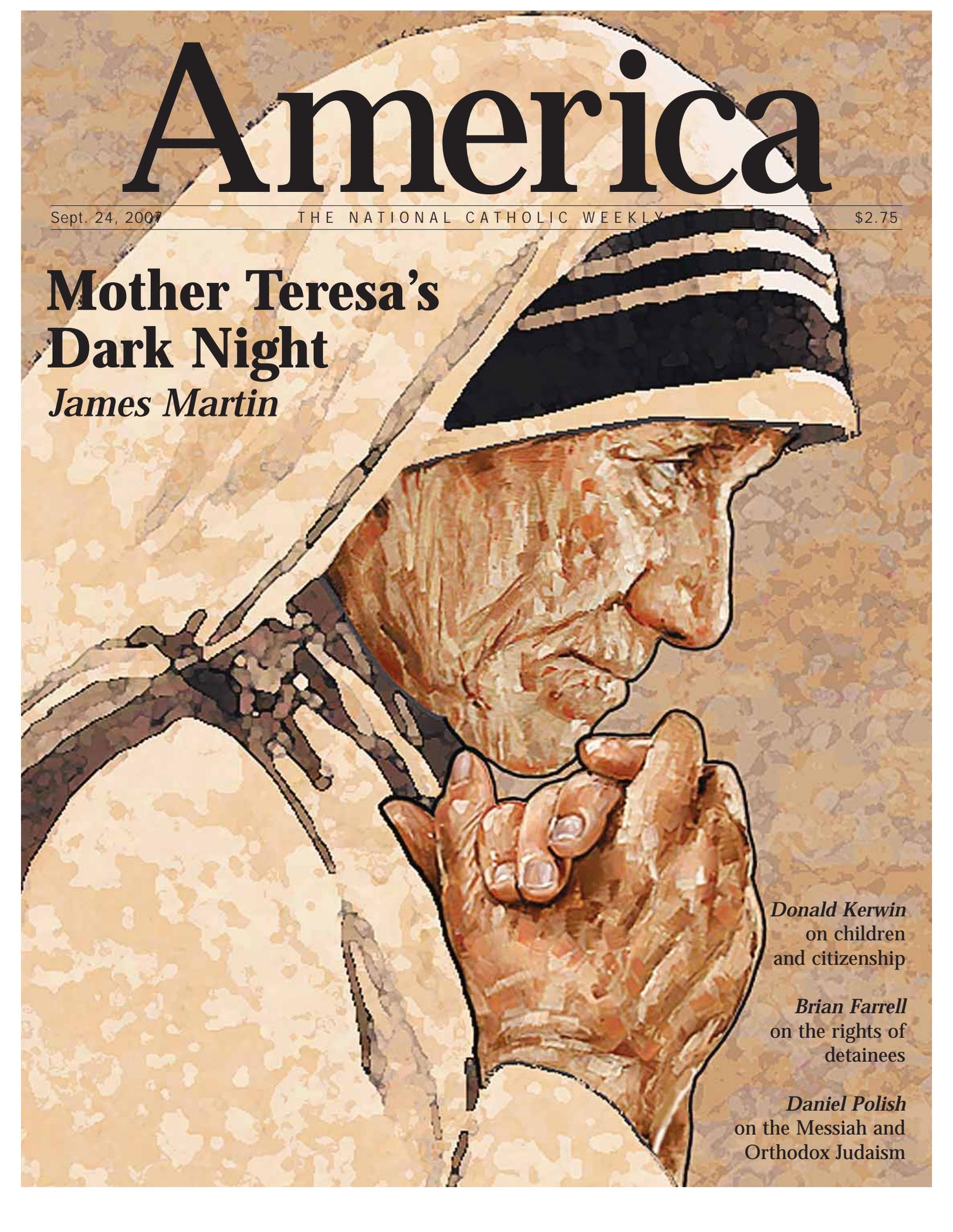


America



Sept. 24, 2007

THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC WEEKLY

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Mother Teresa's Dark Night *James Martin*

Donald Kerwin
on children
and citizenship

Brian Farrell
on the rights of
detainees

Daniel Polish
on the Messiah and
Orthodox Judaism

THE ADVENT of a new school year reminds every instructor of the persistence of certain catch-phrases, clichés and verbal chestnuts much beloved by students and inspires wonder at the sheer staying power of some of the more curious idioms in the collegiate patois. Resurrected again this fall, for example, is perhaps the most shopworn phrase since “the dog ate my homework.” It’s the one heard so often when a young person responds to a question about his or her personal beliefs: “Oh, me? No, I’m spiritual, but not religious.”

It’s a lovely sentiment, but what exactly does it mean? Rarely what it says, to be sure, for both spirituality and religion in such a formulation are defined in ways probably unrecognizable to any serious practitioner of either. Perhaps the modern-day Meister Eckhart and Julian of Norwich really are in the student lounge watching “The Secret” or reading *Eat, Pray, Love*. But I doubt it. My suspicion is that the phrase cheapens the meaning of both religion and spirituality, and in the case of the latter actually hijacks the authority of spiritual traditions thousands of years old.

One must be compassionate, of course. Many fans of such a phrase are at the beginning of a long journey of knowledge and self-discovery, and it is useful to remember the regrettable things one did and said in the folly of youth. I distinctly recall a month during my freshman year in college when I never wore shoes. I also have vague memories of a high school afternoon spent lecturing a Jesuit priest on the similarities between the cult of Christianity and the myth of Santa Claus. No doubt I bored him to tears, but he was thankfully a man of few words, listening to a child of many.

A further complication is that *rara avis* who really means it, the young person for whom the longstanding traditions of spirituality, either in the East or West, actually play a significant role in daily life. I was once taking a classmate at Columbia University to task for employing the language of spirituality as an alternative to religion when she coolly informed me that she yearly attended a 10-day Vipassana retreat, in which she sat lotus-style in meditation, staring at a wall for 12 hours a day, and so had little interest

in a lecture on superficiality.

And yet when I hear students speak of being “spiritual but not religious,” it still sticks in the craw. Yes, I know, the great Buddha was spiritual but not religious, but so was my erstwhile college roommate with the medical marijuana prescription; both approached something they called nirvana. Too often, the phrase implies the smug abandonment of a naïve religiosity in favor of a more sophisticated understanding of the universe, when in fact the reverse may be happening—someone is making an uninformed surrender to the silly wind blowing at the moment, a capitulation to what Pope Benedict XVI denounced as “the dictatorship of relativism.” You’ve got your religion, fine; but me, oh no, I don’t judge. And I’m better than you for it.

Sometimes the phrase also means something relatively harmless, that perhaps “football games are televised at the same time as Mass,” or “you have no idea how embarrassing my parents are in

church,” or even “I now live in a city where the bars are

open until four in the morning on Saturday nights.” And no doubt the expression sometimes allows a young man or woman to retain deeply held beliefs while avoiding the public impression that maybe they’re just a little too churchy to be any fun. Then there are the students who explode the dichotomy, who are both, as their religious faith helps them move into a deeper spirituality that builds on and informs their pre-existing religious views.

Ultimately, however, I suspect there is another reason for the popularity of the phrase. Too many of us have internalized the tiresome commonplace of our contemporary culture that “religion” is the province of all things narrow-minded, dogmatic, intolerant, fanatical and old-fashioned, whereas “spirituality” encompasses that which is open-minded, meditative, reflective and tolerant of all creeds. Unfortunately, so defined, the latter is also inclusive enough to embrace all that is amoral, directionless, apathetic, slothful, banal and pernicious to the human spirit. Given the choice, I’ll stick with what got me this far and continue with my current riposte whenever the subject comes up: “Oh, me? No, I’m religious, but not too spiritual.”

James T. Keane, S.J.

Of Many Things

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What We Owe Iraq

With the Petraeus/Crocker report presented to Congress and the White House selling yet another set of measures for success in Iraq, the American people have a responsibility to weigh what they owe the Iraqi people. Whether we have the capacity to rescue Iraq, militarily or otherwise, from a downward spiral of civil war, we have some basic duties to the Iraqi people and to others in the region that we must not evade. It was the United States, after all, that launched the preventive war of choice that stirred up a whirlwind of violence in that country.

These are duties to refugees and displaced people above all, especially those who aided the U.S. effort, but to others as well, including Iraqi Christians, who have had to flee the violence in their homeland. In the years ahead, we must support and resettle them in cooperation with countries of first asylum like Syria and Jordan and organizations like the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Second, our nation must face up to the regional implications of a U.S. draw-down or withdrawal. It must build and support a structure for regional security with Iraq's neighbors, including Iran and Syria, key actors the administration prefers to ignore or vilify. That will mean a broad settlement with Iran that goes far beyond ending its nuclear weapons program.

A regional security pact will also demand working with other nations, like Russia and the countries of the European Union, in a cooperative spirit quite unlike the arrogant unilateralism that has marked U.S. foreign policy these past six years.

Finally, while our own efforts at nation-building in Iraq have failed, our duty in that regard has not been exhausted by the billions of dollars we wasted in the attempt. We must assist, and not impede, ties between the Iraqi government and international organizations and programs that, when the time is right, can help the Iraqi people rebuild their national infrastructure and economy.

Loan Crisis

For three decades the world of high finance has been spinning away from the real-world economy in which most men and women live and work. The latest financial crisis is once again a case where the working poor and lower middle class will soon be paying for the sins of high rollers. New financial instruments, like hedge funds and derivatives, have made possible the expansion of the world economy, the digital and biotech revolutions, and the spectacular growth of populous, once-poor countries like China and India. At the same time, they have accelerated the

growth of inequality, diminished the middle class, intensified the focus of business on quarterly returns alone and created conditions for spectacular, too-big-to-fail financial crises. Now the crisis over sub-prime (risky) lending in the home loan market threatens a new meltdown that will dwarf the 1994 Mexican peso crisis, the 1997 Asian financial crisis and the bursting of the dot-com bubble in 2000. President Bush has proposed modest support for homeowners threatened with foreclosure. More robust assistance to homeowners will inevitably be needed, but any remedy must address the underlying cause of the problem: lack of regulation. Financial services must be more tightly regulated and supervised. Tax benefits to hedge fund managers, who are billed at lower rates than their gardeners, must be rescinded; and limits must be set for a government bailout of the mortgage industry, to put an end to the too-big-to-fail syndrome for money managers who make colossal mistakes.

Play Ball!

Barry Bonds has hit more home runs in American baseball than any other person alive. There was a brouhaha of no small importance when he did it on July 27, 2007; but in the weeks since, few have paid attention. Hammerin' Hank Aaron captured America's hearts in 1974 (a few exceptions notwithstanding) in his heroic chase of Babe Ruth's record, but we lost interest quickly in Barry Bonds, the endless stories of his steroid use and his many blasts beyond the fence. Why?

In many ways, medicine rules our lives as Americans: there's something for everyone in the medical miracles that the pharmaceutical industry has engineered (to its great profit) over the last two decades. Nevertheless, we exclude Bonds and his astounding accomplishments from our appreciation of this sea change in American life, because another trend is working against the dyspeptic, pharmacologically enhanced slugger. Despite the advances medicine offers us, we still disdain a cheater.

Baseball occupies a unique place in our national psyche, a privileged place recognized by Congress (in its continued willingness to abide by baseball's unique exemption from antitrust laws) and by fans, who see the sport both as a harkening back to a bucolic past and relatively free of the speed-em-up disease that has corrupted American culture. Autumn introduces a welcome advent of new heroes who seek glory on green fields with wooden bats, and in the end we have no patience for the intrusion of a perverse science into our national pastime. Every October we are reminded of our youth by these players, and we prefer them innocent. Play ball!

'Best Colleges,' Poor Report

U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT recently published the 24th edition of "America's Best Colleges"—by far its most anticipated issue each year. Brian Kelly, editor in chief of the magazine, gives a soft sell to the rankings as a "first step" for prospective students, "a way to get a quick read on a variety of schools." In point of fact, they are a big business with undeniable influence on higher education. Slight changes in a school's ranking can significantly affect its recruitment, even its fundraising.

