

America

Nov. 19, 2007

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Darfur A First-Person Account

John H. Ricard

Also:

When Church Teaching Meets Wall Street

Mary Ellen Foley McGuire



I WAS NEVER a member of the so-called process school of philosophy, but nonetheless Alfred North Whitehead, the mathematician and logician who inspired that approach, is one of my favorite thinkers. The scholasticism of process philosophy put me off, and, to be honest, I find metaphysics—"cosmology" to the Whiteheadians—too speculative for my practical turn of mind. I drew insight from books in which Whitehead anticipated or distilled his vision, like *Science and the Modern World*, *Modes of Thought* and *Essays in Science and Philosophy*. Even more I have found myself over the years drawing on works that describe fundamental human experiences, especially *Religion in the Making* and *Adventures of Ideas*. The latter was his philosophy of history and civilization.

A phenomenon that preoccupied Whitehead was the life and death of civilizations. He believed that a particular type of civilization had only a limited life-span. It could repeat itself only for a restricted period of time before facing decline. Only a rapid transition to a new "ideal" can save a civilization from decay.

My gut feeling is that for the United States the 2008 elections will be that kind of moment. We stand at a historic turning point, where "stale repetition" of worn-out ideas (and practices) will hasten America's decline, or reinvigoration with new ideas and a new sensibility will allow its rebirth.

I worry because the leading candidates of both parties seem to offer us government-as-usual at a time when continuity could not be more problematic. Sen. Hillary Clinton refuses to put any meaningful distance between herself and the hostile foreign policies of the Bush administration; and Rudolph W. Giuliani, the former mayor of New York, threatens to be even more bellicose than the incumbent, if such a thing is possible. Even the Democratic Congress, elected in the hope of effective opposition, seems captive to the same mentality, unable even to put itself on record against the disastrous policies of the White House. Their calculation seems to be, as James Traub suggested in the *New York Times Magazine* for Nov. 4, that Americans are neither ready nor able to relinquish their fear.

The public's thrall to fear is certainly a consideration for any politician. The times, however, call for extraordinary leadership. The miscalculations and the

obstinacy of the administration have bequeathed a Pandora's box of troubles, not just to the next president but to the next generation: restoring the constitutional balance between civil rights and security, respecting the rights of foreign nationals, reinstating checks and balances in government, reviving the nation's standing in world affairs and righting the imbalances in the national economy. In addition, health care needs a real fix, and Social Security needs a plan for sustaining its long-term viability.

Correcting the failed policies of the past seven years would be a daunting agenda for any politician, but the next president will also face an array of global challenges that will not wait. Not to address them is to court disaster or, at best, rapid decline. Above all, a new international regime to curb global warming and reduce its worst effects needs to be worked out. Just as important is re-establishing a system for nuclear nonproliferation. Tensions with Russia, expansion of the terrorist threat and instability in

Pakistan, not to mention the Iranian nuclear program, all

heighten the risk of nuclear catastrophe. As globalization advances, devising systems for managing the world economy will be a challenge; and outfitting the American economy for the global marketplace will likewise be a formidable test.

None of these challenges are susceptible to the solutions of conventional wisdom. They all require imaginative thinking and inspiring, resolute leadership. This is an epochal election, in which what passes for "experience" in American politics will count for very little. Yes, powers of persuasion, coalition-building skills and old-time charisma will be enormous assets in addressing so large an agenda; but catering to the party base, "triangulation," the Christmas-stocking approach to legislative initiatives with a small gift for everyone and tough talk to assuage the ill-defined fears of the masses, while they may win elections, will set the nation on a downward slope of decline and the world spinning into greater instability. America's renewal and the future of a globalized world depend on the advent of a new generation of American leadership that understands the future belongs to those who will guide the public on a historic "adventure of ideas."

Drew Christiansen, S.J.

Of Many Things

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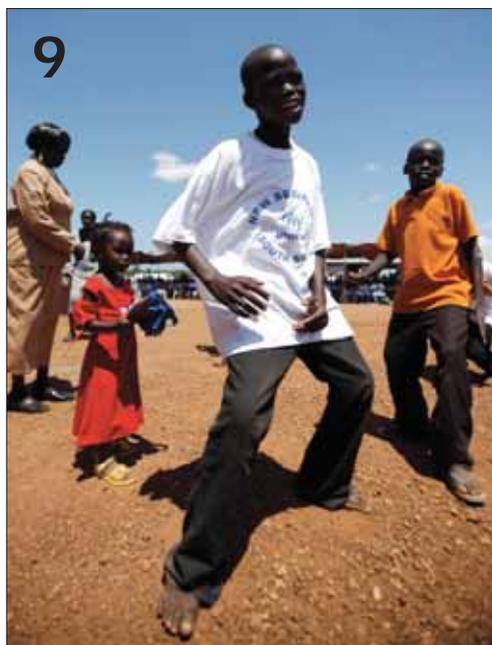
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Cover art African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) peacekeepers prepare to leave for patrol in Muhajiriya town, South Darfur, on Oct. 10, 2007. Reuters/Stuart Price.



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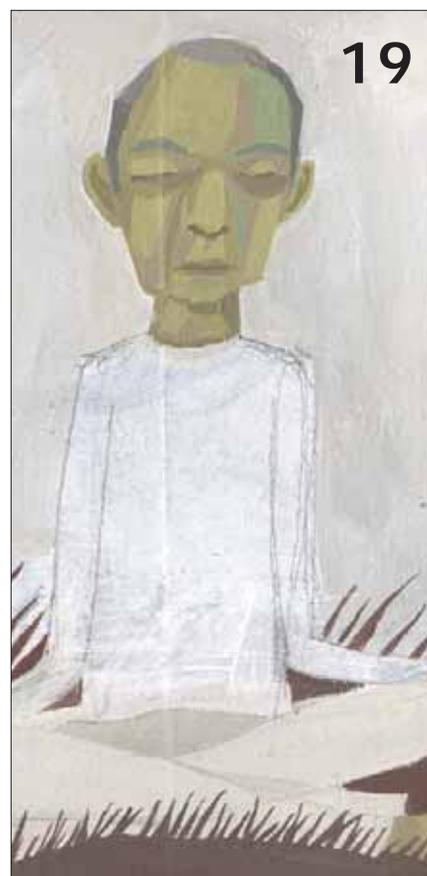
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Hollywood's Drama

Strike! After an 11th-hour bargaining session between representatives of the Writers Guild of America and the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers failed, the Writers Guild called a general strike on Nov. 5 for the 12,000 scribes covered by the guild. It has been almost 20 years since the writers last walked out, a 22-week marathon that cost the industry half a billion dollars. This time the stakes are even higher. The entertainment industry has expanded rapidly in the past two decades, and the defense and aerospace industries that fueled Los Angeles' growth have collapsed, leaving entertainment with ever-larger economic influence on the region's 13 million residents.

"The fight is never about grapes or lettuce," Cesar Chavez once said of his work organizing California's farm workers, "it is always about people." It may be hard to feel the same sympathy for Hollywood hipsters as for laborers facing harsh conditions in California's fields. The labor troubles writers face, however, are also primarily about people, not just famous wordsmiths but hundreds of thousands of others whose livelihood depends on the labor and capital of the entertainment industry. This fight also has repercussions for organized labor elsewhere in the United States. The United Auto Workers were recently forced to accept painful rollbacks of employee benefits after short strikes against G.M. and Chrysler. In an era when management triumphs over labor at every turn, could the most gripping drama in years come not from Hollywood's pens, but from its pickets?

From Great Silence

Very little is known about the Mexican folk artist Martín Ramírez. After immigrating to the United States and working a series of railroad jobs, he was institutionalized in 1931 and spent the next 30 years in mental hospitals, deaf and by all signs mute. He was ultimately diagnosed as a schizophrenic. Ramírez composed most of his work while in the hospital, where later in life he was given his own space and materials. Probably many of his pictures were thrown away, but some remain thanks to a psychologist who recognized his talent. A collection of his work—featuring his signature renderings of trains, caballeros and Madonnas—is on display at the Milwaukee Museum of Art through Jan. 13, 2008.

Self-taught, Ramírez had no connection with the out-

side world, much less to the art world that traditionally nurtures such talent. His story is a reminder that art can flourish in the most unlikely of places, and that the mentally ill can have rich imaginative lives. Ramírez reportedly never spoke a word while he was in the hospital, yet in his art he found a means to communicate, and 50 years later his drawings—especially his towering, mesmerizing Madonnas—still invite contemplation. In an earlier age he might have been appreciated as a visionary, a man who despite his suffering found consolation in silence and work, and through his art offered the same to others. That he was locked away until his death in 1963 is an indictment of society's meager ability to engage the mentally ill.

Women and Human Freedom

Five religious sisters of the Poor Clare community in Raseli, in the Indian state of Madhya Pradesh, were dragged, beaten and had their clothes torn on Oct. 25 as they returned to their convent from a family rosary prayer gathering at the home of one of their Catholic employees. The attackers were members of a fundamentalist Hindu organization that favors *sati* (the ritual suicide of widows). All five sisters were hospitalized, one with a broken leg. Another sister required seven stitches to her head. Their offense, according to the fundamentalists, was encouraging conversion to Christianity.

The Catholic archbishop of Indore, Leo Cornelio, spoke out strongly against the attack and the prevailing climate of intolerance: "We have been suffering silently, but it looks as if the fundamentalist organizations take that as a weakness on our part. It is an attack on women and human freedom. India is a democratic country and this cannot be tolerated; our religious freedom is non-negotiable."

On Nov. 1, Christians held a massive candlelight rally, and that evening a 27-member delegation led by Archbishop Cornelio met with the state governor to inform him of the serious situation and to ask for an inquiry into the attacks on the Christian community, on Muslims and on members of the Dalit caste. Under the circumstances, defending the rights of all minorities demonstrates the church's full commitment to human rights. It is incumbent on the government to fulfill its duty to protect the rights of all.

Intolerance and violence are equal opportunity offenders. This attack by Indians on Indians, on Indian women in particular, demands an outcry of protest from political leaders and from potential investors.

