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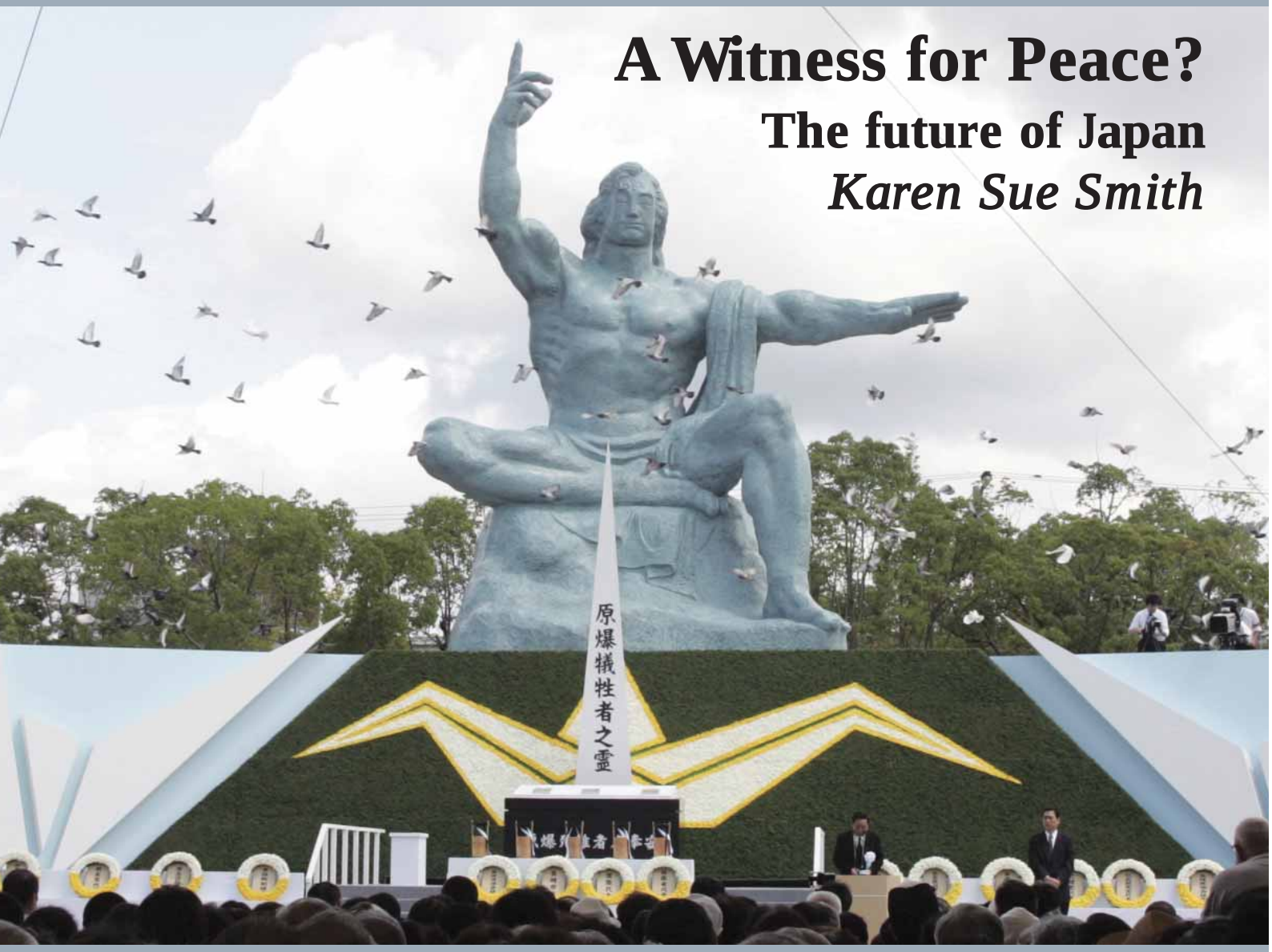

A Witness for Peace?

The future of Japan

Karen Sue Smith

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Dotty Lynch

Of Many Things

IT SEEMS THAT THE GOVERNOR of New Mexico and presidential candidate Bill Richardson thinks that Iowa is literally God's country. In a bizarre episode last month in Sioux City, Richardson declared that "Iowa, for good reason, for constitutional reasons, for reasons related to the Lord, should be the first" of the presidential primaries and caucuses. Richardson's campaign later said that it was just a badly botched joke.

No one was laughing either when Senator John McCain also linked the Lord with the U.S. Constitution, recently telling the Internet site Beliefnet.com that he believed that the "Constitution established the United States of America as a Christian nation." Non-Christians and not a few Christians were appalled and roundly denounced McCain. In response, McCain did not claim that he was joking, as Richardson had, only that he hadn't meant what he said in quite the way he said it, thus adding confusion to the outrage.

Perhaps we should not be too quick to pillory Senator McCain, however, considering that the majority of Americans agree with him. According to a recent poll released by the First Amendment Center, fully 55 percent of Americans believe that the U.S. Constitution established a Christian nation. Most people who have taken sixth grade civics should know that the Constitution did no such thing. In the middle of the last century, the political philosopher John Courtney Murray, S.J., rightly pointed out that the genius of the Constitution is that it declared a truce in the confessional wars, promising that the federal government would not take sides.

But the Constitution did not establish an atheist nation either. As Murray once noted, if this were the case, then the First Amendment, by virtue of having prohibited a state religion, would have in practice created one, namely a kind of established atheism. This makes no sense, of course, so the founders must have been up to something else. And they clearly did not envision a country in which faith would be banned from the public square.

Die-hard secularists do not like to admit that point, insisting that the constitutional separation of church and state intended by the founders is absolute. For the secularists, faith is grudgingly tolerated as a purely private affair, the stuff of Sunday morning church socials but never Monday morning governing. Murray warned us about such people, writing, "We have to abandon the poetry of those who would make a religion out of freedom of religion and a dogma out of separation of church and state."

Similarly, I would add, we should beware of other extremists who seem unable to tell the difference between a nation created "under God," and one created "by God." This may seem farfetched, but anyone watching the presidential debates might be justified in thinking that America is suffering from a messiah complex, thinking that we have some divine charge to lead the world. This national mythology has always been dangerous, and it still is, as our experience in Iraq would seem to indicate.

It is also frequently said in public discourse that we should adopt this or that public policy because the country "needs to return to its Judeo-Christian roots" or that we need to "reclaim America for God," suggesting that the United States was founded as a Christian theocracy. It wasn't, and as historians have pointed out, many of the founding fathers practiced (if they "practiced" anything) a kind of Enlightenment deism, which little resembled orthodox Christianity and would properly be characterized today either as pantheism or, at best, agnosticism.

The American proposition is not a secularist or theocratic dogma. It is prose, as Murray wrote, and we "have to talk prose, the prose of the Constitution itself, which is an ordinary legal prose having nothing to do with doctrinaire theories." We may not be atheists, but neither are we "the last best hope for man on Earth." That role belongs to God and the church.

Joe Shufro of Sioux City told The Des Moines Register after Richardson's gaffe: "I don't know what God had to do with choosing Iowa among other states. I found that a little strange." You found it strange, Mr. Shufro, because God didn't choose Iowa. Iowans, of course, should choose God. But the Constitution hasn't done it for them. ***Matt Malone, S.J.***

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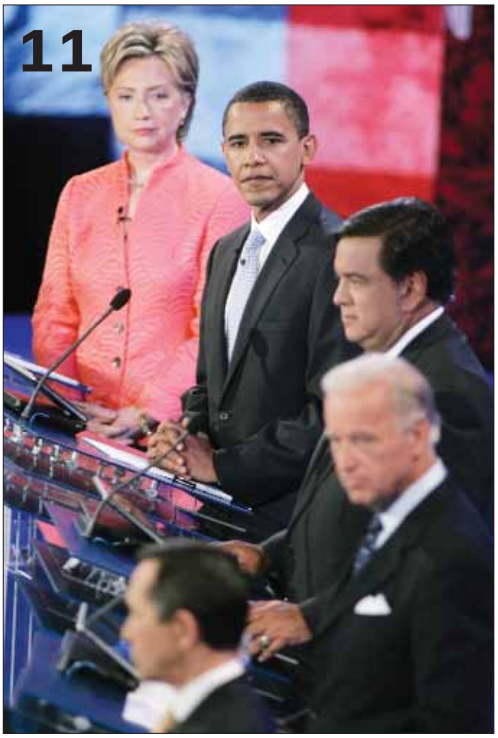
Cover art Doves flutter around the Peace Statue in Nagasaki, Japan, during a ceremony commemorating the city's atomic bomb blast. Reuters/Yuriko Nakao



Articles

This week @ America Connects

From spring 1947, the editors assess the future of postwar Japan. On our podcast, Jim McDermott, S.J., talks about what to watch on TV this fall. Plus "The Good Word," our blog on Scripture and preaching, all at www.americamagazine.org.

Christians Need Not Apply

On July 4 the government of Prime Minister Ehud Olmert announced the appointment of Meir Sheetrit as Israel's Minister of the Interior. The Israeli daily Yedioth Ahronoth reported that shortly after taking office the minister complained about the "quasi-Jews," Africans and illegal Palestinians living in Israel. "It's time," he is reported to have said, "to bring only Jews to Israel.... Entrance to the country should not be automatic." One consequence of this policy has been increased cancellation and denial of visas to clergy serving the Christian communities in Israel and the Palestinian territories. Once eligible for multiple entrance visas, Catholic priests of various rites are now granted only one-time entrance and must reapply each time they seek to re-enter, with a wait of many months for news of rejection or approval. This regulation has greatly impaired the pastoral work of the church, whose clergy are largely Palestinian or Jordanian. The latest restrictions follow frequent denial of church worker visas for religious and lay people from abroad and a stiffening of residency requirements that have forced the repatriation of elderly monks and nuns. The 1993 Fundamental Agreement between the Holy See and Israel guaranteed the church the right "to train, appoint and deploy its own personnel." Israel, however, holds that the treaty is not legally binding, so the church's avenues of redress are sorely limited. An outcry from the Christian world against the current practice offers some promise of relief. In addition, Pope Benedict should also refuse to visit Israel until the treaty becomes binding and the admission of clergy and church workers is normalized. No visas, no visit!

The C.I.A. and Torture

Waterboarding, mock executions and restraint positions are just a few of the methods U.S. interrogators have used on detainees suspected of involvement with terrorists. Testifying for Physicians for Human Rights before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence on Sept. 27, Allen S. Keller, M.D., said that while such techniques leave no bodily scars, they can nevertheless cause severe physical and psychological harm. In waterboarding, a prisoner is strapped to an inclined board with a cloth over his or her face. Water is then poured over the cloth to create the sensation of drowning. Dr. Keller, who is director of the torture survivors program at Bellevue Hospital in New York City, described the experience of one of his patients subjected to this: long afterward, whenever it rained he "would panic and gasp for breath."

Dr. Keller gave the example of another patient who had a gun pointed at his head while being interrogated. The gun was suddenly pulled away and fired into the air. "He told me, 'Until now I still hear the sound of the gun in my brain.'" Similarly, restraining prisoners for long periods has led to several deaths of detainees in U.S. custody in Iraq and Afghanistan, Dr. Keller said. He also raised the issue of medical ethics, disputing the C.I.A.'s claim that its "enhanced" interrogations program is safe because medically supervised. Health professionals who monitor interrogations, he observed, "cease to be healers" and instead become "calibrators of harm." He urged the Senate committee to conduct a full investigation of the C.I.A.'s enhanced interrogation techniques. Justice demands it.

Writing, or Typing?

Much ink has been spilled over the past few months commemorating the 50th anniversary of Jack Kerouac's iconic novel *On the Road*. Among the many accolades are a few sheepish confessions by critics that they panned the book upon its release in 1957. One is reminded of Truman Capote's eviscerating take on Kerouac: "That's not writing, that's typing." A few years later, Joseph Heller endured a similar broadside aimed at his new novel, *Catch-22*, which The New Yorker said "doesn't even seem to be written; instead, it gives the impression of having been shouted onto paper."

The editors of **America** also did not approve of Kerouac (they ignored *Catch-22* altogether), sniffing that "he can yell louder than a small army of bleating Britishers" and that "if this book is a forerunner of a new literary generation, we may well begin to get ready for a shoal of mindless books." It wasn't the first time the editors showed their distaste for new works later ballyhooed as The Great American Novel. "F. Scott Fitzgerald's earlier books, unfortunately, ran into a large number of printings," the editors wrote in May 1925. "'The Great Gatsby' will probably meet with like success, despite the fact that it is an inferior novel...feeble in theme, in portraiture, and even in expression." Fitzgerald had some fine company, however, for a quarter-century later J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* was dismissed in these pages as "a story that becomes frightfully boring before one is halfway through…perhaps the best thing to be said about *The Catcher in the Rye* is that Mr. Salinger would do well to remain in the field of the short story."