But the survey has serious flaws in both its method and philosophy. Americans in general and Catholic colleges and universities in particular would be wise to challenge its conclusions.

While the issues surrounding the U.S. News rankings are legion, the most troubling of them regards the validity of the instruments used to determine rankings. U.S. News considers 16 criteria, including selectivity, alumni giving, peer review and test scores, which are grouped into categories and assigned weights. But 10 years ago, when the magazine commissioned the National Opinion Research Center to evaluate its methodology, the center found that "the weights used to combine various measures into an overall rating lack any defensible empirical or theoretical basis." Why should peer review, for instance, count for 25 percent of a school's ranking, and academic quality only 15 percent? The N.O.R.C. found the system "difficult to defend on any grounds other than the U.S. News staff's best judgment on how to combine the measures."

Also problematic are the data ignored. U.S. News does not assess "product"—how students who go to a given school turn out, what they learn, what opportunities, challenges or assistance are provided, even how satisfied they are. Such measurements are possible. In fact, each year the National Survey of Student Engagement alone surveys half a million students on issues like professor accessibility, academic engagement inside and outside the classroom, and tutoring. To rate schools without such data is like ranking football teams without considering their records. In which case, congratulations, University of Michigan! You're still number one.

This question of the criteria used to evaluate the schools is of particular concern for Catholic colleges and universities. The pressure to succeed by U.S. News's standards looms large. In recent years many Catholic institutions have branded themselves with giddy, unrealistic slo-

gans like "the national Catholic urban university" (of Des Moines).

Institutions look to Notre Dame, Georgetown University or Boston College as the finish line, when in point of fact those schools, too, race to keep up with the Joneses. In the face of high competition and secular standards, the very question of what purpose a higher rank serves in the Christian scheme of things is easily lost.

The fact of the matter is, U.S. News's image of a successful school ill suits Catholic institutions, ignoring their strengths or even casting them as flaws. For U.S. News the successful school is a wealthy institution with a lot of "buzz" that accepts very few of those who apply. Tuition costs are ignored; commitment to service, values or diversity is irrelevant; and accessibility may very well hurt a school's score. This year Kelly reassured schools that data on graduation rates have been adjusted to account for Pell Grant students, whom he describes as "low-income students who tend to graduate at a lower rate than comparable students coming in." "Rather than penalize schools for admitting a large number of low-income students," says Kelly, "we put in a formula to factor that out to level the playing field." This is an improvement, to be sure, but the underlying point remains: Accessibility is seen as a disability to be accommodated, while selectivity is praised. As Kay McClenney from the University of Texas at Austin wondered on the PBS "NewsHour With Jim Lehrer" (8/20), "When in America did we come to the point of saying that the mark of quality is the proportion of prospective students that you refuse to serve?" The same could be asked of Catholic schools.

A growing number of institutions of higher education are refusing to participate in the U.S. News survey, citing these issues and others. The valid question, they argue, is not what is the "best" college, but what is the right college for a given student.

The report exerts too much influence for most schools to simply ignore it. But Catholic schools would do themselves and our society a great service (and some do) by evaluating and presenting themselves in terms of the intellectual and spiritual formation they provide, the questions they raise, the service they require, the world they wish to build and the faith that guides their efforts. U.S. News may not appreciate these values, but in a world hungry for meaning and purpose, many others will.

Jim McDermott, S.J.

Pope Discusses Exodus of Christians From Iraq

Pope Benedict XVI met with Syria's vice president to discuss the exodus of Christian and other refugees from Iraq, many of whom have fled to Syria. Syria is now home to an estimated 1.5 million Iraqi refugees, and Syrian officials have said the international community has not helped the country to deal with the influx. During a private audience Sept. 5, Vice President Farouk al-Sharaa gave the pope a personal message from Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad, the Vatican said. Later, the Syrian vice president met for separate talks with Archbishop Dominique Mamberti, the Vatican's top foreign affairs expert. The Vatican said the discussions focused on Syria's efforts to host Iraqi refugees and on Syria's requests for aid from international agencies. Also on the agenda were the problems and conditions of Christians in Syria and what the Vatican termed the "decisive contribution that Syria can give in order to overcome the serious crises that afflict many populations of the Middle East."

Pope Voices Hope for Just Settlement in Mideast

Pope Benedict XVI met with Israeli President Shimon Peres and expressed hope that new diplomatic moves can bring peace in the Middle East. After 60 years of suffering endured by the peoples of the region, it is imperative to make "every effort" to find a just settlement, the Vatican said after the Sept. 6 meeting. Following his 35-minute private audience with the pope, Peres held separate talks with Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, Vatican secretary of state, and Archbishop Dominique Mamberti, the Vatican's top foreign affairs official, to discuss the Middle East and church-state relations in Israel. The encounters came as Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert were preparing to renew negotiations. Meanwhile, diplomats were setting the stage for a U.S.-sponsored international conference on the Middle East in November. The Vatican statement said

the prospect of an international conference raised new hopes and created a "particularly favorable context" for progress.

Church Critic of Zimbabwe Leadership Resigns

Pope Benedict XVI accepted the resignation of Archbishop Pius Ncube of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, the most outspoken critic of the country's leadership, who is facing allegations of adultery. In an undated letter written by the archbishop and released by the Vatican press office Sept. 11, the archbishop wrote that he offered his resignation to Vatican officials in July to spare sullyng the image of the church. The Vatican announced that the

pope accepted the archbishop's resignation under Canon 401.2, which covers resignations for illness or some other grave reason. Archbishop Ncube, 60, is being sued for adultery, and his case is before the High Court of Zimbabwe in Bulawayo. The lawsuit was made public in July, and state-run newspapers published photos they said were of Archbishop Ncube and a woman, taken with a concealed camera placed in the archbishop's bedroom. Archbishop Ncube's resignation "is not to be seen as an admission of guilt" to the adultery charges and it "shouldn't have any bearing on the court case," said the Rev. Frederick Chiromba, secretary general of the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference.

Pope Stresses Christian Values for Europe



Pope Benedict XVI waves a censer during a Mass outside the Marizell basilica in Austria Sept. 8. About 30,000 people turned out for the service at the popular pilgrimage site.

Before an audience of Austrian political leaders and international diplomats, Pope Benedict XVI urged Europe not to jettison its Christian values, especially when it comes to the rights of the unborn and the dying. The pope made the remarks Sept. 7 in an ornate reception hall of Vienna's Hofburg Palace, which was packed with government officials, legislators, ambassadors and representatives to U.N. and other agencies. After being welcomed warmly by Austria's president, Heinz

Fischer, the pope stood at a podium on a red carpet and declared: "Europe cannot and must not deny her Christian roots. These represent a dynamic component of our civilization as we move forward into the third millennium."

The pope then quickly turned to two pro-life issues, abortion and euthanasia, which he said were not merely church concerns but represented threats to the most basic human right, that of life itself.

Ordination of Chinese Bishop Part of Transition

The ordination of Coadjutor Bishop Paul Xiao Zejiang of Guizhou, China, was seen as part of a smooth transition in the diocesan leadership. More than 3,000 Catholics attended the ordination of the 40-year-old priest Sept. 8 at the cathedral, or North Church, in Guiyang, the capital of Guizhou province, reported UCA News, an Asian church news agency.

The ordination, performed with the approval of both the Holy See and the Chinese government, marked the first ordination of a bishop since Pope Benedict XVI issued his open letter to mainland Chinese Catholics June 30. The Rev. Long Chengzhong, Guizhou's vicar general, told UCA News Sept. 10 that all the diocese's priests are glad to have a young bishop.

As coadjutor, Bishop Xiao will automatically succeed 89-year-old Bishop Anicetus Wang Chongyi, who is still active, upon the elderly prelate's death or retirement.

Bishops Seek Exemption on Sex-Change Records

English and Welsh bishops have expressed concern that they would not be able to stop transsexuals from becoming nuns or priests under new equality legislation proposed by the British government.

The Bishops' Conference of England and Wales said it feared that proposals to ban "indirect discrimination" against people who have had sex-change operations would take away the church's right to check vital records, like baptismal and confirmation certificates, that would reveal whether candidates for the priesthood, religious life or marriage were transsexuals.

The bishops expressed their concerns in a Sept. 10 submission to the British government, which has proposed that vital records be altered when a person has a sex-change operation. A copy of the submission, prepared on behalf of the bishops by Archbishop Peter Smith of Cardiff, Wales, was obtained by Catholic News Service.

\$198.1 Million Settlement in California Lawsuits

The Diocese of San Diego and the Diocese of San Bernardino, which broke off from its southern neighbor in 1978, agreed Sept. 7 to pay \$198.1 million to settle lawsuits with 144 victims of sexual abuse by priests between 1938 and 1993. The dioceses had originally offered \$95 million to settle the claims. The plaintiffs sought \$200 million. Earlier in the year, the San Diego Diocese filed for bankruptcy protection hours before a trial was to begin in one of the first lawsuits alleging that the church was responsible for sexual abuse by priests. The judge in the bankruptcy case had recently threatened to throw out that case if the church did not reach an agreement with the plaintiffs.

The settlement is one of the largest in the country. Under the agreement, the San Bernardino Diocese and its insurer, Catholic Mutual, will pay \$15.1 million for 11 cases. The San Diego Diocese will pay \$77 million and Catholic Mutual will cover another \$75.7 million for a total of 111 cases. San Diego will pay another \$30.2 million for 22 cases involving members of religious orders. A statement from the San Diego Diocese said it hoped at least part of that amount could be recovered from the religious orders.

New Missal Translation Expected by 2009

An international liturgical committee that advises the Vatican reported progress in its work on the new English translation of the Mass. After meeting at the Vatican Sept. 2-6, the Vox Clara Committee said it hoped the English translation of the Roman Missal would be completed and approved by the end of 2009. It was the first time a specific date had been anticipated for the completion of the lengthy project. The third edition of the Roman Missal was promulgated in Latin by Pope John Paul II in 2002, and work on the English translation began soon afterward. A Vox Clara statement said its meeting reviewed the most recent draft translations of the Roman Missal.

From CNS and other sources. CNS photos.



Cecilia Nya, S.H.C.J. provincial leader of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus in Africa, was one of four speakers at a Sept. 6 workshop held during a U.N. conference on climate change. The speakers described current projects in Nigeria, Indonesia, Australia and Newark, N.J.

Spiritual Enthusiasm Marks Scout Anniversary

As a priest for 52 years and a member of the Boy Scouts for 65, Msgr. John B. Brady, a retired priest of the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C., says he has never experienced the "youthful spiritual enthusiasm" he witnessed this summer as a chaplain at the Goshen Scout Reservation in Goshen, Va. "Scouts of every faith attended religious services in record numbers," Msgr. Brady said in a report on his experiences with the more than 7,000 scouts and leaders who attended the six camps at Goshen this summer. "Jewish and Islamic services, Buddhist meditations, all-faith scouts' own services, nondenominational Christian services and daily Catholic Masses reported significant increases in attendance," he added. The summer of 2007 marked the 100th camping season for the scouts since Lord Robert Baden-Powell, founder of the world scouting movement, oversaw the raising of the flags at the world's first scout encampment at Brown Sea Island off the coast of Southampton, England, Aug. 1, 1907.



A Postwar Program That Worked

‘Can this success story be repeated?’

WE DO NOT OFTEN hear success stories about foreign policy. After the Second World War, the United States did what victorious powers throughout history have rarely done. Rather than vanquishing and humiliating our defeated enemies at war’s end, we worked together to strengthen them and create a safer world.

After the cold war, the United States did it again. While most Americans are familiar with the Marshall Plan, the rebuilding of Germany and Japan and the creation of NATO, most are unacquainted with the Cooperative Threat Reduction programs. But we should know about them. They need support and should be expanded to other critical areas like India and Pakistan.