An Appreciation

Two Red Hats

AMERICAN CATHOLICS had good reason for satisfaction on the morning of Oct. 17 upon hearing that two of our archbishops were selected by Pope Benedict XVI to join the College of Cardinals: John Patrick Foley and Daniel Nicholas DiNardo. Cardinal-designate Foley had learned of his appointment from Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, S.D.B., only the previous morning, after returning from a cataract operation with a pirate's patch still covering his eye. He was in St. Peter's Square on the 17th to hear his name read out by the pope and was chatting with some pilgrims from Poland. They seemed a bit skeptical when he told him that his name was on the list.

Archbishop John P. Foley, who turned 72 on Nov. 11, became pro-grand master of the Knights of the Holy Sepulcher in late June. He had been president of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications for more than 23 years. A native of Philadelphia, he attended both the city's Jesuit high school and college, where he was president of the student body. He studied for the priesthood at St. Charles Seminary and later attended New York's Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1962.

Between stints in the 1960s as a teacher, pastoral minister and assistant editor of Philadelphia's archdiocesan paper, *The Catholic Standard & Times*, he studied in Rome, where he covered the Second Vatican Council from 1963 to 1965. In 1970 he was appointed editor in chief of the paper and was still running it in 1984, when Pope John Paul II named him an archbishop and appointed him head of the Vatican office for social communications. In that office he worked tirelessly to encourage the church's use of the media, undertaking arduous journeys all over the world, finding time when he was at home also to teach at the Pontifical Gregorian University.

Archbishop Foley's presence throughout the world served as a morale booster for those working in difficult situations. He has always remained a most faithful member of the Catholic Press Association, from which he received its highest accolade, the Saint Francis de Sales Award. In his home diocese he is remembered as a star debater, an excellent teacher and a wise and deft editor.

Cardinal-designate Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, a former Vatican official, was born May 23, 1949, in Steubenville, Ohio. He was ordained a priest for

the Pittsburgh Diocese in 1977. From 1984 to 1990 he was a staff member of the Vatican Congregation for Bishops. From 1990 to 1997 he held pastoral posts in the Pittsburgh Diocese, where he taught in the ongoing formation program for priests and was assistant spiritual director at St. Paul Seminary. He was named coadjutor bishop of Sioux City, Iowa, in 1997 and became diocesan bishop there the following year. In Sioux City, he was known for a strong focus on vocations, the strengthening of adult religious education programs, a continued emphasis on the value of Catholic schools and the creation of safe-environment programs for children. He became coadjutor of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston in 2004 and head of that archdiocese in February upon the resignation of Archbishop Joseph A. Fiorenza.

Archbishop DiNardo attended the Jesuit-run Bishop's Latin School in Pittsburgh and remained an active alumnus even after the school was closed. He received bachelor's and master's degrees from The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., where he is currently a member of the board of trustees. He also received a licentiate in theology from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome and a degree in patristics from the Augustinianum in Rome. During his time in Rome, he also served as director of Villa Stritch, the residence for U.S. priests working at the Vatican, and taught a theology seminar in methodology at the Gregorian University.

THE RECOGNITION OF JOHN FOLEY and his enormous contributions to the world of the Catholic media is a matter of special gratification to the editors of **America**. To have a knowledgeable former working editor in the College of Cardinals means that a man who fully understands the challenges of communications is now in an even more prominent position to share his wisdom and experience. The elevation of Daniel DiNardo is equally gratifying to his former teachers and to the people he served in Pennsylvania, Iowa and now Texas. All commentators have taken note of Texas as representative of the rich and vibrant Catholic tradition in the American southwest. Daniel DiNardo, with his Roman experience, brings a vision of the whole church to his people and will in turn speak of them to the universal church. We offer these men and their new colleagues all congratulations and our prayers.

Dennis M. Linehan, S.J.

Women Foundation Heads Meet With Vatican Officials



Representatives of several U.S. and European family foundations gather at the Vatican Oct. 18 for meetings with church officials regarding issues of women and the church.

A group of U.S. and European Catholic lay women representing their family foundations traveled to Rome last month to discuss the role of women in the church with leading Vatican officials. Representatives of the Amaturio Family Foundation, the Mary J. Donnelly Foundation, the Fidel Goetz Foundation, the Loyola Foundation and the Raskob Foundation for Catholic Activities met with five cardinals: Walter Kasper of the Council on Christian Unity, William J. Levada of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Renato Martino of

the Council for Justice and Peace, Giovanni Battista Re of the Congregation for Bishops, and Jean-Louis Tauran of the Council on Interreligious Dialogue, as well as other key officials of those dicasteries. They also met with Archbishop Gianfranco Ravasi and other top officials of the Council for Culture; Dr. Rocio Figueroa, the head of the women's section at the Council on the Laity; Monsignor Pietro Parolin, the under secretary of state for relations with states; and Federico Lombardi, S.J., the general director of Vatican Radio and the

Vatican press secretary.

In each meeting of extended, substantive and cordial conversation, the women expressed their support for the stated desire of Pope Benedict XVI and Secretary of State Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone to elevate more women to positions of leadership in the church. They voiced their concerns regarding the disconnect experienced by many Catholic women who value the church's promotion of women's dignity and rights in the secular sphere, and yet see the limited opportunities women have to offer their talents to the church in leadership positions. The group expressed the need for the promotion of an internal church culture that places high value on the leadership and gifts of women. Appreciative of the warm reception they received in Rome, the women plan to pursue options for collaboration with Vatican departments to advance the role of women in the church.

The meetings were organized by Chantal Goetz of the Fidel Goetz Foundation, which is based in Lichtenstein. She and the other women are longtime colleagues through their membership in Fadica (Foundations and Donors Interested in Catholic Activities), a consortium of some 50 family foundations engaged in Catholic philanthropy. During their visit to Rome, one member of the delegation, Kerry Robinson of the Raskob Foundation, was interviewed on Vatican Radio. Her Oct. 19 interview, entitled "Women of Faith," is available on the Vatican Radio Web site.

Call Reaffirmed for End of Death Penalty and Torture

Christians must work for the abolition of the death penalty and all forms of torture, said Cardinal Renato Martino, president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. "Christians are called to cooperate for the defense of human rights and for the abolition of the death penalty, torture, inhuman or degrading treatment" both in wartime and in times of peace, the cardinal said. "These practices are grave crimes against the human person created in the image of God and a scandal for the human family in the 21st century," he

said. In an Oct. 30 press release, the cardinal's office said he made his statements during a meeting with Sylvie Bukhari-de Pontual, president of the International Federation of Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture. The Rome-based Community or Sant'Egidio and the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty announced Oct. 30 that they would present to the president of the U.N. General Assembly five million signatures on a petition calling for a worldwide moratorium on capital executions.

Public Activism Must Become More Focused

Catholics involved in the public square must above all follow the principles of the common good, though that is a countercultural approach in both politics and contemporary American life, said the chairman of the department of politics at The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. Speaking on Oct. 30 to a gathering of the group Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good, Stephen Schneck, who also heads the university's Life Cycle Institute, a public policy

research program, outlined a five-step agenda for bringing a “common good agenda” to American public policy. “The foundation for Catholic thinking about politics, governance and policy is the idea of the common good,” Schneck said. But that is “a hard notion for contemporary Americans to understand.” And the momentum in American politics “is one accelerating [away] from anything like the common good,” he said. “Let’s remember that ours is a politics where citizens are encouraged—after a terrorist attack—to go shopping.”

Franciscans to Close Nazareth Grotto for Work

The Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land, which coordinates Christian pilgrimage sites, will close the grotto of the Basilica of the Annunciation for four months for conservation work on the grotto’s rock. The work will begin Nov. 10 at the grotto in the basilica’s lower church in Nazareth, Israel.

“There is a constant flow of people walking past the grotto as there [are] a lot of people coming to Israel now, and most of those people go inside the grotto, and that creates a serious problem,” said Brother Ricardo Bustos, the Franciscan superior of the convent of the Most Holy Annunciation at the basilica. The rock of the grotto is very fragile, he said, and even the temperature change within the grotto caused by visitors’ body heat is damaging the rock. Besides, many people touch the rock, Brother Bustos told Catholic News Service. Some people, seeing that the rock is crumbling, help themselves to a chip to “take the grotto home with them,” he said, adding that flash photography is also extremely harmful. Last year a team of experts from Italian universities in Milan, Pisa and Turin began analysis work on the site. The experts said the site must be closed to measure accurately the atmospheric conditions inside the grotto, said Brother Bustos. Depending on the work that needs to be undertaken to strengthen the rock, Franciscans hope that the grotto will be able to be open in time for the feast of the Annunciation, on March 25, he said.

From CNS and other sources.

Cardinal-Designate Installed in Nairobi

Hundreds of people, including Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki, jammed Holy Family Minor Basilica for the installation of Cardinal-designate John Njue, 63, as head of the Archdiocese of Nairobi. The former coadjutor archbishop of Nyeri, who will be made a cardinal Nov. 24 at the Vatican, replaces Archbishop Raphael Ndingi Mwana’a Nzeki, who retired Oct. 6 after leading the archdiocese for 10 years. Archbishop Alain Lebeaupin, the apostolic nuncio to Kenya who presided at the installation, urged local Catholics of various ethnic backgrounds to cooperate with the newly installed archbishop. The nuncio told the cardinal-designate, “You have not been installed for the Catholic faithful only, but for the entire people who happen to be within your pastoral jurisdiction.” In his homily, Cardinal-designate Njue appealed to all Catholics to help him with his pastoral duties. “I will count on you as you count on me,” he said. “With God’s guidance, I will do my best.”

Olympics in China Should Promote Rights, Peace

A Vatican official said he hoped the 2008 Olympic Games in China would help promote international peace and respect for human rights. Archbishop Celestino Migliore, addressing the U.N. General Assembly Oct. 31, said the Vatican views the Olympics as an important moment of dialogue that can help countries bridge political and other differences. “Dialogue and encounter through sport hold great potential in the area of peacebuilding and conflict prevention,” said Archbishop Migliore, the Vatican’s permanent observer to the United Nations. “While the rule of law and justice remain the foundation of durable peace, sport provides the tool for warring factions to come together for a common purpose,” he said. The archbishop noted that Beijing will host the 2008 games, and that the world is already preparing for the event. He said one lesson of the Olympics is that the important thing in life is not the triumph, but the struggle.