Race and the War on Drugs

THE WAR ON DRUGS is driving the U.S. prison system's enormous growth. Over the past quarter century drug arrests have tripled, and almost half a million men and women are behind bars for drug-related offenses. Mandatory minimum sentencing laws, which in many cases focus on drug offenses, have had a devastating effect on communities of color. When these laws were enacted, their target was drug kingpins. But research shows that over 60 percent of crack cocaine offenders are nonviolent, low-level street dealers.

Recent studies based on government data point to racially skewed sentences like those for possession or sale of crack cocaine and powder cocaine. For example, the Sentencing Project's recent report, *A 25-Year Quagmire: The War on Drugs and Its Impact on American Society*, notes that while both crack cocaine and powder cocaine have the same chemical composition, sentences for crack offenses are far heavier. A person convicted of selling five grams of crack, equivalent to the weight of two pennies, receives the same mandatory minimum sentence as someone who sells 500 grams of powder cocaine. Crack sentences fall most heavily on African-Americans, who are more likely to use this form of cocaine than whites. And because it is frequently sold in inner-city areas on street corners, police can more easily engage in "buy and bust" procedures. Powder cocaine, on the other hand, is usually more accessible in higher-income areas, where detection and arrest are less likely. The issue is thus also one of class.

The drug war has led to the incarceration of hundreds of thousands of young black men and women. Women are more likely than men to be found guilty of drug offenses, and in some ways they are more deeply affected. Two-thirds of the women in state and federal prisons are mothers of children under 18 years of age. Imprisonment means the removal of their offspring to foster care or the homes of relatives, who may already be overburdened with children of their own. After release, both men and women convicted of drug felonies are hampered in efforts to make a successful re-entry into society. Federal legislation in 1996 placed a lifetime ban on receiving food stamps and allows public housing authorities to bar those with drug convictions.

Lack of adequate drug treatment while incarcerated also compounds re-entry problems. Instead of rising, the rate of in-prison drug therapy has actually fallen since 1991, despite the fact that almost one in five people in state prisons on drug charges cite the need to pay for their drug habit as the reason for their offense. The U.S. bishops pointed out in their 2000 statement *Responsibility, Rehabilitation and Restoration* that "locking up addicts without proper treatment and then returning them to the streets perpetuates a cycle of behavior that benefits neither the offender, nor society." Similarly, a RAND study argues that drug treatment, within as well as outside incarcerational settings, is more effective in controlling drug abuse and crime than expansion of the prison system.

INITIATIVES TO REFORM DRUG LAWS are emerging. This year both Delaware and Rhode Island considered the repeal of mandatory minimum sentencing laws for drug crimes. Rhode Island's House and Senate passed legislation of this kind; and although the governor vetoed the measure, the fact that the state's legislature backed it shows movement toward more sensible drug laws. At the federal level, too, the U.S. Sentencing Commission has recommended that sentencing guidelines be lowered for crack offenses because of implicit racial inequities. Its recommendations take effect Nov. 1 unless disapproved by Congress. This change, however, will not affect federal mandatory minimum sentencing policies, which only Congress can alter and which cry out for change because they bind the hands of magistrates seeking to administer justice fairly. But Congress can and should pass the pending bipartisan legislation aimed at removing the disparity between penalties for crack and powder cocaine. In the meantime, the Supreme Court is also addressing the disparity, though indirectly, by considering whether a federal judge has the right to impose a sentence for a crack offense that is less than what the guidelines call for.

With 80 percent of crack sentences imposed on African-Americans, racial disparities have reached glaring levels and point to the need for a changed policy. On the wider societal level, as the bishops note in their 2000 statement, it is the deep, underlying problems that need attention: lack of employment, poor housing, inadequate education and family disintegration in poor communities. Instead of unfairly harsh sentences for drug offenses, supportive initiatives for low-income communities and greater use of alternatives to incarceration should be the basis of an enlightened approach to criminal justice.

Religious Freedom at the Core of Peace

The only way to ensure that religions contribute to peace rather than violence is to guarantee religious freedom and promote religious education so believers understand that peace and harmony are at the core of every religion, the Vatican's foreign minister said. Archbishop Dominique Mamberti, the Vatican's secretary for relations with states, spoke Oct. 5 at the U.N. General Assembly's high-level dialogue on interreligious and intercultural understanding and cooperation for peace. The text of his remarks was released Oct. 6 by the Vatican.

Archbishop Mamberti said Pope Benedict has taught that "faithfulness to one's own religious convictions is not expressed in violence and intolerance, but in sincere respect for others, in dialogue and in an announcement that appeals to freedom and reason while remaining committed to peace and reconciliation." While religion is a herald and source of peace, the archbishop said, it too often has been manipulated by politicians, nationalists and those seeking power.

Catholic-Anglican Text Encourages Realism

Anglicans and Roman Catholics should witness to the faith they share and work together to promote Christian values in the world, but they also must be realistic about issues still dividing them, said a recent document by Anglican and Catholic bishops. *Growing Together in Unity and Mission* was published in mid-September by the International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission, made up of bishops from the two communities. While leaked copies of the completed document were circulating already in February, the official release was delayed until commentaries commissioned by the Vatican and by the Anglican Communion were finalized.

The international bishops' commission was formed in 2001 to develop a document summarizing 35 years of official Anglican-Roman Catholic theological agreements, to encourage wider study of the agreements and to demonstrate how much Catholics and Anglicans share by promoting joint activities such as prayer services, study, Christian witness and social action. However, the final document said, "difficulties in the life of the Anglican communion," particularly the tensions caused by the ordination of an openly gay bishop in New Hampshire, the blessing of same-sex unions in British Columbia and the acceptance of women bishops in some Anglican provinces have forced Anglicans and Roman Catholics to recognize that progress toward full unity will be slower than many had hoped.

Students at McQuaid Jesuit High School in Rochester, N.Y., wore red on Oct. 5 to express solidarity with the saffron-robed Buddhist monks in Myanmar who demonstrated in protest against government injustice. Myanmar's military government launched pre-dawn raids on monasteries Sept. 27 in a crackdown on the biggest public protests in 20 years.

Jewish Leaders Meet Pope on Anti-Semitism

Pope Benedict XVI welcomed to the Vatican the new leaders of the World Jewish Congress, which represents Jewish communities in more than 80 countries. Ronald S. Lauder, elected president of the congress in June, said the talks on Oct. 8 focused on interreligious dialogue and on anti-Semitism in a number of European countries. While the congress issued a press release after the meeting, the Vatican simply announced that the pope had met the officers of the congress.

The congress' statement said Lauder, a former U.S. ambassador to Austria, told the pope that "the anti-Semitic statements" attributed to Tadeusz Rydzyk, the Redemptorist priest who is founder and director of Poland's Radio Maryja, "should not be tolerated anymore." Lauder "called on the pontiff to take action against those in the church who wanted to do damage to the close and positive relationship between Christians and Jews," the statement said.

Australian Bishops Sever Ties With Amnesty

The Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference has severed all ties between the Catholic Church in Australia and Amnesty International because the human rights organization changed its neutral stance on abortion. "It is with much regret that we are now in a position of having to advise that membership in Amnesty International is no longer compatible with Catholic teaching and belief on this important point," Archbishop Philip Wilson of Adelaide, president of

the bishops' conference, announced Oct. 3. "After due consideration we now also urge Catholics and all people who believe in the dignity of the human person from natural conception until natural death to seek other avenues of defending human rights," the archbishop said. A statement from the bishops' conference said that by imposing a new policy in favor of "limited abortion rights," Amnesty effectively had created a human rights organization that excluded Catholic members.

Cardinal Decries Ecumenical Insensitivity

According to a report in The Tablet (Oct. 6), Cardinal Karl Lehmann, president of the German Bishops' Conference, told the annual assembly of bishops Sept. 26 that the so-called *One True Church* document issued July 10 by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith had led to anti-Catholic hostility among Protestants. "It is not appropriate," the cardinal said, "to repeat and republish reminders and admonitions on binding church teaching" when time is needed for theologians and church officials to communicate the teaching in a fashion that does not lead to "world-wide misunderstandings." The C.D.F. had attempted to correct misinterpretations of Vatican Council II's "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church." The council fathers had avoided articulating a one-for-one equation of the Catholic Church with the church of Christ. Instead they used the term "subsists," stipulating that the Church of Christ "subsists in" the Catholic Church.

The cardinal lamented the insignificant role the Second Vatican Council's decree on ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, played in the C.D.F. commentary. What is essential now, the cardinal said "is to revive the largely abandoned discussion of the aims of ecumenism." Germany has sizable Catholic and Lutheran populations.

At the same meeting, the bishops decided that no priest is obliged to celebrate the Tridentine Mass and that for the time being the bishops would not establish special parishes for celebration of the Tridentine rite.

From CNS and other sources. CNS photos.

Father's Stem Cells Provide New Life

Nick and Paula Mueting are pictured with their 3-year-old son, Andrew, outside their home in Dodge City, Kan., in late September.

Three-year-old Andrew Mueting of Dodge City, Kan., is a bright, happy-go-lucky, energetic little boy. But when he was 4 months old, doctors gave him a bleak prognosis. Born with malignant infantile osteopetrosis, an extremely rare blood disorder that affects approximately 20 U.S. babies a year, Andrew was expected to spend his few years of life fighting anemia and infections, struggling with weak bones and eventual blindness and deafness. Now, thanks to a new procedure that used his father's adult stem cells, Andrew has a chance to live a long, healthy life with few ill effects. In treatments at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, Tenn., "Andrew had to go through eight days of chemotherapy to completely wipe out his immune system," said his father, Nick Mueting. "During the last five days of his treatment, I took a medicine that helped my body produce a lot of stem cells in my blood. At the end of that period...I was hooked up to a machine for five hours as it extracted the stem cells from my blood." After that, 50 cubic centimeters of the father's stem cells were injected into his son's blood.

Market-Driven Medicine Threatens Human Dignity

Market-driven medical technology applied at the beginning and end of life is a growing threat to human dignity, speakers for the National Catholic Bioethics Center told a conference in San Francisco Oct. 3. Catholics must counter with an uncompromising defense of Christian ethics that also encourages lawful innovation to nurture and sustain life, the speakers said, adding that Catholic teaching provides the most reasonable framework for ethical decisions about human life in any clinical or research setting. "I always encourage people that if you're ever confronted with a teaching of the church you don't understand and that at first looks problematic, stop and ask yourself what dimension of human dignity the church sees being threatened in this procedure that we won't allow," said John Haas, president of the bioethics center. The Philadelphia-based center is a scholarly institution that advises the Vatican and the nation's bishops. Oakland's Bishop Allen H. Vigneron told Catholic San Francisco, the archdiocesan newspaper, that the main issues on which the church finds itself "at odds with a lot of the trends in our culture" were in vitro fertilization, embryonic stem cell research and end-of-life issues.

Trip or Treat

'Chocolate can be sweeter for people on both ends of the supply chain.'

'THEY SHOULD CALL IT "trip or treat," our 4-year-old quips, struggling with the tail of her hand-me-down mermaid costume, while her baby brother trips over his duck costume. "More safety pins to the rescue," is my standard "trip or treat" fix-it. My husband prefers duct tape.

I wish all solutions were as simple. As parents, we'd like to preserve a simple childhood tradition of greeting neighbors and enjoying treats. But as citizens, we must weigh the dark side of those sweets. Concerns about child labor, slavery and exploitative conditions in the African cocoa trade make trick-or-treat bittersweet. How can we avoid tripping into moral perils while enjoying holiday traditions?

More chocolate is sold at Halloween than at any other time of year. Chocolate sales were $14.4 billion in 2004, as Americans consume nearly 12 pounds of chocolate per person per year. Chocolate consumption in rich countries should be good news for the world's poor. The cocoa beans that make chocolate can be grown only in a narrow band near the equator, a slice of the planet home to many of the world's poor. Yet chocolate profits go predominantly to manufacturing and marketing companies in the first world, rather than cocoa farmers in the developing world. Instead of benefiting from the cocoa trade, many cocoa growers suffer exploitation.

Africa leads the world in cocoa production, growing over 76 percent of the planet's total output. Four of the five top cocoa-growing countries are in Africa: Ivory Coast, Ghana, Cameroon and Nigeria. Ivory Coast alone is responsible for 43 percent of world cocoa production, yet the country is extremely poor and becoming poorer. More than 44 percent of Ivorians have incomes below the poverty line, and the country ranks near the bottom in the U.N. human development index: 164th out of 177. Certainly poverty there has many causes: a civil war ravaged the economy and the rising H.I.V./AIDS epidemic takes its toll. But low prices paid to cocoa growers have not helped.

Media exposés six years ago focused attention on the dire conditions of cocoa workers in West Africa. Congress responded, and the House passed legislation that would have required that cocoa products be labeled and certified that they were not made with child or forced labor. The chocolate manufacturers intervened and derailed the legislation. They raised the standard chorus of multinational corporations looking to shirk social responsibilities in the global economy: that they do not own the producers, are not responsible for conditions there and are unable to control their own supply chains. In September 2001 Representative Elliot Engel (Democrat of New York) and Senator Tom Harkin (Democrat of Iowa) negotiated the Cocoa Protocol, a voluntary agreement among chocolate companies, cocoa traders, governments and plantation owners to take measures to improve conditions among cocoa farmers, reduce child labor and establish a certification procedure by July 2005. The companies failed to meet the deadline, blaming the civil war in Ivory Coast. But a recent industry report released by Tulane University lauds the progress on other fronts (http://www.candyusa.org/Media/Hot/Labor).