This month we mark the anniversary of this largely unheralded success story. Fifteen years ago, Senator Richard Lugar, Republican of Indiana, and then Senator Sam Nunn, Democrat of Georgia, made our lives much safer from nuclear weapons by establishing the C.T.R. programs. The Soviet Union was disintegrating, but a vast number of nuclear weapons and large stocks of radiological, chemical and biological materials were unsecured and scattered across the territories of the former Soviet Union. George H. W. Bush, president at the time, was preoccupied with a war in Iraq and not focused on nuclear weapons safety and elimination. Displaying historic congressional leadership in foreign policy, the senators reached out across party lines, took the long view and created a better future for us all.

MARYANN CUSIMANO LOVE is professor of international relations at The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C.

Through this highly successful program, the United States and the states of the former Soviet Union cooperated to destroy nuclear weapons quickly and safely and to safeguard, protect, control and account for the nuclear materials, weapons and scientists from the former Soviet Union’s nuclear complex. The program was later expanded to include chemical and biological weapons, and measures to detect weapons of mass destruction for border security.

Thanks to the vision and persistence of Senators Nunn and Lugar, Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Belarus are now free of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems, and last year the C.T.R. program was expanded to destroy Albania’s chemical weapons. Thousands of nuclear weapons have been deactivated and thousands of missiles, strategic bombers and nuclear submarines designed to deliver nuclear weapons have been destroyed. Over 75 percent of Russian nuclear warhead sites have been secured to date, and 160 buildings housing hundreds of tons of nuclear materials have been secured. Cold war biological and chemical weapons production facilities in Russia, Georgia, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan have been safely dismantled. Thousands of scientists associated with these weapons programs have been retrained and employed in civilian pursuits.

All of this has been accomplished on a budgetary shoestring. From 1992 to 2007, the United States has budgeted a total of only \$13.3 billion on all C.T.R. programs combined. According to the government’s nonpartisan Congressional Research Service, this is less than we spend on the war in Iraq in a single month.

Given this established track record, you might think the president would be

leading the movement to expand these efforts. You would be wrong. Today, another President Bush is in the White House, preoccupied with another war in Iraq and not providing leadership in this critical area. Since 2002 Senator Lugar has proposed globalizing C.T.R. efforts, particularly to safeguard the vulnerable nuclear arsenals of India and Pakistan. In 2004 the father of Pakistan’s nuclear weapons program, A. Q. Khan, was discovered selling nuclear secrets and technologies to Iran, North Korea and Libya. Pakistan’s President Musharaff is the frequent target of assassination attempts, and Islamic extremists supportive of Al Qaeda and the Taliban thrive in Pakistan, including in its military. The insecurity of Pakistan’s arsenal is a danger to the world.

Despite these proven dangers, Senator Lugar’s fellow Republicans in Congress and the White House have not followed the September 11th Commission’s recommendations and advanced C.T.R. programs. This year Senator Lugar has again submitted legislation to expand C.T.R. beyond the former Soviet states.

The comparison with Iraq is worth considering. Five years ago on Oct. 7, 2002, President Bush argued that the United States had to invade Iraq so that Saddam Hussein could be disarmed of his weapons of mass destruction programs. “America must not ignore the threat gathering against us. Facing clear evidence of peril, we cannot wait for the final proof—the smoking gun—that could come in the form of a mushroom cloud.”

Apparently that argument applied only to Iraq. The White House has willingly sacrificed the lives of over 3,700 Americans and 100,000 Iraqis and has spent over \$450 billion dollars to disarm a nonexistent Iraqi program for weapons of mass destruction. Yet it is unwilling to work cooperatively through proven programs that use nonmilitary means to secure known, existing arsenals of weapons of mass destruction in India and Pakistan at a tiny fraction of the cost.

Expanding C.T.R. is a proven way to stop terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction. It works by strengthening the peace rather than by war. The public and Congress ought to appreciate and replicate Senator Lugar’s successes.

Maryann Cusimano Love



IMMIGRATION PROTEST IN LOS ANGELES, CALIF., MAY 1, 2006. SHUTTERSTOCK/MARK SCOTT SPATNY

Protecting the rights of those born on U.S. soil
America's Children

– BY DONALD KERWIN –

NOT SINCE THE “AMERICANIZATION” movement of the first quarter of the 20th century has the United States given the integration of its immigrants the kind of sustained policy attention it deserves. At its best, that movement sought to promote citizenship, to assure that government agencies addressed the specific needs of immigrants and to teach them English, U.S. history and civic skills. These goals need to be revisited, particularly since Congress failed to pass comprehensive immigration reform this year.

DONALD KERWIN is executive director of the Catholic Legal Immigration Network Inc.

Two visions of nationhood vie for primacy in the U.S. immigration debate: civic nationalism and ethnic or ethnocultural nationalism.

It would be reckless to assume that a diverse and growing population of 37 million immigrants will be incorporated easily or automatically into our national life. The United States' historic genius at integrating immigrants has been rooted in a relatively open job market, a participatory political system, strong mediating institutions (including family) and a legal framework that extends its core rights and protections to "persons," not only to U.S. citizens. The essential ingredient, however, has been the conviction of successive waves of immigrants that they can become full members of the United States. By contrast, many European nations have developed formal immigrant "integration" policies and extend generous social safety nets to immigrants, but the children and grandchildren of many of these immigrants do not feel either that they belong or that they can become full and equal French or German or Dutch citizens.

What Is a Nation?

How immigrants see the United States depends largely on how the United States views them and how it conceives of itself, and those attitudes are changeable. At present, two visions of nationhood vie for primacy in the U.S. immigration debate. Civic nationalism does not deny the role of history, tradition and culture in forging ties among citizens, but it views national membership primarily in terms of shared civic values and political institutions. This vision resonates with immigrants and others who see the United States as a "creedal" nation. According to one of our most cherished national myths, people from throughout the world have fled poverty and persecution to find a home in a nation that asks in return only that they be good and loyal citizens. In gratitude, these immigrants have put aside their other differences to build a nation that offers hope to a bitterly divided world.

Ethnic or ethnocultural nationalism, by contrast, views nations as distinct peoples connected most deeply by inherited characteristics like race, religion, history and language. This vision does not dismiss the importance of shared civic goals and beliefs, but regards concepts like rights, freedom and equality as mere noble abstractions that do not sufficiently bind citizens to one another and to their nation. This paradigm might itself be dismissed as an abstraction that fails to capture the U.S. experience. Its proponents would do away with the primacy given to family unity in U.S. immigration law. In their view family-based immigra-

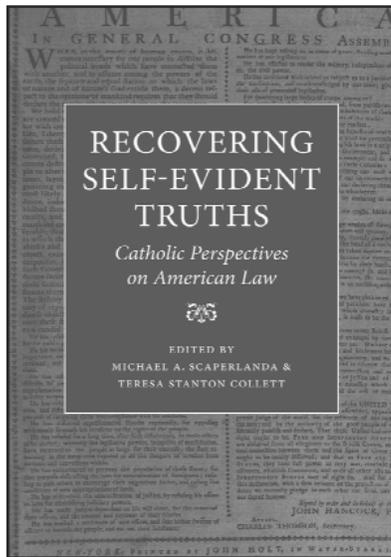
tion has led to the admission of large numbers of immigrants who threaten to dilute, if not overwhelm, U.S. "Western" culture. These cultural differences can be overstated. Religious faith, a commitment to family, hard work and patriotism—which many see as core features of U.S. culture—likewise characterize immigrant communities. The great wave of immigrants from 1890 to 1916 faced similar criticism, primarily because of their countries of origin (mostly Southern and Eastern Europe) and their faith (mostly Catholic), which U.S. nativists attacked as alien and incompatible with democratic values.

Targeting Birthright Citizenship

The main policy ethnocultural nationalists oppose is the granting of birthright citizenship for the children of undocumented persons. Some who would restrict immigrants cynically refer to such children as "anchor babies," although such children cannot petition for their family members to join them in the United States until they themselves become adults. On the one hand, the opposition to birthright citizenship seems to contradict the primacy that ethnocultural nationalists give to U.S. history and tradition in defining membership. In fact, most of these children will never have another culture, heritage or tradition than what they acquire in the United States. On the other hand, it stands to reason that if you want to perpetuate a distinct people, you would want to deny citizenship to children who lack the inherited characteristics you value. The Fourteenth Amendment, which many who would restrict the number of immigrants trivialize as an immigration loophole, presents a formidable obstacle to such a denial. Its first sentence reads: "All persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside." This language reversed the infamous Dred Scott decision, which held that persons of African descent could never become U.S. citizens. An 1898 Supreme Court decision, *United States v. Wong Kim Ark*, affirmed that the amendment also applied to children born in the United States of parents who are not U.S. citizens.

A legal skirmish has erupted over whether being "subject to the jurisdiction" of the United States means being required to obey U.S. law (in which case the amendment applies to all children born on U.S. soil), or allegiance to the nation (in which case citizenship could arguably be denied

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to the children of noncitizens without amending the Constitution). The court reasoned in the *Wong Kim Ark* case that “every citizen or subject of another country, while domiciled here, is within the allegiance and protection, and consequently subject to the jurisdiction, of the United States.”

Limiting the Rights of Young Citizens

One must question how it would serve the national interest to relegate children born here to lives with few rights, limited prospects and no security. How would such children contribute or be bound to the only country they might ever know? The Supreme Court made this point trenchantly in *Plyler v. Doe*, its 1982 decision on the right of undocumented children to public education through high school. The *Plyler* decision highlighted the complementary nature of rights and the common good, an enduring feature of both U.S. law and Catholic social teaching. “It is difficult to understand,” the court reasoned, “precisely what the State hopes to achieve by promoting the creation and perpetuation of a sub-class of illiterates within our boundaries, surely adding to the problems and costs of unemployment, welfare, and crime.... Whatever savings might be achieved by denying these children an education, they are wholly insubstantial in light of the costs involved to these children, the State, and the nation.”

What would restrictionists do with such children? Ethnocultural nationalists might favor deporting them (and their parents). Or they might pressure such families to leave by denying them the means to subsist, as hundreds of pending state and local measures are attempting to do. Or they could make it a felony to be or to assist an undocumented person, as the House of Representatives voted to do in 2005. The more this vision plays out in practice, the less it seems to honor core U.S. ideals, although this is its very point. After all, ideals cannot play a large role in attempts to resurrect one of the most shameful legal decisions in U.S. history, the *Dred Scott* decision, and apply it to a new class of defenseless persons. The ethnocultural vision never seems more un-American than when it attempts to articulate exactly which attributes or characteristics should determine membership.

No mainstream group in the U.S. immigration debate favors open borders, supports undocumented migration or opposes the “patriotic assimilation” of immigrants. Immigrant advocates believe, however, that these immense challenges must be addressed in ways that honor our nation’s underlying values.

The Views of Early Presidents

What beliefs make up the U.S. creed? In the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson names equality, self-evi-

dent rights and the consent of the governed. In the preamble to the 1780 Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, John Adams defined as the purpose of government “to secure the existence of the body politic, to protect it, and to furnish the individuals who compose it with the power of enjoying in safety and tranquility their natural rights, and the blessings of life.” He referred to the polity as a “voluntary association” of persons governed by laws enacted for the “common good.”

In a letter to a Hebrew Congregation at Newport in August 1790, George Washington identified good citizenship and allegiance as the fundamental requirements for membership in the new nation. “It is now no more,” Washington wrote, “that toleration is spoken of as if it were the indulgence of one class of people that another enjoyed the exercise of their inherent natural rights, for, happily, the Government of the United States, which gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance, requires only that they who live under its protection should demean themselves as good citizens giving it on all occasions their effectual support.” In his “Gettysburg Address,” Lincoln called the United States a nation “conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.” These concepts define our nation and bind us to our fellow citizens.

Although political membership and religious affiliation cannot be equated, ethnocultural nationalism also seems alien to a religious tradition based not on ethnicity, race or culture, but on a person’s deepest beliefs and commitments. St. Paul wrote, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:28). Pope John Paul II made the same point about immigrants in his message for World Migration Day 1996: “The church considers the problem of illegal migrants from the standpoint of Christ, who died to gather together the dispersed children of God, to rehabilitate the marginalized and to bring close those who are distant, in order to integrate all within a communion that is not based on ethnic, cultural or social membership.” The church’s vision has been inclusive, even for those who violate immigration laws. In 1986 the U.S. bishops wrote in *Together a New People*: “It is against the common good and unacceptable to have a double society, one visible with rights and one invisible without rights—a voiceless underground of undocumented persons.”

