

# America

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THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC WEEKLY

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## **Diagnosing U.S. Health Care** *Mary Jane England*

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Orthodox Relations  
*Maximos Davies*

Ecumenism in Europe  
*James Massa*

Mexico's Drug Violence  
*George M. Anderson*



*Drew Christiansen*  
The second in the  
Advent series

**F**RANCIS XAVIER and Ignatius of Loyola met as roommates (along with Peter Favre) at the College of Sainte Barbe in Paris. Xavier, was 23, born into an aristocratic family, with little interest in the spiritual life, thrown in with a middle-aged ascetic. Today, Xavier's feast day, we remember their friendship, but Ignatius also described Francis as his most difficult convert. One wonders what their first meeting might have been like....

*Setting: A college dorm room.*

*Enter a young man in fine apparel, sword in shiny scabbard at his side. Two servants follow with trunks.*

*Standing in the room, a young man in simple attire.*

FX: So, you must be my roommate. I'm Frankie Xavier. Here's my coat.

PF: Uh, O.K. Hi! I'm Peter Favre.

FX: Boys, put the trunks down by the bed near the window and go get the entertainment system. Great to know you, Patrick.

PF: It's Peter.

FX: Uh-huh. I see we have a triple to ourselves. Thank goodness. I have a lot of stuff.

*Francis turns, startled to see a short, sickly man in a worn robe standing beside the door.*

FX: I'm sorry; I didn't see him lurking there. Is this your manservant?

PF: Uh, no, this is....

IL: "...the other guy."

FX: Sorry?

IL: Ignatius.

PF: Our roommate.

FX: Our roommate?

IL: Your roommate.

FX: He looks old enough to be my father.

IL: I'm 38.

FX: And what, 3'7"? Seriously, I've seen Hummels that are taller than this guy.

IL: This from the kid with the toy sword.

PF: Ignatius is actually a preacher, here to study philosophy. He used to be a gentleman at the court of Navarre.

FX: Really? I'm from Navarre.

IL: I worked for the viceroy there. My life was consumed with the pursuit of pleasure, adventure and romance. Then I was injured at Pamplona.

FX: Pamplona. Hmm....

IL: During my months of recovery, I used to imagine myself back at court. It

seemed so hollow.

PF: Wow.

IL: Then I began to imagine myself living like a saint, and....

FX: Wait a second. Are you from Loyola?

IL: I am.

FX: You're kidding.

PF: What?

FX: This man—when the French attacked Pamplona, this man rallied the troops, mounted an incredible defense, even got hit by a cannonball.

IL: That's right.

PF: My God! A hero!

FX: Yes. And then he went crazy.

PF: He doesn't look crazy to me.

FX: Yes, well you didn't know him when he had stopped shaving and showering and eating and cutting his nails.

IL: I must admit, I had a certain predilection for excessive penances.

FX: Your fingernails were so long they looked like bedsprings. I thought you worked for the circus. My mother

wouldn't let us go near you.

IL: Well, those days

are over.

FX: Really. So where are your shoes?

PF: Yeah, I was wondering that, too.

FX: And when did you last eat?

IL: I have a very small stomach. But I should tell you, if you ever hear me crying, don't worry. I just get very emotional in prayer sometimes.

FX: See what I'm saying, Percy? Tiny Tim here is a few beads short of a rosary.

IL: Maybe so. But what's crazier, I wonder: fasting to appreciate the suffering of Jesus, or chasing a life of empty pleasures?

FX: Listen, lawn gnome, just because you don't want to enjoy life doesn't mean I shouldn't.

IL: I bet you don't even last a year.

FX: Excuse me?

IL: All your soirees and designer clothes and self-indulgence.... I give you one year before you're looking for something more meaningful to live for.

FX: Old man, there's a better chance of me baptizing babies in India.

IL: Kid, do you think I aspired to spend my 30s living in Paris with a spoiled brat from Navarre?

PF: It's a good point, Frankie.

FX: Peter, go make up my bed.

*Jim McDermott, S.J.*

# America

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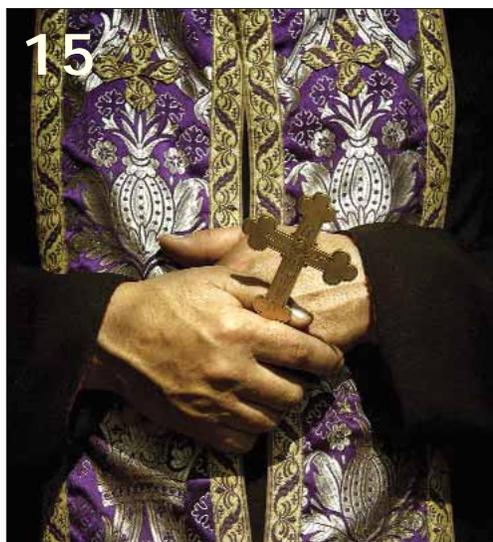
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**This week @  
 America Connects**

Drew Christiansen, S.J., and José Casanova discuss Mark Lilla's *The Stillborn God*. Matt Malone, S.J., discusses the U.S. bishops' meeting in Baltimore. And from the archives: the editors on the Clintons' 1993 health care plan. All at [www.americamagazine.org](http://www.americamagazine.org).

### No News...

When Pope Benedict allowed wider use of the Latin Mass last July, he explained that he did not expect as a result any extensive return to the Tridentine rite. Rather, he said, he intended to heal rifts with traditionalist groups and allow young people attracted to the rite to experience it. He said he did not mean to lessen the authority of the world's bishops, who until then held sway over local use of the rite. Nor did he mean to offend Jews worried about offensive language in the prayers of Holy Week. To assuage fears that the old rite might compete with the new one, the pope proposed to review the situation in three years.

The Catholic response to the permission in the United States has been predictable. On op-ed pages proponents hailed it as progress; Patrick Buchanan publicly declared himself "a Latin Mass Catholic." News outlets big and small ran stories showing priests facing the altar, not the people, and confirming in quotes and interviews just what the pope had predicted: some young people like participating in Mass using a rite they had never before experienced. Something has changed.

But how broad is Catholic interest? A recent New York Times story cited an objective measure: a phone survey of the 25 largest U.S. dioceses, in which diocesan officials said that a traditional Latin Mass has "emerged in just one or two parishes." That meager interest confirmed information **America** obtained from an independent reporter we had engaged to track and write the story. There is no story, though things might change and interest build. For now there is little to report.

### 'Forget it, Jake, it's Chinatown'

The most prized American natural resource of the future will not be oil or timber or gold; it will be fresh water. Rapid migration into parched areas over the past century has been possible because we learned to exploit water resources, both aboveground and under the earth. As these are tapped to an ever greater degree, the American West and South face the prospect of massive cutbacks in water use. A drought that began in 1999 is now being called the worst the American West has seen in 500 years, and could lead to something even worse than the Dust Bowl catastrophe, which devastated the agricultural communities west of the Mississippi in the 1930s.

These days the focus of concern is not agriculture, but the cities, including Los Angeles, Phoenix, Las Vegas and

other thirsty communities, including Atlanta. Lake Lanier, which supplies the five million residents of Atlanta with drinking water, could be dry in less than two months, and Georgia's Governor Sonny Perdue held a prayer vigil on Nov. 14 to pray for rain. Lake Mead, which waters Las Vegas and other municipalities, is half-empty. And according to the U.S. Climatic Data Center, 67 percent of the western United States is suffering from middling to extreme drought. A few wet years will not solve the problem, since population growth continues. California alone will grow from 37 million to between 44 and 48 million people by 2025. Where will we find all this water, and how can we use it more wisely? And what kind of example can we set for the rest of the world?

### Veterans Day 2007

Among the little-noticed wages of war is the disturbing fact that veterans of military combat make up a disproportionate share of the homeless population in the United States. In the days preceding the celebration of Veterans Day, the Homelessness Research Institute reported that "veterans, who represent only 11 percent of the civilian adult population, comprise 26 percent of the homeless population." And that percentage is likely to grow as more and more veterans return from combat in Iraq and Afghanistan. This most recent wave of veterans, including more women than in previous wars, faces new challenges. Aid workers warn that they are moving more quickly toward homelessness than did the generation of Vietnam veterans.

While the wounded warriors of this new generation receive more support from the American public than the returning Vietnam veterans did, they also bear different and disturbing wounds: higher rates of post-traumatic stress disorder and brain injuries that might have been fatal in earlier wars. In addition, repeated and extended tours of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan disrupt families and make integration back into civilian life more difficult. High housing costs, which can account for half of some veterans' income, place some 72,000 of the new generation of veterans at risk for homelessness.

As the cost of the unnecessary and ill-planned war in Iraq spirals, along with reports of billions lost through waste and corruption in the reconstruction effort, the needs of our homeless and near-homeless veterans must claim a high place in the spending priorities of the Bush administration.

# The Politics of Fear

**I**N AN IDEAL WORLD, a presidential election campaign would be a time to consider competing visions of the most important challenges that now confront the United States. How to respond to the continuing threat of international terrorism assuredly is one of those challenges. Unfortunately our present political culture, dominated by political consultants, pollsters and focus groups, does not encourage candid and thoughtful debate. Discussion of international terrorism has been dominated by the politics of fear, each candidate striving to persuade U.S. voters that he or she would be tough enough to deal with the dangers of terrorism. Very little attention is paid to who would be smart enough to understand the nature of the danger we face and develop an effective strategy to contain it.

No candidate has been more singleminded in exploiting the politics of fear than Rudolph W. Giuliani, the former New York City mayor who is one of the leading candidates for the Republican nomination. Mr. Giuliani won national and international respect for his leadership in the immediate aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on his city, a reputation that proved financially rewarding for him on the lecture circuit and for his consulting business in the years that followed. Even his most persistent critics recognize the courage and eloquence with which he rallied the city in the aftermath of the attack. In the years before the 2001 attack, however, the Giuliani administration did not act on the recommendations made after the 1993 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center. The failure to clarify command structures and provide better communication between the police and fire departments compromised the heroic response of city agencies on that second day of terror. Mr. Giuliani's record, then, on understanding and responding to the threat of international terrorism is, at best, mixed.

The other candidates, however, both Democrats and Republicans, have failed to address the challenge of international terrorism in ways that would enlighten and encourage the American voters. Little attention has been paid, for example, to the fact that the 2003 pre-emptive invasion of Iraq was not a necessary or wise response to

international terrorism but, in fact, a costly distraction that has compounded the dangers we face. Saddam Hussein was a ruthless dictator, but he was not behind the terrorist attacks of 9/11. The Bush administration, however, appealed to popular anger over those attacks to gain emotional support for a war of choice. The possibility that Saddam's regime had weapons of mass destruction did represent a real danger, but it was a danger that would have been more wisely contained by international oversight. The decision to invade Iraq, against the counsel of long-time U.S. allies, was a costly blunder and has not made the region or the world safer. Yet some voices both within and outside the Bush administration seem bent on repeating that error in dealing with the nuclear ambitions of Iran by suggesting unilateral military action by the United States may be necessary.