POPE BENEDICT XVI MET with King Abdallah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia in the Apostolic Palace of the Vatican on Nov. 6. They discussed interreligious and intercultural dialogue aimed at peaceful and fruitful coexistence between individuals and peoples and the importance of collaboration among Christians, Muslims and Jews for the promotion of peace, justice and spiritual and moral values, especially in support of the family. They also exchanged views on the situation in the Middle East and on the need to find a just solution to the conflicts affecting the region, especially that between Israelis and Palestinians.



A Grim Task

“Why bother with the difficult, dangerous and depressing job of counting the dead in Iraq?”

“**C**OME PLAY WITH US under the blanket, Mama.” I don’t have to be asked twice. I set aside my work, civilian casualty figures for the Iraq war, and join the kids under the tent they’ve made of my grandmother’s afghan. “Tell us again about your grandma,” they ask, and I oblige.

“Your great-grandma was small, but she was very strong,” I begin. Being twerps themselves, they appreciate this. “Mary Isabella Cusimano left school after the fifth grade to work to help her family. She cooked and laughed generously, and crocheted constantly, the work of her hands warming us still, wrapping her great-grandchildren in this cozy crocheted hug...” The wiggling and giggling stops. The kids fall asleep under the trance of a story and the warmth of a blanket. I tuck the afghan around them and return to work.

Unexpectedly, the kids have clarified this grim task for me, counting dead Iraqi civilians. Everyone’s family deserves to be remembered. There are three sets of conflicting, contested numbers. U.S. Gen. Tommy Franks infamously said at the start of the Iraq war, “We don’t do body counts.” This is not true. Every U.S. military death is carefully counted and publicized. Iraqi civilian deaths are not so carefully counted by each military service, and are kept secret. The A.C.L.U. is currently suing the Department of Defense to release these numbers. The Army has

complied, but the other services have not.

Because the U.S. government is not forthcoming with its own, admittedly incomplete, records of Iraqi civilians killed in the war, the Iraq Body Count nongovernmental organization began its work. Using a meticulous and consistent—but seriously flawed—method, Iraq Body Count documents 80,000 Iraqi civilians dead from the war. They count Iraqi civilian war deaths reported in more than one English-language news account.

The third accounting of Iraqi civilian deaths comes from the doctors at the Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health. Using established epidemiological methods, the physicians have conducted in-depth surveys (using native interviewers) of over 1,800 randomly selected Iraqi households. Generalizing the results to the Iraqi population at large, they estimate over 600,000 Iraqi civilians dead from the U.S. invasion and subsequent civil war/violence as of October 2006. By now the numbers are no doubt considerably worse.

This number is criticized as too high to be believed. Some of the most vehement criticism comes from the folks at Iraq Body Count. They argue that the sample is surely not representative; how could the media and authorities miss so much? Easily, any of the students in my “Media and Foreign Policy” class could tell you. Journalists are restricted in their movements because of security concerns, are usually based in Baghdad and under-report events in the rest of the country. Reporting from Iraq is extremely costly in lives and money. International news organizations have drastically cut the number of journalists and amount of reporting from Iraq since the start of the war. So at precisely the time when violence is

increasing, there are fewer news accounts describing it. Journalists tend to cover larger casualty events. But much of the violence in Iraq is dispersed and decentralized. Many killings occur in small numbers over a wide space and over time, precisely the kinds of events that the media tend to under-report. Thus the Iraq Body Count number seriously and systematically under-reports the death toll in Iraq.

However you count it, the death toll in Iraq is horrific. It is easy to despair: over the unnecessary loss of life, the cavalier arrogance of the U.S. administration in the face of such slaughter and the failure of these numbers to dent the U.S. policy process. The administration is more concerned with saving face than saving Iraqis. They justly criticize the Iranian president for failing to acknowledge Jewish civilian deaths in the Holocaust, but they simultaneously fail to acknowledge Iraqi civilian deaths today. Lacking the two-thirds vote needed to override a presidential veto or a Republican filibuster, Congress is unable to change the course of the president’s war significantly.

The civilian casualty figures are not needed to show the war is unjust; the invasion was from the outset not a just war. So why bother with the difficult, dangerous and depressing job of counting the dead if it will not change U.S. policy?

My children reminded me of the answer. We honor the dead by remembering them. This time of year especially, from All Saints Day, All Souls Day, Veteran’s Day, through Thanksgiving, we remember the God-given dignity of those who have gone before us. No government or partisans may erase their intrinsic worth. Conflict-ridden societies devise truth and reconciliation commissions and mechanisms because we cannot build sustainable peace by ignoring uncomfortable facts, like the number of civilians killed and the way they died.

As Catholics we recognize this in our sacraments: first confession, then forgiveness. Truth is a necessary component of reconciliation. We must face what our governments cannot if we are to build peace for our children. The past touches our present and future generations each day, as tangibly as my grandmother’s blanket.

Maryann Cusimano Love

MARYANN CUSIMANO LOVE is professor of international relations at The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. She served on the Council on Foreign Relations Homeland Security/Rethinking Borders Project.

Sudanese children dance during celebrations to mark World Refugee Day on June 20, 2007.

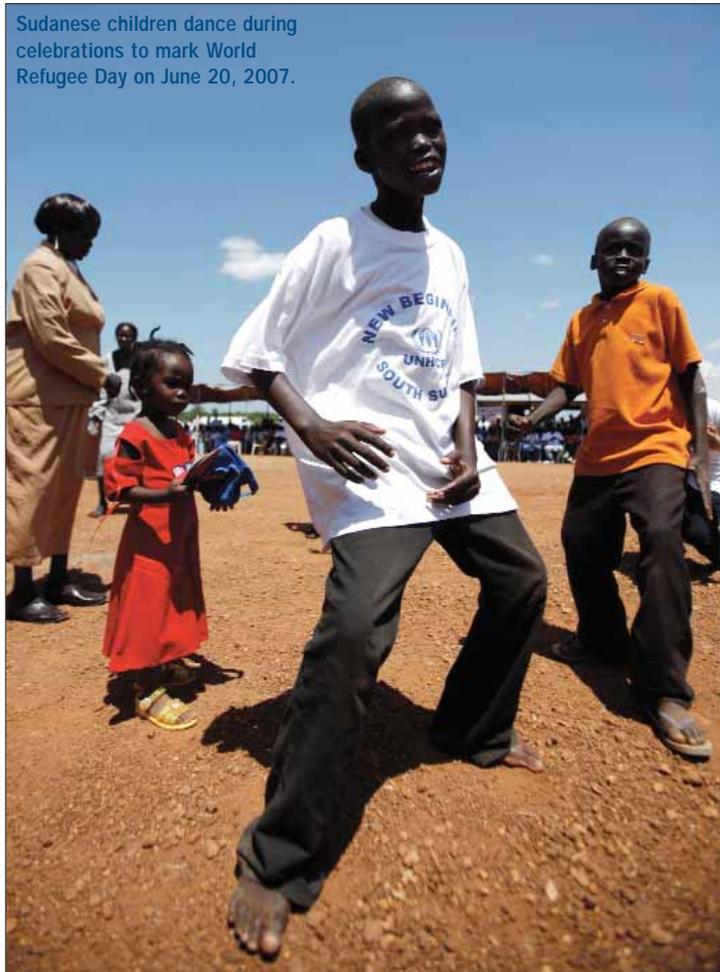


PHOTO: REUTERS/EDWARD OUB

A first-person account

Will Darfur Dance Again?

— BY JOHN H. RICARD —

MY RECENT VISIT TO SUDAN corresponded with the first Sudanese bishops' annual meeting in Khartoum in nearly 20 years that included both northern and southern bishops. The bishops, separated by a long civil war, were again united, and the joy was palpable. After a jubilant open-air Mass, nearly 5,000 people gathered outside the

THE MOST REV. JOHN H. RICARD, S.S.J., is bishop of the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee, Fla.

Darfur's Humanitarian Crisis

Darfur is the recipient of one of the most extensive humanitarian efforts in the world, in response to one of the largest humanitarian crises in the world. On the positive side, the aid community is making great strides. Malnutrition is being addressed. Children are being vaccinated. Aid is reaching more people than it has in the past. But serious challenges remain. The presence of armed militias keeps humanitarian aid from reaching all vulnerable communities.



Groups like Catholic Relief Services have been on the ground in Darfur for years, and the complexity of their responses shows it. One camp I visited has the air of a planned community, with streets and homes plotted out before residents arrive. Each family receives a demarcated area and has access to water and other services at central points. C.R.S. is also building schools for children in these camps and providing training and materials to teachers. Though the country's brutal civil war interrupted the education of southern Sudanese children—sometimes for years—aid agencies hope students in Darfur will be able to continue their studies, making it easier for them to resume their normal lives when peace arrives.

But as humanitarians try to impose order and stability on a violent, chaotic situation, needs continue to grow. After fleeing from their villages, these families traveled more than 30 miles to homes constructed by C.R.S. in El Geneina.

But they found crowded conditions when they arrived. With nowhere else to go, they erected improvised shelters on a flood zone on the outskirts of the camp. As the seasonal rains approached, it was clear their shelters were in jeopardy and new quarters were needed. Without the new structures, they could have watched their lives be washed away—again.

Aid groups have found ways to address the needs of people displaced by this long conflict, but that does not make the massive disruption easy for affected families to bear. The ability of agencies to provide services (housing, food and clean water) is constantly jeopardized by insecurity on the ground. That leaves displaced communities with few assurances of protection or comfort.

church to express affection for the bishops, hugging them and kissing their hands. Young dancers and drummers from every major tribe in southern Sudan entertained the crowds with music, singing, dancing and prayers. The festivities inspired audience members—including nuns, priests and a bishop—to jump up and dance with their tribes. The celebration felt like a real turning point, as if the people were removing the last restraints of war and feeling free to express their faith and joy. I pray that the people of Darfur in their turn will have opportunities to dance euphorically.

Darfur Revisited

I first went to Darfur, Sudan, in 2004, just a year after a dire conflict erupted across the region, overturning the lives of millions of people. Traveling with Ken Hackett, president of Catholic Relief Services, I heard about whole desert communities forced from their villages; those who survived the violence made their way, shell-shocked, to meager camps where agencies like C.R.S. scrambled to meet their basic needs. We hoped the conflict would be a short-lived clash.