In a meeting of the African Cocoa Summit last month, Ghana's President John Agyekum Kufuor told a different story. Although countries have now ratified the International Labor Organization's Convention 182 pledging to do away with the worst forms of child labor, they do not adhere to it. He called for imposition of "a regime of verification and stoppage of the phenomenon in every form." This is important so that the Cocoa Protocol results in real gains, not excuses.

There is another way to get at the problem: buy only fair trade chocolate and cocoa, especially through Catholic Relief Services' partnership with Divine Chocolate. Fair trade chocolates return more of the purchase price to the farmers who grow the cocoa, helping them and their families to make a living and rise from poverty. Eating fair trade chocolate is a way to put your money literally where your mouth is, and use your food dollars to "treat" both yourself and the person who grew your food.

The Catholic Relief Services' fair trade chocolates program goes one step further. The farmers of the Kuapa Kokoo cooperative in Ghana are not only guaranteed better fair trade prices for their cocoa beans; they also own almost 50 percent of the Day Chocolate Co., which produces their Divine Chocolate bars and products, so they earn a share of the profits directly from all Divine Chocolate sales. C.R.S. also encourages schools, parishes, teams and other groups to use fair trade products in their fundraisers. Through their Raise Money Right program, groups can raise money for their organization and raise awareness about fair trade as a way to fight global poverty. Winners of the C.R.S. Raise Money Right contests earn prizes, including trips to Ghana to visit the cocoa cooperative themselves.

As we prepare for the onslaught of the "trip or treaters," we can use the holiday to stand in solidarity with children in poverty around the world and make chocolate a sweeter experience for people on both ends of the global supply chain.

Maryann Cusimano Love

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

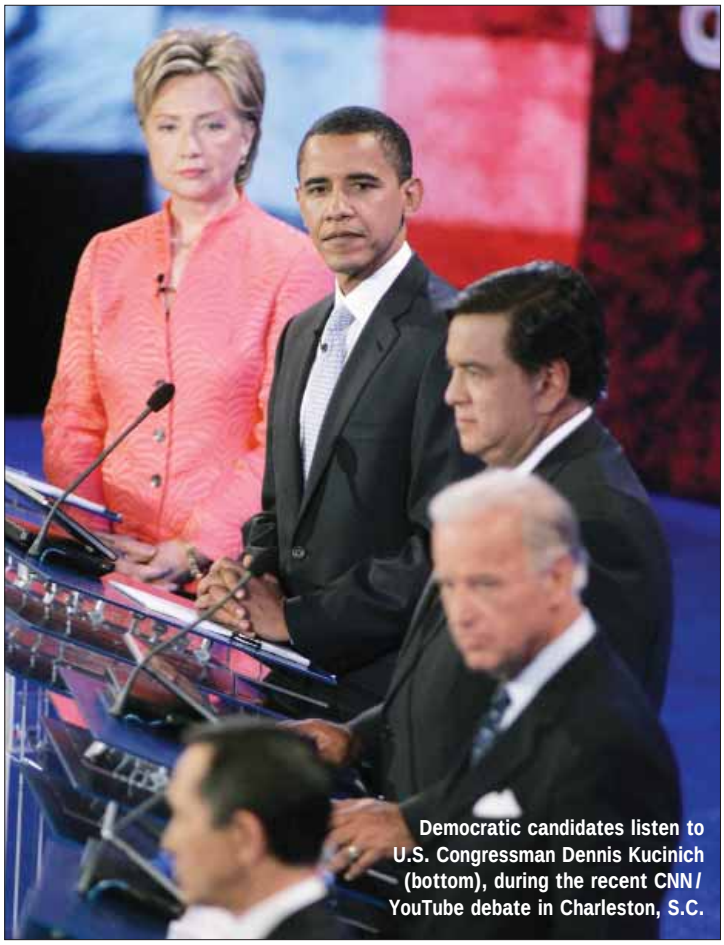


PHOTO: REUTERS/TAMI CHAPPELL

Democratic candidates listen to U.S. Congressman Dennis Kucinich (bottom), during the recent CNN/YouTube debate in Charleston, S.C.

How the Media Shape Elections

– BY DOTTY LYNCH –

'GEORGE, I'VE BEEN STANDING HERE for the last 45 minutes, praying to God you were going to call on me." This was Representative Dennis Kucinich's answer to a question posed by George Stephanopoulos in a debate on ABC News this summer in Iowa, asking the candidates whether they believed prayer can alter events. Kucinich spent much of the miniscule amount of airtime he got at the forum complaining about the miniscule amount of airtime he was getting. Dark-horse candidates like Kucinich will have to offer a lot of prayers this year to break through the media firewall, which has effectively declared only top-tier candidates worthy of coverage.

DOTTY LYNCH is an executive in residence at the School of Communications of American University in Washington D.C. She was the senior political editor for CBS News from 1985-2005 and is now a political consultant with CBS News.

Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama and John Edwards and Rudolph Giuliani, John McCain, Mitt Romney and Fred Thompson in their respective parties made it to that level by emerging in early polls, even though many commentators say these polls are meaningless. In terms of visibility, however, they mean everything. In primary politics name recognition equals money, money equals coverage, coverage equals name recognition, and name recognition equals—you guessed it—more money.

Ask political reporters or editors how they decide who to cover and why they ignore candidates like Senators Joe Biden, Sam Brownback and Chris Dodd, and they will say, occasionally sheepishly: "Look, there are 18 candidates, and we only have so much money and staff, and we can hardly afford to cover the big six or eight. Sure, Biden is the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, has 30 years experience and is an engaging guy, but he is going nowhere."

Lack of coverage helps to ensure that such a candidate goes nowhere.

Today candidates have an alternative: they can turn to the Internet. The outspoken Elizabeth Edwards explained her husband's increasingly strident Internet campaign by saying: "We can't make John black; we can't make him a woman…. Those things get you a certain amount of fundraising dollars." She neglected to mention that they also garner attention from the mainstream media. So Edwards went around the mainstream media to the Internet, where he speaks out loudly and clearly.

How the media approach a campaign also serves to shape it. In the early part of 2007, for example, the media spent a lot of time asking: Can a woman, a black person or a Mormon be elected president? The typical answer was a definite maybe. But the question itself increased the recognition of the female, black and Mormon candidates. For the first time ever, the white Catholic and mainline Protestant men had to go nuclear to compete.

Was It Always Like This?

Eric Engberg, the former CBS News correspondent, is fond of saying that journalism is the only profession that gets rewarded for making mistakes: "First you miss a story and get it all wrong, then the real story unfolds; it is an upset and what happens? You get an even bigger story!" The media love upsets, surprises and Cinderella victories. Of course, the Cinderellas often toiled in obscurity before being "discovered."

George McGovern, a former senator from South Dakota and the 1972 Democratic presidential candidate, tells a story about his run in 1971, when no media were taking him seriously. One day as he landed at the airport in Cleveland, where he was to give a substantive speech on economics at the Cleveland City Club, an aide looked out and saw a phalanx of television cameras. McGovern quickly woke up from a nap, straightened his tie and walked off the plane, only to see the cameramen dash away and swarm around Chubby Checker.

In 1975, when the media were sure that the Democratic candidates to watch were Lloyd Bentsen, Birch Bayh and Henry Jackson (known as Scoop), Jimmy Carter and his wife, Rosalynn, rode around Iowa in a rental car going from one local radio station to another. They became known one city at a time. Jack Germond, the veteran political journalist, said that while everyone in Washington was swooning over Howard Baker, Iowans were learning about an obscure peanut farmer from Plains, Ga., who said he would never lie to them.

In 1983, with the experiences of McGovern and Carter under my belt, I was working with Gary Hart's presidential campaign. Once again big media decided that the race was between the two front-runners, Walter Mondale and John Glenn. Hart was frustrated but not daunted. His staff was poor (they received no paychecks for months), cold (the heat was kept off in the national headquarters) and unduplicated (the Xerox machine was removed by bill collectors). Yet using several alternative strategies, Hart saw some

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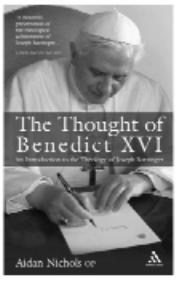

Thought of Pope Benedict XVI
An Introduction to the Theology of Joseph Ratzinger
Aidan Nichols, O.P.

Aidan Nichols' timely book is the first full-scale investigation of Joseph Ratzinger's theology, from the 1950s to the present day. It presents a chronological account of the development of Ratzinger's writing which reflects a wide range of historical and theoretical interests.

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media successes. First, work your way into other people's stories. When the president says something, for example, be the first person to respond (White House reporters are happy for a quick quote). Second, if political reporters are not paying attention, look for ways to get into the business section, style section, even the sports section of the newspapers. Those reporters tend to play it straight, and their stories are read by audiences who do not automatically have their "I hate politics" guard up. Third, say yes to all offers of publicity.

In late 1983, when a network TV correspondent was assigned to a new technology story, she tried to enlist all the front-runners. They said they were far too busy to cooperate with a soft feature. We in the Hart campaign, by contrast, said: "Sure, we will play." "Are you doing focus groups?" she asked. "We have one scheduled with young people for next week," we said. (That was a stretch, but it seemed like a good idea.) We set up a group, the crew came, and we "tested" a slogan we knew was a winner with young people. "How do you feel about a candidate who represents a 'new generation of leadership?'" we asked them. "Wow, I would vote for him in a heartbeat" and "He speaks to me" were the answers. This focus group touting our candidate and theme made it to the evening news virtually unedited. Later, the reporter remembered who helped her get on the air.

Table 1: Air Time Given to Presidential Campaigns

Year	Total minutes	ABC	CBS	NBC
2007 Jan-July	340	99	106	136
2003 Jan-Dec	167	59	52	55
1999 Jan-Dec	339	78	131	130
1995 Jan-Dec	294	87	123	84
1991 Jan-Dec	146	27	71	48

Can Such Things Happen This Year?

Dark-horse candidates slog on, convinced or at least hoping that lightning will strike in the same place a fourth or fifth time. But given the combination of an early primary and caucus calendar, the short time between the first primaries and "Tsunami Tuesday" on Feb. 5, the huge financial advantage of the front-runners and the media's decision to ignore all but the top tier, it seems that Cinderella may never even get to the ball.

Voters in the early states are being bombarded with messages from national media telling them which candidates are viable. Ron Brownstein, a columnist for The Los Angeles Times, put it this way: "The new system isn't bringing back the bosses' smoke-filled room, but it is increasing the clout of the air-conditioned television studio and the elegant drawing room in New York, Chicago and Los Angeles. And it is presenting dark-horse candidates with something like a closed circle. Even in the initial states with the power to confer national viability, voters appear increasingly inclined to reward only the candidates who have already demonstrated it, in part because those are the only candidates they hear much about in the national media."

An unprecedented amount of coverage was given this year to what used to be called "the invisible primary" phase of the campaign. The Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism has counted 5,051 newspaper and television stories about the top-tier candidates in the first half of 2007. Figures prepared by the Tyndall Group on the amount of time network news devotes to campaigns show that the time given in just the first half of 2007 outpaced the total number of minutes spent in the pre-presidential election years for the last four campaign cycles (Table 1).

The fall phase of the 2008 presidential campaigns has been marked by the arrival of "embeds," formerly known as "kids on the bus." These are young producers who are sent out by the networks to cover the campaigns 24/7. It is hardly surprising that the television networks have embedded full-time producers with the top two candidates on both sides and have assigned their highest-profile political reporters to cover them. NBC, for example, put Andrea Mitchell with Hillary Clinton; CBS assigned Jim Axelrod, their White House correspondent. The other candidates mainly get a day with one of these big reporters and an occasional look from the producers assigned to Iowa or New Hampshire. Only the top tier receives full network coverage.

Occasionally one of the lower-tier candidates gets a moment in the spotlight. Walter Shapiro, the author of *One Car Caravan*, a delightful look at the early phase of the 2004 campaign, when reporters could get up close and personal with candidates, says that this year it is almost impossible to do that. The top tier had entourages with palace guards, canned speeches and television and online ads from the beginning of the campaign.

News organizations have been fighting to get small snippets of exclusive information from the big eight. But Shapiro, who is now Washington bureau chief for Salon, decided to spend some of his scarce resources on Michael Sherer, a reporter for Salon, who developed an early fascination with Mike Huckabee, a former Arkansas governor and a Republican. Huckabee seemed to have a shot at breaking out of the pack, so Sherer wrote a long early profile on him. Shapiro's hunch was pretty good, since Huckabee managed to have a minor Cinderella moment by

coming in second in another allegedly meaningless event: the Iowa Republican Straw Poll. For a few quiet weeks at the end of the summer, Huckabee drew some coveted attention from the mainstream media as well, which may have helped to fill his paltry campaign coffers.