Nearly five years after the invasion of Iraq, the United States has a responsibility to the Iraqi people to try to heal the wounds of war by supporting the transition to a stable government in a society divided by sectarian conflict. The administration also has a responsibility to help relieve the suffering of families who have lost sons and daughters on the battlefield and those veterans who are returning severely wounded in body and spirit. But the moral and emotional investment demanded by the Iraq invasion should not prevent us from recognizing that it was a mistake and gaining some wisdom from its painful lessons.

**A MORE ENLIGHTENED APPROACH** to dealing with the continuing threat of international terrorism might begin by retiring the misleading phrase "war on terror." Instead of a war that might end with a surrender or a treaty, we are engaged in a continuing police action waged by the international community against a loose network of nihilists with no coherent political agenda. In dealing with an international threat, Washington must recognize the necessity of international cooperation, sharing intelligence and working toward the kind of consensus necessary to support effective military action.

Above all, in this continuing struggle, we must repudiate any tactics that compromise our commitment to human rights and international law. If we compromise our fundamental values, we run the risk of becoming mirror images of our adversaries. The struggle with Islamic extremism in the decades ahead will be, above all, a contest of ideas and values. We must recognize the self-defeating strategies of a politics of fear and have confidence that a civilization grounded in respect for human dignity will, in the end, prevail.

### Vatican Diplomat Questions Relations With Israel



Pietro Sambini

With new problems over visas for foreign priests and the long, ongoing negotiations needed to resolve the tax status of Catholic institutions in Israel, the

Vatican's former ambassador to that country said, "To be frank, relations between the Catholic Church and the state of Israel were better when there were no diplomatic relations."

Archbishop Pietro Sambini served as the Vatican nuncio to Israel for seven years before being named nuncio to the United States in 2005. The archbishop made his statement during an interview that was published Nov. 16 in the online edition of *Terra Santa* magazine, a publication of the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land.

Although issues related to the juridical and financial status of the Catholic Church had not been fully clarified, the Vatican went ahead and launched full diplomatic relations with Israel in 1994 "as an act of trust," certain that Israel would act quickly to finalize agreements on the legal and financial issues, Archbishop Sambini said, offering his personal opinion on the matter.

### Bishops Approve Text on Conscience and Citizenship

In what several bishops called "a watershed moment" for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, the full body of bishops overwhelmingly approved a document intended to help Catholic voters form their consciences on a variety of issues before the 2008 elections. *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Political Responsibility From the Catholic Bishops of the United States* was approved by a 221-to-4 vote Nov. 14, the last public day of the Nov. 12-15 U.S.C.C.B. general assembly in Baltimore. The bishops also endorsed a shorter document, designed as a parish bulletin insert, by a vote of 221 to 1. Prepared by a task force made up of the chairmen of seven U.S.C.C.B. committees, the document underwent more than a dozen drafts and was still heavily amended during the meeting and immediately before the Nov. 14 vote. The longer document rejects politics based on "powerful inter-

From CNS and other sources. CNS photos.

ests, partisan attacks, sound bites and media hype" and calls instead for "a different kind of political engagement."

### Chinese Change Stance on 'Religion'

Some church leaders praised the inclusion of the word "religion" in the Communist Party's constitution as a small step forward, but a recent commentary in a Hong Kong daily identified the Vatican as a "foreign force" meddling in the affairs of Hong Kong and Macau. The 17th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in Beijing in mid-October has been called a breakthrough for religion in China, reported the Asian church news agency UCA News. The latest revision to the party constitution uses the word "religion" for the first time since the constitution was drafted in 1921. The 19th paragraph of the constitution's General Program now includes this sentence: "The party strives to fully implement its basic principle for its work related to religious affairs and

rallies religious believers in making contributions to economic and social development." The paragraph originally contained only calls for Communists' promotion of relations with ethnic minorities based on equality, solidarity, mutual harmony, training of cadres from these groups, and empowering these groups to work for prosperity and development.

### Over 100,000 Changes to Italian Mass Readings

Italians listening to the Scriptures at Mass will no longer hear that it is impossible to serve "God and mammon," but rather that no one can serve both "God and wealth." On the feast of the Annunciation, the Gospel reading no longer will have the angel Gabriel greeting Mary with the words "Hail, full of grace," but rather with "Rejoice, full of grace." After five years of work and 15 drafts, the first volumes of Scripture readings for Masses in Italian have been approved by the Vatican and may be used in parishes beginning in December. The new lectionaries for Sundays and holy days—one for each year of the three-year cycle of readings—were presented Nov. 12 at a Vatican press conference. The bishops expect to complete the collection of readings for other Masses by the end of 2008, and use of the new translations will be obligatory beginning with Advent 2010.

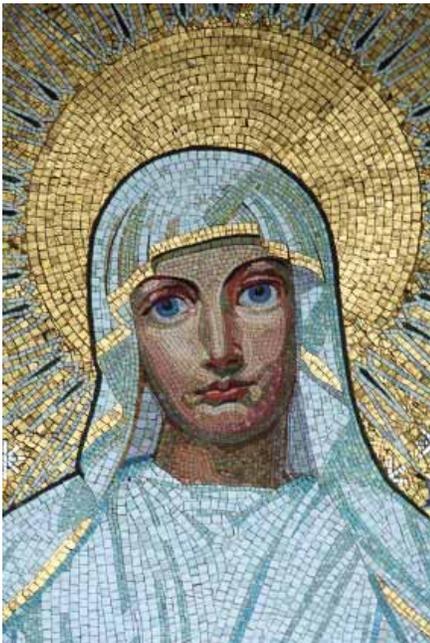
### Human Trafficking Victims Need More Help

Although the United States has made progress in addressing human trafficking, more needs to be done to help victims, particularly children, said a Catholic official in testimony before a committee of the U.S. House of Representatives. "From the Catholic perspective, human trafficking represents a scourge on the earth which must be eradicated," said Anastasia Brown, director of refugee programs for the Committee on Migration and Refugee Services of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. She applauded the efforts already made to stop human trafficking, such as the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, which Congress reauthorized in

## Signs of the Times

2003 and 2005. But in her testimony before the House Judiciary Committee Oct. 31, she stressed that trafficking victims need "access to a continuum of services in order to attain self-sufficiency and restored mental and physical health." Most victims of trafficking are "commonly linked by poverty and lack of opportunity" and are sold into bondage as prostitutes, domestic workers and child laborers, she said.

### Papal Visit to Lourdes to Mark Marian Apparitions



A mosaic of Mary is displayed in an outdoor chapel in Lourdes, France.

Officials confirmed Pope Benedict XVI will visit the Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes in France to mark the 150th anniversary of the Marian apparitions there, but said the exact time period of the papal visit was not yet known. Bishop Jacques Perrier of Tarbes and Lourdes, who is in charge of the preparations for the jubilee celebrations, said the papal journey was "a sure thing." The bishop and others spoke to journalists during a Nov. 13 Vatican press conference, unveiling details of the yearlong jubilee celebrations. Federico Lombardi, S.J., head of the Vatican press office, said the papal trip "most probably" would have Lourdes as its sole destination and for now would

### Knights Donate Wheelchairs to Veterans

In ceremonies on Nov. 9 and 10 in Washington, Chicago, Los Angeles and Bonham, Tex., which is near Dallas, the Knights of Columbus distributed 2,000 wheelchairs to military veterans. "As our nation pauses to honor these men and women on Veterans Day, we are honored to be able to reach out to help veterans in need," Supreme Knight Carl A. Anderson said. Veterans Day was Nov. 11. "This wheelchair distribution continues our longstanding tradition of service to our service men and women, both those who are on active duty and those who are retired," he said in a statement in Washington, D.C. The Knights of Columbus formed a partnership with the Wheelchair Foundation to distribute the chairs. Five hundred were distributed in each of the four cities in ceremonies that drew hundreds of people. A press release from the Knights said the Chicago ceremony began with Boy Scouts wheeling veterans into the auditorium of the Edward Hines Jr. Veterans Affairs Hospital in new "Ferrari red"



A cadet from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., a member of the Knights of Columbus, assists a wheelchair recipient in Washington, D.C., on Nov. 10.

wheelchairs, escorted by an honor guard of 76 fourth-degree Knights.

not include stops in other cities. Bishop Perrier said he is often asked if the pope will arrive at Lourdes at one of the "significant moments" for the church, such as Feb. 11, the day the apparitions began and also the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, or Aug. 15, the feast of the Assumption. Bishop Perrier said whatever date the pope decides for his visit would be a significant moment for them.

### D.C. School System to Be Reconfigured

The Archdiocese of Washington has finalized its decision to reconfigure its current 12-school center-city consortium. Four schools will make up a new smaller consortium. Seven schools will be converted into charter schools and one will become a parish-run school. The Center City Consortium was established in 1997

to help schools facing decreasing enrollment, budget deficits, deteriorating buildings and the threat of closure. Through the consortium, schools pooled their resources and have been assisted by consortium staff with development, fundraising and purchasing.

The final plan for Washington's urban schools, announced Nov. 5, was developed in response to several crises facing the consortium, including a \$7 million shortfall this school year, a projected \$56 million deficit over the next five years, a 19 percent decline in enrollment and an increase in the number of the city's tuition-free public charter schools. An archdiocesan statement noted that "a conversion [to charter schools] will allow faculty and students to be 'grandfathered' in and to continue at the school they already attend, although the school would no longer be Catholic."



# Coal to Diamond, Frog to Prince

## ‘God’s dream takes time to emerge.’

**I**N THE BEGINNING, God ran the grains of the embryonic earth through creating fingers and dreamed a dream: that every one of these grains might become, in God’s love and power, a being capable of reflecting something of the mystery from which it springs; that each grain might become what it is destined to be—a being fully alive, and therefore a shaft of the glory of God. And so began the awesome unfolding of all that might emerge on planet Earth through the eons of evolving life.

Very occasionally we get to see that process miraculously accelerated before our eyes, as though God were saying, “Here, if you don’t believe me, just take a look at this!” One of those glimpses came my way in the most unlikely fashion.

My daughter called me into the study. “I must show you something on the Internet,” she said. Intrigued, I watched while she brought up a little clip from a recent television show. It was one of those “talent shows” that can range from the mainly mundane to the modestly mediocre, to the occasional “wow!” It was not a show I was in the habit of watching myself.

An unremarkable man walked haltingly onto the stage, visibly apologetic for taking up a space on the planet. His clothes lacked any vestige of style. His shoulders drooped. His head fell slightly to one side as if in a permanent state of deference. His nervous smile revealed a missing tooth, and his arms hung awkwardly at his sides, as though they did not quite belong to him. His whole appearance exuded a total lack of self-confidence.

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MARGARET SILF lives in Staffordshire, England. Her latest books are *Companions of Christ: Ignatian Spirituality for Everyday Living* and the Catholic Press Association award-winning *The Gift of Prayer*.

With eyes shyly reluctant to meet the camera, he hesitantly shared with the nation that he was a cellphone salesman from Cardiff, but his entire demeanor gave off the message: “I’m nobody really, and I don’t know what I’m doing here.”

A panel of three judges awaited him. They had clearly had about as much as they could take that day of Britain’s “talent,” much of it imagined. One of them in particular had a reputation for ruthless criticism and was apparently in the mood to live up to it. The candidate was asked, “What are you here to do today?” He replied, “to sing opera.” The judges exchanged glances, barely veiling their dread of what they might be about to sit through. I, meanwhile, was wondering what my daughter had found so special about this clip, and had come to the conclusion that it was either supposed to be funny, or else I was going to witness something cringingly dreadful. I braced myself.