In the last two years, hundreds of thousands of immigrants have taken to the streets in cities across the country. The overwhelming majority of them—pushing strollers, dressed in their work clothes, carrying religious symbols, marching peacefully, carrying “We are America” posters—share our civic values. Like millions of immigrants before them, they want to help build the United States and to participate fully in our national life. We should let them. **A**



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'In My Soul'

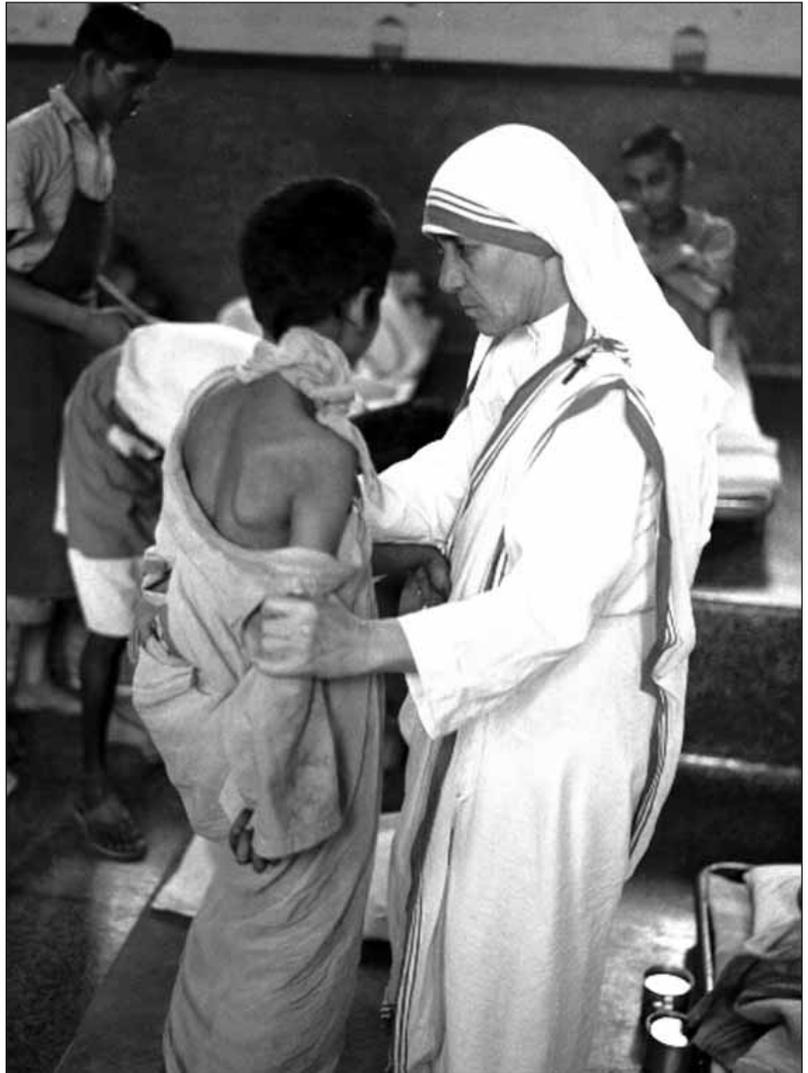
*The long dark night of
Mother Teresa*

BY JAMES MARTIN

PERHAPS CATHOLICS SHOULD NOT have been surprised by the revelations in *Mother Teresa: Come Be My Light*, a new collection of letters by the "saint of the gutters" that show her astonishing battle with spiritual darkness. Reports of her "dark night" had been circulating since 2003, when Brian Kolodiejchuk, a priest member of the Missionaries of Charity and postulator for her cause for canonization, published on the Catholic Web site Zenit.com a series of articles about her struggles. That same year, in the journal *First Things*, Carol Zaleski wrote an article entitled "Mother Teresa's Dark Night," which quoted selections from her letters. So some information about Mother Teresa's interior struggles with darkness, doubt and despair have been available to the general public for several years.

What is new about *Come Be My Light* is that it gathers together the bulk of letters, which reveals the full measure of her inner turmoil. For the first time readers will learn that Mother Teresa suffered this relentless aridity for roughly 50 years—with one brief respite—until her death in September 1997. "In my soul I feel just that terrible pain of loss—of God not wanting me—of God not being God—of God not really existing," she wrote to a confessor in 1959.

According to Father Kolodiejchuk, these letters were gathered from the files of bishops, priests and spiritual directors to whom Mother Teresa wrote and who had retained them. In a recent interview, Father Kolodiejchuk noted that although Mother Teresa had hoped the letters would be destroyed, the gathering together of such writings



"She wanted to proclaim the Gospel not with words, but by being a light, a radiance of God's presence."—Brian Kolodiejchuk, M.C.

is an essential part of the canonization procedure. The letters are also a critical resource for the Missionaries of Charity as they seek to understand more fully the distinctive spirituality, or charism, of their founder.

Early Mysticism and Later Darkness

The posthumous collection is largely an extended cry to God, expressed through candid letters. A recurring syntactical habit—the frequent use of dashes—adds to the breathless urgency of her lamentations. "In my heart there is no faith—no love—no trust—there is so much pain—the pain of longing, of not being wanted—I want God with all the

JAMES MARTIN, S.J., is acting publisher of *America* and author of *My Life With the Saints* (Loyola), which will be released in paperback in October.

powers of my soul,” she writes in the letter of 1959 quoted above.

The feeling of God’s absence is not uncommon in the lives of the saints or in the lives of average believers. The Spanish mystic St. John of the Cross called it the dark night and posited it as a necessary stage for the ascent to mystical union with God. St. Ignatius of Loyola termed it spiritual desolation in his manual for prayer, *The Spiritual Exercises*. “One is completely listless, tepid and unhappy,” he wrote, “and feels separated from our Creator and Lord.” During her final illness, St. Thérèse of Lisieux, the French Carmelite nun, experienced a desolation that seemed to reflect doubts over whether or not anything would await her after her death. “If you only knew what darkness I am plunged into!” she once said to the sisters in her convent.

For Mother Teresa, the decades of spiritual darkness, which began not long after she founded the Missionaries of Charity, were all the more acute when she reflected on her earlier relationship with Jesus.

The woman born Gonxha Agnes Bojaxhiu was raised in a devout Catholic family in Skopje, Albania. Her mother, Drana, was a generous woman who used to care for an elderly neighbor who was ravaged by alcoholism and covered with sores. “When you do good,” Drana told her daughter, “do it quietly, as if you were throwing a stone in the sea.”

A Jesuit priest’s talk at her parish stirred within Agnes the desire to do missionary work, and in 1928 at the age of 18 she was overjoyed to be accepted by the Sisters of Loreto in Ireland. Three months after her entrance, Sister Mary Teresa (she took the name to honor Thérèse of Lisieux) was sent on a mission to India to work in a girls school in Calcutta. In 1937 she pronounced her vows of poverty, chastity and obedience and, as was the custom in her order, was given the title Mother. Five years later she made a private vow to Jesus “not to refuse Him anything.”

In 1946 on a train ride en route to a retreat (and some rest) in Darjeeling, she was surprised to undergo a series of intense mystical experiences, which included hearing the voice of Jesus, who asked her to begin working with the poorest of the poor. “Wilt thou refuse?” asked Jesus. These experiences, which she would term her “call within a call,” convinced her to take the difficult step of leaving the Sisters of

Loreto to found a new order.

Her later years of darkness were all the more baffling to her in the wake of the unique graces received early in her religious life. Moreover, since clergy and members of religious orders were (and are) regularly counseled to rely on Jesus as their most intimate friend, his subsequent disappearance from Mother Teresa’s inner life was nearly impossible for her to understand.

She also seems to have been slow to recognize that her darkness may have been a kind of answer to her fervent prayers and private vow; in 1951 she wrote of her wish “to drink *only* from His chalice of pain” (her emphasis). For the reader who knows what awaits her, this is among the most difficult passages to read in *Come Be My Light*. The subsequent trials recall the comment of another Teresa, of Ávila, who said that more tears are shed over answered prayers than unanswered ones.

In Her Own Words

In April 1961 Mother Teresa wrote to Joseph Neuner, S.J., after he preached a retreat to the Missionaries of Charity in Calcutta.

Now Father—since [19]49 or 50 this terrible sense of loss—this untold darkness—this loneliness—this continual longing for God—which gives me that pain deep down in my heart—Darkness is such that I really do not see—neither with my mind nor with my reason.—The place of God in my soul is blank.—There is not God in me.—When the pain of longing is so great—I just long & long for God—and then it is that I feel—He does not want me....

—Mother Teresa: *Come Be My Light*
Doubleday Books, 2007

‘I Have Come to Love the Darkness’

Ultimately, in 1961 Mother Teresa found some relief from her interior turmoil through the counsel of

Joseph Neuner, S.J., who suggested that her dark night might be one way God was inviting her to identify with the abandoned Christ on the cross and with the abandoned poor. He also reminded her that the very longing for God itself came from God. “For the first time in this 11 years,” she wrote the Jesuit theologian, “I have come to love the darkness.” Indeed, one of the many poignant aspects of *Come Be My Light* is that it makes clear how much someone can suffer without the right spiritual guidance, and how much relief can come with a few words of wise counsel.

Still, while this provided further insight and what one might call intellectual relief, God’s absence continued unabated in her prayer. In 1967 she wrote again to Neuner, “Father I want to tell you how you—how my soul longs for God—for him alone, how painful it is to be without Him.”

Mother Teresa understood how odd her situation was: the woman acclaimed as a “living saint” struggled with her faith. Though she sometimes admitted feeling like a “hypocrite,” as she notes in one letter, she decided that a public admission of her struggles would direct focus on herself, rather than on Jesus. Consequently, she suffered her spiritu-

al trials largely alone. One less publicized aspect of her journals lies in this personal act of humility: Had these letters been destroyed, few would ever have known of her trials. As her own mother had counseled, she was trying to do good quietly.

Why?

Most believers who read *Come Be My Light* will at some point ask, "Why would God do this?" Of course one might just as well ask, "Why is there suffering?"

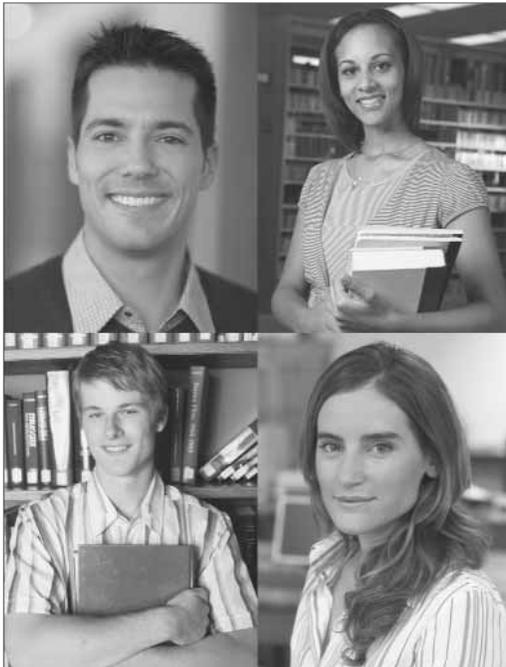
In his *Spiritual Exercises*, St. Ignatius Loyola suggests three possible explanations for spiritual desolation. First, we may be "tepid, lazy or negligent" in prayer. Clearly this was not the case for Mother Teresa, who was utterly faithful to her daily prayer, to the Mass and to frequent visits to the Blessed Sacrament. Second, it may test "how much we are worth and how far we will extend ourselves in the service and praise of God." Again, if Mother Teresa, who worked tirelessly until her death, did not "extend herself," who of us has? Third, it may give us "true recognition" that consolation is "a gift and grace from God our Lord." In other words, it reminds us who is in control. But after 10 or 20 years of the darkness, Mother Teresa had grasped this, as her letters to her spiritual directors demonstrate.