August was a huge bonanza month for Mike Huckabee. According to National Journal's Hotline, he not only made it onto the Sunday talk-show circuit but topped the list of candidate exposure on cable television, with 1 hour and 19 minutes. He was seen on mainstream media and also on "The Colbert Report" (Comedy Central) and HBO's "Real Time With Bill Maher," which moved him into the top 10 candidates in terms of airtime. Second in August was the first-place winner of the Iowa straw poll, Mitt Romney. Third was Joe Biden at 1 hour and 6 minutes.

Table 2: Declared and Possible Presidential Candidates' Appearances on Broadcast and Cable TV
9/6/05 to 8/31/07

		Hours	Minutes
1	McCain	30	2
2	Biden	28	22
3	Gingrich	28	3*
4	Richardson	17	35
5	Edwards	13	11
6	Obama	12	39
7	Dodd	12	28
8	Romney	10	8
9	Gore	10	0
10	Huckabee	9	20
11	Tancredo	8	43
12	Hagel	8	26
13	Hunter	7	52
14	Brownback	7	35
15	Giuliani	7	24
16	Clinton	6	21
17	Paul	3	48
18	Gravel	2	34
19	Kucinich	2	26
20	F. Thompson	2	8
21	T. Thompson	1	15
22	Bloomberg	12	46

*Gingrich was a paid political commentator for Fox during this period.

The Unpredictables of Media Coverage

Other breaking news can wreak havoc with even the best media strategy. Mitt Romney, who spent most of his airtime capital on traditional media, was scheduled to appear on the business channel shows to promote his new tax plan. That day the Senator Larry Craig story broke (Craig was arrested in a men's room in Minneapolis). As a result, Romney used his air time explaining why he fired Craig from a post in his campaign.

The publication of Joe Biden's autobiography was a hook to help him get some visibility, which worked quite well. But a trip to Iraq in September, which his campaign hoped would gain him some airtime, was overshadowed by a surprise visit from President Bush, who has bigger marquee value than the senator from Delaware; then a sandstorm kept Biden from making a much-heralded interview on CNN.

In the quarterly review of the Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism, the authors found that articles and television stories about the front-runners were so overwhelming in number that they did not even bother counting stories about the other candidates. It seems ironic, therefore, that while the media are preoccupied with the front-runners, the front-runners tend to avoid interviews, especially the Sunday talk shows and one-on-one interviews that they cannot control. A second Hotline list documents the coverage (Table 2).

In terms of the total time they have spent on the air giving interviews and answering questions, the top three—McCain, Biden and Gingrich—are hardly the front-runners in national polls. Those front-runners—Clinton and Giuliani—by contrast, are interview-averse, ranking 15th and 16th on the Hotline list. And Fred Thompson, who had many stories written and aired about him, clocked only 2 hours and 3 minutes of face time. Perhaps it just makes sense that the candidates least sought out by the media would avail themselves of the "free" talk shows.

One setting in which the second- and third-tier candidates had hoped to level the playing field was the debates. But the actual number of viewers for most of these forums has been low, and the news reports on them focus almost exclusively on the skirmishes among the leading candidates. A classic New York Times article following the April South Carolina Democratic debate had this insightful reporting on Senator Chris Dodd, who was mentioned for the first time in the 23rd paragraph: "Senator Christopher J. Dodd of Connecticut also took part in the debate."

Voters who want to go beyond horse-race journalism and make their own reasoned decisions about who can best lead the country can do it, although it will take a bit of hard work. All the candidates have Web sites, position papers and long biographies. Spending some time with C-Span, one of the few places on television that covers all the candidates talking to voters at length, is a way to assess these politicians unfiltered by the media lens. And watching the town meetings and neighborhood coffees, we are reminded how seriously the citizens in the early voting states of Iowa and New Hampshire take their role as surrogates for the rest of us. A

The Power of Japan

Does it lie in military strength or in its unique witness for peace?

BY KAREN SUE SMITH

Japanese peace activists demonstrate outside the Defense Ministry in Tokyo in May 2007, calling for the withdrawal of the Japan Air Self-Defense Force stationed in Iraq.

PHOTO BY REUTERS/TSHIYUKI AIZAWA

First it was "Little Boy," then "Fat Man." Sixty-two years ago, in August 1945, the United States dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, each a Japanese city of roughly 250,000. According to estimates, a total of 150,000 Japanese were killed immediately in the two cities, and thousands more were injured or made ill by the radiation and nuclear fallout. What few people outside Japan realize is that the death toll continues to climb. In summer 2007, when Tomihisa Taue, the Mayor of Nagasaki, led the annual commemoration of the bombing at the Nagasaki Peace Park, he added more than 3,000 deaths from bomb-related radiation illness during the previous 12 months, which brought the official death toll as of 2007 to 143,124 for Nagasaki alone.

There were, of course, survivors, the *hibakusha* (literally "explosion-affected people") and among them the *tainai hibakusha*, those nestled "in their mother's womb" when the atomic bombs exploded. It is not inconsequential that the current Archbishop of Nagasaki, the Most Reverend Joseph M. Takami, is himself one of the *tainai hibakusha*. Speaking at Georgetown University in March 2007, Archbishop Takami noted that he had grown up personally affected by the suffering. A week after the blast, he said, "four members of my immediate family, including my grandmother and two aunts, died." He acknowledged that Japan was not merely a victim of the war, but a willing aggressor against its Asian neighbors. Yet, speaking for many Japanese people, the archbishop said that direct experience of the atomic bomb "taught us a precious lesson of nonviolence as a way of life, a conviction, a belief and a non-negotiable commitment."

Nonviolence as a way of life needs to be recast or revitalized for the current generation of Japanese, however, for Japan's "non-negotiable commitment" to peace is being tested by developments within Asia itself, on the larger world scene and by the United States government. Since the year 2000, the U.S.-Japan relationship has been changing radically in ways that have alarmed some Japanese voters, Japan's Catholic bishops and some of the country's political leaders, like the mayor of Nagasaki. As Archbishop Takami put it in his Georgetown address, "Japan is a willing partner in the U.S. global war on terror," increasingly allowing the U.S. military to use its land, air and naval facilities as Japan itself takes on an ever larger military role. Such a role stands in direct contradiction to Japan's postwar Constitution, self-

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understanding and foreign policy.

Post-World War II Developments

Nonviolence as a way of life, as Archbishop Takami expressed it, is relatively new in Japan's long militant history. It took root in postwar Japan, defeated and occupied for six years by the Allies, mainly the United States. As a nation, Japan was (and still is) unique in the world in having experienced the horror of a nuclear attack. Yet the Japanese transition to nonviolence developed gradually. As a war-torn world began to realize the extent of the Holocaust and the immense number of Stalin's victims, the Japanese started to acknowledge their aggression toward other Asians in the Pacific and their own war crimes. This intense period was also one of enormous flux as leaders set up a new government and rewrote the 1890 Meiji Constitution. That constitution had been promulgated under Emperor Hirohito's grandfather, who was considered a deity (as was his son and grandson until after World War II, when the emperor's religious role was recast). In 1947 the Japanese Diet (parliament) debated a draft constitution for 114 days, made revisions and accepted the final version, which included Article 9, a controversial prohibition against Japan's maintaining an offensive military or using force internationally for any reason. In its entirety Article 9 reads:

> 1. Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes.
> 2. In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.

Scholars have advanced several reasons to explain why Japan, acting in contrast to its highly militarized past, so readily agreed to limit its military. It is said that Japan envisioned itself becoming a neutral nation like Sweden or Switzerland and that by not having to rebuild its military, while under the protection of the United States, Japan could focus on rebuilding its economy. Meanwhile, as the Japanese public embraced a new Constitution, a new government and a new understanding of their emperor, it also began to internalize the pacifist ethic that still characterizes a majority today, particularly regarding nuclear arms and proliferation.

During those same years the U.S.S.R. united its postwar land gains and pursued Communist world domination, emerging as the new threat to world peace. Japan's proximity to both Communist Russia and China was particularly advantageous to America's anti-Communist strategy. As early as the Eisenhower administration, the U.S. government had second thoughts about having urged institutionalized pacifism on Japan, which weakened it as an ally. On the other hand, some scholars argue that Japanese leaders saw Article 9 as a potential defense, shielding Japan from being caught between the two cold war superpowers.

In signing the 1951 Mutual Security Treaty and the 1954 Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement, the United States promised to protect Japan, and Japan allowed the United States to use its territory for permanent military bases. The latter agreement also permitted Japan to maintain a limited Self-Defense Force to protect its mainland.

Since the end of the cold war, three unlikely streams continued to run alongside one another in Japan. First, nonaggression and nuclear pacifism have become a part of Japanese culture and identity. The signs are various. Not only did Japan sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and refrain from building or trading in nuclear arms; but according to polls conducted over the last few decades, more than 70 percent of Japanese have consistently opposed nuclear weapons. As a nation Japan did not intervene during the Vietnam War, after a citizen campaign of protest, and rejected U.S. pressure to send members of the Japanese Self-Defense Force to support the United States during the first Persian Gulf war.

Second, Japan's S.D.F. has grown substantially in size and strength. Its navy, air force and army together employ 240,000 people (according to 2006 data). And Japan's $50 billion annual defense budget is the world's third largest after those of the United States and Russia, though China's (which is not publicly known) might be larger.

Third, the U.S. troops and weapons on Japanese soil have increased in number, size and power. Some 50,000 U.S. troops currently reside on more than 130 military installations, mostly on Okinawa—all at Japanese expense, the troop salaries excepted.

In addition to these three streams, Japan has breached its own self-defense policy on a number of occasions, beginning in Cambodia in 1992, when Japan sent some 2,000 "peacekeepers," including members of its military, to Cambodia under the auspices of the U.N. to monitor a ceasefire, train civilian police and engineer the repair of roads and bridges. Japan's role in world peacekeeping has grown since then.

By the time the Soviet Union split up in the early 1990s, Japan and the United States had become strong allies with social, cultural, political and economic ties. Japan's economy boomed, and Japan became one of the world's richest nations. The cold war era ended and another era began.

Changing Role on the World Stage

Enter China. Asia's sleeping giant has awakened. As the behemoth labors to develop its economy and shape its new international role, Japan is being forced to adjust its self-image, regional strategy and position in the world. North Korea's nuclear testing and posturing and Pakistan's interest in nuclear arms, heightened by its role in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, have scarcely gone unnoticed in Japan. Add to the picture a newly aggressive Russia, flush with oil profits, looming to the northwest over Japan's shoulder and it becomes apparent that Japan cannot remain unaffected or indifferent. A nuclear Asia is at hand. What does that prospect mean for Japan? This is a matter for significant public thought and conversation, which should be reflected in the kind of leaders Japan chooses to govern it.

But that is not all. Since the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, the United States has become engulfed in a "war on terror" and is mired in the Middle East, its troops stretched thin. How secure is Japan now with the United States as its protector? Does Japan's protectorate position promote regional peace or work against it? The Bush administration has urged Japanese leaders to remove its constitutional restraint and take on more responsibility for regional defense. Given such increasing pressures, it is not surprising that two Japanese prime ministers, Junichiro Koizumi and after him Shinzo Abe, have pushed for a referendum to amend the Constitution, particularly the clause on international collective defense in Article 9. This seems to be in abeyance under the new prime minister, Yasuo Fukuda, who is thought to be more cautious in military matters. But the issues will not simply fade away.

The choice facing the Japanese is not a new one, since Japan has already leaned away from its Constitution. It has broken precedent (Archbishop Takami says it has violated its Constitution) by using military force beyond its borders. In 2001 the S.D.F. sank a North Korean spy ship; recently Japan has sent troops to Afghanistan and Iraq as part of the "coalition of the willing." Technically Japanese troops do not engage in combat there but provide logistical support. Japan is also aware that its Self-Defense Force is ill-equipped for offensive actions: its navy has no nuclear submarines or aircraft carriers and its three military branches lack both coordination and efficient communication. In 2006, the Diet introduced a bill to consolidate oversight of these operations and change the name of the ministry.

At Georgetown Archbishop Takami cited bilateral agreements of 2005 (the U.S.-Japan Alliance) and 2006 (the Roadmap for Realignment Implementation), by which, he said, "Japan has been made a major hub for American military operations all over the world, transforming the Japanese military forces into part of the globally deployed U.S. military forces." The archbishop questioned the legality of the process, intimating that it may require formal treaty revisions "through democratic procedures." He also said that Japan has committed itself "to full participation in ballistic missile defense, counterterrorism, search and destroy operations, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance operations, through response to attacks by weapons of mass destruction and joint use of bases and facilities in Japan with the Self-Defense Force to the U.S. use of seaport and airport facilities, roads, water spaces, airspaces, and frequency bands." The complete list is cumulatively more troubling. These agreements violate Japan's Constitution, yet they have been agreed to by the two governments, even as constitutional change is being discussed without strong support for change among Japanese voters.