At that time, Sudan was a few steps away from signing a historic agreement to end the separate, two-decade civil war between north and south. Having visited Sudan several times before, I understood the entrenched north-south divide, and the encouraging implications of the accord. The brutal fight in Darfur, Sudan's westernmost province, was a stark reminder that peace is fragile, but optimism about the country's future ran high.

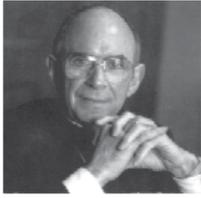
When I returned to Darfur this summer, I found a conflict that is far from resolved, a mature humanitarian response from agencies that have learned to work within alarming constraints and a dogged hope that recent peace efforts will bear lasting results. For millions in Darfur, survival is still not possible without additional help. Optimism is strong, but so is a pervasive sense that peace is a delicate, tenuous thing throughout Sudan.

A Broader View

Understanding the current situation requires one to step back to take a broader view of the region. The Comprehensive Peace Accord that ended the country's north-south civil war in 2005 brought relative stability to southern Sudan, but many of its provisions still have not been met, either in letter or in spirit. Rebels from northern Uganda move back and forth across the border with Sudan, jeopardizing the sustainability of peace in both countries. And Sudan's own conflicts have spilled across borders, destabilizing sections of Chad and the Central African Republic. For now, the accord is holding, but there are concerns about whether it can withstand these pressures.



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International attention has centered on Darfur in recent years, but it is only one large piece in a complicated puzzle. If the process of implementing the C.P.A. stalls, Sudan could again be drawn into civil war, snuffing out Darfur's hope for peace. And without attention to the smaller, less notorious conflicts in other parts of the region, the chance of sustainable peace diminishes. The connections between Darfur and the rest of the country may require peacemakers to look closely at the Comprehensive Peace Accord and evaluate how to make it truly and nationally comprehensive.

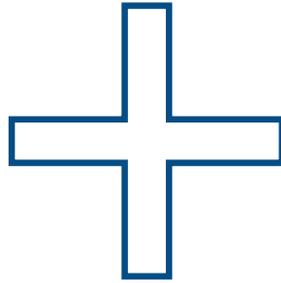
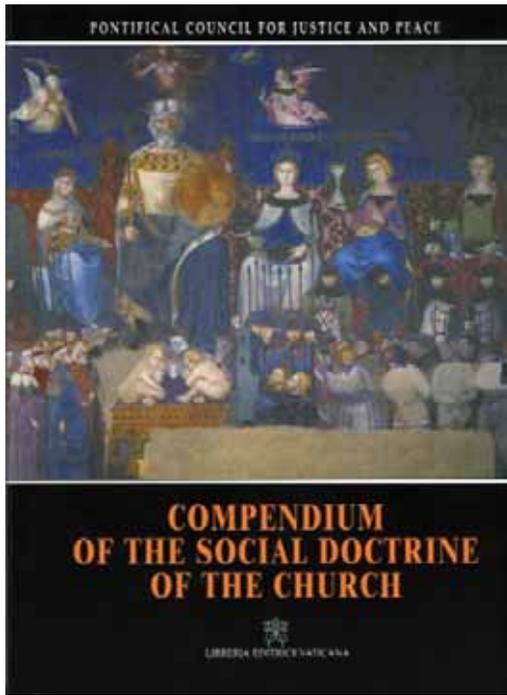
A Way Forward

In June, Sudan accepted a robust force of peacekeepers from the United Nations and the African Union, and more boots were to arrive in Darfur in coming months. But solving the crisis requires more than troops. Without a peace deal, what peace would they keep? First, there must be a durable cease-fire, an initial step to a reinvigorated peace agreement, ensuring that all relevant parties are at the negotiating table. In Darfur, this includes the government, a wide array of rebel groups, people displaced by the violence, host communities that have taken in the displaced, women, nomadic Arabs and others. Each of these groups is a stakeholder in the process, and buy-in from each will be required to ensure that any agreement holds.

The Sudanese government has already signed one peace accord to end the conflict in Darfur, but only one prominent rebel leader joined as a signatory. This rendered the agreement ineffective. The rebel groups, however, largely splintered into separate factions in the past year, recognize the need to come together if peace talks are to have any meaning and weight. At a recent meeting in Tanzania, most factions agreed on a general, common platform as part of an ongoing process designed to lead disparate groups back to the negotiating table.

But setting that table may take serious diplomatic attention. President Bush appointed a special envoy to the area last year. The high-level attention is appreciated, but more is needed before this nuanced diplomacy can have the necessary effect. Through the United Nations and other channels, the United States has immense diplomatic pull. Though the Sudanese government may not be swayed by our voice, other nations—some with greater influence in Sudan—may be.

Securing the Comprehensive Peace Accord required years of difficult negotiations, but that process provides key lessons on what it will take to bring peace to Darfur—namely, strong U.S. leadership, tough regional diplomacy, a unified negotiating process rather than scattered efforts and intense focus. The longer the conflict in Darfur festers, the more damage it will inflict on peace across the region and the harder it will be for families and communities to heal after it ends. ▲



Catholic Social Teaching Meets Wall Street

Do good while doing well.

BY MARY ELLEN FOLEY McGUIRE

GULNORA HUSEINOVA WAS IN TROUBLE. When she got divorced a few years ago, she was left to care for her child, which is no easy matter for a single woman in Khujand, Tajikistan. She decided to start her own business at the local market, but she needed \$800 to purchase grain. The problem was that she had no collateral and no past credit history to help her secure a loan. Meanwhile, halfway across the world in Richmond, Va., Thomas J. Dorsey had a desire to help small international businesses. He connected with Gulnora Huseinova online (through www.kiva.org) and was one of 16 North Americans who together lent her \$800 in April; some contributed as little as \$25. Huseinova's business has taken off and as of September, she had already repaid 67

percent of her seven-month loan. Welcome to the transformational power of socially responsible investing.

Investing Today

Most Americans will at some point invest money in personal portfolios or a retirement plan where they work. Some in privileged positions will make decisions about how the assets of institutions are invested. The main reason we invest in anything is to turn a profit, but investments can also prove effective in promoting social change consistent with Christian values. In 2003 the U.S. Catholic bishops proposed two principles that should guide all investment decisions: responsible financial stewardship and ethical stewardship. In this sense smart and responsible investments have two purposes: to make money and to promote social change consistent with the Christian vision of justice and compassion.

Is such a vision of smart and responsible investment ide-

MARY ELLEN FOLEY McGUIRE is the director of campus ministry at Rivier College in Nashua, N.H. Before that she worked in the financial services industry.

PHOTOS FROM SHUTTERSTOCK AND CNS

alistic or naïve? And how does high-minded social concern affect the actual rate of return on investments? For a few years now, concerned investors have been engaged in socially responsible investing. Results on such investments show that many investment opportunities can promote positive social change and still earn a competitive rate of return.

Socially responsible investing is defined by the Social Investment Forum, a trade association of the U.S. social investment industry, as “integrating personal values and societal concerns with investment.” The concept is not entirely new. For centuries the Quakers opted not to invest in the arms industry, and in the early 20th century many investors chose not to invest in “sin” stocks (typically tobacco, alcohol and gambling). But in the 1980s the concept took hold as individuals and institutions around the United States sold their stock in companies doing business with South Africa. This divestiture turned out to be a significant force in bringing about the end of apartheid. At first, the concept pertained to identifying funds that one would rather not invest in or would prefer to divest from. But even then, before the advent of so many positive investment opportunities that further social concerns, the power of socially responsible investing proved to be an effective force for change.

Currently, the main avenues for socially responsible investing are community investing, socially responsible mutual funds and shareholder advocacy.

Community Investing

In 1976 Bangladeshi economist Muhammad Yunus took a field trip with a group of students and met some young women who needed \$27 each for their furniture-weaving businesses. What might seem a trivial amount for the more affluent was very significant for these businesswomen of extremely limited means. Surprised that no traditional lending institutions would assist them, Dr. Yunus personally lent them the money they needed. Their businesses grew exponentially, and the women repaid the loan in a few months. The radical success of this small lending program led Professor Yunus to open the first “microcredit” institution, Grameen Bank. In 2006 Dr. Yunus won the Nobel Peace Prize for the initiative, which has lifted millions out of poverty.

This kind of microlending, which provides small loans to poor people at minimal interest rates, is one form of community investing, which provides capital for underserved communities and individuals in the United States and around the world; it provides loans for small businesses, affordable housing, childcare or other community services. The borrowers—most are women and all are in desperate financial situations—do not qualify for assistance from traditional financial institutions.

Today, many credit unions, banks and housing developments are committed to microlending, both domestically and internationally. Instead of opening a deposit account at a traditional bank, investors deposit funds at a microcredit institution of their choice. Usually a \$1,000 minimum deposit is required, which can be made in the form of a certificate of deposit, savings account, checking account or money market fund. The bank then uses the funds to extend entrepreneurial microloans (as small as \$20) to borrowers, who use the money to get a small business off the ground. The borrower pays interest and soon repays the principal. In the meantime, the investor gets the deposit back at will (or at maturity for a C.D.)—plus interest.

The benefits of such an approach can be profound. Not only do the poor receive the desperately needed funds to which they would not otherwise have access, but they are able to use the funds in their own way. Rather than imposing ideas or methods, microlending encourages motivation, group accountability and ownership. The rich invest in the poor, sharing a partnership in their business ventures. And the joint effort makes significant strides against poverty. According to Social Investment Forum, in 2005 \$19.6 billion was deposited in microcredit institutions, benefiting 80 million entrepreneurs, who had a 95 percent to 100 percent repayment rate.

As with any type of investing, microlending involves risk, especially in the international market. Foreign exchange rates affect the return on investments and reduce profit margins, and the stability of local economies and governments affects entrepreneurial ventures. On the other hand, deposits at U.S. microcredit banks are F.D.I.C. insured up to \$100,000, so investors have some guarantee on principal.

Socially Responsible Mutual Funds

Another approach is to use socially responsible mutual funds. Such funds screen out companies that do not meet explicit social and moral criteria. For example, an S.R. fund might invest only in companies that have a good environmental record or are responsible in their disposal of hazardous waste. Other considerations might include the company’s product (tobacco or firearms producers might be excluded from the portfolio), payment of a living wage in international operations or the practice of gender equity in the workplace. Currently there are about 200 S.R. mutual funds as well as several benchmark indices that allow investors to track the performance of their fund measured against other S.R. funds.