Any divine "reasons" for her trials remain mysterious. But with hindsight certain fruits of her suffering—besides

the heightened ability to identify with the poor—may suggest themselves.

For one thing, Mother Teresa, like many saints, had a commanding ego, forceful enough that she argued for the foundation of her order in the face of fierce opposition. A common theme in the early letters is her relentless drive to have the young order approved, a pursuit born of certitude in her mystical experiences. "Why make me wait so long? ...How long must I wait? May I not write again or straight to Rome?" she wrote to the Archbishop of Calcutta in 1948, when Vatican approval for her order was not immediately forthcoming. Later, when her ministry flourished, she was showered with worldly honors, including perhaps the ultimate secular accolade, the Nobel Peace Prize. Did her spiritual trials temper a natural pride that might have otherwise subtly compromised her mission?

Likewise, one might argue that Mother Teresa's letters, the fruits of her spiritual agony, which she asked to be destroyed, will now help a new group of people. Having ministered to the sick and dying in Calcutta during her lifetime, she will now minister to the doubtful and the doubting as a sort of saint for the skeptics. Could this be a way God will use her sufferings to bring about greater good? Is this the Easter Sunday of Mother Teresa's long Good Friday? Only God, and now Blessed Teresa of Calcutta, knows the answers.



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Great Saint, Complicated Seeker

Come Be My Light reveals Mother Teresa to be one of the greatest of all the saints. To that bold statement church historians and theologians will surely respond, “Wait and see.” Yet it is difficult to think of anyone who accomplished so much with so little spiritual sustenance. The closest analogues are St. Jane Frances de Chantal, founder of the Congregation of the Visitation, whose turmoil lasted for three decades, and St. Paul of the Cross, founder of the Passionist order, who underwent an even lengthier trial, but was granted relief toward the end of his life.

While every saint has faced spiritual trials, most have felt close to God during their years of active ministry. St. Ignatius Loyola, for example, was frequently overcome with emotion while celebrating Mass, even to the point of tears. Some were even granted unique graces. In his later years St. Francis of Assisi enjoyed mystical experiences at his prayer and, during one retreat, received the stigmata.

In contrast, Mother Teresa felt nothing for 50 years—except for a brief respite—all the way until her death. “[M]y soul is just like [an] ice block,” she wrote.

Come Be My Light also provides an unintentional response to those who during her lifetime dismissed Mother Teresa as a sort of well-meaning but unsophisticated believer. Her letters show how, when confronted with a complex spiritual crisis, she questioned with candor, vigor

and passion, and ultimately responded with trust, love and works of charity. She is revealed as a complicated and sophisticated seeker.

‘I Have Never Refused You Anything’

The unrelieved spiritual aridity of Blessed Teresa of Calcutta makes her earthly accomplishments all the more remarkable. Her letters also offer some lessons to believers. First, they are a reminder that what could be termed radical Christianity is not simply the province of those called saints. Many imagine that since the saints enjoy privileged access to God in prayer, their work is somehow easier, lighter—a mistaken view that excuses the “average believer” from striving for sanctity. Instead, Mother Teresa’s life reminds us that holiness is a goal for all believers, even those given to doubt. Second, her letters remind us that dryness, darkness and doubt are natural parts of the spiritual life, whether ordinary believer or extraordinary saint. Finally, they remind us that fidelity does not depend solely on feelings or emotions.

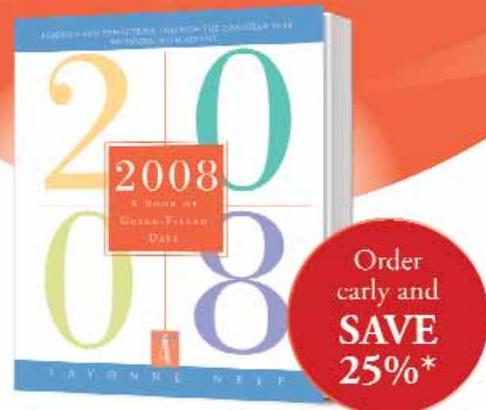
Blessed Teresa remained heroically faithful to the original call from the very God who seemed to have withdrawn from her. Shortly before her death, one of her sisters noticed her praying alone before an image of Christ and overheard a phrase that could sum up her life. “Jesus,” she prayed, “I have never refused you anything.” 

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The Rights of Detainees

Prisoners at Guantanamo are entitled to habeas corpus.

BY BRIAN R. FARRELL



U.S. military police escort a detainee to his cell in Camp X-Ray at the naval base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

CNS PHOTO

ON JUNE 29, 2007, in an extremely rare move, the United States Supreme Court reversed its own earlier ruling and agreed to consider whether a law passed by Congress, the Military Commissions Act of 2006, can legally deny detainees at Guantanamo Bay access to civilian courts. While this is only a decision to accept the case and cannot be read as an indication of the manner in which the court will ultimately rule, the move is consistent with the court's recent scrutiny of the detention policies used by the Bush administration in its "war on terror."

This case is of particular significance because it will determine whether the detainees have a constitutional right to the remedy of habeas corpus. The remedy, one of the most fundamental guarantees under the Anglo-American legal system, allows an individual to test in a civilian court the legality of his or her detention or imprisonment. A

BRIAN R. FARRELL is an attorney in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and a doctoral candidate at the Irish Centre for Human Rights at the National University of Ireland, Galway.

habeas corpus proceeding does not determine guilt or innocence, but ensures that a person is deprived of his or her liberty only in accordance with established legal principles and processes. Since its origin in medieval England, habeas corpus has served as an important means of checking abuses of authority and has been embraced by diverse legal systems throughout the world.

History and Context

Last year, in the wake of Supreme Court rulings that the president did not have the authority to authorize military commissions to try detainees without congressional approval and that the remedy of habeas corpus was available to detainees, Republicans in Congress introduced legislation aimed at overcoming both of these rulings. The Military Commissions Act of 2006, signed into law on Oct. 17 of that year, authorizes the establishment of military commissions to try alien "unlawful enemy combatants" and sets forth procedures for doing so. Among its provisions, this law purports to deny federal civilian courts jurisdiction to hear an application for a writ of habeas corpus filed by an

alien classified as an “unlawful enemy combatant” or awaiting such classification.

While the law does provide for appellate review by a newly created Court of Military Commission Review and, eventually, the Supreme Court, such review takes place only after trial by a military commission is completed. No trials have yet been held under the Military Commissions Act; charges against detainees in the first two cases under the new act were dismissed for technical reasons in early June. Keeping in mind that some detainees have already been held without trial for over five years, without access to habeas corpus it could take additional years before even the first cases would be subjected to any review by a civilian court under the terms of the act. In the meantime, the act prevents detainees from challenging the legality of their present detention.

It is perhaps a testament to the importance of habeas corpus that a group of detainees is using a habeas corpus proceeding—the very proceeding the act seeks to take away—to ask a civilian court to decide whether the act does in fact shut them out of civilian courts.

The key issue in this current challenge is whether Congress can constitutionally deny civilian courts jurisdiction to hear habeas corpus applications from persons designated “unlawful enemy combatants.” The detainees originally filed their habeas corpus petition in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia prior to passage of the Military Commissions Act. That court ruled against them in 2005 based on then-existing law. While the case was before the Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, the new act came into effect; and that court was called on to decide whether it was constitutional. The Court of Appeals held that the Military Commissions Act did not violate the constitutional guarantee of habeas corpus and that the detainees, as aliens held outside the country, did not have the right to invoke constitutional guarantees.

Initially, in April 2007, the Supreme Court declined to review the case (named *Boumediene v. Bush* after one of the detainees) citing the need for detainees first to exhaust the remedies available to them under the Military Commissions Act. On June 29, however, the court granted a petition for rehearing filed by the detainees. The court’s reversal of its own decision is without precedent in recent decades, according to experts. While no specific reason was cited in the court’s order, it is speculated that the June 22 submission of an affidavit by a military intelligence officer criticizing the workings of the secretive military commissions may be part of the reason for the court’s unusual reversal. Although the contents of the affidavit are not yet known, an attorney for the detainees described it as showing the military commission process to be a “sham.”

An Enforceable Right?

When it finally hears the case in its next term, the Supreme Court will consider whether the Military Commissions Act violates the right to habeas corpus guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. The Constitution, however, does not affirmatively guarantee the remedy of habeas corpus; rather, Article I, Section 9, provides that the writ “shall not be suspended, unless when in cases of rebellion or invasion the public safety may require it.” Thus, as in past habeas corpus cases, the court will attempt to interpret the meaning of the so-called suspension clause, determine the scope of its protections in 1789, when the first federal courts were created, and analyze the right of detainees to invoke constitutional guarantees.

A much clearer, affirmative statement of the right to habeas corpus, however, exists in United States law, in Article 9, Section 4, of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, ratified by the United States in 1992. This provision states:

Anyone who is deprived of his liberty by arrest or detention shall be entitled to take proceedings before a court, in order that that court may decide without delay on the lawfulness of his detention and order his release if the detention is not lawful.



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***War, Politics and Ethics: Choices for the Country
and the Citizenry in an Election Year***

Rev. J. Bryan Hehir

Professor of the Practice of Religion and Public Life

Harvard University

TUESDAY, MARCH 11, 2008

***Religious Identity in a Pluralistic World:
Liberal, Conservative or Just Catholic***

Paul Baumann

Editor, *Commonweal* magazine

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The habeas corpus guarantee in the international covenant applies to all persons deprived of their liberty, not just criminal defendants, and it is applicable in cases of preventative detention. And unlike the constitutional provision, the covenant has been understood by the United Nations Human Rights Committee (now the Human Rights Council) to prohibit suspension of habeas corpus in times of emergency because of its importance in protecting other fundamental rights. As a treaty signed by the president and ratified by the Senate, the provisions of the covenant are part of “the supreme law of the land” in the United States.

Unfortunately for the detainees, they cannot rely on the covenant in their case before the Supreme Court, because upon ratifying the covenant, the United States declared that the treaty was “not self-executing.” In simple terms, this declaration means that in the United States the covenant does not create enforceable rights that an individual can assert in court. Rather, it creates obligations on the government vis-à-vis other members of the international community.

While the habeas corpus guarantee in the covenant may thus seem irrelevant because of the lack of a judicial enforcement mechanism, such a view is short-sighted. The fact is that the United States, along with more than 150 other nations, has voluntarily, by ratifying the covenant,

accepted the legal obligation to provide access to habeas corpus proceedings. Although judicial enforcement is not available, pressure to comply with international law obligations can be applied through diplomatic channels. The covenant itself provides a mechanism for a state-party to the convention to challenge the failure of another state-party to comply with its obligations. Upon ratifying the convention, the United States declared that it accepted the competence of the Human Rights Committee to receive and consider such communications.

In addition, compliance with the covenant guarantee can be effected through the domestic political process. The Senate Judiciary Committee, now under the control of Democrats, approved a bill in early June that would restore the habeas corpus right to Guantanamo Bay detainees. Certainly the fact that the United States already has an obligation to provide access to habeas corpus pursuant to the covenant should be brought to bear as this legislation is considered by the full Senate.

Habeas corpus has long been a cornerstone of the Anglo-American legal system and is now enshrined in nearly two-thirds of written constitutions worldwide. Restoration of this right to detainees at Guantanamo Bay would not only bring the United States into compliance with its international law obligations, but would also mark a significant victory for the rule of law. **A**

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The Messiah Is Coming

Musings at the gate of the new year

BY DANIEL POLISH

A Jewish worshipper takes part in Slichot, a daily prayer service leading up to Yom Kippur, at the Western Wall in the Old City of Jerusalem.