Political leaders have also sidestepped Japan's popular no-nuclear policy. According to Archbishop Takami, 546 Tomahawk missiles are already in place on U.S. warships at Yokosuka, and the nuclear submarine George Washington will be deployed there next year. A citizens' movement against its deployment collected 500,000 signatures, and the city council passed a resolution opposing it in 2005; but "the mayor now defends the Yokosuka base as the forefront of the ballistic missile defense," the archbishop reported. He added that "Okinawa has the biggest arsenal in Asia that can store more than 50,000 tons of ammunition in 500 installations."

The Japanese people's post-World War II commitment

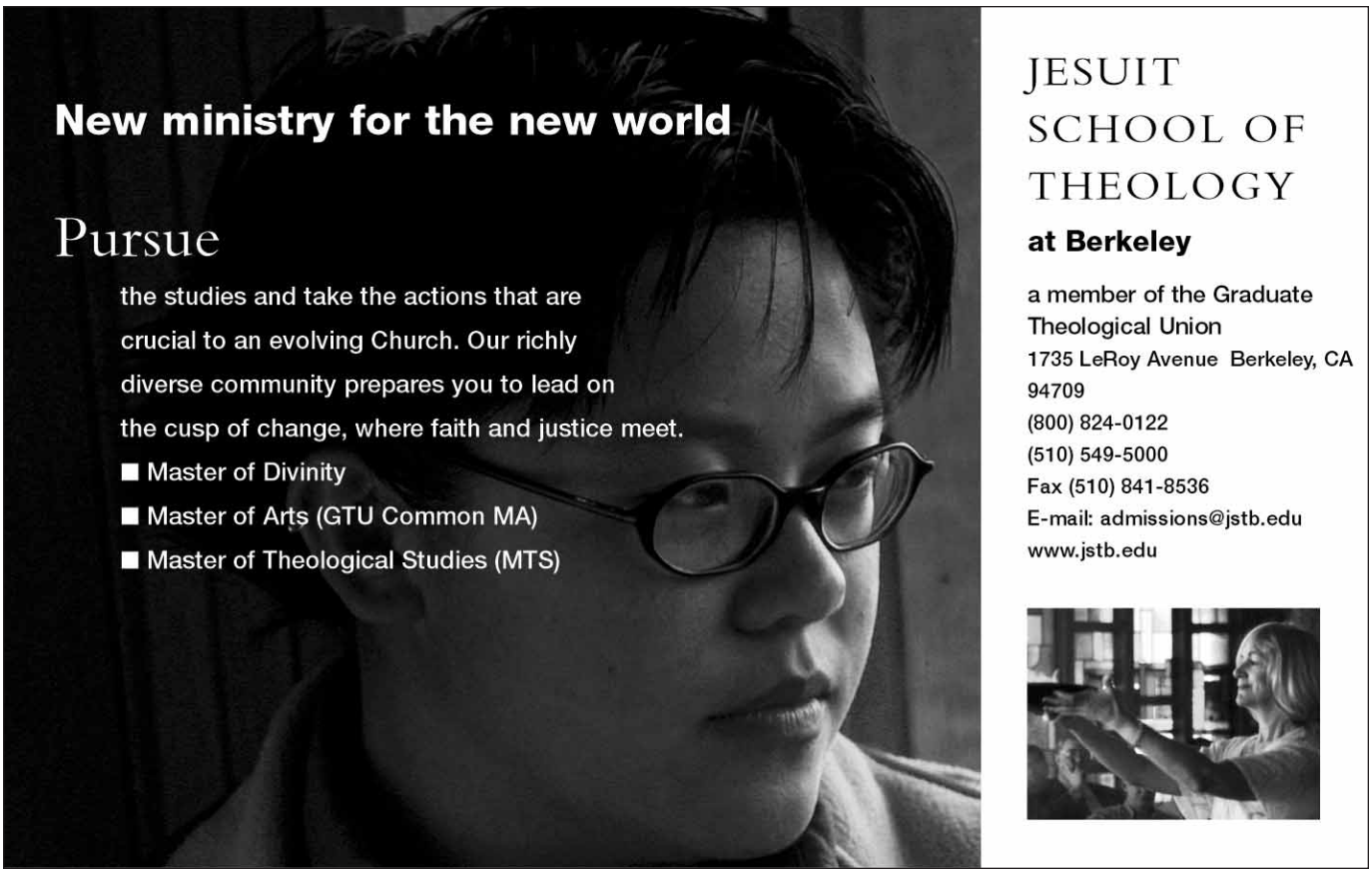
to nonviolence and against nuclear weapons must be updated in light of such recent developments. And Japan's relationship to the United States needs to be publicly aired and assessed. The questions facing Japan are serious. Can Japan remain dependent upon the United States and willfully unable to protect itself, even as more large or unstable nations nearby acquire nuclear weapons? Is that prudent? Does Japan—apart from the promptings of the United States—wish to address the worldwide war on terror? If so, how? How can Japan strengthen and balance its relationships to China, North Korea, India and Pakistan, among others? If Japan amended its "peace constitution," shed its military dependency and became a major military power in the region, would that increase Japan's security and stability and the peace of Asia?

Japan could make a firm recommitment to peace and renegotiate its military agreements with the United States. Or Japan could amend its Constitution and existing treaties so that these reflect its current policy. Or Japan could take a whole new direction in terms of national goals and policies, take over its own military affairs and require the U.S. troops to leave.

The direction Japanese voters will prefer is difficult to predict. While there seems to be no current groundswell of support for a full militarization of Japan, support is growing on the margins. In an upper-house election in July, the people voted in a landslide election for members of the Democratic Party, the party in opposition to that of the prime minister (the Liberal Democratic Party). Commentators interpreted the vote as displeasure with Abe's domestic scandals and policy blunders, which later brought about his downfall.

Unwittingly, the voters have bought some time for those who oppose efforts to revise the pacifist Constitution. Opponents may well redouble their efforts to make a persuasive case for peace. Opponents include the Japanese Catholic Bishops Conference, which prefers to keep Article 9 as it is and to fortify the nation's commitment to nonviolence as a world witness to peace, and the current mayor of Nagasaki, Tomihisa Taue. In his remarks at Nagasaki's Peace Park, Mayor Taue warned against the perils of nuclear proliferation and proposed that Japan's three non-nuclear principles, which ban the possession, production and importation of nuclear armaments, be enacted into law. "The use of nuclear weapons can never be permitted or considered acceptable for any reason whatsoever," Taue said. What the Japanese people as a whole must decide is whether they, as victims of atomic weapons, will become potential perpetrators. A

From **America**'s archives: the editors on postwar Japan, from spring 1947, at www.americamagazine.org.



A Visitation

Two strangers unexpectedly bring home the pain of war.

BY ELLEN RUFFT

ART BY PAT BYRNES

WE WERE NOT expecting a visitation. It was an ordinary Monday afternoon peace vigil, with only about 10 of us holding signs in front of the building that houses our provincial administration. There was an older couple who almost always came, a young woman who was there for the first time, another who works at a homeless shelter, the priest who is our chaplain and about six sisters. Traffic is always heavy at that time of day, with commuters returning home from work, and usually many people respond to our signs asking them to "honk for peace." It was no different on that day.

ELLEN RUFFT, C.D.P., is a former provincial director of the Pittsburgh Province of the Sisters of Divine Providence.

The two previous Mondays might have seemed more fitting days for a visitation. We had been having a two-week international meeting of our religious congregation, and almost 100 sisters had joined us in the vigil on both Mondays—sisters from Germany, Peru, Korea, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic as well as from several places in the United States. Some sisters were wearing the habit, others were not. It was a scene that caused traffic to move more slowly and even prompted a few drivers to ride around the block to drive past the group a second time. Two more visitors from another country might not have been quite as startling on those days.

But they did not come until this Monday, when there were only 10 of us, almost all from the States, a small, ordinary-looking group holding a variety of signs protesting the war in Iraq and advocating peace. Unexpectedly, an older woman and a young man jumped out of a car they had parked on the side of the road and ran toward us. The man appeared to be about 20 years old and was dressed in cut-off shorts and sandals. It was more difficult to judge the woman's age. She was wearing a long, loose dress with a scarf around her head and under her chin; only her face and hands were visible. They came rapidly, the woman almost falling as she ran across the grass to greet us. "I saw the signs and I told him," she said of the young man, "that we had to come to thank you."

She was from Iraq, a medical doctor, and had just arrived in the United States to visit her son. She had not seen him since he became a student two years ago at our college. When we began to tell them how sorry we were that our country was at war in Iraq, the woman replied quickly: "Don't worry. We know the difference between the American people and the American government. You are the American people." And then, almost like a mantra, she said over and over: "For what? For what do they do it? Your children are dying; our children are dying. For what? I work in a hospital. I see the wounded and the dying. For what? For what?" When one of our group said that the war had begun because of greed, the woman responded: "If they want the oil, let them take the oil. Just leave us our children. Please leave us our children." After she thanked us several more times and said that she hoped that her son would join us in future peace vigils, they went back to the car and drove away, honking for peace as they went.

I felt something change within me at that visitation. It was not just that this woman had made the war more real for me, though she surely did that. To hear

someone who had just been taking care of the victims of a war that our country had started and continues to this day, ask so plaintively, "For what?" was heart-wrenching. She brought the pain home to me in a way that all the news media somehow had not done. It was not even that she almost wept the words about their children dying and our children dying that most affected me, though I wept as she repeated them. Her understanding that many, perhaps most, people in the United States do not want the war in Iraq to continue, even though those in power are determined to "stay the course," was a relief. But even her awareness of the distinction between us and the government was not the watershed moment for me.

It was the thank-you's that did it. It was watching this woman in her long dress race across the grass, calling ahead that she had come to thank us. It was the sight of her son running after her, smiling over his mother's excitement at seeing us with peace signs. It was such an unexpected gift, that wealth of gratitude for something that seemed to me, by comparison, such a paltry action that I felt overwhelmed with a feeling I could not identify at the time. Later, talking with some of the others who were at the vigil and listening to their description of their feelings when they heard the woman's words, I was finally able to name the emotion that had arisen in me at the time.

I realized that what I had felt then was forgiven—forgiven for being able to do so little. It was as though the woman's thank-you was her way of saying not just that she knew those of us at the peace vigil did not agree with the position of the United States government but, even more, that she understood we felt her pain and the pain of her people. She understood that we were doing the little we could to share in that pain and to bear witness to the evil of the war, even though we did not have the power to alleviate the suffering. I cannot remember another thank-you that meant so much to me. I am hoping that I will never be the same, that the war will never seem distant to me again and that I will be more determined than ever to speak out against it. When my resolution starts to wane, I am going to revive it by remembering the sight of that gracious Iraqi woman running across the grass calling out her thank-you. A

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Death's Door

Why must we turn our eyes from suffering?

BY MICHAEL SEAN WINTERS

MY MOTHER DIED on March 18, the vigil of the feast of St. Joseph, the patron saint of a happy death. Her death was not unexpected. She had suffered from Parkinson's for many years; and then, last summer, she was in a terrible car accident. The last six months of her life were spent in a hospital and a nursing home; and while modern medicine has certainly conquered issues of pain management, her life was not what it had been. After the accident, she never ate any real food again; she never spoke, although she could nod her head yes and no; and she was reliant upon nurses to change her. I was not surprised when she died, but I was still devastated. As I had been told by many, you are never really ready for the end.

What did surprise me were the things I was told after my mother died. People with the best of intentions, never sure of what to say, try their best to say something they think will be comforting or healing or therapeutic. Their efforts, however, unfailingly amounted to an invitation to avert my gaze from what had just happened and from the brute fact that my heart was suffering.

"Remember the happy memories." Well, I could remember the happy times we shared when she was still breathing, thank you very much. And I do not want to remember only the happy memories. I want to remember it all. I want to think that in the first few days after the accident, when she seemed closer to death than life, she knew I was at her bedside and that my presence gave her strength. I want to remember the times she cried over the occasional cruelties life threw her way. I want to remember sharing her sadness the day her brother died five years earlier. Those moments of difficulty, and the love shared in them, are to be cherished as much as any happy moments.

"At least her suffering is over." My mother had her share of sufferings in this life and I am sure that her so-called "quality of life" was not the best during her last six months. But she smiled when I visited her every morning and evening. She clutched my hand when I sat on the floor by her bed and prayed the Hail Mary or watched a rerun of "Law & Order" with her. She was not able to say the words of the prayer, and I am sure she was not following the plot on the television show, but I like to think that she knew that these things we had done together all our lives were still important to us both.

The most frequent advice I received was to "celebrate her life, don't mourn her death." This smacks of simple denial. In

ART BY STEFANIE AUGUSTIN

MICHAEL SEAN WINTERS has written about politics and Catholicism for The New Republic, Slate, The New York Times, The Washington Post and **America**. His book, *Left at the Altar: How the Democrats Lost the Catholics and How the Catholics Can Save the Democrats*, will be published by Perseus Books Group in January 2008.

the face of death, especially when the wound is fresh, the key fact about her life is its absence. The phrase "A Celebration of the Life of…" has come to adorn funeral programs. Perhaps my faith was insufficient to the moment, or I was too selfish to simply let go of my grief. My heart felt closer to these words of Augustine's (*Conf.*, Bk. IV) when the dear friend of his youth died:

> My heart grew somber with grief, and wherever I looked I saw only death. My own country became a torment and my own home a grotesque abode of misery.… I hated all the places we had known together, because he was not in them and they could no longer whisper to me "Here he comes!" as they would have done had he been alive but absent for a while…. Tears alone were sweet to me, for in my heart's desire they had taken the place of my friend.