Then the man opened his mouth and sang. I have heard many operatic performances and have had the fibers of my heart wrenched in a thousand different ways, but I don’t think I can remember ever being so transfixed, so rooted to the spot, as I was during that rendering of Puccini’s “Nessun dorma.” The most sublime voice you could imagine poured forth, as though Pavarotti himself had come back to remind us that nothing ever dies. But this was not Luciano Pavarotti. It was Paul Potts from Cardiff, and nobody in that audience could believe what they were hearing. A total silence fell upon the whole scene. The cameras zoomed in on the judges’ faces. One had tears in her eyes. All were stunned and spellbound. The silence was broken only when tumultuous applause erupted. I felt the hairs rising on the nape of my neck.

That was just the audition. In the

finals, needless to say, Paul swept the board and became a national hero overnight. A filmed flashback showed him walking along the shore of his native South Wales, revealing that his secret dream had always been to spend his life doing what he felt he was born to do. He also disclosed that he had been bullied in his youth, and only by singing had he held on to some dim sense of his own intrinsic worth. His voice, he said, had become his best friend. “I know I need to have a bit more faith in myself,” he added with impressive understatement. “I’m working on that.”

The judges, it appeared, also had dreams. One described Paul as a little lump of coal who had become a diamond, a frog turned prince. Another shared the vision they had all had at the start of the show: that some ordinary, unassuming person, doing a very ordinary job, quite unaware of his extraordinary gifting, might truly discover who he was and become a gift to the world.

Sometimes God’s dream takes eons to emerge out of eternity, and sometimes it happens overnight. A story like Paul’s reverberates down through the centuries from a little town in the Middle East, where an apparently unremarkable child, also destined to endure abuse and misunderstanding, was born to an apparently ordinary girl. That extraordinary child is a constant reminder that God’s dream is longing to come to birth in every one of us. God’s dream is always about what we are born to do and who we are born to be, and the power and the Spirit that continue to flow from that child are the way dream becomes reality, coal turns into diamonds and frogs become princes—not a fairy story, but a real and grounded invitation to each of us to become who we are, a unique human being fully alive, a shaft of the glory of God that will shine in the darkness and which the darkness cannot overcome.

Paul himself summed it up: “I have always felt insignificant, but now I know I am somebody. I am Paul Potts.”

Who am I? When we can answer that question with both confidence and humility, then we are echoing back something of the very being of God, who says, “I am who I am.”

*Margaret Silf*



Health care cannot be fixed piecemeal;  
a new system is required.

# Diagnosing the U.S. Health Care System

– BY MARY JANE ENGLAND –

**M**ICHAEL MOORE'S FILM "Sicko" uses social commentary to hold health care in the United States up to shame. Though Moore neither adequately diagnoses nor prescribes treatment for the patient he observes—our health care system—his film prods viewers into thinking seriously about his subject. This article considers both the dark and the bright sides of health care with a view toward future improvement.

MARY JANE ENGLAND, M.D., is president of Regis College in Weston, Mass. In 2005 she chaired the national committee of the Institute of Medicine that produced *Improving the Quality of Health Care for Mental Health and Substance-Use Conditions* in its series "Crossing the Quality Chasm."

On the dark side, the system as a whole is broken, not just the financial and insurance aspects of health care. The way diagnoses are made and care is delivered is actually a non-system, a chaos composed of fragmented services and partial treatments. It accidentally kills 90,000 people a year through medical error—death by health care. The number of serious injuries, dangerous side effects and deaths from over-the-counter and prescription drugs alone nearly tripled between 1998 and 2005.

Health care in the United States ranks as the world's costliest at \$2.2 trillion annually (17 percent of G.D.P. compared with 10 percent in other developed nations). Health insurance premiums continue to rise, with increases outpacing inflation. According to a September 2007 report by the Kaiser Family Foundation, a research organization that tracks the cost of health insurance, this year's average premium for a family of four was \$12,106, of which workers paid \$3,281 on average; for a single person it was \$4,479, of which workers paid \$694. The portion that families and single people pay has nearly doubled since 2001. Rising premiums make insurance less affordable even for businesses and working people. And the number of people without health insurance—47 million—is growing. Already serious problems of accessibility and equity grow with it.

Studies by nonpartisan agencies show that Americans seldom get the world's best care for their expenditure. A few years ago the World Health Organization ranked the health care of 191 countries and placed the United States 37th, on a par with developing, not advanced, countries. A New York Times editorial on Aug. 12 noted that when the Commonwealth Fund looked at quality and access to care in the United States and in five other nations (Australia, Canada, Germany, New Zealand and the United Kingdom), it judged the United States number one for providing the right clinical care but last on a number of other measures, including treatment of the chronically ill and frequent medical deaths.

On the bright side, health care in the United States has access to the most advanced medical technology in the world, technology that our best hospitals have rapidly assimilated and are already using to benefit patients. The United States also operates world-class medical schools and hospitals. And some insurers have learned from their experience in the early years of managed care to allow prevention and intervention and to give consumers a choice of physicians. Currently, health care includes conceptual and institutional developments that

can lead to substantial improvements.

## Crossing the Quality Chasm

Since 1996 the Institute of Medicine has focused on understanding and addressing the quality problem. That year it launched a series of studies aimed at “crossing the quality chasm.” The project first documented the nation's overall quality problem, concluding that “the burden of harm conveyed by the collective impact of all our health care quality problems is staggering.” Second, it published two major documents, *To Err Is Human: Building a Safer Health System* (1999), on medical error, and *Crossing the Quality Chasm: A New Health System for the 21st Century* (2001). Both emphasized that reform around the margins is inadequate to address systemic ills and prescribed comprehensive change through a new transformational vision of what needs to be done. Now in its third phase, the project is making its recommendations operational.

It has developed a model from six stated aims for quality care: care must be safe, effective, patient-centered, timely, efficient and equitable. The model defines quality in measurable terms as “the degree to which health services for individuals and populations increase the likelihood of desired health outcomes and are consistent with current professional knowledge.” And it provides new rules for client-professional relationships.

The institute has studied many aspects of quality—from primary care and the treatment of chronic conditions to delivery of care, nursing, technology and so on—and has identified priority areas for action. In 2005 it produced *Improving the Quality of Health Care for Mental and Substance-Use Conditions*, which advocated incorporating care for mental health and substance use conditions into overall health care.

So we know a great deal, but we need to implement what we know and figure out how to pay for it. Today, eight years after an institute study called for quality care for cancer (1999), research shows that uninsured cancer patients tend to be diagnosed at an advanced and less curable stage of cancer than insured patients; many families, even those with insurance, cannot meet the high costs of treatment because of limited benefits. Quality, delivery, cost, coverage, equity, policy, the doctor-patient relationship, effectiveness—each aspect affects the other. The non-system cannot be fixed piecemeal, but rather by developing a true system. Those of us who work with health care systems and delivery recognize that financial reform of health care cannot focus on the frag-



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/ROB BYRON

mented non-system any more than reform around the margins of health care can improve quality of care.

### Money, Health and Government

Most Americans receive health care through employer-based insurance plans—a combination of H.M.O.'s and out-of-plan physicians. For the indigent, the government offers Medicaid, for seniors Medicare. The Americans left out of this system are the 47 million “uninsured,” a group that includes workers who have opted out of their employers’ insurance plan, persons with jobs but no insurance benefits and persons without jobs. The number of uninsured also includes children without coverage.

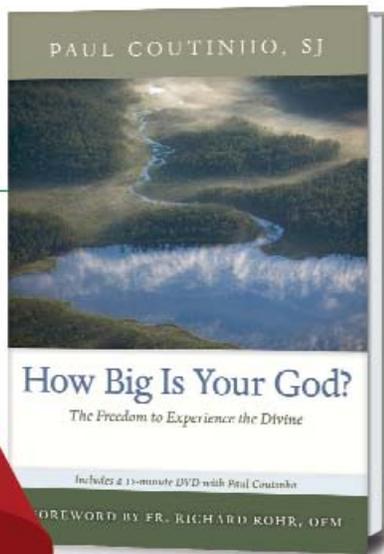
Because of the increasing cost of employer-based insurance, employers struggle with large liabilities; and health care coverage has become a chief point of negotiation in labor-management contracts. The recent agreement reached between General Motors and the United Auto Workers, for example, hinged on providing an alternative, a trust called a “voluntary employee benefit association” (VEBA), which includes the union’s participation and will secure the benefits of retirees and every hourly worker now at GM for 80 years, while allowing GM to strengthen its manufacturing competitiveness here and globally.

Some politicians in the United States have needlessly whipped up anxiety by associating any prospect for a more

unified approach to health care with “socialized medicine.” If health and systems of care led the conversation, however, we might see the money problem differently and be better able to solve it. Rather than throwing good money after bad at the current non-system—including good money from joint employer- and government-sponsored plans—we must pay attention to new models of care, some emerging from state and federal government and some from health-care professionals, which deliver more efficient and effective care. Doing this would help place universal coverage in perspective as a means, not an end. We need a good system of care with reasonable access. As the New York Times editors put it, “All other major industrialized nations provide universal health coverage, and most of them have comprehensive benefit packages with no cost-sharing by the patients.” The United States is the lone exception.

### Two Models

Bipartisan support is harder to obtain today than it was a decade ago, but some states have attained such support on health care. In California, a field poll in January 2007 revealed that 81 percent of the voters thought “it should be public policy that government guarantee that all Californians have access to affordable health care insurance or other health care coverage,” that is, universal health care coverage. Since various drafts of a health care reform plan



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include universal access to health care as the goal, California's citizens will likely benefit no matter which proposal prevails.

Working with Democrats, Republican Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has contributed many ideas to the process. Recently, however, Assembly Bill 8, the plan as it currently stands, faces the governor's veto. The Associated Press quoted him as saying, "First and foremost, AB8 does not cover everyone.... Any reform that leaves millions without health insurance and fails to address our dangerously overcrowded emergency rooms simply maintains a broken system." When Schwarzenegger judged that the proposal put too great a financial burden on businesses, he called for a special session of the legislature to address the issue. California is not giving up; it simply has to work it all out.

Last year the Massachusetts legislature and governor worked out a plan to ensure that everyone in the state has health insurance coverage. The idea was to improve the quality of care, reduce the cost and remove barriers to access. On April 12, 2006, health care reform became law. Provisions in the bill aimed at achieving nearly universal health insurance coverage, but also maintained a strong safety net, which has historically distinguished the state.

The plan could be nicknamed the "shared responsibility" plan because it asks government, employers, insurers and citizens all to do their part to expand health coverage

and quality of care. A chief feature of the plan is the "Commonwealth Health Care Connector," with its own advisory board and Web page that connects individuals and small businesses with health insurance products. The connector allows for portability (coverage travels as individuals move from job to job) and permits more than one employer to contribute to an employee's health insurance premium. The plan allows H.M.O.'s to offer coverage linked to health savings accounts, reducing costs for those who enroll. The plan has also created a subsidized insurance program called the Commonwealth Care Health Insurance Program for individuals who earn less than 300 percent of the federal poverty level and are ineligible for the state Medicaid program. Premiums for this program will be set on a sliding scale based on household income, and no deductible will be required. The bill has expanded eligibility for employee participation in the current Insurance Partnership program from 200 percent to 300 percent of the poverty level, providing another option for small businesses who want to offer health care to their employees.