THE DAYS OF AWE, from Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur (Sept. 13-22), afford Jews an opportunity to reflect on what the enterprise of Jewish life is all about. As with all religious traditions, it must be about more than the symbols or institutions of our respective communities of faith. For Christians, Christianity must be about more than the church or the sacraments themselves. Surely Judaism is about more than “survival” or “continuity”; the project of Jewish life has a purpose and a goal beyond itself. As I reflect on this, I am reminded of one unusual facet of Jewish life today.

RABBI DANIEL POLISH, former director of the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism, is now spiritual leader of Congregation Shir Chadash of the Hudson Valley in Poughkeepsie, N.Y. His latest book is *Talking About God: Exploring the Meaning of Religious Life With Kierkegaard, Buber, Tillich and Heschel* (Jewish Lights Publishing, forthcoming in October).

The Messianic Claim: Heresy?

Christian readers may be intrigued to learn of a significant conflict taking place in the Jewish world today. It is not between Zionists and non-Zionists, nor between Orthodox and Reform. It is wholly contained within the Orthodox world (estimated at between half a million and one million Jews worldwide). When Menachem Mendel Schneerson, rabbi of a group of Hasidic Jews originally from the town of Lubavitch in Russia, died in Brooklyn in 1994, many of his most devoted followers believed that he, widely known as the Lubavitcher Rebbe, was the *Mashiach*, the Messiah. Many Lubavitch Hasidim continue to believe that; others do not. The movement today is being torn apart by a kind of civil war between those who hold to the messianic claim and those who reject it. This internal Lubavitch struggle is being compounded by criticism from the non-Hasidic Orthodox world. Serious Orthodox thinkers condemn the very idea of claiming that the rebbe was the Messiah. They call it heresy and argue that the Lubavitch sect runs the risk of straying outside of normative Judaism altogether.

And what do non-Orthodox and non-Lubavitch Jews make of all this? Some find it intriguing to see the Orthodox world at war with itself. There are liberal Jews who agree with the Orthodox criticism of Lubavitch’s messianism, because they find it impossible to take any talk of a messiah seriously. They suggest that all that Lubavitch talk about the rebbe being the *Mashiach* is ridiculous, because any talk at all of the *Mashiach* is ridiculous. I know that many of my fellow liberal Jews believe that the idea of a messiah plays no role in our religious life and has no place in our tradition. And I know that many Christians have accepted this depiction of Jewish life and assume that Jews dispense totally with the idea of a messiah.

What Christians might find evocative is the argument from the other pole—from the Orthodox critics. These exponents of Jewish tradition argue that talk of this person or that person as being the *Mashiach* does not make sense, not because any talk of the *Mashiach* does not make sense but because the claims of the rebbe to be the *Mashiach* do not hold up according to normative Judaism’s own cri-

REUTERS PHOTO BY RONEN ZVULUN

teria. We will know that the *Mashiach* has arrived when all the ills of humankind have been alleviated: war will be no more, the hungry will be fed, the naked clothed and the sick made whole. Jerusalem, the age-old capital of the Jewish soul, will be a beacon of justice and harmony.

I Stand With Maimonides

To my own surprise, I find myself not in the camp of many liberal Jews, and certainly not in the camp of the Rebbe-is-the-*Mashiach*-Lubavitchers, but in the camp of normative Orthodoxy. I end up in the Orthodox camp because I believe that concern about the coming of the *Mashiach* is central to the Jewish enterprise. It is not irrelevant. It is not completely absent, as some claim.

For better or worse the *Mashiach* has occupied center stage in Jewish thought for millennia. The rabbis often spoke as if the Messiah were waiting just around the corner. The early church emerged out of a Jewish community suffused with messianic expectation. When Maimonides tried his hand at writing a credo of Jewish belief, he argued that belief in the coming of the Messiah was an absolutely essential

part of Jewish faith. From time to time, when things became painful for Jews during their 2,000 years of exile, people would step forward and claim to be the Messiah arriving to rescue them. As recently as the 18th century, thousands of Jews in Europe wandered off, selling all their property and venturing to parts unknown to follow one of those false messiahs. Even the Jews of Ethiopia recorded the emergence of a false messiah who led his followers into the jungle to take them back home to Jerusalem. All those Jews followed these false messiahs because for them the ultimate coming of the Messiah was a vital and urgent part of their Jewish belief system.

When Jews were marched to the gas chambers in that dark night of the Shoah, they sang a song based on Maimonides's ancient theological formula: "I believe with perfect faith in the coming of the Messiah. And even if he tarry, even in the face of that, I still believe." What a profound final affirmation. And not very much later, when the Soviet Union tried in its own way to eradicate Jewish life, Soviet Jews expressed confidence in their ultimate triumph in a song that affirmed,

"Redemption is coming soon, the Messiah is coming very soon." Jewish life has never been without its faith in the coming of the *Mashiach*.

I myself, when I was very young, met a man who claimed to be the Messiah. One Yom Kippur he was walking around in front of the synagogue during services handing out pamphlets. I could not understand why the adults were all so sure he was wrong. And I was pained by the eagerness of the leaders of the congregation to have him deterred from

disrupting our worship. Imagine driving the Messiah away—and on Yom Kippur no less! To my childish understanding this, of all days, was the time we should invite him in, even ask him to preach to us. But adult wisdom prevailed. Our "messiah" was persuaded to move on. The leaders of the congregation turned out to be right. He was not the Messiah. Peace, health and human well-being did not suddenly burst into fulfillment on that day. Nonetheless, as I understand my own motivation as a Jew, the coming of the *Mashiach* has never been far from center stage in my own Jewish life. It is never far from my religious consciousness.

A Vision of Human Perfection

Do I believe in an individual who will ride in on a horse led by Elijah? Do I expect him to show up in front of my synagogue this Yom Kippur? No, I confess I do not. If the false messiah I met as a boy were to show up today, I would probably not believe in him either. But I am energized by that ancient vision of an age of human perfection when human suffering will be ended and disease, war and poverty conquered. I do believe *be'emunah shleimah*—with complete faith—that that time can come. And I believe with complete faith that we can bring it about. Our efforts can create that time of perfection and wholeness, a time of peace and human well-being. I agree with what Franz Kafka once wrote: that the Messiah will come the day after he arrives. That is, once we have done the work and created the time of perfection, then the Messiah will come. This belief has always been a powerful engine for my own Jewish life, and I am convinced that the spiritual rededication of the Days of Awe summons us to it. These days remind all Jews that living a Jewish life means being a person on fire with the promise that the world can be made perfect and impelled by a sense of urgency to bring that about.

Standing at the threshold of a new year is always about reconnecting to what matters most in our tradition, recommitting ourselves to engage more wholeheartedly in the project of Jewish life. For me, the very heart of the enterprise is the effort we expend to bring the coming of the Messiah nearer, to mend the broken world and to do our part to make it whole again. **A**

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Wooing the World

Charm Offensive

How China's Soft Power Is Transforming the World

By Joshua Kurlantzick
 Yale Univ. Press. 320p \$26
 ISBN 9780300117035

China seems to undergo dramatic change nearly every decade, giving China watchers new stories to tell. Joshua Kurlantzick, a reporter with experience in Asia who is now a visiting scholar at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, focuses on “a new, more nuanced and effective Chinese diplomacy,” something he calls a “charm offensive.” China’s rapid economic growth—and the ability of its entrenched political elite to safeguard its position while overseeing that growth—has evoked admiration and respect among elites and citizens of other nations. Part of the charm offensive is to nourish that admiration and leverage it to advance Chinese interests abroad. At the same time, as any rapid growth in power carries a threat, a charm offensive attempts to calm whatever fears others might have. China’s “peaceful rise” “will not come at the cost of any other country,” declared Prime Minister Wen Jiabao in 2004, “will not stand in the way of any other country, nor pose a threat to any other country.”

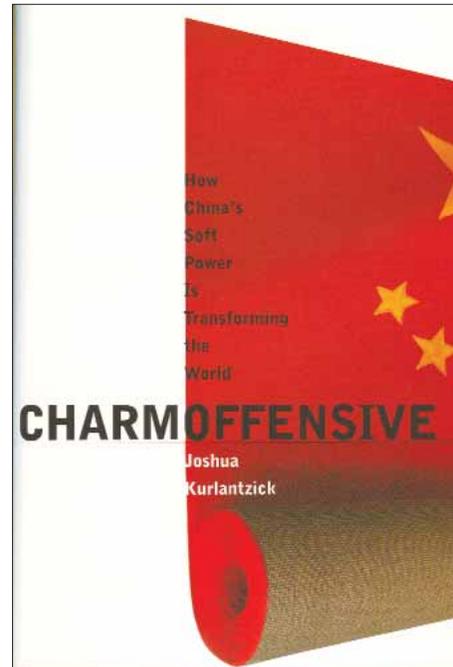
Kurlantzick takes the reader from Asia to Africa to Latin America to watch the charm offensive at work, blending his own experiences and interviews with the work of other journalists and scholars to describe Chinese foreign aid, trade, expressions of friendship, cultural exchanges and the like. To put an academic gloss on his treatment, Kurlantzick has borrowed the concept of “soft power” from the work of Joseph Nye, an international relations scholar and former Defense Department official. Nye has for some time (most recently in his book *Soft Power*) argued that we misunderstand the dynamics of world politics if we look only at “hard power”—particularly military power and the use of potent threats and promises to affect the behavior of other states. Surely, argues the soft power theorist, the image

of the state in the minds of others—the attractiveness of its culture, the things it stands for, the meaning of its historical experience—can influence that behavior as well.

To show soft power at work, Kurlantzick marshals a variety of indicators like “opinion studies, interest in Chinese culture and language, respect for Chinese officials, and treatment of diaspora Chinese.” He expands the soft power argument to include the economic relationships and agreements China makes with the rest of the world. But tracing the quiet play of such ties in shaping state

behavior is a difficult, long-term assignment. It is easier for Kurlantzick to argue that “for the Chinese, soft power means anything outside of the military and security realm, including not only popular culture and public diplomacy but also more coercive economic and diplomatic levers like aid and investment and participation in multilateral organizations.” When China, for instance, conditions its foreign aid on the recipient’s stance on the question of Taiwanese independence (which China bitterly opposes), this is, for Kurlantzick, still soft power and thus part of the charm offensive. Or in Zambia, where “the Chinese ambassador in 2006 warned that Beijing might cut off diplomatic ties [and thus its aid and investment] if voters picked an opposition candidate.”

Surely these are examples of *hard* power—not as hard as a threatened military invasion, of course, but still an attempt to force compliance by waving a stick rather than applying charm. The more we mislabel an action, the more confused we can become about what China is doing and with what success.



Many have claimed that China today has gained respect from its sticks rather than its smiles.

In spite of its conceptual problems, *Charm Offensive* is an instructive look at contemporary Chinese foreign policy. It reports on the failures of the offensive as well as its successes. It points out the downside: China often shows no concern for the nature of the regime it deals with (and that in itself can add to China’s “charm”), and Chinese economic practices are often hostile to workers and the environment, blind to corporate

irresponsibility and likely to produce a vast disparity in benefits. At the same time, *Charm Offensive* notes the increasing contributions China has made to providing economic and technical assistance, supporting multinational efforts (including peacekeeping) and defusing international crises (like North Korea’s nuclear weapons program). It recounts how China has urged others to be cautious about challenging the United States, in pressing Venezuela’s government not to reorient its oil relationship precipitously with the United States.

The Reviewers

Peter R. Beckman, emeritus professor of political science at Hobart and William Smith Colleges, is co-author of *Nuclear Weapons, Nuclear States, and Terrorism* (Sloan Publishing).

David Garrison is professor of English and Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, at Georgetown Southwestern State University, Americus, Ga.

Robert P. Imbelli, a priest of the Archdiocese of New York, teaches theology at Boston College in Chestnut Hill, Mass.