Since the field of socially responsible mutual funds is of relatively recent origin, some issues still need to be resolved. For example, whether a fund screen is based on tobacco, environmental concerns, human rights issues, or all of the above is not always clearly stated by fund managers, so

investors may find it difficult to identify funds that match their own values. Furthermore, since research on S.R. performance is only available for the last 10 years, it is too early to predict with confidence long-term financial returns. At the same time, it can be said that so far S.R. funds have been found to achieve rates of return comparable to those from unscreened funds, which is good news for socially concerned investors.

Shareholder Advocacy

Perhaps the easiest way to manifest a concern for socially responsible investing is to begin with one's current portfolio. Shareholders can use their ownership in companies to advocate changes in corporate policies that run counter to Christian values. Owning even one share of stock gives an investor a say in how that company runs its business. Every investor has a right to attend annual shareholder meetings and speak up about issues of concern, or to vote on shareholder proposals in annual proxy statements. Instead of discarding such statements when they come in the mail, one could read them with attention and find proposals that are consistent (or inconsistent) with one's social and moral concerns. Many religious communities, for example, research companies and sponsor shareholder resolutions consistent with Catholic social teaching.

Another avenue for shareholder advocacy lies with S.R. funds, which can use their lobbying power to influence the companies within their portfolios. While individual shareholders can propose changes in company policy, mutual funds have the advantage that they hold many shares and therefore can speak with a more powerful voice.

Shareholder advocacy can be very effective. Social

Investment Forum reports that 28 percent of socially responsible shareholder resolutions were successfully addressed in the first half of 2005. And so far in 2007, a record number of proxy shareholder social and environmental resolutions have been proposed.

Walking the Walk

Socially responsible investing, then, is a way to invest money, make a profit ethically and effect both systematic and individual change. The scope of its environmental and corporate influence is vast, as is the difference it can make in one person's life and in the lives of millions of poor families. It is a powerful way to be a disciple of Christ's mission to "bring glad tidings to the poor." How does one begin?

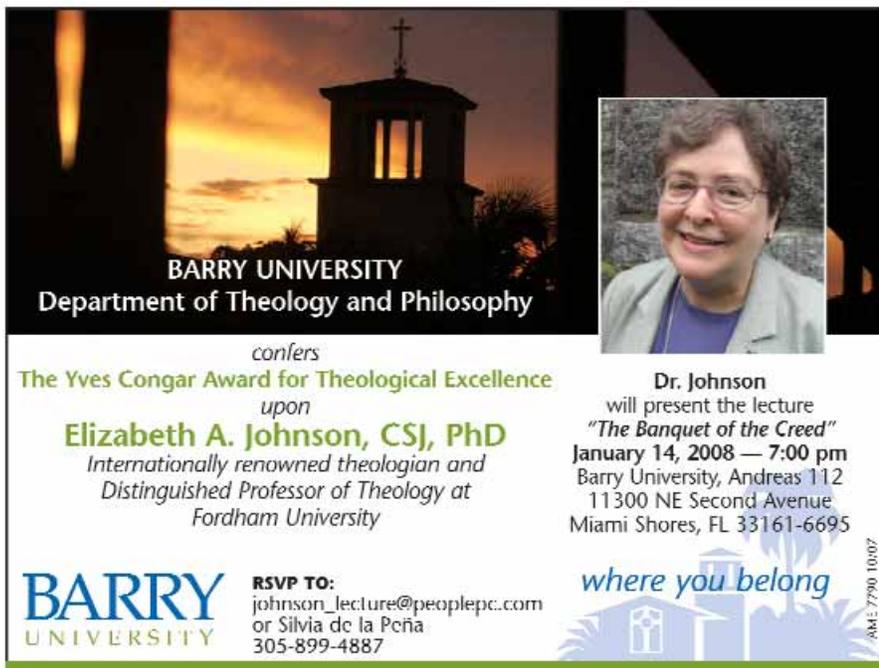
Talk to your financial advisor. You can obtain a listing of financial advisors who are committed to socially responsible investing by requesting the National Green Pages, published by Coop America.

Invest in socially responsible mutual funds. Check out your retirement plan at work to see if this is an option. For investment possibilities for yourself or your church, school or hospital, go to the mutual fund performance chart at www.coopamerica.org/socialinvesting.

Deposit funds in a microlending institution. The Community Investing Program suggests that 1 percent or more of your investments be devoted to community investing. For a list of microlending opportunities and more information, go to www.communityinvest.org and www.kiva.org.

Be an active shareholder. Vote your proxies. Support and sponsor shareholder proposals. Write letters. Ask questions. Anybody who owns even one share of stock in a company is a part owner and can have a say in how it is run.

WHEN I WORKED in the financial services industry, I never heard mention of microlending, community investing or socially responsible mutual funds. But since then, my discovery of socially responsible investing has been a transforming experience. A community investment impact calculator on www.communityinvest.org estimates that if someone were to invest \$1,000 for one year, that money could finance three microenterprises and create four jobs in Africa. At the end of the year the investor would likely get the \$1,000 back, plus interest. Spread the word. This is truly "good news for all the nations." 



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In Mystic Silence

Where East and West can meet

BY WILLIAM JOHNSTON

I LEAD A LITTLE MEDITATION group at Sophia University in Tokyo. Every Saturday afternoon we sit around the Blessed Sacrament, some in the lotus position, others on chairs. I myself, alas, no longer sit in the lotus but have to use a chair. We sit in silence for an hour before celebrating the Eucharist. Then we indulge in a party, drinking green tea and talking about anything from politics to religion.

When we meditate, each person follows his or her inspiration. I use a variation of the Jesus prayer, repeating a mantra again and again. Of the various mantras, the one I like best is “Lord Jesus, have mercy on me a sinner.” I like to be clear that I am a sinner. This does not cause me guilt because I know that Jesus loves sinners. Often I have recommended this kind of meditation to the participants in my group. Many of them say in Japanese, “Jesus, have mercy on me” and repeat it again and again, not only when they are in the lotus before the Blessed Sacrament but while they are sitting in the train or washing the dishes.

I was inspired to pray this prayer by reading *The Way of the Pilgrim*, the little book of the Orthodox monk who walked around Russia repeating “Lord Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.”

WILLIAM JOHNSTON, S.J., is the author of many books and a former professor of religious studies and director of the Institute of Oriental Religions of Sophia University in Tokyo. His autobiography, *Mystical Journey*, was published by Orbis Books in 2006.

ART BY STEFANIE AUGUSTINE

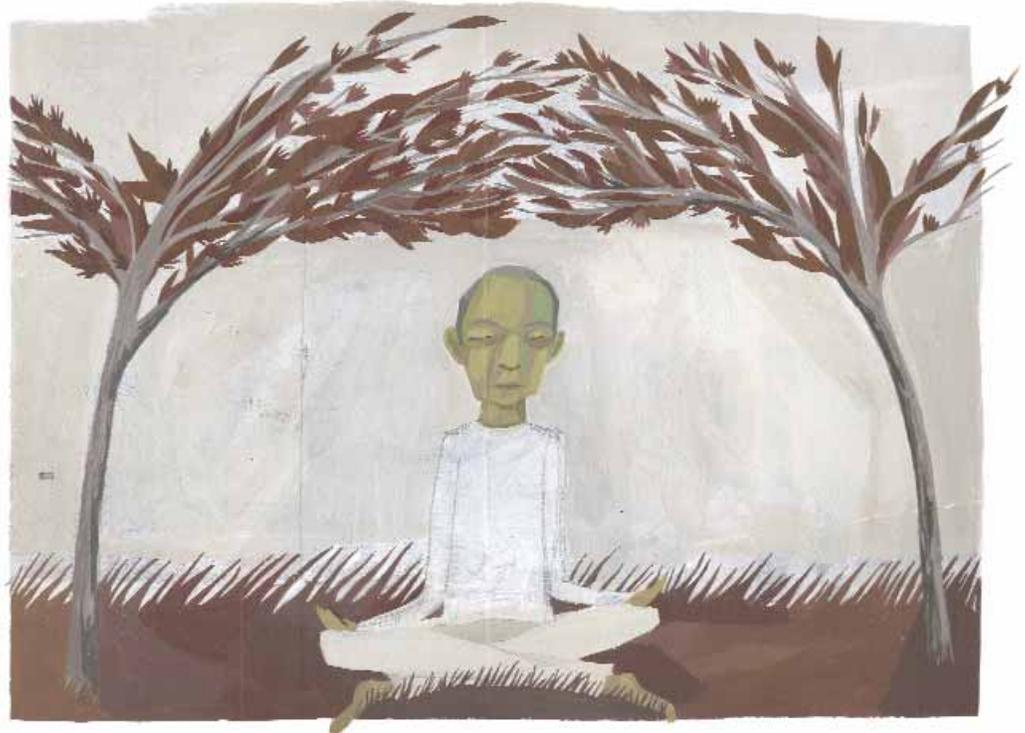
He was putting into practice the exhortation of St. Paul to pray without ceasing: “Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances” (1 Thes 5:17). The pilgrim (as he called himself), taking Paul literally, walked around Russia filled with joy, reciting the name of Jesus and always giving thanks.

This way of meditation suits the Japanese because recitation of a mantra is in their tradition. Some Buddhists use the mantra *Namu Amida Butsu*, calling on the Buddha Amida for mercy; in another Buddhist sect the participants say *Namu yo Horen Gekkyo*, reciting the Buddhist love for the lotus sutra. To call on the name of Jesus continually makes sense to the Japanese. Many do pray without ceasing, continuing their mantra after their formal prayer. I believe that Buddhism is deep in the mind, heart and body of the Japanese, even in those who do not belong explicit-

ly to any Buddhist sect. For this reason some people quickly come to understand St. Paul’s words, “I live, now not I, but Christ lives in me” (Gal 2:19), for they experience Jesus dwelling in the depths of their being.

From the Little Ego to the Big Self

In this kind of meditation we can go down through our unconscious mind from the little ego to the big self. Thanks to Freud and Jung and the psychological theories of the 20th and 21st centuries, we recognize that there are many layers in the mind, through which we can go down, down to the very depths of ourselves. Some people do this in counseling, others in meditation. Still others, like me, use a combination of both. Deeper than the self, or somehow within it, I come to meet the great mystery of mysteries we Christians call God and believers of other religions



call by different names.