This sense of desolation cannot find comfort in a celebratory mood, not so soon anyway.

BIBLICAL POETRY WITH SKIN

"I wrestle with God 'flesh to flesh, sweat to mystery,' and I limp away."

From the poem *God Cheats* by K. McDonnell

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Kilian McDonnell, OSB

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All of these sayings were meant to be comforting, even though they only stoked my sense of grief, adding a sense of incomprehension to the already bewildering emotions swirling through my heart at rapid speed. They were well intended, of course, and I received them as such, thanking the persons saying them for their kind remembrance of my mother. Inside, my heart was aching.

The sympathy cards we received all carried similar niceties, invitations to think of something other than what had just happened, euphemisms. You will search in vain for a Hallmark sympathy card that even mentions the words "death" or "died." Yet that is what happened. This person upon whom I relied for my own sense of well-being and happiness and, indeed, for my own existence, this wonderful person died. The relationship that shaped so much of my own beliefs, my own opinions, my own life, was brought to a final, utterly final, conclusion. She had crossed the abyss and I have not. Amid all the different and depressive feelings that beclouded my heart, the most insistent of them was this: I felt horribly alone.

A few years ago, Msgr. Lorenzo Albacete wrote a brilliant essay on the industry of grief counseling. He noted that grief counselors are attuned to the psychological and physical effects of grief. They seek to help a person confront grief and move beyond it. But, as the Monsignor wrote, "[t]he roots of grief arise from a wound deeper than the psychological or the cultural. It is at that level in ourselves where we decide what we can or cannot expect of life, what is just or unjust, what is the purpose and value of our existence. To the degree that grief counseling ever ignores those questions, it does not deal with grief; it leads us to suppress it." The church cannot answer the enigma of death, but it can and does lead us to the realization in faith that death is not a wall but a door. It is a door that only the eyes of faith can discern and open.

What mattered most to me in the days after my mother's death was the presence of others who loved her, or loved me, or loved us both. A dear priest friend said to me: "There are no words I can offer. I am just here to be with you, to be in solidarity with you in your suffering." That was truly comforting. It was not the message on the sympathy cards that helped, it was

the fact of the sympathy cards. I cannot remember a single thing that was said to me by the 207 people who signed the guest book at my mother's wake, but I was grateful that so many came to show their respect to her. They did not need to say anything: their presence said all I needed.

On the afternoon my mother died, I called the bishop, whom I had asked previously to celebrate her funeral Mass, to see what date would work for him. He said, "I can check my calendar now, but Michael, this is the worst day of your life. We can do the planning tomorrow if you would prefer." That, too, was comforting. Amid the myriad things to be arranged (it is more appropriate than I knew that we call these things "the arrangements"), it is too easy to stay in caregiver mode, too easy to be busy. I knew in my heart of hearts that this was the most horrible day of my life, but I needed someone to tell me that.

In the planning of the funeral, the bizarre suggestion was made that we videotape the Mass. It came from a relative whose son makes videos. This same son had approached me at a family reunion in the days immediately after the accident with the cheerfully delivered news that he had rushed to the accident scene and taken pictures, which he had brought for me to see. It had not occurred to him that such pictures would be the last thing I would want to see. Like the tourists crowded in front of da Vinci's "Mona Lisa" or Michelangelo's "Pietà," never really looking at the art itself because they are so busy trying to photograph it, I found the suggestion of videotaping the funeral Mass vulgar.

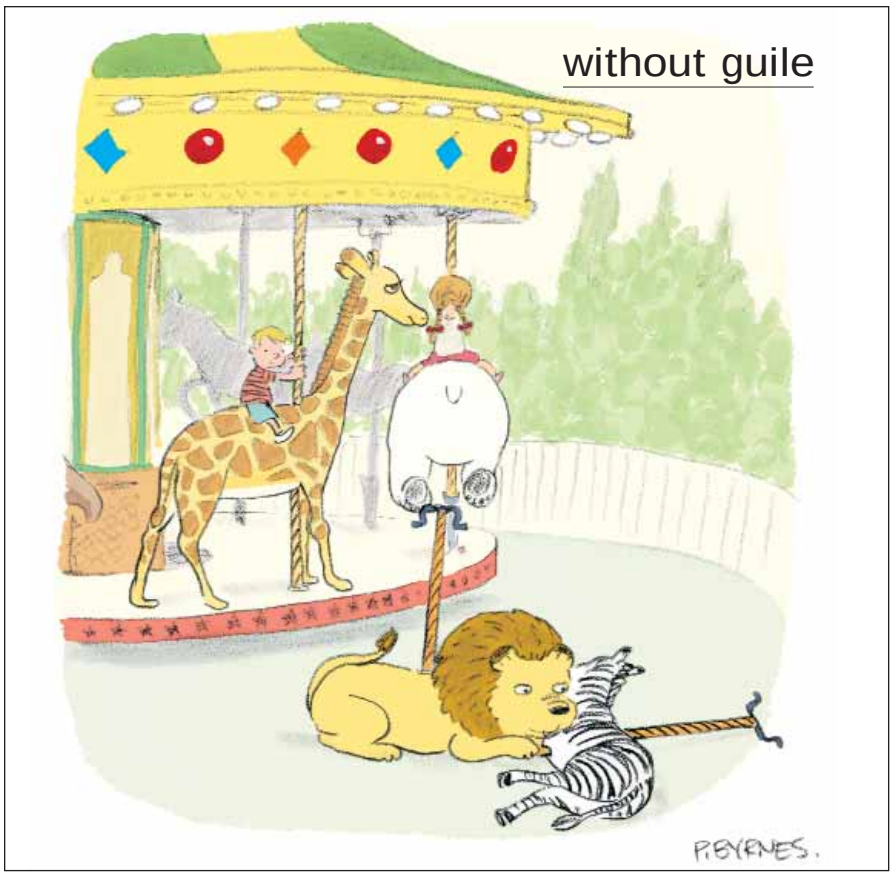
What is it about a camera, and the vicariousness it implies, that we moderns need to put one between ourselves and reality? Why do we need niceties and euphemisms to separate us from the actuality of our grief? In those horrible days, only the church and her ministers did not ask me to avert my gaze from my grief, or from my mother's suffering, but to see in that suffering the redemptive power of love. The very familiarity of the funeral Mass, which is little different from any other Mass, pointed my heart in the direction it needed to go. There, in the sacrifice of the Mass, grief finds its place, its meaning, its human worth.

All of these thoughts came back to me in the days following the massacre at Virginia Tech. The invocations of community rang empty. The chant "Let's Go Hokies" was chilling. Within 24 hours, the implications of the tragedy for gun legislation were being debated on the airwaves. The grief counselors, we were assured, were being deployed. The round-the-clock voyeurism of the media, the fascination with the grisly details, the cruel expectation of interviewers that those who had just survived this horrific trauma should be expected to give voice to their feelings, all displayed how what Pope John Paul II called "the culture of death" has infected the culture of death without quotation marks. The media frenzy was exploitative, inhumane.

I recalled President Bush's visit to ground zero in New York City four days after 9/11, when the crowd erupted in chants of "U.S.A.! U.S.A.!" as if it were a hockey game, when in fact the president was at that moment standing upon the rubble of a human crematorium. Sadness, we were told in the wake of 9/11 and after the killings in Virginia, is a normal feeling. But sadness in the face of loss is not only normal, but appropriate. It is appropriate to sit with sadness, not to rush onward to feelings of community pride or national pride or happy memories of those we have lost.

These days I like to sit with my sadness at Mass. Only there can I truly be united with my mother. For the fact is that I want my mother back. I want my mother to live forever. And it is only at Mass that this wish of mine finds itself unfrustrated. Because my mother was a loyal daughter of the church, who intended to raise her children in the faith, I came to Christ in the catechumenate of the womb. Under her tutelage, I learned my prayers. By her example, and by her teaching, I came to believe that my desire to live forever with those I love is not a fantasy born of my psychological desires but the only guarantee of my remaining humane. "Our yearnings anticipate landfall," said Augustine.

At Mass, I feel my mother both close to me and at rest in that home prepared for her before the foundation of the world. It is at Mass that the abyss that separates us is obliterated by the "death of death and Hell's destruction," who is Jesus Christ, crucified yet risen. At Mass, and only there, can I discern in my grief the grace of a happy death. A



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Twenty Centuries of Conversation

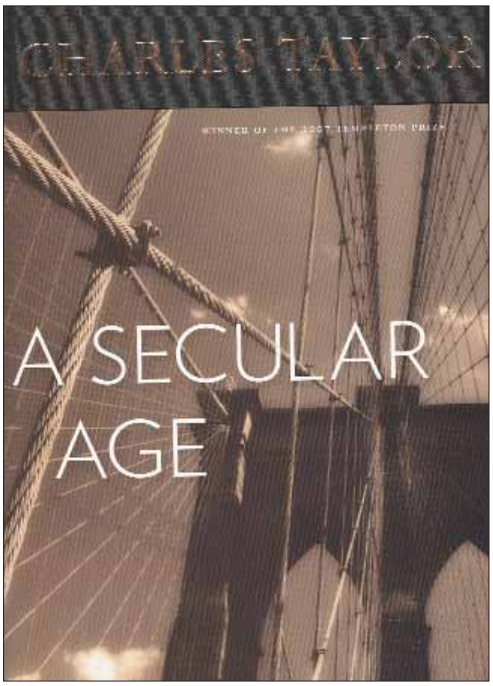
A Secular Age

By Charles Taylor
Harvard Univ. Press. 896p $39.95
ISBN 0674026764

When I was asked to review Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age*, I was warned that it was a "doorstop" of a book. Indeed! My advance copy contained 776 pages of text, 75 pages of footnotes and, when finally printed, a 45-page index. The length is essential to the message.

Taylor, for many years a distinguished philosopher at McGill University in Montreal, received the 2007 Templeton Prize, awarded for "discoveries about spiritual realities." Readers of his extensive and influential published work might be somewhat surprised that he should receive an award for "theology." A Catholic, Taylor had until his Gifford Lectures of 1999 scarcely addressed religious issues directly. George Marsden, in a friendly critique, accused him of "tiptoeing" around Christian commitments in his professional work. In *A Secular Age*, Taylor is certainly more forthright about his commitment to Christianity and to its Catholic expression. That said, he insists that faith cannot be approached directly. "Our [present-day] faith is not the acme of Christianity nor is it a degenerate version; it should be open to a conversation that ranges over the whole of the last 20 centuries (and in some ways before)." Twenty centuries of conversation and then some demands a doorstop.

A prevailing temptation in covering centuries is to create narratives of fortunate progress or disastrous decline: the triumph of rationality and science, the loss of faith from some Golden Age (a medieval synthesis of high theology and grand cathedrals). Taylor presents no such directional narrative; he describes radical change while totting up gains and loss. Our present condition, he concludes, is indeed "a secular age," from which there is no return. He offers possible definitions of the "secular": the disconnect between religion and public life, a broad loss of belief and the existence of multiple and powerful alternate nonreligious scenarios for life. These three senses of "secular" are distinct: religion could disappear from the public square yet remain powerful for private life; religious belief could diminish in the population to marginal, eccentric reality; religious belief could remain compelling but in a cultural milieu in which its legitimacy was challenged by significant alternative scenarios it could not avoid or reject outright. It is this last sense of "secular" that Taylor explores as it exists in most of Europe and America.



Avoiding progress-and-decline narratives, Taylor develops a thick description of the radical changes that have occurred in our culture over the last 500 years. Before 1500 our current secular world picture would have been virtually incomprehensible. Earlier people, going as far back as human societies existed, lived in an "enchanted world." (Vast numbers of people outside the North Atlantic sphere of culture continue to live in such a world.) Individuals in an enchanted world live as "porous" selves. At its most imaginative, the self is beset by outside powers (spirits, demons, gods) that direct it for good or ill. In a more mundane register, individuals are defined by the given world into which they are born: son of Jan, daughter of Lauren, vassal of lord and king. From 1500 to roughly 1800, a new world and a new self come into being. The self is the "buffered self," an independent being who views the world "from a far distance." Descartes offers the clearest example of a buffered self that withdraws into inner rationality, from which point it constructs a world. Technical philosophic obsession since Descartes with "the mind/body" problem or the "nature of the external world" is a byproduct of the buffered self.

What caused the emergence of the buffered self? Taylor is at great pains to reject "the subtraction theory," which holds that after 1500 science and rationality banished ghosts and gods, thus liberating the self. The story is much more complex. The buffered self emerges from a broad reconstruction of what Taylor calls "the social imaginary," a view of self and world for which a developing "cosmic imaginary" often is alleged to be the ground. The social imaginary of the buffered self offers humans the freedom to create a social world. While one might link the free self to everything from science to the Reformation, Taylor locates the root of this self as far back as the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 and its decree for yearly auricular confession.