The bill shifted significant federal resources from supporting individual hospitals to funding health insurance coverage for uninsured individuals, and requires a lifetime spending ceiling for waiver services. It also created a "fair share contribution" (approximately \$295 per full-time employee per year) to be paid by employers who do not



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provide health insurance for their employees. And the bill required that, as of July 1, 2007, all residents of the Commonwealth must obtain health insurance coverage. Individuals for whom there are no affordable products available are not penalized for not having insurance coverage.

A year into the Massachusetts plan, Nancy Turnbull, a dean at the Harvard School of Public Health, noted that 170,000 people have insurance today who otherwise would not. But universal health care, while an important achievement, will not solve the problem of quality.

It is too early to assess the effectiveness of these state initiatives, though they do show boldness and creativity and hold promise. They also offer some parallels with successful programs elsewhere, notably in Holland, which implemented a plan in 2006 requiring individuals to buy insurance or pay a penalty and requiring insurers to offer coverage to all comers. The difference between the Dutch plan and the plans of Massachusetts and California is that Holland does not require employers to offer health coverage.

Cost—whether one looks at insurance, government expenditures, equity, employer contributions or health care quality—remains a major issue. We Americans are well on our way to spending 20 percent of G.D.P., \$1 of every \$5, on health care. Without universal health care, such high costs will only increase the gap between Americans who can pay for what they need and Americans who cannot. As we pursue the best possible health for all Americans, we must find ways to reduce all related costs. That entails redesigning the whole system. The current broken system will only drive up costs. Yet an undertow seems to pull Americans down so that they resist changes in the financing of health care.

### Toward a New Health Care System

Having worked during the 1990s at understanding multiple systems of care and how they do or do not intersect well, I have come to see that health and health care are the focus; they give the proper perspective. Public policy cannot be focused on financing, because we will not get the financing right until we put research and time into developing systems of care in which patient outcomes are measured and found to be better.

New systems of care are emerging in several still-developing models that could help improve American health care, because they focus on health and health care itself and take a new, pragmatic approach to the administration of care from the ground up. What characterizes the new models is the design and implementation of a system that is patient-centered, not doctor-visit or hospital-centered, yet that still links a patient to a primary-care practitioner.

The new models draw on medical technology and centralized records (available even in the home) so that telephone and Internet communication help build a continuum

of relationship and emphasize wellness and prevention, as well as medical treatment of illness. The models cultivate different perspectives, gained through the use of “coaches” or care managers, in person or by electronic means, and advance the patient’s ability to manage his or her health. And they bring all these features together with social support.

Instead of rewarding professionals for tests, treatments and number of visits because of illness or chronic conditions, as is currently the case, these models reward medical and health professionals financially for producing health and preventing illness (as patients quit smoking, lower their cholesterol, need fewer or no hospital stays, lose weight, lower blood pressure, control and monitor diabetes, etc.). In sum, these emerging models centralize health care in the patient and treat the patient as a whole human person, allowing the patient to take charge more effectively of his or her own health.

What is beginning to dawn in the mind of the average American citizen, and may characterize health care in the 21st century, is the patient-centered and socially collaborative design in which care is based upon continuous healing relationships, not visits. The patient is the source of control, not the health professional. Knowledge is shared and information flows freely, and decisions are based on solid evidence. **A**

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# What Divides Orthodox and Catholics?

*How the faithful can foster ecumenism at the level of church culture*

BY MAXIMOS DAVIES

**W**HEN PROTESTERS IN BELGRADE converged on the patriarchal headquarters of the Serbian Orthodox Church last April, they were angry about proposed liturgical reforms. The reforms included an instruction to priests to recite aloud some previously silent prayers and to leave the holy doors in the icon screen between the altar and the congregation open during the celebration of the Eucharist. A photograph in a Serbian newspaper showed an activist holding an icon of St. Sava, the most important national saint of the Serbian Orthodox Church, in one hand. In the other she held a placard: “Master: Do not turn us into Roman Catholics!”

What brought that Serbian to put Sharpie to cardboard was not a dispute over doctrine, but instead a fear of the invasion of a culture perceived as alien. Upon closer questioning, the protester might have argued, “Catholics are heretics!” For many Orthodox Christians, however, such a claim is a secondary argument shoring up the main point, which is that Roman Catholics and Orthodox are just *different*. For many Orthodox, Rome’s alleged heresies are inevitable because of differences in outlook and traditions. Even if theological issues could be settled, that deep sense of otherness would remain a serious obstacle to reunion.

It is not clear that many Catholics think this way about Orthodox Christians, however. Catholic attitudes likely reflect the casual assumptions typical of a dominant culture. In its recent document on the nature of the church, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith reasserted Catholic teaching that the Orthodox belong to real churches, lacking only communion with Rome to be complete. The external affairs spokesman for the Moscow Patriarchate, Metropolitan Kyril of Smolensk, responded to the document by stating, “It helps us see how different we really are.” Even when Rome tries to emphasize the close

relationship between Orthodox and Catholics, its Eastern dialogue partners take these statements as a sign of distance.

Are Catholics and Orthodox truly that different? For half a century now the two sides have been referring to each other officially as “sister churches.” A list of theological sticking points looks relatively short, and the Catholic understanding of papal supremacy is generally agreed to be the greatest difficulty. Old disputes over the *filioque* clause in the Nicene Creed (“the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father *and the Son*”) and the modern Roman dogmas of the



PHOTO: REUTERS/DAMIR SAGOLJ

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HIEROMONK MAXIMOS DAVIES is a monk of Holy Resurrection Monastery, an Eastern Catholic community within the Romanian Catholic Eparchy of St. George in Canton, Ohio.

Immaculate Conception and Assumption, both about Mary, are usually agreed by ecumenical cognoscenti to be subspecies of the problem of papal assertions. No one thinks this division can be solved entirely on a theological level. There are political wounds to be healed as well, especially over perceived proselytism by Catholics, most notably in the case of the “Uniate” Eastern Catholic churches.

Such theological and political problems are the bread and butter of official ecumenical dialogues, but much more rarely discussed are the profound cultural differences of the kind the Serbian protester feared. I do not mean “culture” in an ethnic sense, but as shorthand to describe a mode of being Christian, and such differences are most profound on the level of ecclesial culture. Ecclesial cultures develop distinct theological ideas, but these theological aspects are not simply thought; they are also deeply felt at the level of popular piety and practice. Questions of ecclesial culture tend to be underweighted in ecumenical dialogue. Perhaps this is not surprising, since finding a theoretical common ground that is intellectually defensible may prove easier in practice than helping hundreds of millions of the faithful receive such a resolution.

### Cultural Differences

Two major cultural differences can be detected in the way Orthodox and Catholics live out their visions of Christianity. The first includes attitudes toward liturgy, an area where differences are surprisingly difficult to define, because they go far beyond ritual variance. A common misunderstanding is that Orthodox value “reverence” more highly than Catholics in the contemporary West, but this is not necessarily true; a clown Mass is also reverent in its own way. It matters, though, precisely *what* is revered. We move closer to the truth if we say that the Orthodox see liturgy as the primary work of Christians, from which every other activity flows. Catholics, on the other hand, tend to see liturgy as one of many Christian labors; it is important and obligatory, but exists among many important works. While it is impossible to make such statements without employing massive generalizations, this difference between the two traditions is nevertheless a source of alienation.

One way the cultural difference manifests itself can be found in each tradition’s views of private prayer and asceticism. One can legitimately make the case that in Roman Catholicism these have undergone a considerable process of

privatization. Orthodox churches, on the other hand, have retained a more profound sense that asceticism is a communal work. I have been told more than once by Orthodox priests who are otherwise quite ecumenically minded that they would be reluctant to support immediate reunion of

the churches because of what seems to them to be a lack of respect for the discipline of fasting by Catholics. How, they ask, can they tell their people to fast from midnight on the night before they receive the Eucharist when they could go to a local Catholic Mass an hour

after breakfast? At the root of such an attitude lies a fear that without proper protections Orthodoxy will succumb to the siren song of Western individualism.

Catholics of a conservative bent might take heart from this, thinking that in this respect they can count the Orthodox as allies in the battle against liberalism and secularism, but this is true only up to a point. Many conservative Catholics talk about “offering up” some ascetical act for victims of abortion or some other worthy goal. It is difficult to imagine that an Orthodox Christian would think that way, and the Orthodox/Catholic divide is far more complex than any internal conflicts within the Catholic Church. For many Orthodox, what today is called “traditional” Catholic piety may seem just as alien in some forms as are “liberal” expressions of the faith.

Another major difference between these ecclesial cultures can be summed up in the principle of *oikonomia*, from the Greek word for “household rule” or “management,” which is often used in relation to questions of church order and regulations. The concept is not entirely foreign to Catholics, especially those outside the more legalist Anglo-German traditions, but the principle of *oikonomia* colors Orthodox praxis in ways that many Catholics would find surprising, even disturbing. The principle of *oikonomia*, for example, can be used in Orthodox churches to answer not merely questions of church order, but even morality. Two examples of the practice can be found in controversies over remarriage after divorce and the use of artificial contraception, both of which Orthodoxy accommodates within its moral vision under certain circumstances. Millions of ordinary Catholics have been intimately affected by their church’s insistence on the absolute indissolubility of marriage (hence, no sacramental remarriage after a divorce) and the intrinsic evil of artificial birth control. From the Catholic perspective, then, what pastoral ingenuity would

Even if theological issues could be settled, a deep sense of otherness would remain a serious obstacle to reunion.

permit a reunion with a church that (as it would surely be seen) “allows” divorce and contraception?

The Orthodox churches, though, are well aware of the percentage of Catholic applications for annulments granted in Western countries. They are also not blind to the extent to which Catholic teaching on contraception is ignored. If Catholics were to insist that their teaching more faithfully adheres to Christ’s message, how could they persuade ordinary Orthodox Christians that the current annulment process is anything but an expensive, time-consuming and psychologically intrusive version of an ecclesiastical divorce? And why would Orthodox priests risk alienating their own faithful by interfering in matters of family planning?

### Living What One Professes to Believe

How can a church call on others to reunite with it on the basis of practices and beliefs its own members treat with apparent contempt? The question cuts both ways, because Orthodoxy’s vaunted freedom and principle of *oikonomia* depend on the personal holiness of those managing the household of faith. Where sanctity and justice are lacking, the overshadowing chaos and venality may be all that Catholics or the Orthodox faithful will see. For either side to present a good case for its own ecclesial vision, it must live that vision, not merely argue it. A real key to ecumenical progress—the conversion of the other—begins with conversion of the self.

The notion that personal conversion lies at the heart of the ecumenical enterprise is far from new. In its “Decree on Ecumenism,” the Second Vatican Council referred to “change of heart” and “holiness of life” as “spiritual ecumenism,” calling it “the soul of the whole ecumenical movement.” In *A Handbook of Spiritual Ecumenism*, Cardinal Walter Kasper wrote, “only in the context of conversion and renewal of mind can the wounded bonds of communion be healed.” This conversion, he continues, might best be fostered within communities of faith: parishes, prayer groups, religious houses, monasteries or youth organizations, where the organic link between personal holiness and ecumenism might be taught and expressed in practical ways. Only at the grass roots can Catholics or Orthodox begin that long, slow process of reacquaintance without which the most optimistic pronouncements of ecumenical dialogues will prove pointless.