Perhaps I can describe the process of meditation with a crude diagram:

Top level of consciousness
 Unconscious
 Silence
 True Self
 God

In meditation over the years, I have moved down through many levels of silence. This entailed much agony as I

passed through the painful night of the senses, but it also brought much joy and gave me great creativity. Whether I reached the dark night of the soul, I do not know. I have read St. John of the Cross extensively and have studied the 14th-century English mystic who wrote *The Cloud of Unknowing*, trying to become detached from all things by entering the cloud of forgetting. I think I found some experience of the true self, but I have not experienced God except through faith. I believe that God is the mystery of mysteries and

that when we meet God we can only say that we experience Nothing or Emptiness.

Over time, my prayer passed from repeating a mantra to absolute silence with only the sense of presence. I became increasingly interested in the mysticism of Asia. I was a close friend of Enomiya Lassalle, S.J., a world-renowned Zen master; and I went to India, where I stayed in the ashram of Bede Griffiths, a Benedictine monk (some would say a spiritual master) living in India who wrote on mysticism. From Bede, and from his books and conversations, I learned about Sri Ramakrishna, the Indian sage (1836-86); I also read about Gopi Krishna's experience of *kundalini*, a breakthrough that occurred first during meditation and later became a state of being, which gave him a different perspective on the world, a new vision of the universe.

Together in the Darkness

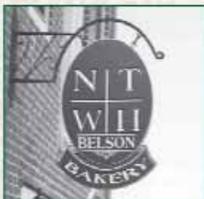
This was a time when the interreligious dialogue encouraged by the Second Vatican Council was becoming popular, and I began to ask myself if we, believers of all religions, were together in the silence, the darkness, the emptiness, the nothingness and the cloud of unknowing. If we were, we could say that all religions were both the same and different. They were the same in the silence at the peak of mysticism; they were different in their verbal devotions. In Assisi in 1985, the representatives of all religions bowed in silence with Pope John Paul II and then went to different corners of the city to pray with words, using the Koran or the Bible or the Sutras or whatever devotional literature was in their tradition. Can we finally say, I wondered, that there is one religion with many expressions, and that we must work together for peace in the human race?

This problem preoccupied me for a long time. I once consulted the Japanese Catholic priest Oshida Naruhito about doing Zen. He said, "Go ahead if you like, but I think you will find that they [Buddhists] have a different faith." Oshida himself practiced much sitting in the lotus position at his little ashram on the mountain where he is now buried, and he gave many retreats in which the participants sat in the lotus position for hours and hours. But he never said that he did Zen. I took him to mean that the silence or nothingness was in fact penetrated by whatever

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faith the participant embraced. Perhaps he was trying to say that in the silence of Zen there is an underlying something that is different from what underlies Christianity.

The advice of Father Oshida was good for me. I did a little Zen, but not much. I found that I did not want to remain always in the absolute silence of nothingness. I wanted sometimes to return to my “Jesus prayer,” and I liked to sit before the tabernacle that contained the Eucharist.

But I did find—and still find—that the silence of mysticism is our best meeting point as followers of different religions. It is here that we can be united; it is here that we can meditate together. Many years ago I joined a group of Buddhists and Christians who meditated together in the shrine city of Kamakura outside Tokyo. We all sat in silence, so what the others were doing interiorly I do not know. But I do know that we became good friends, and that made it an excellent dialogue. I believe that mystical silence is the best meeting place for the great religions.

My religious superior at that time was the deeply spiritual Jesuit Pedro Arrupe. In a yearly interview with him I spoke of my interest in the mysticism of the East and West, and Arrupe said with a smile, “I don’t think St. John of the Cross will satisfy you.” This was a surprise to me, but now I see the wisdom of his comment. He meant that as a Jesuit I was called to contemplation in action, and that pure Carmelite contemplation was not my cup of tea. Moreover, as I read the Scriptures, I began to gain new insights into St. Paul. That great apostle wrote regarding faith, hope and love that “the greatest of these is love” (1 Cor 13:13), and Paul’s mysticism is a wonderful love song. But after love come the spiritual gifts, less important than love, but very valuable. For an active person like myself I saw—and I think Arrupe saw—that these gifts were necessary.

Paul puts great emphasis on the gift of prophecy, encouraging us to “pursue love and strive for the spiritual gifts, and especially that you may prophesy” and reminding us that “those who prophesy speak for other people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation” (1 Cor 14: 3). I began to wonder if our little meditation group is called to prophecy. Is this the vocation of those who meditate in our day? **A**

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We Never Will Be Missed

The World Without Us

By Alan Weisman
St. Martin's Press. 324p \$24.95
ISBN 9780312347291

"I beheld," cried the prophet Jeremiah, "and lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens had fled" (4:25, KJV). One part of the Bible that has gained in heft thanks to the technological horrors of modernity is the apocalyptic genre. When visionaries in either testament describe a global cataclysm, we know, much better than our forebears, just how feasible that would be. We have had lots of practice lately. But what if, for whatever reason, only the human race were erased from the scene?

That is the question posed by Alan Weisman, a science writer and professor of journalism at the University of Arizona, in *The World Without Us*—a stunning extended fantasy about a planet freed from the too-clever-by-half creatures now loving it to death. In a rapid tour Weisman takes us to far-flung sites, from the "red desert" of Houston to Chernobyl to the North Pacific Subtropical Gyre (an Africa-sized floating—and submerged—garbage dump, full of non-biodegradable plastic debris), where red alerts are flashing. *If we suddenly disappeared*, all sorts of positive things, from a sub-Homo sapiens standpoint anyway, would start to happen. With one bold, lyrical stroke after another, Weisman evokes devastation (100 million sharks killed every year, 400 black rhinos in Kenya, down from 20,000 in 1970; nearly 200 million birds dead per year from collisions with electrical towers; 60 million board feet of hardwoods buried annually in the form of coffins, etc.), fading into a splendid resurgence of flora and fauna (lions in southern Europe, polar bears back from the brink, coral reefs reefflorescent).

And this is not simply idle speculation. There are a tiny handful of places, like the D.M.Z. in Korea, where the temporary absence of humans has led to a sort of re-Edenizing of the land. Even the nuclear hell of Rocky Flats, Colo., (whose "Infinity Room" held higher levels of radi-

ation contamination than any instrument could measure) has now become, of all things, a thriving wildlife sanctuary. Plutonium has proved less deadly than hunters and ranchers — so far, anyway.

But while Weisman's vistas of regeneration add up to a stirring sci-fi utopia, one has to recall that the real purpose of utopias is to offer not blueprints for the future, but scalding critiques of the present. Weisman would be the first one to admit that he has no idea how any Twilight of the Prosthetic Gods (as Freud called us) would actually play out (a super-virus? H-bomb? global warming to the boil?), how many species we would take down with us (head and body lice, to begin with) and so forth. The real point in imagining a post-human world is to dramatize the cruel conditions that would make such a world, if it ever existed, a welcome relief to its remaining inhabitants.

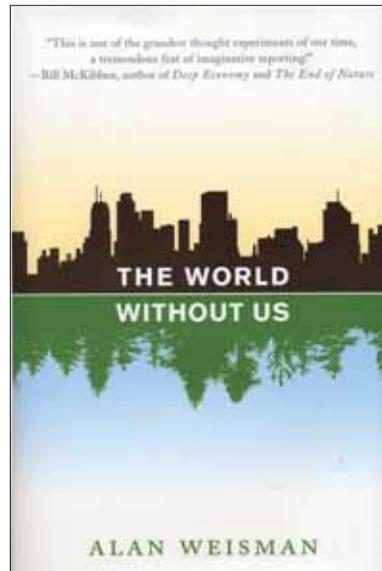
So, essentially we're back in the ethical-ecological framework of *Silent Spring* (1963), only with a still broader and more depressing panorama. How did we ever manage to make such a mess? Weisman takes the long view: he follows the controverted blitzkrieg theory of the paleozoologist Paul Martin, who holds that three-quarters of all the North America's mega-fauna (various mammoths, the giant ground sloth, the dire wolf, et al.) were killed off by human hunters millennia before the white man arrived.

Not that species slaughter has ever spared humans. When the Spaniards first landed in Mexico, there were something like 25 million Meso-Americans there. A century later the number had plunged to one million. But the Mexicans, if not the Caribs, made a population comeback; their animal victims did not. America enshrined Teddy Roosevelt on Mount Rushmore, where he enjoys quasi-immortality (the erosion rate there is only an inch every 10,000 years). But on one of his typ-

ical African safaris in 1909 Roosevelt shot over 600 animals.

And this pattern has speeded up explosively since the long-forgotten eras when human herders turned the Sahara and much of the Middle East into deserts. Millions of acres in Appalachia have recently been dynamited to remove the "overburden" from coal mines beneath. The Yangtze dolphin has just joined the swelling ranks of extinct species, from the clumsy 600-pound flightless moa to the beautiful passenger pigeon (once, in its countless billions, "the most abundant bird on Earth").

Thanks to the host of eloquent scientists and popularizers who followed Rachel Carson, much of this dismal story is now widely known. These days even the worst enemies of nature have to pretend to be green. But what, if anything, can be done at this late date? Weisman introduces us to a dogged bunch of ecologists who are carrying on the unglamorous but crucial work of studying fossils, analyzing soils, counting fish, tracing poisons and so on, in an effort to diagnose our wounded biomes and—if we ever learn from our mistakes—to correct them. He then spins all these documentary strands into a vivid tapestry of mostly bad news (a 2,000-acre park of tall grass, donated by Exxon-Mobil, is all that's left of six million acres of Texas



The Reviewers

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

Patrick J. Ryan, S.J., vice president for university mission and ministry at Fordham University in New York, writes frequently on Islamic and African subjects. He has lived and worked in Africa for 26 years.

Nancy Hawkins, I.H.M., is associate professor of systematic theology at St. Bernard's School of Theology and Ministry in Rochester, N.Y.

coastal prairie). What a bunch of home-wreckers.