The buffered self of the enchanted world found salvation from something other: a shrine, a holy relic, the prayers of holy monks. These places, things and persons existed in a higher world, a special place, an eternal time from which one gained salvation. Decreeing that all Christians should confess yearly suggested that by their own actions they might enter something like the holiness of the saints. Everyone was to be fully Christian. Repeated reform movements in the Middle Ages sought to convert the mass of ordinary folk: the preaching of the

The Reviewers

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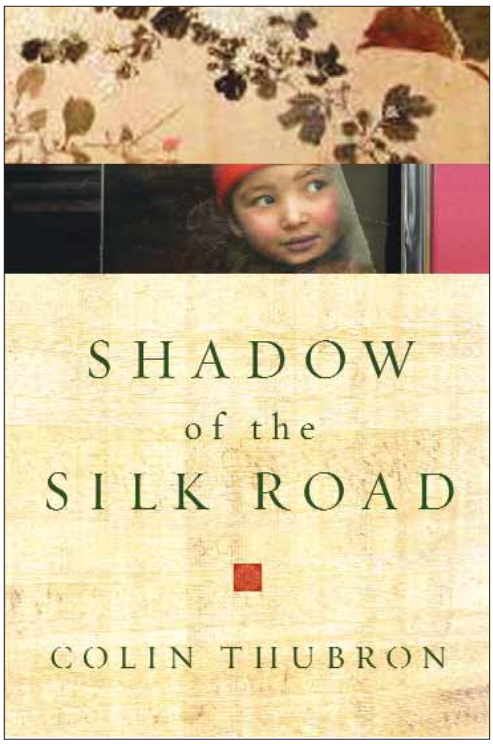
Peter Heinegg is a professor of English at Union College, Schenectady, N.Y.

Dominicans, the translation of the Bible into the vernacular. The Reformation caps this movement, affirming the priesthood of all believers and the acceptability of the ordinary state of life: no celibate monks, no vows of poverty. The distinction between higher states and the ordinary is dissolved.

The emphasis on self-effort instead of participation in the special virtues of saints and shrines created a dilemma for Christianity. If ordinary persons are urged to become fully Christian, is the Christian sense of fulfillment just too high? Will the meaning of fulfillment, then, be lowered to accommodate "domestic goods" like financial security and—more problematic still—sexuality?

Dealing with the self-help dilemma is a key to understanding various ideologies of the buffered self and the negative reaction to those views. Rather than employing the subtraction theory (science disproves religion), Taylor argues that rejection of the moral assumptions of the enchanted world precipitated change. Monks were not "higher"; they were fanatics who denigrated the needs of ordinary human fulfillment. Instead of flagellation and self-denial, the self was to be affirmed—a free rational being could seek a fulfilled life here and now. The buffered self, freed from the particularist ties of the enchanted world (family, lord, sect) was able to act universally, dispassionately and reasonably.



The reasonable bargaining of contract theory binds states. If everyone acts in his or her rational self-interest, the "invisible hand" of the market will produce economic benefit for all. If contract and economics seem too cold to explain morality, various thinkers of the period suggested a natural benevolence in the human breast. The concatenation of moral, political, economic and, yes, cosmic views underpin the buffered self and constitute what we—and 18th-century *philosophes*—call the Enlightenment.

By the end of the 18th century, sensitive souls began to think there was something missing in the quite reasonable social imaginary of the buffered self. The clearest sign of problems can be found in various "romantic" movements. For Wordsworth, "the world is too much with us...getting and spending, we lay waste our powers." Something more than ordinary, practical, quite "rational" fulfillment was desired. "Great God! I'd rather be/ A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn...." The buffered self fit easily into an immanent world of worldly goods. Was there no sense of transcendence, something higher? Romanticism and its 21st-century progeny were and remain explosive for the immanent, ordered world of "getting and spending."

Taylor adopts the metaphor of the nova, an exploding star, for the anti-Enlightenment cultural manifestations of the 19th century. In the 20th century we have a supernova of malign (Nazism), benign (art) and banal (crystals) attempts to relocate a sense of transcendence. Our secular age, therefore, presents a four-cornered contestation of worldviews, each with considerable moral energy: secular humanism of the buffered self, transcendence of the ordinary in the heroic anti-rational self (a Nietzschean view), an immanent transcending self (the "religion" of art or nature) and a transcendent self toward God (traditional religion). These four positions align themselves in all manner of present-day combinations and conflicts.

A Secular Age is an extraordinarily important work because of its deep historical sensibility and acute philosophic perceptions. Taylor's understandings are absolutely crucial in considering the place of Catholic Christianity in a secular age. Pope Benedict XVI has made "secularism" the overall sin of the Western culture. Taylor would surely disagree, since he believes that many of the strands after and beyond the enchanted world of medieval high Catholicism are genuine moral advances for humanity.

If there have been gains through secularism, there have also been distinct losses, and the church may well position herself against spiritual and moral decline. What will not work, however, is preaching a simple "addition theory"—just put God back in the picture. Countering one simplistic subtraction with simplistic addition is no advance. To be heard, the church will have to abandon "a longstanding obsession...to nail down [issues] with ultimate, unattainable and finally self-destructive precision." Nothing short of the great historical conversation that Taylor calls for and in large part realizes will establish a place for Christian belief in a "secular age." ***Dennis O'Brien***

Traveler From an Antique Land

Shadow of the Silk Road

By Colin Thubron
HarperCollins. 363p $25.95
ISBN 978061231728

Imagine a trek across many lands—from Xian in central China through Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey and finally Antakya (Antioch) on the Mediterranean—by rattletrap buses, primitive trains, taxis, hired cars and trucks, one brief plane ride and endless hikes from scores of stopping points along the Silk Road, or what's left of it. For the travel writer Colin Thubron, the journey—recounted in *Shadow of the Silk Road*—took

about eight months. He started in 2003, broke the trip during the fighting in northern Afghanistan (as we gather from references to the SARS pandemic and the future election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad), then resumed a year later from the same spot.

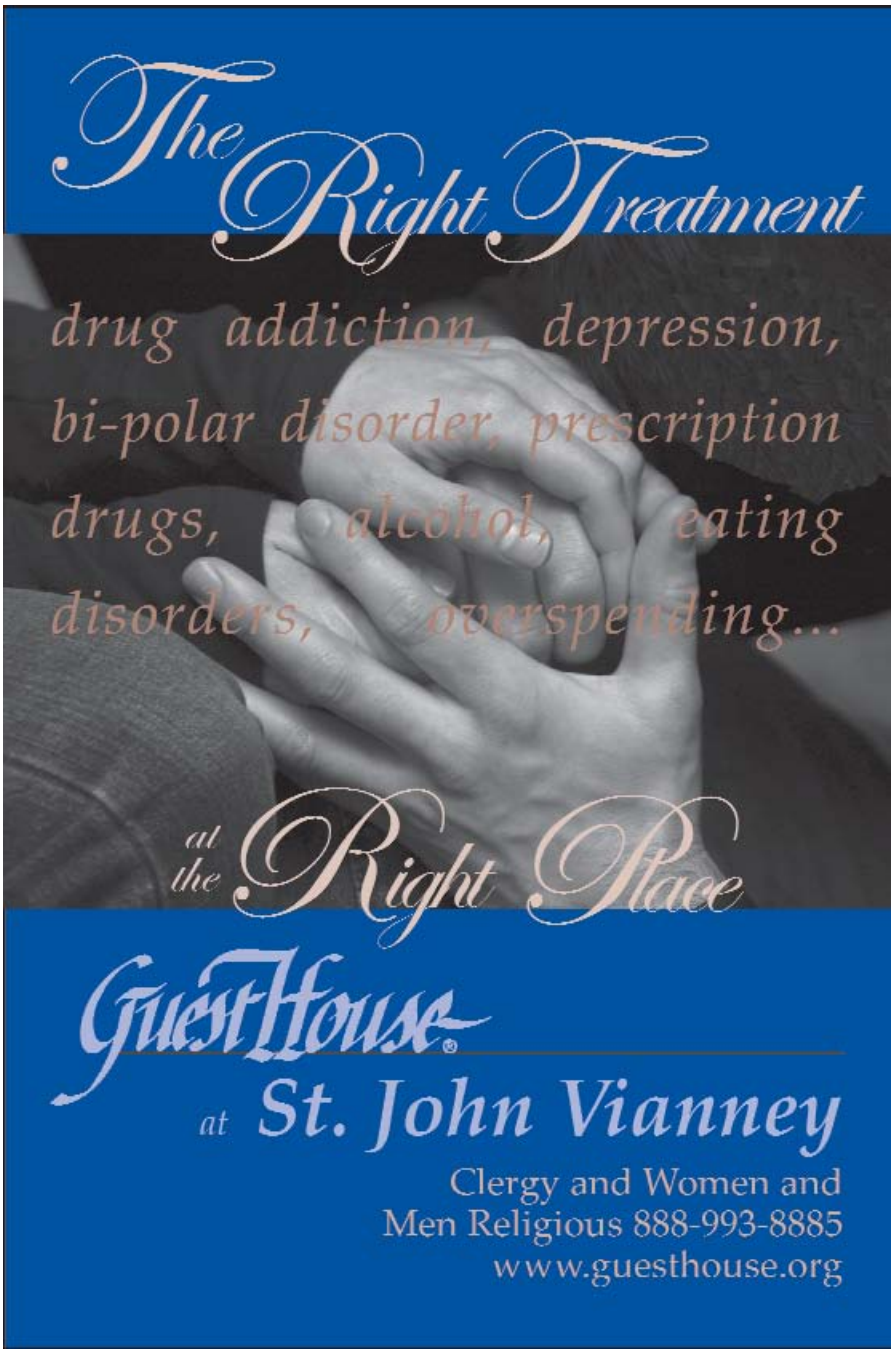
But Thubron is elusive: *Shadow of the Silk Road* cites no dates except ancient ones; and we learn next to nothing about the author's private life or personal history (except that he owns a flat in London and makes one cellphone call in the entire trip to an unnamed female "partner"). He offers reams of references, some of them arcane, to history, archaeology, exotic literature and religion, but he never cites a source. He carries no camera and provides no pictures, though he (or his editor) does, thank heaven, supply four helpful maps to retrace his route.

Now in his 60s (he hints), Thubron is a gifted travel writer in the classic tradition of Charles Doughty, Sir Richard Burton, T. E. Lawrence and Robert Byron. He speaks passable Mandarin and better Russian (see his *In Siberia*); and he has done many years of legwork (having visited a number of the sites long before) and homework for this climactic traverse of over 7,000 miles. His book combines somber meditations over the cradles and graves of civilization, tales of chance encounters with an astonishingly varied, though not necessarily colorful, collection of strangers and postcards from places one can scarcely imagine. And all this in a style that is dense, allusive, painterly, rich and exquisite—alas, often too rich and exquisite by half. This travel account is at once unforgettable and a bit irritating.

The term Silk Road is, first of all, a phrase coined by the German geographer Ferdinand von Richthofen in 1877 (Thubron carelessly calls him Friedrich and places him in the "19th century"). It is not a single route, but a vast network that once bore traders, warriors, missionaries (Buddhist, Christian and Muslim) and explorers from west to east and back again. Its beginnings are unknown—Chinese silk dating back to 1500 B.C. has been found in tombs in Afghanistan—and its gradual dissolution came in the 15th century with the breakup of the Mongol Empire. In its glory days (ca. 1250-1350) it was fancifully said that a virgin carrying a golden dish could walk undisturbed from China to Turkey.

This is a great subject, and Thubron does it justice. As if to disprove Paul Fussell's melancholy dictum in *Abroad* (1980) that we don't have travel anymore, just tourism, Thubron describes what can only be called a series of excellent adventures, spending nights, for example, in monastery guest houses, Uighur hotels, caravanserais, Kyrgyz cabins and village houses or huts in the back of beyond (did he even once use a credit card?), climbing mountains, dodging crooked officials, following in the footsteps of a host of heroic travelers, from Alexander the Great to Marco Polo to Freya Stark, while hiding his dollars in an empty insect repellent bottle.

As a fair-skinned foreigner, Thubron naturally drew much attention and wound up having all kinds of bizarre, affecting conversations, which are the best thing in the book. Muslims try to convert him. Downtrodden women air their grief. Uighurs want to complain about persecution, cultural and otherwise, by the Chinese (a Chinese revisionist historian



startlingly tells him, "You know, in China we have no tradition of respect for human life. It's simply not in our past"). Iranians rail against wretched misrule by the mullahs (though one man cheers the public execution of homosexuals). Azeris blast the Iranians. Thubron hears nothing about the Iraq war except curses on America and England—until he runs into some Kurds. Only in Bukhara does he meet with some old acquaintances, an eccentric painter and his English-teacher wife—the closest thing to an intimate moment in the whole trip.