I belong to an Eastern Church united with Rome, and believe that fundamentally the Catholic and Orthodox visions are capable of communion with each other. But as an Eastern Catholic, I can also speak with some authority on the tensions that arise when we try to make that communion a tangible reality. With respect to those tensions, the Catholic side is overly optimistic. The toxic reaction Eastern Catholics (especially in Eastern Europe) often pro-

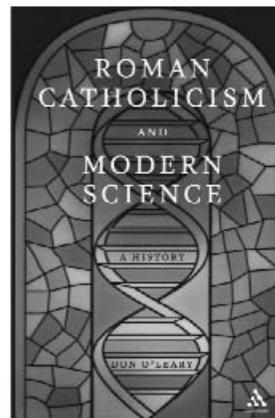
voke by their mere existence should alert our Roman brothers and sisters to a widespread sense among the Orthodox that the differences between us are too great to be papered over. Any attempt to do so may appear inauthentic and even mendacious. Even when Orthodox leaders attempt to give voice to this unease in more moderate ways, they tend to provoke ecumenically minded Catholics to anxious perplexity. A perfect example is the negative reaction that the Ecumenical Patriarch, Bartholomew I of Constantinople, received at Georgetown University in 1997 when he said of Orthodox and Catholics: “The manner in which we exist has become ontologically different. Unless our ontological transfiguration and transformation toward one common model of life is achieved, not only in form but also in substance, unity and its accompanying realization become impossible.”

That protester in Belgrade would have agreed wholeheartedly with the underlying sense that Catholics and Orthodox are different in fundamental ways. It is understandable that ecumenical theologians and ecclesiastical diplomats want to conduct ecumenism on the level of what unites us, but unfortunately our differences remain. In healing these divisions, especially those that exist on the cultural level, theologians and diplomats can do only so much. We spiritual ecumenists, faithful Christians, must do the rest. ▲

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# An Experience of Light

Major families of European Christians meet.

BY JAMES MASSA

**O**RTHODOX monks in flowing black robes mixed with women pastors of Reformation churches, as well as with young Pentecostal Christians from what are the fastest growing “new churches” of Europe. The mingling took place at the Third European Ecumenical Assembly, a fall gathering of representatives from the major families of European Christians. Held in Sibiu, Romania, on Sept. 5 to 9, the assembly was a remarkable achievement, as seen from the vantage point of an American Catholic observer, who imagined what it would be like for all the Christian communities in the United States to gather, literally, under a common tent. “The Light of Christ Shines Upon All” was the theme of the assembly; some participants felt that their experience of the light extended beyond the five-day gathering.

Each morning I traveled half a mile across the medieval town of Sibiu with three Scandinavian friends I had met on a long bus ride from Bucharest, then entered a large tent in the middle of the town square that accommodated the 2,500 delegates. Greetings and embraces among

REV. JAMES MASSA is executive director of the Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.



A monk prays at the Romanian Patriarchal Cathedral in Bucharest.

pastors, lay leaders and older ecumenical veterans continued until 9 a.m. every morning, when we were interrupted by a Romanian Orthodox nun sounding a wooden clapper. After a prolonged silence, music from a Scandinavian evangelical choir opened our morning prayer. The tent, reminiscent of encounters between Israel and God in Scripture, became a true “meeting place” in which the reconciling presence of Christ remained throughout the week.

The assembly showed an extraordi-

nary degree of coordination between the Council of European Churches (representing Protestant and Orthodox groups) and the Council of European Bishops’ Conferences (representing the Catholic Church). Two previous meetings in Basel, Switzerland, (1989) and Graz, Austria, (1997) had not enjoyed significant participation from Eastern European and Orthodox Christians; but this year the Romanian Orthodox Church and Metropolitan Daniel, who would soon be elected patriarch, served as the principal hosts of the event. Msgr. Aldo Giordano, general secretary of the Council of European Bishops’ Conferences, noted a further contrast between the Sibiu assembly and its precursors: “Europe was divided [in 1989]. In 1997 we met at a second assembly in Graz and it looked as though we had a new Europe of freedom, but then only a few years later other questions emerged, such as the environment, terrorism, and bioethics.”

## Issues of Concern

These issues were much on the minds of the plenary speakers, as well as the presenters who addressed smaller groups in afternoon breakout sessions. Concern about the human causes of climate change dominated many of these discussions. In his keynote address on the first morning, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I—



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often called the Green Patriarch—urged Christians in Europe to take on a spirit of repentance for having damaged the world's ecosystems and to pursue a "change of life that accompanies repentance." In a letter read to the assembly, Pope Benedict XVI also offered his support for addressing concerns about the environment. "Protecting water resources and paying attention to climate change are important issues for the entire human family," the pope asserted, adding that attention to the ecological crisis was a welcome sign of "better respect for the wonders of God's creation."

My Scandinavian companions were encouraged by the "Christian consensus" on ecological threats as well as other key social issues like immigration reform, fair trade and debt cancellation for struggling nations. Fear of strangers, particularly Muslim immigrants, has been a pressing concern in places like Copenhagen, where the publication of 12 cartoons depicting the prophet Muhammad in September 2005 sparked protests around the world. One of my companions, Kahn, the successful owner of a software company who immigrated 20 years ago to Finland from Vietnam, openly acknowledged his apprehensions about the high Muslim birthrate across Europe. Sister Suzanne, a member of the Josephite congregation who has worked for more than two decades in youth ministry, shared her difficulties in fostering attitudes of tolerance and respect among young people who feel as if their own Scandinavian culture is slowly disappearing. Stefan, the youngest in our group, told of his struggles to convince his university classmates that Catholic resources can help to resolve tensions in a Europe that is paradoxically fracturing culturally just as it is uniting politically. Despite these anxieties, the final communiqué in Sibiu recommended that the participating churches and their leaders "offer better pastoral care for migrants, asylum seekers and refugees and promote the rights of ethnic minorities in Europe, particularly the Roma people."

In addition to the social and political challenges facing the churches, the assembly also focused on spiritual and theological ways of overcoming confessional divisions. "Why don't we share our buildings with one another, since our congregations are getting so small in many parts of

northern Europe?” asked one retired Reformed pastor from Scotland in a small group discussion I facilitated. Delegates from the Reformation traditions also pushed hard in the plenary sessions for a resolution encouraging the churches to study and adopt a new policy on mutual recognition of baptism. The final communiqué took up this recommendation, while recognizing that “the question is deeply linked to an understanding of Eucharist, ministry, and ecclesiology in general.”

### No Cozy Ecumenism

In his opening-day address, Cardinal Walter Kasper acknowledged that many in the assembly felt hurt by the document from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith of June 29, 2007, that repeated Catholic teaching that Protestant communities are not churches “in the proper sense.” Reactions to the document had been heated during the summer and threatened to cast a pall over the Catholic presence in Sibiu. Cardinal Kasper, who heads the Vatican’s Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, admitted that the document had strained relations between Catholics and partners from the Reformed and Lutheran traditions. “I am not unaffected by it, either,” said Kasper. “I, too, had problems with it, for the hurt and pain of my friends is my hurt and pain as well.”

The cardinal’s appeal for a dialogue of truth that shuns a “cozy ecumenism” was also reflected in presentations on familiar moral issues that divide Christians on both sides of the Atlantic. Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, for example, warned the participants of an emerging crisis in the ecumenical movement based on widening differences in moral conviction: “Believers cannot recognize at the same time the value of life and the right to death, the value of family and the validity of same-sex relations, the protection of child’s rights and the deliberate destruction of human embryos for medical purposes.” Kirill’s remarks were aimed not only at civil legislatures but also at the governing bodies of churches like the Lutheran Church of Norway, which days after the assembly approved the widely publicized appointment of a gay pastor living openly with another man. “[It] does not help to conceal wounds,” said Cardinal Kasper; “we need to leave them

open, even when there is pain; only then can we treat them and, with God’s help, heal them.”

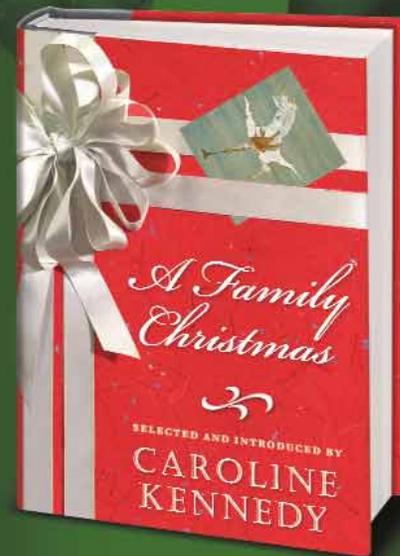
As an American, I was struck by the ways in which interchurch reconciliation is woven into hopes and strategies for Europe’s ongoing political consolidation. The interdependency of these two processes was taken for granted by both church and civil officials who addressed the assembly. Even as the framers of the European Union’s constitution continue to grapple with their Christian cultural roots, the voices heard in Sibiu projected confidence that the continent’s future would have to make room for the spiritual energies that shaped its past. José Manuel Barroso, president of the European Commission, said that if the European Union were to be reduced to its economic and geographic dimensions, it would lack “true unity.”

### A Christian Crossroads

Sibiu has been named “Europe’s Cultural Capital” for 2007, and has always been a remarkable crossroads for Europe’s Christian communities. The city’s largest Roman Catholic church sits on the main square, the Piata Mare. Constructed in 18th-century baroque style and topped with an onion dome, it evokes the period of Habsburg influence. Nearby a Lutheran church that contains a valuable pre-Reformation altar stands a few hundred meters from the city’s Orthodox cathedral. Dating from the early 20th century, this Romanian Orthodox edifice looks like a miniature of the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul, and its side walls hold brilliant icons of biblical stories. Farther down the street is a Hungarian-speaking Reformed church with a towering Geneva-style pulpit and magnificent pipe organ. During the assembly, representatives of every faith community wandered in and out of one another’s worship spaces in a seamless witness to Christian unity.

In Sibiu, Europe’s Christians had a brief taste of the unity in fellowship that is the Spirit’s ultimate gift. For me and my Scandinavian companions on this pilgrimage of hope, the light of Christ illuminated every step of the journey. Our emotional farewells in the Bucharest airport were interspersed with promises of a reunion, whenever the Christian leaders of Europe determine that another such assembly accords with the one Lord’s will. **A**

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# Mexico's Drug Violence

## Shared border, shared responsibility

BY GEORGE M. ANDERSON

**M**UCH OF MEXICO'S drug-related violence has roots in the United States, our people's insatiable demand for illegal drugs. *State of Siege*, a report by the nonprofit Washington Office on Latin America, notes that the United States shares responsibility for drug-connected violence because the level of consumption here not only remains strong but may be growing.