And, speaking of homes, Weisman does a brilliant virtuoso routine on the way houses and buildings fall apart without their inhabitants. We don't really know what might happen to all the domesticated animals without us; but every homeowner knows what a little, or a lot of, neglect will do to roofs, basements or plumbing; and Weisman carries the familiar theme of the ravages of time and the weather, of floods, storms and the freeze-thaw cycle to epic heights as he surveys the grim destiny of every human edifice up to and including skyscrapers, bridges, tunnels, farms, factories and nuclear reactors, when deprived of maintenance. With an engineer's expertise (Weisman has talked to all the right people), he shows precisely how our built-up world will crack, crumble, collapse, rot and give way to its indifferent new owners. "All flesh is grass," says Isaiah (40:6); and so, Weisman insists, perhaps with a bit of schadenfreude, are the Manhattan skyline, the Panama Canal and the Great Wall of China.

For all his astonishing knowledge,

though, Weisman's most impressive quality is his unrelenting, fiercely curious, tragicomic passion for the places he keeps picturing first as trashed and then as transformed. Either way, we crowns of creation have been behaving badly; and Weisman's indictment stings, though it is bracing as well as bitter. *The World Without Us* looks very much like *the* environmental book for some time to come.

Peter Heinegg

From God's Mouth to Our Ear

The Voice, the Word, the Books

The Sacred Scriptures of the Jews, Christians and Muslims

By F. E. Peters

Princeton Univ. Press. 292p \$29.95

ISBN 9780691131122

New York University's F. E. Peters, a clas-

sics scholar who has moved into the study of Islamic civilization, has produced another highly readable book in this field. *The Voice, the Word, the Books* traces the evolution of the three monotheistic scriptural traditions from their first oral reality, through the various forms of written publication to the recognition of scriptural canons (authoritative listings of contents). Peters also surveys for the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament the first and most important renderings in other languages. There are interesting chapters on the illustrations and/or calligraphy accompanying certain manuscripts and the techniques involved in chanting or reciting these texts.

Peters pays little attention to the possibility that there were at least three primitive canons of the Hebrew Bible: Babylonian (preserved with the Talmud), Palestinian (partially reflected in the manuscripts of Qumran) and Alexandrian (possibly the ultimate source of the Greek Septuagint). In general, the author stands on more solid scholarly foundations when he deals with the Hebrew and Christian scriptures.

In the book's epilogue, Peters insists

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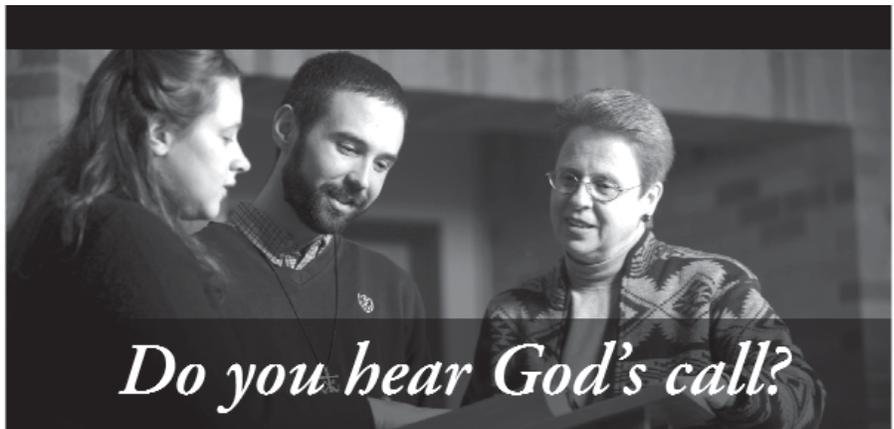
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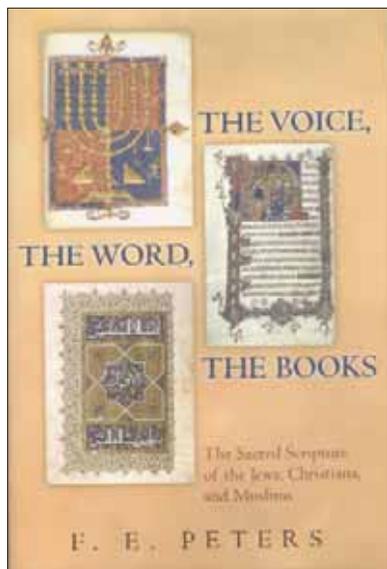
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very clearly on the essential differences between the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament and the Koran. The first and the last have much more in common with each other than either does with the New Testament. But the Torah (the five books of Moses, or Pentateuch) and certain passages from the prophets do not exactly belong to the same genre as the rest of the Hebrew Bible, as Peters notes. The Torah features, along with much primal history of God's activity in this world, lengthy passages defined as God's word directly dictated to Moses. The prophets, as well, often assert that they are announcing God's word in their respective times and places. But the rest of the Hebrew Bible contains much more of the history of those entrusted with that divine word,



their liturgical song, proverbial wisdom and imaginative speculation about the end of history.

The New Testament, on the other hand, although it records the words of the Son of God, is less "God's message" than "about God's message." As Peters correctly notes, "God's message turned out to be Jesus himself." The New Testament conveys that message in Greek rather than in Aramaic, the language of Jesus, and contains, in addition to the Gospels, the history of the early apostolic community, notable epistolary liter-

ature and an apocalyptic concluding work, all centered on the ultimate significance of Jesus the Christ for both Jew and Gentile.

The Koran, by contrast, contains nothing other than what it proclaims itself to be: the very word of God, dictated

directly to Muhammad or communicated to him through an angelic messenger. It is difficult, if not impossible, to construct a sequential history of Muhammad's prophetic life or experience of revelation without relying on commentary or other extraneous materials. Likewise, as the late Canadian Islamicist Wilfred Cantwell Smith once sagely noted, the recitation and memorization of the Koran has for Muslims some of the same sacred significance that reception of the Eucharist has for Catholics. Those hostile non-Muslims who make mockery of the Koran and its first human recipient, Muhammad, need to keep this analogy in mind.

Peters relies too much on the recent revisionist scholarship emanating from certain non-Muslim European scholars who have made it their business to debunk the standard Muslim account of how the Koran was edited and published in written form during the caliphate of Muhammad's third successor, 'Uthman (644-56 C.E.). The underdeveloped state of Arabic script at that time, as evidenced in inscriptions, would seem to open the Koranic text to many more ambiguities than Muslims traditionally concede. But Peters and the

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revisionists on whom he relies should remember, as noted earlier, that the memorization of the Koran began with Muhammad himself, and a defective script was possibly sufficient as an *aide-mémoire* for those who saw an intimate connection between the revealed book (*kitab*), the book as written (*maktub*) and the divine decree of predestination: "what is written" (*ma kutiba*).

Several errors of fact that have remained in the definitive first edition need correction before a second printing. The Battle of Siffin between the caliph 'Ali and his opponents, during which arbitration was sought by soldiers on both sides attaching passages from the Koran to their spears, took place in 657 C.E., not 680. Atatürk and the Turkish Grand National Assembly abolished the caliphate in 1924, not 1928. There can be no "sura 118" in a Koran of 114 suras.

The Voice, the Word, the Books, with its lavish illustrations and adequate index, will prove very valuable for those teaching an introduction to the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament or the Koran.

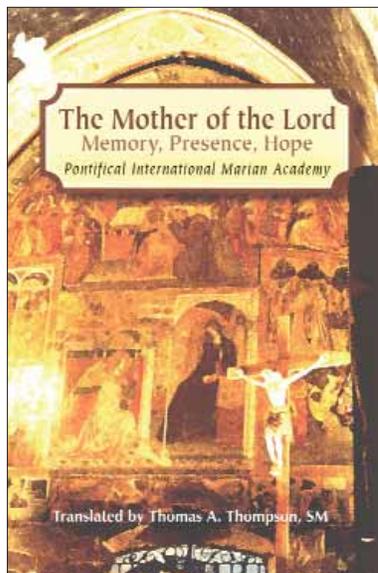
Patrick J. Ryan

Not a Liberating Vision

The Mother of the Lord Memory, Presence, Hope

By the Pontifical International Marian Academy
Alba House. 125p \$14.95
ISBN 9780818912498

With *The Mother of the Lord*, the Pontifical International Marian Academy offers the reader a systematic, academic presentation on the person and mission of Mary, the mother of God. The preface of the work explains what this book is and, by virtue of that explanation, the reader understands what this book is not. It is not a creative, enticing look into the life of this Jewish woman



who lived and struggled in first-century Palestine. It is also not a book that offers current theological trends on Marian theology and spirituality by contemporary authors.

The reader will discover early on that this book, encouraged by the Holy See, is written to clarify for the reader questions that face the church regarding Marian devotion and Marian theology. The sources for this clarification are the writings of the great teachers of the faith, the ecumenical councils, episcopal conferences and many dicasteries and commissions of the Holy See.

Books of this sort are not usually captivating, but this one does have merit. The historical development of Marian doctrine is explained thoroughly and clearly. We see that Mariology penetrates all aspects of



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our tradition and that Mary is truly a woman of hope for our troubled times. The hope that Marian teachings can offer the people of God is clearly delineated and pastorally presented here by the Pontifical Academy. This book will be very useful to someone giving a talk on how the church views Mary. Its writing style is more inviting than the *Catechism*, and its conciseness makes it easy to use.

I was pleased to see a section on Marian spirituality, but I must note that what it offers is a very high Mariology. The Mary of the Pontifical Marian Academy is the perfect Virgin, surrounded by the stars of heaven, sitting by her son at the right hand of God. It must be asked if this is a woman with whom people can relate, and whether she must remain distant from the human experience that she herself lived? An academic book of this kind runs the risk of underemphasizing the blessedness of Mary's human life. I did not encounter the Mary of the Magnificat, a hymn that the German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer calls the most radical Advent hymn in existence. Nor did I encounter the Mary revered in Mexico and the Americas as Our Lady of Guadalupe, wearing the colors of the Aztec culture.