By and large, Thubron is more interested in the dead, or rather their tombs: the legendary Yellow Emperor in Huangling; Tamerlane the Great in Samarkand; Ismail, founder of the Assassins, in Mazinan, Iran (maybe); the Imam Reza in Meshed (where Thurbon sneaks into the sacred precincts); Omar Khayyam in Nishapur; even the Ayatollah Khomeini in Tehran. The poetic possibilities of such monuments, as Percy B. Shelley showed in his poem "Ozymandias," are limitless; and since so many of the graves belong to kings and other agents of cruel vanished empires, they serve both as a launching pad for snows-of-yesteryear laments and as a link to the presence of brutal contemporary empires spreading misery all over Asia.

Thubron is an absolute master of the plangent, wistful cadence ("slowly the fields thinned and the hills turned to unclothed dust," "as the wind sifted the dunes around the martyr's grave." "Sometimes young women murmur here the tangle of their own hearts.") This is all fine, as far as it goes; but most readers will prefer Thubron's far fewer moments of grim emergencies (a four-hour anesthesia-free root-canal in Maragheh, Iran), or his comic fantasy on a warning sign at a hotel in Lanzhou, China:

> This meticulous list turned vandalism into recreation. Wallpaper stains could cost you $5 per square foot, and carpet stains $10 (cleanable) $50 (serious). I could not help imagining some peasant bull in this flimsy china shop, pocketing a basin plug ($5) and defacing some pictures (I sympathised, $3-$8), then losing control and hanging on the luggage rack ($80), and breaking down the door ($120) before smashing the lavatory ($250) and surrendering to the police in the lobby.

Oh well. Armchair travelers are at the mercy of their guide; and, despite his purple passages and brooding obsession with ruins, Thubron is a more than capable one. *Shadow of the Silk Road* serves up lavish feasts of information (on the spectacular history of silk, for instance), casual insights (about the Chinese "laughing Buddha" versus the more austere and politically explosive Tibetan version) and sweeping historical vistas (how the DNA from Crassus' defeated Roman legions lives on today in Chinese hamlets). It's a heady brew—perhaps best consumed in tandem with Rory Stewart's *The Places In Between* (2006), a gritty, stripped-to-the-skin account of a hair-raising trek through Afghanistan. These Brits really know the territory. ***Peter Heinegg***

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Letters

A Step Backward?

The comments of Anthony J. Cernera and Rabbi Eugene Korn in "The Latin Liturgy and the Jews" (10/8) are a perceptive and welcome caution against the ever-lurking danger of anti-Semitism in prayer and worship, and a warning that the insights of *Nostra Aetate* and subsequent magisterial statements must be appropriated by every generation. But they and most commentators on the pope's letter *Summorum Pontificum* do not stress what may be the most deleterious effect of the document. Simply put, the riches of the Old Testament will no longer be opened up to those celebrating or attending regularly the Tridentine Mass. The missal of 1962, like its predecessor, the missal of 1570, contained only 1 percent of the readings from the Old Testament; and these were limited either to snippets from the psalms in the Graduale or in the Holy Week readings.

Yet the Second Vatican Council's "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy" states clearly: "The treasures of the Bible are to be opened up more lavishly, so that richer fare may be provided for the faithful at the table of God's word. In this way a more representative portion of the holy scriptures will be read to the people in the course of a prescribed number of years" (No. 51). The postconciliar "General Instruction of the Roman Missal" (Nos. 318-20) implemented this directive by prescribing three readings: one from the Old Testament, followed by a responsorial psalm; one from apostolic writings; and a Gospel reading—all arranged in a three-year cycle. For the first time the profound religious insights and stunning language of the Old Testament were part of Catholic worship.

As late as 2001, in the preface to the document of the Biblical Commission titled *The Jewish People and Their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible*, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger warned against neglecting the Old Testament both in itself and as an indispensable resource for understanding the New Testament. The restoration of the Tridentine liturgy means that the great narratives of the Exodus, the struggles for the land, the ringing outcries of the prophets against injustice, along with the joyous praise of God and plaintive cries for help in the Psalms will no longer be heard in many Catholic churches. This is surely the deepest affront to the Jewish people, silencing their sacred writings, and a major obstacle to any genuine interreligious dialogue.

John R. Donahue, S.J.
Baltimore, Md.

Remembering a Pioneer

On reading "The Latin Liturgy and the Jews" (10/8), I was disappointed to see the reference to the Missal of John XXIII without any note that it was Blessed John who insisted that the Jewish people be referred to as "the first to hear the word of God, that they continue to grow in the love of his name." While Pope John Paul II made many strides, both forward and back, he seems often to be noted by the less informed members of the Roman Catholic community as the only pope worth remembering. Blessed John's promulgation of the Missal of 1962 was a first step in the renewal and reform of the liturgy of the church. His contributions throughout his long and blessed life include his tireless efforts on behalf of those who were condemned by the Holocaust, those oppressed by Communism and those misunderstood by an unenlightened and fearful church.

(Rev.) John R. Ortman
Romeo, Mich.

'In Remembrance of Me'

"A Dinosaur Ponders the Latin Mass," by Bishop Emil C. Wcela, (10/8) is the best article I have read yet on the subject. His logic, examples and reasoning are superb. There is only one image I would like to add. Can you imagine Jesus at the Last Supper turning his back on the apostles and speaking in a language they did not understand? Rather than distancing himself from them, he knelt down and washed their feet and told us to do likewise. It is astounding that people can think the Latin Mass was the "best way," when Jesus himself told us to imitate him.

Denise Anderson
Grosse Pointe Woods, Mich.

Nourishment Needed

I couldn't help thinking, as I read Bishop Wcela's ironic commentary ("A Dinosaur Ponders the Latin Mass," 10/8), that even dinosaurs need nourishment and that they have received very little from the church for the last 40 years. I am a relatively youthful dinosaur at 56, but coming back to the church in midlife, I was struck by how impoverished the liturgy was. By comparison to what? To what I was raised in, of course. Is it merely nostalgia that drives me to want to hear the words *Surrexit*, *non est hic* on Easter Sunday, rather than "He ain't here," or "He's gone away" or "Whatever"?

Am I to believe that the miserable vernacular renderings that we now endure are the best the church has to offer a generation better educated than its (largely immigrant) predecessor, a group that somehow found meaning and solace in the Tridentine rite? A liturgy with no mystery is about as unsatisfying as one that is incomprehensible. The intellectual demands of church Latin were hardly insuperable. I thought it sounded like Italian. Maybe my grandparents' generation thought so too. Which is why it bothered with Mass to begin with.

Richard J. Salvucci
San Antonio, Tex.

The Responsibilities of War

In "The Rights of Detainees" (9/24) the author begs the question of whether terrorist attacks are criminal activity or acts of war. The president considers us to be at war with jihadists, and the scope of the conflict is certainly consistent with war. He could have avoided this ambiguity by an actual declaration of war (through Congress), but we have not felt bound by that convention for some time now. Criminals deserve habeas corpus, but enemy soldiers, the jihadists, should be killed in battle or taken prisoner for the length of the conflict. Terror is now a

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worldwide war, not the actions of mobsters.

Richard Warren
Springfield, Ore.

Trust, Not Clarity

In his essay "Godforsakenness" (10/1), John F. Kavanaugh, S.J., gives us the essence of the character of Mother Teresa in a few short paragraphs, providing a profound message. Faith is not a crutch that one can lean on, nor a matter of clarity in the direction of our lives. Even as Jesus hung in agony on his cross, he had the one essential support that he needed: trust.

If we seek clarity in our lives, we are doomed to disappointment. But as we discern our need to trust, we will be given the grace to sustain us.

Jack Artale
Doylestown, Pa.

Setting the Record Straight

Regarding your review of *Nuns: A History of Convent Life* (7/30): to say the nuns' talent blossomed in strict cloister is not really true for Sor Juana Inéz de la Cruz in Mexico. The concept of cloister in the Spanish orders of nuns at that time was not the strict observance we today expect. Sor Juana had a running debate with her bishop in the local newspaper, for example. Her literary accomplishments were remarkable for any educated woman of the time, and she did not willingly clothe her talents with cloister constraints until forced to do so. And St. Teresa of Ávila reformed the Carmelites, but she spent a fair amount of time "out and about," sometimes directed to do so.

The review, and maybe the book, does an injustice to the complexities of their situations.

Frances M. O'Hare
Weston, Mass.

Pessimistic About Peace

Thanks for **America**'s several essays on Jerusalem (8/13). All were illuminating. I wish I could find in them more grounds for optimism.

If the very reasonable presentations made by Daniel Levy and Ghaith al-Omari were at the core of discussion, one could hope. However, it is Gerald Meister who speaks from within the Israeli government establishment, and his argument gives little ground for thinking that the Israelis will give up any portion of Jerusalem. His case, almost wholly biblical and religious, is virtually unanswerable in rational terms.

Undoubtedly, there are comparable rigidities on the Palestinian side. Nonetheless, two points can be made. First, the Israelis are the foremost recipients of American foreign aid. We Americans enable their policies and behavior. Second, it is in fact hard to know the nature and extent of intransigence on the Palestinian side, not to say to achieve a genuinely lasting peace, so long as Israeli and American policy is to exclude Hamas and others we do not like from dialogue and negotiation.

Ed McCarthy
Buxton, Me.

America

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Humility in Prayer

Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time (C), Oct. 28, 2007

Readings: Sir 35:12-14, 16-18; Ps 34:2-3, 17-19, 23; 2 Tm 4:6-8, 16-18; Lk 18:9-14

"Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted" (Lk 18:14)

ART BY TAD DUNNE

TODAY WE CONSIDER the second part of Jesus' second instruction about prayer in Luke 18. The parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector reminds us that God hears the prayers of some surprising persons and that we all must approach God in prayer with humility.

The Old Testament passage from Sirach 35 summarizes the recurrent biblical conviction that God gives special consideration to the prayers of the oppressed and needy and of those who seem least important in society, the orphans and widows. Psalm 34 affirms that the Lord is close to the brokenhearted and crushed in spirit and hears the cries of the poor. The parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector makes a similar point, that God hears the prayers of some very surprising persons. To appreciate this parable, we need to place the two characters in their historical and social context.

In the Gospels the Pharisees often appear as negative characters. They are the most persistent opponents of Jesus, and he often criticizes their attitudes and behavior. In English today the word "Pharisee" can refer to a hypocrite or a religious fraud, someone who pretends to be devout and observant but is not so in reality. In Jesus' time and place, however, people would have heard the word "Pharisee" differently. The Pharisees were members of a prominent Jewish religious movement. Many of them were in fact devout and observant. They were also the progressives of their day, seeking to adapt the biblical laws to the demands of everyday life. They gathered regularly for prayer and study, and their meals together celebrated their communal identity and religious commitment. Of all the Jewish groups of Jesus' time, Jesus was perhaps closest to them; he shared an agenda with them and sometimes agreed with them (about the resurrection of the dead, for example). Those who first heard Jesus' parable would have considered the Pharisee as a positive example of learning and piety.

In Jesus' time and place, the tax collector in the parable would have been regarded as the opposite of the Pharisee. Taxes were usually let out for bid. The Roman government official or the agent for Herod Antipas might specify the amount to be collected from the inhabitants of a certain area. A tax collector would then contract to pay the specified amount to the government; what he collected above that amount was his to keep. So in Jesus' day tax collectors were suspect on two counts. They were suspected of dishonesty by overcharging the people and keeping excess profits for themselves. They were also suspected of being collaborators and instruments of the Roman occupiers.

These two men went up to the temple area to pray. Whose prayer was heard by God? The Pharisee's prayer was not heard because he exalted himself. His prayer was so focused on himself, his superiority to the tax collector and his own spiritual accomplishments that it was hardly a prayer at all. It was more self-congratulation than prayer. By contrast, the tax collector, whatever his failings may have been, knew who God is and who he is before God. He prayed sincerely, "O God, be merciful to me a sinner."

Whose prayer does God hear? If our prayer becomes an exercise in self-congratulation like that of the Pharisee, our prayer will not be heard, because it is not a prayer at all. If our prayer celebrates the justice and mercy of God, however, if it acknowledges our dependence on God, our sinfulness and our need for God's mercy, then God will hear our prayer, because it is genuine prayer made in a spirit of humility proper to us as God's creatures.

During this next week we will observe All Saints Day and All Souls Day. Today's selection from 2 Timothy 4 describes how a great saint, Paul the apostle, faced life and death. Paul compares his impending death first to pouring out a libation or drink offering, that is, as a sacrifice freely offered to God. Then he evokes the images of an athletic contest ("I have competed well") and a race ("I have finished the race") and affirms that he has kept the faith.

In the face of death, Paul remained confident and hopeful. He was convinced of the truth of the Gospel that he preached, and he believed that eternal life had already begun for him at his baptism into Jesus' death and resurrection. He could disregard his condemnation by a Roman judge, because he regarded God as the only real judge and trusted that the Lord Jesus Christ would rescue him and bring him safely to his heavenly home. In life and in death, Paul provides a model for all saints and would-be saints, for all who approach God in humility and hope.

Daniel J. Harrington

Praying With Scripture

- What was wrong with the Pharisee's prayer? What was right about the tax collector's prayer?
- What surprises do you find in Jesus' two instructions on prayer (see Lk 11:1-13 and 18:1-14)?
- What allowed Paul to be confident and hopeful in the face of death?

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