Drug policies in the United States focus primarily on interdiction laws, like the mandatory minimum sentencing requirements that sweep thousands of nonviolent, low-level offenders into already crowded jails and prisons throughout the nation. More than half of those in federal prison are behind bars for drug offenses. This prohibition-based approach feeds a large black market for controlled substances like cocaine, heroin and marijuana. Hence the WOLA report's apt subtitle, "Unintended Consequences of the War on Drugs." Overreliance on imprisonment rather than treatment contributes to the United States having the highest incarceration rate in the world—another unintended consequence.

### Producing Illegal Drugs

Not only is Mexico the major transit route for up to 90 percent of drugs in their northbound journey from Central and Latin

GEORGE M. ANDERSON, S.J., is an associate editor of *America*.

America, but it is also a substantial producer of illegal drugs. According to the Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs' 2007 report, *International Narcotics Control Strategy*, Mexico stands out as the main foreign source of the marijuana consumed in the United States and is one of the main suppliers of heroin and methamphetamines.

### The Power of Organized Crime

Drug cartels preside over the violence. So powerful have they become that some of their leaders, even when in prison, can continue their operations from the inside. A drug kingpin can order the murder of rival cartel members on the street, along with others perceived as standing in the way of their lucrative enterprises. Those killed have included officials, judges and

journalists whose writings offended the cartels. As a terror tactic, beheadings have become a favored form of execution. In Michoacán, the home state of Mexico's new president, Felipe Calderón, at least 15 people have been beheaded since January 2006, with the severed heads often left in public places as grisly warnings.

Corruption among Mexican enforcement officials and the military enables drug violence. The pay for many local police officers, for instance, is so low that accepting bribes in return for turning a blind eye to drug transactions, or even facilitating them, is not unusual. The WOLA report states that municipal police in the border town of Nuevo Laredo earn only \$600 a month on average.

Corruption is not limited to the Mexican side of the border. U.S. Army

A Mexican marine lifts a package of marijuana, part of a consignment of about four tons of marijuana seized on Jan. 4, 2007.



PHOTO: REUTERS/DANIEL AGUILAR

members and Border Patrol agents have been found guilty of accepting bribes. Last year a Border Patrol agent pleaded guilty in a federal district court in Houston, Tex., to accepting payment from drug dealers in return for allowing a vehicle carrying cocaine to enter the United States.

Lax gun laws in the United States also play a role. The WOLA report observes that some 80 percent of gun purchases in the United States are made legally at gun shops or gun shows. But gun shows allow unlimited purchases not only of handguns, but of automatic weapons, sometimes without so much as a background check. Maureen Meyer, associate for Mexico and Central America at WOLA, said in an interview that weapons are especially easy to obtain in border states like Arizona and Texas. From there the guns are smuggled into Mexico. Ironically, whereas Mexico's own gun control policies are strict, the United States' lax statutes make it easy for smugglers to circumvent them. Meyer noted that little has changed in the overall drug-and-vio-

lence situation since the report was first issued early last year.

### Selling Drugs, Guns and Humans

Increasingly drug trafficking involves more than weapons and drugs. A dark tie-in with the current immigration debate has also come into play. As anti-immigrant laws have become stricter, undocumented persons attempting to enter the United States rely more and more on criminals, including drug dealers, to help them cross the border. "Organized crime and the drug cartels have become increasingly linked with human trafficking in the border region," Meyer said, "because they control many of the drug routes into the United States, and can make agreements with human traffickers on the routes to be used for immigrants." The result is a deadly triad of drugs, arms and human beings. Given the profits to be made, this situation presents a tough challenge to both governments.

Another commentator on the connection between the drug trade and U.S. immigration policies, Marc Mauer, who is executive director of the nonprofit

Sentencing Project, described what he termed "a vicious cycle" that spurs the cartels' lucrative trafficking. The cycle is created by the lack of economic opportunity on both sides of the border. In Mexico especially, it can be next to impossible for people with limited education to make a living wage for themselves and their families. U.S. policy should move toward sustainable economic development in both countries, Mauer said, in order "to reduce the interactiveness of drug smuggling and selling and also to have reasonable labor standards in the two countries."

From the U.S. side, these challenges might be more effectively met if the administration committed itself to the comprehensive immigration reform that President Bush himself once promoted to reduce the number of people who use smugglers to bring them across the border. The same commitment is needed for gun control.

### Reducing Demand

The overriding issue, though, remains the need to reduce the demand for hard drugs in the United States. Mauer said research

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has shown that the federally sponsored Drug Abuse Resistance Education program has not been effective in reducing teen drug use. The U.S. General Accountability Office has reached a similar conclusion. Nevertheless, DARE has become virtually institutionalized through its connection with police departments and their relationships with school systems. The WOLA report notes that "certain school-based programs have demonstrated their value," but "only about one-third of school districts are teaching proven, research-based curricula, and fewer still are implementing these curricula with fidelity."

A better step toward ending drug addiction would be to provide greater access to residential substance abuse programs. Currently, few programs are available for low-income addicts and others without insurance coverage. The WOLA study shows that because of barriers to treatment, cost and other difficulties, almost a quarter-million people seeking treatment in the period under review, 2003 and 2004, did not receive it. The problem lies primarily in our two-tiered system for effective residential treatment.

Marc Mauer pointed out that while people with means have access to high-quality residential treatment programs like the Betty Ford Center, millions of lower income addicts do not. "If they are lucky," he said, "they might get into a drug court program that mandates treatment, but ironically, in order to enter such a program, the person has to be arrested first." Prevention and treatment have always received short shrift in the U.S. budget process, he added.

### Corruption in Mexico

As for Mexico, widespread corruption and lack of justice are also responsible for the drug-related violence. A report released by Human Rights Watch at roughly the same time as the WOLA report describes some of the same issues of corruption. *Lost in Transition: Bold Ambitions, Limited Results for Human Rights Under Fox* focuses on the lack of accountability for past abuses in Mexico and the reform of the justice system needed to end them. While the report credits former President Vicente Fox for having taken some positive steps, human rights abuses continue, and the cartels

continue to generate billions of dollars each year.

President Felipe Calderón has promised to crack down on them. Since assuming office in December 2006, he has launched at least nine joint military police operations in different states in Mexico considered hot spots for organized crime, Ms. Meyer said. She added that the Calderón administration's first government report states that since September 2007 over 10,000 people have been detained for drug crimes, including leaders and operators of seven drug trafficking organizations. How successful this hard-line approach will be in reducing the drug violence remains to be seen. Much will depend on actions by the United States in addressing the demand for drugs here, our loose drug control laws, and a broken immigration system that virtually invites undocumented persons to take life-threatening risks with human smugglers. **A**

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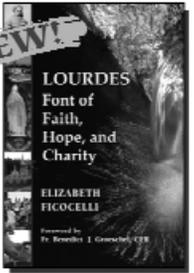
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# Editor, Mentor, Friend

## A tribute to Frank Oveis

BY LEO J. O'DONOVAN

**I**N LATE AUGUST a group of theologians gathered at America House in New York to celebrate a colleague and friend who was retiring from his position as vice president and senior editor at Continuum International publishers. He edited some of us first in the early 1980s, others in the '90s, and several still more recently. For us he had been a paragon of insight and intelligence, seeing books through clean, elegant production to effective marketing, with a keen sense of each author's audience and its interests. The party was a true symposium, this editor standing for many other editors who have supported theologians selflessly and wisely over recent decades.

Born in the Bronx in 1941, Frank Oveis attended Cathedral High School and then St. Joseph's Seminary at Dunwoodie, Yonkers, N.Y. After leaving the seminary, he attended graduate school at Fordham University and joined Seabury Press in 1973, where he remained through its various transformations into Crossroad Publishing Company, the Continuum Publishing Group, and for the past eight years Continuum International.

Despite all the technological changes in the business, he told *Library Journal* this past May that "publishing remains a

LEO J. O'DONOVAN, S.J., is past president of the Catholic Theological Society of America.

highly personal affair, dependent upon the interests, education and intelligence of the acquiring editors.... I can't say I develop

spotting quality and was generous with young theologians. Peter Phan of Georgetown University (who wrote his doctoral dissertation on Karl Rahner's eschatology) recalls that Oveis sold him Rahner's complete *Theological Investigations* at a reduced price to help him get started.

Early in his career Oveis helped make available in English translation the work of major European theologians and biblical scholars, including Hans Urs von Balthasar, Bernard Häring, Hubert Jedin, Othmar Keel, Johannes Baptist Metz, Karl Rahner and Edward Schillebeeckx. In mid-career Oveis worked with Carol Christ, Lawrence Cunningham, Joseph Fitzmyer, Langdon Gilkey, Bernard McGinn, Rosemary Radford Ruether, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza and David Tracy. More recently Margaret Farley, Roger Haight, James Keenan, Judith Kubicki, Paul Lakeland, Kevin Seasoltz and Terrence

Tilley joined the chorus of voices Oveis both heard and advanced.

Oveis may well be the only editor to have nominated two winning books for the prestigious Grawemeyer Award in Religion. Responsible at Continuum also for *Judaica*, he took particular pride in the posthumous publication, after a decade of negotiation, of the English translation of Abraham Heschel's classic 850-page work *Heavenly Torah: As*



Frank Oveis, pictured at a recent book signing, recently retired after nearly 35 years in publishing.

books. Rather, I encourage certain authors." Exactly.

Many of us first met Frank Oveis at the annual conventions of the Catholic Theological Society of America, the College Theology Society or the American Academy of Religion, where he was a regular presence at the book counters, at plenary sessions, in hallway conversations or evening socials (where the real business takes place). He had a gift for



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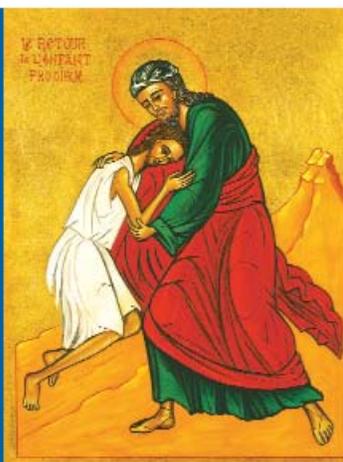
When his former teacher Msgr. Myles Bourke died in 2004, Frank wrote that the Scripture scholar had been for two generations of New York priests their most exacting professor, but one who inspired limitless devotion. Even though Frank Oveis is retiring, many authors will continue to seek counsel and advice from a friend whose high standards also evoke deep affection and admiration. **A**

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#### Authors on Frank Oveis

Last summer I was beyond exhausted, and the job of finishing the book I was working on, on God, seemed debilitating rather than filled with joy. I wrote Frank a letter and explained, apologetically, that I could not write and he should just forget about it. Frank's only response: "F— the book." He took off the obligation. The freedom enabled me to rest, then indeed to finish. The book, *Quest for the Living God*, has just appeared.

*Elizabeth Johnson, C.S.J.*

Every one of Frank's former writers will tell you the same thing: he had a nose for clumsy prose; he was always right about suggestions he made; he was conscientious to a fault. They will also tell you he was a wonderful talker at table and possessed of a formidable intelligence.

He is the best letter writer with whom I ever corresponded. Frank would write me out of the blue about something he had read, or to pass on a book that might be missed or to relate some fey anecdote that had amused him. I wish I had kept a file of those wonderful letters. I frequently tucked the letters into books and, now and again, run across them and reread them with a mixture of pleasure and amusement. Letter writing is a lost art, but, in my mind, he is the last great practitioner of that noble genre.