This is a measured rather than alarmist view of China's efforts, as is Kurlantzick's discussion of the implications for the United States. He argues that the growth of China's soft power is partially a function of the decline in America's soft power (a decline accelerated by the current Bush administration's policy choices), and that decline must be addressed. And while the author acknowledges that China's charm offensive may create a threat to the United States, he also suggests that the growth of Chinese soft power may prove to be mutually beneficial, as "both are major energy consumers and desire global stability in order to access resources like oil and gas; neither has any desire to see a nuclear North Korea or a nuclear stand-off in South Asia; both want to combat H.I.V., avian flu, and other transnational disease threats; both are committed to counterterrorism and counternarcotics; both desire continued reductions in barriers to free trade; both want to prevent failed states in the developing world."

Charm Offensive helps us imagine the growth of China's soft power and meaningful cooperation with the United States. But there are two critical, interrelated limitations in Kurlantzick's analysis. First, it lacks historical sensitivity. China has mounted other charm offensives; they proved short-lived. In the mid-1950s, for instance, China sought to persuade its Asian neighbors that a revolutionary Marxist state could live in harmony with them. Second, Kurlantzick treats the Chinese political system as a cohesive, rational decision-making unit, rather than an often fractious set of leaders and bureaucracies that advocate competing policies in an uncertain world. The success or failure of those policies can have a profound impact on the power held by members of China's elite. The 1950s charm offensive, spearheaded by Zhou Enlai, was quickly undercut by Mao's attempt to impose the Great Leap Forward (followed by the Cultural Revolution) on a reluctant party and populace, and by the unresolved issues that bedevil any state's foreign policy—at the time, the future of Taiwan and unrelenting American hostility.

History and Communist Party politics thus suggest a short life for the current charm offensive. But history is also

the story of surprises. Joshua Kurlantzick and the reader might well ponder what it is about today's China and its foreign policy that would give some permanence to his argument.

Peter R. Beckman

Meditating on Mortality

Littlefoot

By Charles Wright
Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. 91p \$23
 ISBN 9780374189662

Though we seldom speak of Charles Wright as a religious poet, at least not as we might discuss George Herbert or Gerard Manley Hopkins, he is nevertheless among the most spiritual of American poets of the last 50 years. His poetry is relentlessly attendant to the numinous: "I am," he writes in *Littlefoot*, his 18th book,

"what is not found." For Wright, the not-found, the "other side of the river," has been always as real as the here-and-now, as sure as a breath and as close as a not-breath. Years ago he wrote, "Thinking of Dante is thinking about the other side,/ And the other side of the other side./ It's thinking about the noon noise and the daily light." Always the present world and our present

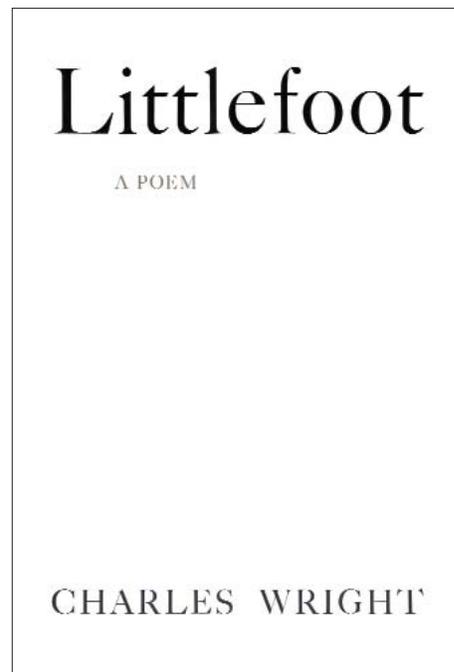
consciousness exist as the shadow cast by the light that is the meaning of all things: *omnia quae sunt, lumina sunt*. This latest collection, actually one long poem composed of 35 numbered but unnamed sections, is another in a series of maps that illustrate Wright's way of living, as pilgrim, between the seen and the unseen, attempting to come as close as possible to

the light.

This life and art of pilgrimage—Wright has always been conscious of his age, of the ticking of the clock, and *Littlefoot* makes much of his arrival at 70—involves a rich and detailed awareness, in this case very like Hopkins's own uncanny sensitivity, of the physical world. Landscape, memory, desire and a wistful acknowledgement of death crowd each page. "I remember the way the mimosa tree," he writes, "battered the shade/ Outside the basement bedroom, soaked in its yellow bristles." A matter-of-fact tautology about mortality—"We're not here a lot longer than we are here, for sure./ Unlike coal, for instance, or star clots"—is followed by a raised eyebrow, a wink, and the poet's hedge: "Or so we think." Wright works simultaneously in the realm of the physical (coal, star clots, mimosa bristles) and the metaphysical. These are not distinct realms for him, but mutually present, one a palimpsest of the other: "How is it we can't accept this, that all trees were holy once,/ That all light is altar

light,/ And floods us, day by day, and bids us, the air sheet lightning around us,/ To sit still and say nothing...?" Wright is a pilgrim of the spirit, always on the road, like the Japanese poet Basho, always the reluctant disciple, unambiguous about the holy but burdened with doubt about the holes where the nails have been.

And this confluence of spirituality and emptiness brings us to the heritage of Appalachia still present in Wright's work. Granted, these poems are built from many tools and sensibilities, including a sense of imagery and cadence learned from Ezra Pound ("Sun over plum-colored leaf planes...."), the vibrant understatement of poets of the Tang Dynasty (Wang Wei, for example), the line reach of Walt



Whitman, the quick epistemological turn of Emily Dickinson, the structural blocks of Cézanne, the what's-left-out of the evocative line of Giorgio Morandi, the Italian landscape and language. But Wright grew up in the mountains of eastern Tennessee and early on knew the death-haunted, weirdly melancholic music of A. P. Carter and the Carter Family. Since his earliest poems, that music has provided a recurrent hum in the background: life, beauty, love, loss, death, hope, hopelessness, the grave, possible but unlikely comfort. *Littlefoot*, perhaps more than any of the earlier works, is drenched in the sorrowful loneliness of that music, the orphan's fear that salvation is an empty expectation.

"Is there an emptiness we all share?" asks Wright. For this long poem and its individual parts, the answer is yes. The book's 35th entry is A. P. Carter's "Will You Miss Me When I'm Gone?" That unanswered question is the last word, and it is the silence at the end of it that is the emptiness.

Wright's artistry, which began with the publication of the autobiographical

The Grave of the Right Hand (1970), has never turned its steady gaze away from the immediate accessible world visible to anyone who is willing to look—"The little birds are honing their beaks on the chopping block stump"—nor has it ever failed to situate its language in an understanding of what is not understood: "The dread of what we can see, and the dread of what we can't see." *Littlefoot* continues Wright's pilgrimage toward an inevitable transubstantiation, toward absolution: "Almost noon, the meadow/ Waiting for someone to change it into an other. Not me./ The horses, Monte and Littlefoot,/ Like it the way it is./ And this morning, so do I."

Poetry, especially American poetry, is seldom long enough and patient enough to provide us with a formally sustained inquiry into the meaning of our lives, or at least into a consciousness of that meaning. One thinks of Whitman, and, though the ambition was different, of Pound. Charles Wright has devoted more than 40 years to that inquiry and to the formality of it ("this business I waste my heart on"). Another poet, Mark Jarman, has commented that "the paradox of Charles Wright is that his is a religious poetry without a religion, but

not without a metaphysics." This "God-fearing agnostic," as Wright has labeled himself, keeps producing prayer after prayer: "So many joys in such a brief stay," he writes. "Life is a long walk on a short pier." *Littlefoot* takes us closer to the edge.

David Garrison

God's Real Plan

Created for Joy

A Christian View of Suffering

By Sidney Callahan

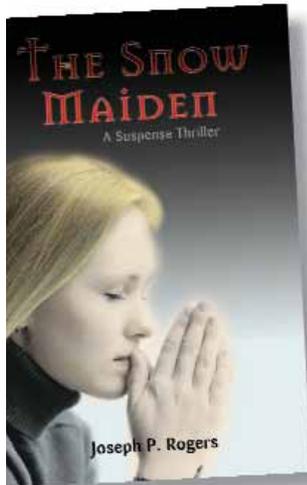
Crossroad. 246p \$19.95 (paperback)

ISBN 9780824525668

Sidney Callahan dedicates her lovely and wise book *Created for Joy: A Christian View of Suffering* to an infant and a child. The infant, her fourth son, died of sudden infant death syndrome when not yet two months old. Thirty-five years later, on the very same day, came the healing joy of her granddaughter's birth. Yet joy and sorrow intermingled once more, when the newborn's mother died of an undetected

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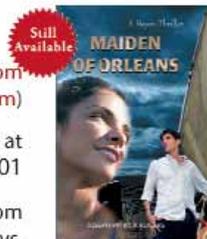
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blood clot. Callahan's reflections, though rich with theological and psychological insight, are primarily forged in the fire of human experience and Christian faith.

Theologically, Callahan has clearly learned from such feminist thinkers as Elizabeth Johnson and the late Catherine Mowry LaCugna, C.S.J. She sensitively evokes images highlighting God's feminine face. Thus, within the context of an evolving universe, she stresses that God's action is not controlling and coercive, but, like a parent, guiding and persuasive. Yet the feminist perspective she favors is never one-sided: a stress on God's pervasive immanence does not compromise, but requires acknowledgment of God's total transcendence.

Callahan—an award-winning author, professor and psychologist—draws suggestively upon the renewal of Trinitarian thought in contemporary Catholic theology. She gives special attention to themes of relationality, communication and communion among persons. The triune God of Christian faith is not distant and unaffected. God knows our suffering. In a real sense, such knowing becomes a sharing.

Here Callahan refers to psychological studies about the positive role of emotion in human life to underscore the concept of

empathy. The book, in effect, rehabilitates “emotion” for spirituality and theology. She insists that “love always includes empathy and mutual union, along with a desire to alleviate another's suffering felt as one's own. Thus empathy is the foundation of justice and morality, since it moves one to take the role of the other and consider her well-being from her point of view.” And she boldly declares: “So too with God: it is the suffering e n g e n d e r e d through expanded empathy that characterizes our divine Lover, Parent, Friend, and Creator.”

Though she does not pepper her text with reminders that all talk of God is “analogous,” the author clearly asserts that

“God's joy is not curtailed or stunted by empathetic suffering: infinite empathy does not preclude infinite joy.” One could

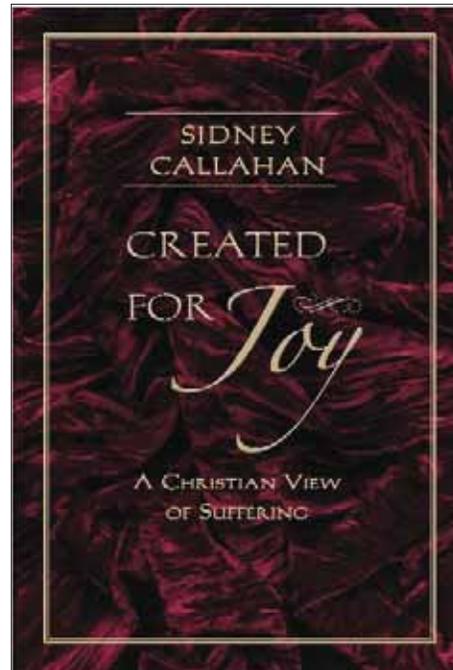
have wished for a more sustained development of the point (and a quick allusion to God's “di-polar nature” does not greatly illuminate). But the intuition seems to me sound: the Triune God of love desires with passion the good of creation. Sidney Callahan can surely enlist Pope Benedict XVI as an ally in affirming both eros and agape in God.

Callahan viscerally recoils from

any intimation that God sends suffering as pedagogy, much less as punishment. She engages in a sustained, respectful exchange with C.S. Lewis, whose classic *The Problem of Pain* she now finds unconvincing, though she admits: “I have been intellectually shaped by his work, even though I now disagree with many of his views.” Her unswerving conviction is that “love engenders life and joy. God does not harm or hurt or rule by pain and terror.”

The issue, of course, becomes most pointed when one confronts the cross of Christ. No doubt there have been, in some theological and catechetical circles, understandings of the cross that seem to suggest that punishment has been inflicted upon an innocent victim to satisfy some cosmic debt. This is a view that in the minds of many today, leads to exalting suffering and promoting passivity before injustice, in a way incompatible with the Gospel of salvation.