There is a fear implicit in this book of connecting the Virgin too closely to such a liberating figure, because this kind of connection veers too far from doctrinal pronouncements. When Marian devotion is explained, it is noted that it must be marked "with a clear ecclesial orientation." I was reminded of Robert Orsi's wonderful book, *The Madonna of 115th Street*, a chronicle of how the official church of New York City co-opted the annual Marian *fiesta* of Harlem and wrested it from the Italian immigrants, who used the devotion to work through their harsh life as poor people in a new nation. These Catholics longed for a Mary who would sit beside them in their sorrows. While she was their Queen of Heaven, she was also their sister and mother, who comforted them in their pain. Those concerned with ecclesial realities were fearful that they would "lose control" of intense devotions to a woman whom the church made its own. It seems that fear still persists, which is unfortunate. Nonetheless, this book is very much on target when it connects Mary to the communion of

saints and the life of the Spirit moving in our midst.

There is definitely a place on the library shelf for *The Mother of the Lord*, but only if it is placed next to *Truly Our Sister*, by Elizabeth A. Johnson, C.S.J., or another

work by a contemporary Catholic theologian. The two books combined will give the reader a balanced, ecclesial and liberating vision of a graced woman of faith who has a key role to play in our lives.

Nancy Hawkins

Poem

Paperboy

He moves with burglars and police
in the hours of our deep sleep.
His hump-backed, pregnant silhouette
strides by dark houses
as streetlights push
his block-long shadow.

Sometimes he comes upon
a parked car containing
things a boy shouldn't see.
Sometimes a sense of power
wells up within him
an adult omniscience
possessed by those who know
the secrets of the night.

His spinning flopsheets
slap down on porches
as birds begin to chirp.
Dew is beaded on his shoes.
How fine and clean the world smells
when day is but a purple bruise
upon the brow of night.

William Hart

WILLIAM HART's stories and poems have appeared in several hundred publications. Two documentaries, in collaboration with his wife, Jayasri Majumdar Hart, have played on PBS, "Roots in the Sand" and "Sisters of Selma." His second novel is *Operation Supergoose* (Timberline Press, 2007).

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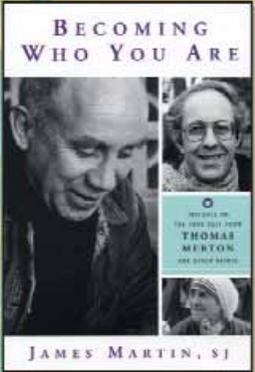
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Letters

Intellectual Nourishment

The editorial “‘Jaw, Jaw,’ Not ‘War, War’” (10/15) was a well-argued analysis of this most frightening situation. It is too bad that such essays in **America** do not receive wider dissemination in either the secular or religious press. A conversation among like-minded persons is fine, but the dialogue and engagement needs to occur among well-meaning but ill-informed persons in our parishes, communities and families. Why can’t a version of this essay be the subject of a Sunday sermon or a discussion in a diocesan newspaper? But that raises another question: where can thinking persons within the larger belief community, most especially Catholics in various parishes, find a forum for intellectual nourishment and growth on such important political issues?

Mary Keelan
Millbrook, N.Y.

Preserving Evidence

Regarding “Church Records and the Courts,” by William Bassett (10/29): After 39 years of litigation experience, it is my belief that Bassett’s suggestion, in response to sexual abuse litigation against the Catholic Church, that periodic review of files be undertaken to clear the files of certain classes of evidence is not “good stewardship of records,” but on the contrary is an invi-

tation to destroy evidence. Experience teaches us so.

Thomas F. Currin
Larchmont, N.Y.

Charity or Social Justice?

In “A Catholic Call to the Common Good” (10/15), Alexia Kelly and John Gehring suggest that their appeal has found roots with the public. I think not. The common good is no more helpful in making political choices than are the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes, the parables or the Book of Wisdom.

We are told that the church must seek social justice in the political sphere and that Catholic voters should be of one voice on such complex issues as war, immigration, health care and climate change. I beg to differ. These are matters of prudent judgment, not Catholic teaching. Jesus did not establish his church to propose legislation, call for more spending or advocate change in political or economic systems. Jesus was concerned for the poor, but he never asked for Caesar’s help.

A just society, human rights, good housing, education, jobs, clean air and water can all be delivered by a God-free state. The proper social work of the church is charity, not political action.

Thomas Ryan Mulcahy
Arden Hills, Minn.

Mystic Traditions

“Love Will Decide Everything,” by Kevin F. Burke, S.J., (11/12) was both a challenge and a delight. I am a convert to the Catholic Church and did not know of Pedro Arrupe until this article, but I have long been a student of the mystic tradition. Indeed, that was one of my attractions to Catholicism, since Protestants had less appreciation for the mystics. I have found great encouragement within that tradition.

Charles Kinnaird
Birmingham, Ala.

Respecting Humanity

Myles N. Sheehan, S.J., states in “A Struggle for the Soul of Medicine” (11/5) that “education that ensures respect for patients while not diminishing the humanity of those in training remains a

daunting challenge.” I respectfully disagree and submit that respecting one’s patients enhances the physician’s humanity. One of my treasured memories as a student at Marquette was watching a doctor holding the hand of a bedridden patient as he asked him about his illness. The down-and-out patient was respected by the professor, and my appreciation for the doctor’s humanity grew and has remained with me for more than 40 years.

Larry Donohue
Seattle, Wash.

Desks and Taxes

Terry Golway’s “High Taxes, Empty Desks” (11/12), presents a flawed argument, suggesting we are not entitled to a tax credit or some other form of tax relief because we have an obligation to support public education.

Completely overlooked is the point that by educating our children outside of the public system, we are relieving that system of a substantial cost—that of educating the child.

What is the per capita cost of educating a child in a school district? You can bet it’s a lot higher than any suggested tax relief that has ever been proposed to help offset the cost of a private education.

Tom Faranello
Croton, N.Y.

Healing Presence

“Like a Cedar of Lebanon,” by Michael G. Rizk, (10/29) resonated deeply with my own experience as a visitor to the Trappist Monastery in Spencer, Mass. The monks there have shown me that true joy is possible in this world if we acknowledge God’s healing presence in all the circumstances of our lives. On my last visit, when I took reluctant leave of the monks to return to the noise and confusion of the city, I wondered which in fact was the “real” world.

Phyllis Townley
New York, N.Y.



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The Roots of Christian Spirituality

The Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ the King (C), Nov. 25, 2007

Readings: 2 Sm 5:1-3; Ps 122:1-5; Col 1:12-20; Lk 23:35-43

“Above him was an inscription that read, ‘This is the King of the Jews’” (Lk 23:38)



IT HAS BECOME CUSTOMARY to celebrate the feast of Christ the King on the last Sunday in the church year. Our main guide during this past year has been Luke, a master of Christian spirituality. We have covered many topics pertaining to Christian spirituality and placed them in the context of Luke’s narrative about Jesus. Today’s celebration of Christ the King can help to solidify the framework of our spirituality: the Old Testament, the mystery of the cross and the saving significance of Jesus’ life, death and resurrection.

Christian spirituality is rooted in God’s promises to Israel as his special people. Today’s passage from 2 Samuel 5 describes how David, the ancestor of Jesus, became king in ancient Israel. In the New Testament Jesus is often identified as the Son of David, the Messiah and the Shepherd of God’s people. What we call the Old Testament provides the language and conceptuality for understanding Jesus. Our spirituality is based on God’s election of Israel and on Jesus’ role as the fulfillment of God’s promises.

Christian spirituality is rooted in the mystery of the cross. With his characteristic simplicity and subtlety, Luke throughout his Gospel illustrates many times over the wisdom of Jesus and the good example that he gave. In today’s reading Luke has us confront the mystery of the cross.

The inscription on the cross reads, “This is the King of the Jews,” a title reflecting popular Jewish speculations about Jesus’ possible identity as the Messiah of Israel. It was surely intended by the Romans to be ironic. To them Jesus was just another Jewish religious troublemaker, who had to be dealt with quickly

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and brutally. The double irony, of course, is that to Luke and other early Christians that title was correct, since the kingship of Jesus was made manifest most perfectly in his suffering and death on the cross. That means that Christian spirituality cannot ignore the realities of suffering and death. Moreover, even on the cross Jesus contin-

Praying with Scripture

- How did David point forward to Jesus? In what ways did Jesus take on the identity of David?
- What did the inscription, “This is the King of the Jews,” mean to Jews, Romans and early Christians, respectively?
- What does the description of Jesus as Wisdom personified mean to you? What place does the cross have in the wisdom of Jesus?

ues his ministry of reaching out to marginal persons when he promises the “good thief” a place in God’s kingdom. That means that Christian spirituality must have a social dimension and be open to all kinds of persons.

Christian spirituality is rooted in the saving significance of Jesus’ life, death and resurrection (the paschal mystery). This point is well expressed in the early Christian hymn preserved in Col 1:15-20. That hymn celebrates Jesus as the Wisdom of God, as the first in the orders of creation and redemption and as the one who has reconciled all things to God by “the blood of his cross.”

The first part of the Colossians hymn presents Christ as the firstborn in the order of creation. It portrays Christ as present at creation and as “the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.” The personification of Wisdom is a prominent motif in various Old

Testament writings (Proverbs 8, Sirach 24, Wisdom 7), and there are many speculations in them about who or what Wisdom is and where Wisdom dwells. As Colossians 1 shows, early Christians identified Jesus as Wisdom personified and located Wisdom in the body of Christ. As the Wisdom of God, Christ is not only God’s agent or helper at creation; he is also the one who holds all things together: “all things were created through him ...and in him all things hold together.”

The second part of the hymn describes Christ as the firstborn in the order of redemption. As the Wisdom of God, Christ has been pivotal in God’s design for bringing humankind back into right relationship with God. The hymn calls Christ “the firstborn of the dead,” an obvious reference to his resurrection. It says that in Christ the fullness of divinity was pleased to dwell and that through Christ God has brought about reconciliation on a cosmic scale. The reconciliation that he has effected involves not only humankind but even the whole of creation.

Christ the King invites us to share in his kingdom. The introduction to the hymn in Col 1:12-14 may well reflect the baptismal context in which the hymn was first used. It is a call to give thanks to God because God has transferred us from darkness to light and so to “the kingdom of his beloved Son.” That transfer took place at our baptism into Christ’s death and resurrection. Through baptism we have become part of Christ’s kingdom, and we now belong to Christ the King.

Christ is no ordinary king. His kingship reaches back to and carries on the kingship of his ancestor David. His kingship is manifest especially in the mystery of the cross. His kingship extends over all creation and lasts forever. His kingship should give us confidence in the present and hope for the future. **Daniel J. Harrington**