*Lawrence Cunningham*

Frank said he never knowingly published a revised doctoral dissertation until Gaspar Martinez's *Confronting the Mystery of God* (2001). I promptly read it and understood why he took it; it is a great analysis of the work of the "nephews of Rahner"—Metz, Gutiérrez and Tracy. He had an eye for what would be significant and important in theology.

**Terrence Tilley**

I've worked closely with Frank on four books over the past five years. He wants to publish good books. He personally assumes responsibility for the work so that, as an author, you have complete trust in his judgment. He is far from heavy-handed, but his suggestions carry authority because of his book and market wisdom. When he takes your book, you know it is in good hands.

**Roger Haight, S.J.**

Several years ago I was in the final stage of editing *Catholic Ethicists on HIV/AIDS Prevention*, a book designed to appeal to mainstream lay Catholics and bishops. Above all I wanted to argue that Catholics working for H.I.V. prevention ought to be seen as orthodox. After doing the proofs and the final mark-ups, unilaterally our publisher withdrew our contract. Inasmuch as I wanted to keep the book mainstream and not controversial, I could not take any action against the publisher.

Fortunately, the associate editor at that press walked our manuscript right over to Frank. He took it instantly. The book was published and reviewed in over 40 international journals, won the Alpha Sigma Nu (Jesuit Honor Society) prize in ethics and was republished in Brazil and the Philippines. Because of Frank, our book remained mainstream. I know my book was not the last he would rescue.

**James F. Keenan, S.J.**

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# Liturgy and the Political Isaiah

*The second in a series for Advent and Christmas*

BY DREW CHRISTIANSEN

OF ALL THE OLD Testament writers, probably not one has shaped the Christian imagination more than Isaiah. His three Servant Songs enriched the early church's view of Jesus as the Suffering Servant of Yahweh. His prophecies—especially “Behold, a virgin will conceive and bear a son. He will be called Emmanuel” (Is 7:14)—were and are taken as prophecies of Jesus' birth.

Readings from the Book of Isaiah give warmth and light to the Advent cycle. Antiphons echo and re-echo Isaiah's words throughout the season. “A voice cries out: In the desert, prepare the way of the Lord”; “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people”; the most evocative of Advent chants, “Rorate, Caeli” (in English “You heavens, open from above, that clouds may rain the Just One”); and perhaps the most enchanting Advent hymn, “Lo, how a rose e'er blooming,” are based on Isaian texts.

Some of Isaiah's appeal lies in his poetry. The book draws on the best Middle Eastern traditions of oral poetry. It evokes elementary human experiences: light and darkness, hunger and thirst, nursing mothers and suckling children, drought and abundance, enslavement and freedom, war and peace. And it links these fundamental polarities and pairings to deep spiritual yearnings and inspiring visions of the future, entwining religious with political aspiration.

In antiquity Isaiah's messianic visions gave rise to his status as a proto-Christian. St. Luke places Isaiah's words on Jesus' lips, defining his messianic mission: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the good news to the poor...” (Lk 4:18; Is 6:1). In modern times, Isaiah has become the poet of peace. One of early America's most mem-

orable paintings is Edward Hicks's (1780-1849) “The Peaceable Kingdom,” which depicts a world where...

The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,  
and the leopard shall lie down  
with the kid,



and the calf and the lion and the  
fatling together,  
and a little child shall lead them.

Is 11:6

When the United Nations building was erected in New York, the statue designed to symbolize its aspirations depicted one of Isaiah's more memorable images, a farmer forging his sword into a ploughshare (2:4).

The modern uses of Isaiah as emblems of peace, justice and the integrity of creation are true to his vision. Isaiah is a political document. The aspirations Isaiah voices are ours: for freedom, for justice, for liberation, for peace. (Even the bucolic painting “The Peaceable Kingdom” portrays William Penn in the distance, signing a peace treaty with local natives.) Amid the overly competitive politics of our day, we do well to contemplate these divinely inspired ideals in the quiet, elevated setting of the Advent liturgy. The liturgy enables us to disinvest our egos from our political

undertakings and to commit ourselves to the common good of humanity, trusting, as the philosopher Alfred North Whitehead wrote, that we are attuned to “coordinations wider than personality.”

This year we are observing the 40th anniversary of Pope Paul VI's encyclical *Development of Peoples* (*Populorum Progressio*). Paul understood politics in visionary, Isaian terms. He projected Christian charity into the world in what he called “a civilization of love” where there would be “an enlargement of heart, to a more brotherly way of living within a truly universal human society.” “Development,” he told us, “is the new name for peace.”

“Man must meet man, nation meet nation, as brothers and sisters, as children of God,” Pope Paul counseled. “In this mutual understanding and friendship, in this sacred communion, we must also begin to work together to build the common future of humanity.” The agenda he set is as urgent today as it was 40 years ago: human solidarity, the aid rich nations must give developing nations; social justice, the rectification of inequitable trade relations; universal charity, a more human (equitable) world for all, especially migrants.

This Advent, as we listen to Isaiah's words promising justice for the oppressed, it would be well to read *Populorum Progressio*, allowing ourselves to be captured by its message of a politics and an economics suffused with God's love. Paul VI knew that some people thought he was “utopian.” They did not perceive, he said, “the dynamism of a world which desires to live more fraternally.” In response, he argued, with a vision worthy of a modern-day Isaiah, “Christians know that their labors and sacrifices” on behalf of the world's poor represent “slow but sure steps to the Creator” and to “the body of Christ in its plenitude: the assembled people of God.”

DREW CHRISTIANSEN, S.J., is editor in chief of *America*.

“ADVENT,” BY JULIE LONNEMAN

# My Second First Mass

## On presiding at a Latin liturgy

BY MICHAEL KERPER

**O**N SEPT. 23 I walked down the center aisle of our parish church, genuflected and made the sign of the cross while saying, *In nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti*. Thus began my first Mass according to the Roman Missal of 1962 more than 22 years after my first experience of celebrating the Eucharist.

When Pope Benedict XVI issued his letter of July 7 eliminating most restrictions on the use of the so-called Tridentine Mass, my reaction oscillated between mild irritation (Will this ignite conflict? How will we ever provide such Masses?) and vague interest (Is there perhaps some hidden treasure in the old Mass?).

Within a week, letters trickled in. Some demanded a Latin Mass every

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REV. MICHAEL KERPER is a priest of the Diocese of Manchester and pastor of Corpus Christi Parish in Portsmouth, N.H.

Sunday, insisting that the pope had “mandated” its regular celebration. Others were more reasonable. In August, I met with a dozen parishioners who wanted the Mass. The meeting became steamy as I explained that I had never said the “old” Mass as a priest and had served such Masses as an altar boy for only two years before everything changed. Some thought I was just feigning ignorance to avoid doing it.

A few days after the meeting, I obtained a 1962 missal, looked through it, and concluded, reluctantly, that I knew more Latin than I had thought. My original cranky demurrals crumbled under the force of my own pastoral self-understanding, which had been largely shaped by the Second Vatican Council. As a promoter of the widest range of pluralism within the church, how could I refuse to deal with an approved liturgical form? As a pastor who has tried to respond to people alienated by

the perceived rigid conservatism of the church, how could I walk away from people alienated by priests like myself—progressive, “low church” pastors who have no ear for traditional piety? An examination of conscience revealed an imbalance in my pastoral approach: a gracious openness to the left (like feminists, pro-choice advocates, people cohabiting and secular Catholics) and an instant skepticism toward the right (traditionalists).

Having decided to offer the Tridentine Mass, I began the arduous project of recovering—and reinforcing—my Latin grammar and vocabulary so that I could celebrate the liturgy in a prayerful, intelligible way. As I studied the Latin texts and intricate rituals I had never noticed as a boy, I discovered that the old rite’s priestly spirituality and theology were exactly the opposite of what I had expected. Whereas I had looked for the “high priest/king of the parish” spirituality, I



CNS PHOTO/PETER FINNEY JR., CLARION HEARLD

A priest celebrates a Tridentine solemn high Mass on Sept. 14 at St. Patrick Catholic Church in New Orleans, La.

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found instead a spirituality of “unworthy instrument for the sake of the people.”

The old Missal’s rubrical micromanagement made me feel like a mere machine, devoid of personality; but, I wondered, is that really so bad? I actually felt liberated from a persistent need to perform, to engage, to be forever a friendly celebrant. When I saw a photo of the old Latin Mass in our local newspaper, I suddenly recognized the rite’s ingenious ability to shrink the priest. Shot from the choir loft, I was a mere speck of green, dwarfed by the high altar. The focal point was not the priest but the gathering of the people. And isn’t that a valid image of the church, the people of God?

The act of praying the Roman Canon slowly and in low voice accented my own smallness and mere instrumentality more than anything else. Plodding through the first 50 or so words of the Canon, I felt intense loneliness. As I moved along, however, I also heard the absolute silence behind me, 450 people of all ages praying, all bound mysteriously to the words I uttered and to the ritual actions I haltingly and clumsily performed. Following the consecration, I fell into a paradoxical experience of intense solitude as I gazed at the Sacrament and an inexplicable feeling of solidarity with the multitude behind me.

Even as I cherish this experience, I must confess that I felt awkward, stiff and not myself. Some of the rubrical requirements, like not using one’s thumbs and index fingers after the consecration except to touch the host, paralyzed me. As a style, it doesn’t really fit me (I also can’t imagine wearing lace). But as a priest, I must adapt to many styles and perform many onerous tasks. Why should this be any different? Perhaps we have here a new form of priestly asceticism: pastoral adaptation for the sake of a few.

My reluctant engagement with the Latin Mass has not undermined my own priestly spirituality, born of Vatican II. Rather, it has complemented and reinforced the council’s teaching that the priest is an instrument of Christ called to serve everyone, regardless of theological or liturgical style. Ultimately it means little whether Mass is in Latin or in the vernacular, whether I see the people praying or hear their silence behind. For sure, I have my preference, but service must always trump that. 

# The Ongoing 'American Experiment'

## The Stillborn God

Religion, Politics, and the Modern West

By Mark Lilla

Knopf, 334p \$26

ISBN 9781400043675

In his provocative new book, *The Stillborn God*, the historian Mark Lilla tackles the centuries-old debate about the nexus between politics and religion.

After 1,500 years during which religion and government were inextricably intertwined, political philosophers began to question the wisdom of that arrangement, leading to what Lilla calls "the Great Separation" between church and state that started four centuries ago.

Today we find it incomprehensible, he writes, "that theological ideas still inflame the minds of men, stirring up messianic passions that leave societies in ruin. We assumed that this was no longer possible, that human beings had learned to separate religious questions from political ones, that fanaticism was dead. We were wrong."

The challenge, Lilla says, has been to find a delicate balance that accepts the civil role of the state, but also recognizes the positive role of religion. "In healthy societies," he writes, "religion has helped to forge the social bond and encourage sacrifice for the public good."

But Lilla, a professor of humanities at Columbia University, also recounts how frequently differing conceptions of God, including the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Trinity, became a source "of almost unremitting struggle and conflict, much of it doctrinal, pitting believer against believer over the very meaning of the Christian revelation." Many have wondered how and why belief in God could inspire so much carnage. During the Protestant Reformation, for example, doctrinal differences spawned vicious cycles of killing.