For Callahan the passion of the cross can never be separated from the compassionate life and ministry of Jesus, nor from the joyful proclamation of the one who is the firstborn from the dead. Still, it does not seem to me that Callahan marginalizes the cross in this book, as is done in some versions of feminist and liberationist theology. As I read her, the cross is not mere-



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ly a consequence of the provocative life of Jesus. It brings that life to consummation. She writes, "Since Jesus lived in readiness for everything that his work and love of God would bring, he freely gave over his body, blood, mind, heart, and life for God and his people."

The name, unmentioned in the book, but which to some represents a view of Christ's atonement that verges on the abusive, is that of St. Anselm. My own persuasion is that scholarly as well as popular approaches to the atonement have distorted Anselm's theological vision. After all, the often maligned Anselm tenderly evoked "Jesus our mother" centuries before the much-admired Julian of Norwich did so. Even more to the point, in the following heartfelt avowal, Callahan sounds a note not alien to Anselm:

In empathy and love Jesus suffers not only his own pain and distress, but all the world's past, present, and future travail. Moreover, as we have seen, empathy can be felt for the ignorant and deformed evildoers who in their moral wickedness reject the light and remain in darkness. In this sense Jesus bears the burdens and sins of humankind. He is innocent, but through loving empathy can suffer for the lethal and sinful lapses of his people. His bearing of the sins of the world is not a passive punishment laid on Jesus by God, but rather it is a voluntary act of love and empathy for the human family. A mother mourns and suffers vicariously in and with her children's destructive sins, and so Jesus suffers for us.

I have cited this passage at length, because I think it recapitulates the heart of *Created for Joy*. The heart is Incarnation. God so loved the world that God gave the beloved Son. Jesus so loves us that he continues to give himself, sharing our sufferings that he might in turn share with us his life. Sidney Callahan's book, in plumbing suffering's depths and celebrating joy's heights, is, first and last, a love song to this loving God who creates us for joy.

Robert P. Imbelli

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FRANCINE PROSE

Worthy Liturgy

It has been several months since Bishop Donald W. Trautman's article on the new English translation of the Roman Missal ("How Accessible Are the New Mass Translations?" 5/21), and still no dissent in these pages? Let this be it.

I grew up with the ICEL translation, first as a churchgoer, then as an altar server of many years, later as a seminarian and now as a doctoral student in theology. My impression, though untechnical and visceral, never wavered: ICEL's translation was wretched. As I looked behind the translation, however, I realized it was not just bad, but also treacherous. Words that discomfited members of the commission—you know, like "soul" or "grace"—were eliminated or marginalized in their translations of the Mass and sacraments. There was then no question of translators translating, but of translators imposing their own theological views on the church.

Bishop Trautman frets about the negative, "non-pastoral" effects on "John and Mary Catholic" of ICEL's more stringent translation policies (courtesy of Vatican oversight). Yet he offers no evidence that John and Mary Catholic have liked ICEL's work in the past, and he is silent about his own measures to gauge the pastoral pluses and minuses of the current translation. He complains that the new Creed's "consubstantial" will be unintelligible to most Catholics, while offering no proof that Catholics understand now what "one in being" means. All of which leads me to believe that "pastoral" and "non-pastoral" are merely buzzwords for whatever one agrees or disagrees with.

Predictably, the Second Vatican Council is forced into service. An appeal is made to No. 21 of the "Constitution on the Liturgy," arguing that the council said liturgical texts should be translated

into easy language. Thus, until the Vatican got involved ICEL was only following the will of the council. But ignored is the fact that the council fathers of Vatican II never envisioned the wide-ranging use of the vernacular (see No. 36). Nor were they providing principles of translation for liturgical texts in No. 21, but treating the reform of liturgical ritual. So the implication that ICEL's old way of translating had Vatican II's mandate is anachronistic and self-serving. It is such megalomaniacal thinking by the commission and its enablers that finally brought about the Vatican's intervention.

I support the Vatican's efforts to reform the "old ICEL" in order to give John and Mary Catholic a liturgy worthy of the beauty of their faith.

Matthew W. I. Dunn
Sparta, N.J.

On Winning

I read Bishop Donald W. Trautman's essay on the new Mass translations (5/21) with interest and appreciation for the information it contained. Thank you for running it.

Who are the members of the committee of the International Commission on English in the Liturgy who have proposed these linguistic follies? Their names, please.

The cartoon accompanying the article was not entirely apt since it portrayed a parishioner thumbing his dictionary. Surely people know enough semi-archaic English to cope with "deign," "bid," "wrought" and the still current "thwart" and to recognize "ineffable" and "consubstantial" as transliterations of the Latin and not translations from it. Such is the whole purpose of the exercise into good Finnish, Spanish, Enga and Tagalog, not to say English. Yet the dictionary reference is not entirely inapt, bringing to mind the gentleman with weak English who tried to explain his childlessness by saying successively but unsuccessfully that his wife was incapable, unbearable and inconceivable. He should have tried unmotherly and then, not finding it in the dictionary, should have given up on it.

The burden of Bishop Trautman's article, with its examples, is no matter of jest. It is a swindle of English-speaking Catholics that must already be causing the bishops and lower clergy of Ireland, India and New Zealand—among others affected by ICEL's decisions—to deplore Americans' imperfect grasp of modern spoken English. They will say this knowing only that ICEL is headquartered in Washington, D.C., and unaware that no U.S. liturgical scholars or litterateurs had anything to do with this *faux* religious Esperanto.

One word on Cyril's vanquishing of the Antiochenes over *theotokos*, which was all about Mary's Son rather than about Mary. It is true that he has been commemorated in prayer as *assertor invictus* for many centuries, but he was himself vanquished (if you will pardon the expression) when he acknowledged that Mary's Son was a full and complete human being as well as eternal Son of God in the *Symbol of Union* drawn up after Ephesus and written probably by Theoderet of Cyrus. It made its way to Chalcedon 20 years later as Cyril's favored *kata hypostasin* did not. Win some, lose some.

(Rev.) Gerard Sloyan
Hyattsville, Md.

Unifying Impact

I read "A Partner for the Pastor," by Thomas P. Sweetser, S.J., (7/30) with interest, being one of those pastors about whom he writes. I concur with some of his itemized points about a partner with appropriate organizational/administrative expertise. But I believe the issue of the pastor's role of leadership should be given more careful analysis. In the end, parishes—and organizations—rise and fall primarily on the effectiveness of the person in that seat.

If the roles of a parish pastoral council and a finance council are to give "counsel" to the pastor on critical issues, the role of a partner or staff administrator should not interfere with this process and relationship. Whose agenda is really to be set? Without sufficient reflection, a pastor's attempt at delegation can become abdication of his role—and the influence-

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relationship between himself and his councillors. In the attempt to rescue the priest-pastor, we can run the risk of losing the influence of the pastor as the critical leader of the faith community.

Priest overload or shortages notwithstanding, staff members cannot replace the vision, relationships and dynamic established by the pastor in his leadership role.

Several years ago I established the position of coordinator of ministries as a primary overseer of that aspect of the parish. It has had a great unifying impact on parish life.

I also have a business manager. We are managed quite well, thanks to his efficient and competent oversight. I work with these two persons as a primary staff leadership team. I have learned from experience, however, that they cannot stand in for me as leader in the consultation process with the primary parish leadership groups. I need to hear them and they need to hear me.

Pastors struggle with an understanding of their rightful place in the mix and can get lost once staffs have been put into place, thinking their job is going to get easier.

Diocesan bishops have staffs to assist them in their leadership role. From my view, these staff roles seem to be clear and not confused with the public role of the bishop as leader. It should be no different at the parish level.

The pastor is charged with providing for the pastoral care of the people with the assistance and counsel of the laity. His unique role is more than sacramental; he is the ecclesial leader. Some administrative functions can be handled by a partner or coordinator, but not who he is and how we will act as the leader.

*(Msgr.) James T. Gaston
 Lower Burrell, Pa.*

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Rich and Poor

Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time (C), Sept. 30, 2007

Readings: Amos 6:1, 4-7; Ps 146:7-10; 1 Tim 6:11-16; Luke 16:19-31

“Between us and you a great chasm is established” (Luke 16:26)

LAST SUNDAY’S GOSPEL reading from Luke 16 established a link between money and Christian spirituality. Followers of Jesus must apply their intelligence and energy to things of the spirit just as they do to financial matters, use wealth wisely, be good stewards of their possessions and not make money into a god. Today’s reading reminds us that we have a duty to share our goods with the poor.

The Old Testament readings set the stage for a frightening parable from Jesus. The prophet Amos denounces the rich of his own day for their luxurious living and warns them that they will be the first to go into exile. Archaeological evidence has confirmed Amos’s picture of a society divided sharply between rich and poor. Psalm 146 celebrates the God of Jacob, who is the creator of heaven and earth, as being on the side of the poor and needy.

The parable in Luke 16:19-31 begins with a contrast of two characters. One character (traditionally called Dives, the Latin adjective for “rich”) is a very wealthy man who dresses well, eats well and lives in a fine house. The other character is a very poor man named Lazarus (whose name means “God helps”). He is sickly, a beggar who camps out at the door of the rich man’s house. The rich man seems unaware of Lazarus’ existence. These two men could not be more different.

Both men die. And when they die, their situations are reversed. The poor man enjoys perfect happiness in Abraham’s bosom (what we might call heaven), while the rich man finds himself suffering the punishments of the netherworld (what we might call hell). This reversal illustrates the sayings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Plain, “Blessed are you who are poor, for the kingdom of God is yours... But woe to you who are rich, for

you have received your consolation” (Luke 6:20, 24). Only now does the rich man recognize the poor man’s existence. Only now does he want to do something. But now it is too late.

The second part of the parable is a dialogue between the rich man and Abraham. That the rich man is accustomed to giving orders and getting his own way is clear from his requests. When the rich man asks that Lazarus be sent to give him some water, Abraham tells him that now it is too late, since there is no going back and forth after death. When the rich man proposes that Lazarus be sent to warn his five brothers, Abraham replies that all they need to know about sharing their goods is in the Hebrew Scriptures. When the rich man suggests that his brothers would understand better if someone from the dead would go to them, Abraham responds that it would make no difference. During life he took no account of poor people like Lazarus. Now it is too late.

One of Luke’s goals in writing his Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles was to encourage the rich Christians in his community to attend to the needs of the poor members and to share their material goods with them. One can easily imagine the impact that this parable would have had on the rich members. It is both a sobering warning and a good scare. It should do the same to 21st-century American Christians. We live in a very rich country. However slender our personal fortunes may be, they dwarf the incomes and possessions of most people in most countries. Yet even in our cities and towns, there are desperately poor persons like Lazarus, living off the search for soda and beer cans to redeem the deposits. Lazarus is among us! Do we choose to ignore Lazarus? Do we distract ourselves with foolish pleasures as the rich man did? Neither Jesus nor Luke was an economist or a politician. But at a certain point the problems of poverty and homelessness



turn into economic and political matters. How we deal with them both personally and socially is surely one of the great challenges facing us in the 21st century.

Today’s reading from 1 Timothy 6 exhorts Christians to pursue a life of virtue. The term “virtue” is seldom heard today except in certain philosophical and theological circles. It even sounds quaint and old-fashioned now. Yet what is more important and noble than striving to be a virtuous person? The virtues recommended in this text are a mixture of human virtues (righteousness or justice, patience, gentleness) and religious virtues (devotion, faith, love). Christians pursue virtue not for its own sake but rather as a response to their call to discipleship, following the example of Jesus and in the hope of eternal life with God. What Paul says shortly after this selection summarizes neatly today’s readings, “Tell them [the rich] to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous, ready to share” (1 Tim 6:18).

Daniel J. Harrington

Praying With Scripture

- What emotional reactions do you have to the story of the rich man and Lazarus?
- Where in your daily life do you encounter the modern equivalents of Lazarus? What do you do?
- What virtues do we need to practice in order to deal effectively with poverty and homelessness?

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