The core of this important book is Lilla's discussion of the groundbreaking

writings of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and other European political philosophers who were reacting to centuries of religion-inspired violence. Their goal was to build a just society that did not depend on church dogma or interpretations of God's will.

Hobbes' book *Leviathan* contains "the most devastating attack on Christian political theology ever undertaken," Lilla writes. Summarizing Hobbes,

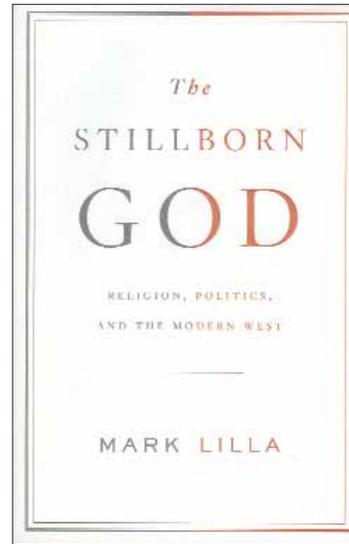
Lilla says that wars based on religion are "impossible to contain so long as the adversaries believe that the ultimate prize is eternal life, and that defeat means eternal damnation."

But the story is more complicated, because some esteemed political philosophers, including Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Immanuel Kant, defended the role of religion in political life. Lilla calls Rousseau's essay "The Profession of Faith of the Savoyard Vicar" "the most beautiful and convincing defense of man's religious instincts ever to have flown from a modern pen."

A sharp divide emerged between thinkers in Germany, who wanted to preserve the link between politics and religion, and those in England and America, who wanted to keep them separate. It is chilling to read how a group of Protestant church leaders calling themselves the German Christians supported Hitler in the 1930s, even declaring, "Christ has come to us through Adolf Hitler.... Through his power, his honesty, his faith and his idealism, the Redeemer found us."

Although debate continued in England and America about where to draw the line between politics and religion, there was no disagreement about keeping them separate. No one, for example, "argued for a bicameral legislature on the basis of divine revelation."

Readers may gain a new appreciation for the uniqueness of American democracy and its assumption that a just society can be created without reliance on divine



revelation. Although "every civilization known to us has been founded on religion, not on philosophy," somehow the American experiment in church-state separation has worked.

The book's awkward title alludes to liberals' attempts to reconcile biblical truths with modern political life. "The liberal deity," Lilla writes, "turned out to be a stillborn God, unable to inspire genuine conviction among those seeking ultimate truth." But that issue is not central to the book's thesis, which is more about church-state separation than about what inspires true believers.

More to the point, Lilla lauds contemporary democracies, saying they "have managed to accommodate religion without setting off sectarian violence or encouraging theocracy, which is a historic achievement."

Although *The Stillborn God* is an important book that advances our understanding of a long-running debate, it suffers from an overly academic tone. Some passages are confusing, and it is not always clear whether Lilla is summarizing someone else's beliefs or stating his own.

Readers naturally will wonder what all this history means for the United States today, but Lilla offers little guidance. Much has been written recently about the rise of Christian fundamentalism and about attempts to merge religious belief with public policy. Without

Readers naturally will wonder what all this history means for the United States today, but Lilla offers little guidance.

## The Reviewers

**Bill Williams**, a member of the National Book Critics Circle, is a former editorial writer for The Hartford Courant.

**Patrick J. Ryan, S.J.**, vice president, Office of 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.

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

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addressing that concern, Lilla concludes that “we have chosen to limit our politics to protecting individuals from the worst harms they can inflict on one another, to securing fundamental liberties and providing for their basic welfare, while leaving their spiritual destinies in their own hands.”

Lilla ends the book with this tepid sentence, “If our experiment is to work, we must rely on our own lucidity.” That offers little guidance to people worried that we have a president who thinks he is on a holy mission in Iraq and who claims to be guided by God.

*Bill Williams*

Drew Christiansen, S.J. and José Casanova discuss *The Stillborn God* at [www.americamagazine.org](http://www.americamagazine.org).

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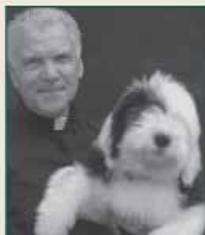
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### Journey Into Islam

The Crisis of Globalization

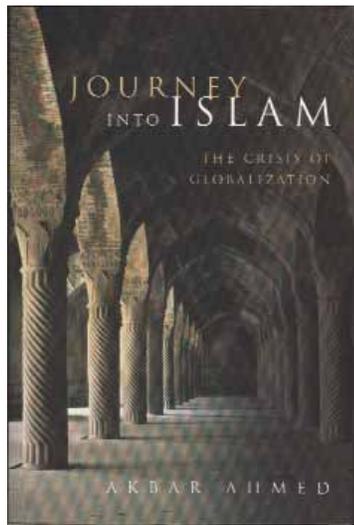
By Akbar Ahmed

Brookings Institution Press. 323p \$28.95  
ISBN 9780815701323

Professor Akbar Ahmed, a genial Pakistani scholar trained in Britain and now established at Washington's American University as holder of the Ibn Khaldun Chair of Islamic Studies, took a study trip with three undergraduates through much of the Muslim world in the spring semester of 2006. *Journey Into Islam*, a garrulous but always engaging book, is the result of that trip and some questionnaires administered by Ahmed's students. Their basic intent was to discover how the wooly concept of globalization affects contemporary Muslims, principally in south Asia, a geographical zone in which half of the world's Muslims live.

Ahmed's perspective on Islam in the contemporary world reflects his own origins in the subcontinent. He characterizes all modern Muslims—not just those indigenous to India, Pakistan and Bangladesh—as belonging to one of three tendencies, each of them called after one of three major Muslim schools in India. Ajmer, the geographical center in contem-

porary India of the Chistiyya Muslim mystical confraternity, becomes in Ahmed's hands a term for characterizing mystically inclined Muslims anywhere in the world. Thus, talking about West African Islamic history, Ahmed writes that "Sufis of the Ajmer model...were instrumental in Nigerian trade for hundreds of years." By this he means that the mystical confraternities emanating from northwestern Africa, people who probably never heard of Ajmer in India, played important roles along trade routes in the development of centralizing states and the Islamizing of West Africans in those states. These processes went on for several centuries before the colonial era and the creation of modern states like Nigeria.



The second major Islamic tendency Ahmed characterizes in terms of an Indian school derives from the rigorist, anti-Sufi madrasa located at Deoband in India. The so-called Wahhabis of Saudi Arabia (they think of themselves as *Muwahhidun*, proponents of the absolute unity of God), the members of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt and elsewhere in the Arab Middle East, as well as the Hamas militants currently dominant in Gaza, are all characterized by Ahmed as belonging to the Deoband type. These movements in the central Arab world might possibly see the links between themselves as Islamic rigorists, but they would be surprised to find out that they likewise belong to the Deoband type. It is true, however, that the Egyptian rigorist Sayyid Qutb, hanged by the Nasser government in Egypt in 1966 and thereby made a martyr for subsequent generations of Muslims resentful of secularizing governments, had studied in English translation the voluminous writings of the Indo-Pakistani Islamist scholar, Maulana Maududi (d. 1979).

More akin to Ahmed's own orientation are the Indian and Pakistani Muslims who trace their intellectual ancestry to Aligarh, the Muslim university in India, an institution founded in the 19th century by

Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan as the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College. Left high and dry in India 60 years ago, Aligarh Muslim University, as it is called today, has current students who surprised Ahmed's student interviewers by their hostility to Americans and the admiration they felt for Muslims of very Deoband tendencies, among them Osama bin Laden and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, president of Iran. But it is more likely that these students were reacting to the hubris of American college students asking them in English to fill out questionnaires.

Scant attention is paid to Muslims in Africa in this book, even though Ahmed admits that one quarter of the world's Muslims live in that continent. One of Ahmed's student assistants made a brief visit to East Africa, where he came up with the idea that Somali Muslims, whom he met as refugees in Kenya, still

adhered to "the inclusive spirit of Ajmer," but Somalia itself "is a good example of the appeal of Deoband." This sort of impressionistic journalism diverts attention from understanding the uniqueness of Islam, a faith tradition with no central religious authority, in different parts of the world. It is laughable that the late military dictator of Nigeria, General Sani Abacha, is said to have belonged to a group of "Aligarh-like Muslims"; it is also claimed that his dictatorship fell in 1999, a year after Abacha's death of a heart attack in embarrassing circumstances in 1998. In fact, Abacha's military successor, also corrupt but not quite so thuggish, handed over power in 1999 to an elected president, a Christian, who rigged the next two "democratic" elections in Nigeria, in 2003 and 2007.

Throughout the book there are many photographs of Ahmed and his undergraduate student researchers meeting famous people, and the author is not reluctant to tell us about the awards he has received in the United States for promoting interreligious dialogue. *Journey Into Islam* might prove useful for introducing

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undergraduates to the study of Islam in south Asia, but it is not, despite its subtitle, a major contribution to understanding what is really going on in the Islamic world more generally.

Patrick J. Ryan

## Wanted: Eye-of-Needle Enlarger

### Richistan

A Journey Through the American Wealth Boom and the Lives of the New Rich

By Robert Frank

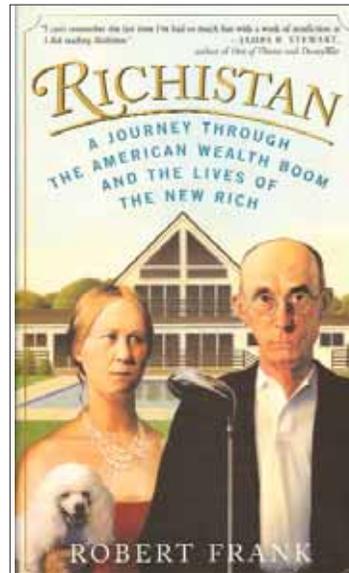
Crown. 277p \$24.95

ISBN 9780307339263

Ignore the Robin-Leach-like subtitle: this is not an ogling survey of mega-moneyed celebrities. Robert Frank writes a weekly column and daily blog called "The Wealth Report"™ for The Wall Street Journal; and he offers us an informative guided tour around an astonishing American landscape. Most of its inhabitants are unknown to the general public, and with good rea-

son: many of them prefer anonymity; and, with few exceptions, they are not, or do not sound like, brilliant, creative or interesting people. But that is Frank's point: we are living in a world where hitherto unimaginable wealth can be quickly obtained by plenty of quite ordinary individuals.

Frank offers thumbnail sketches of his nouveaux riches; he provides some basic history, sociology and psychology to explain their ways. But the most valuable feature of this journalistic account is surely the numbers. Consider the following: there are now about 7.5 million American households with a net worth of from \$1 million to \$10 million, more than 2 million households worth \$10 million to \$100 million and thousands of households worth \$100 million to \$1 billion. There were 13 American billionaires in 1985; there are



currently more than 1,000. The richest 1 percent of Americans own more than a third of the nation's wealth and more than the entire bottom 90 percent. The total wealth owned by the Forbes 400 (all billionaires) has shot from \$439 billion in 1995 to over \$1 trillion today.

And these folks need not fear the tax man: the highest federal tax rate has dropped from 91 percent in 1965 to 35 percent in 2007 (the approximate rate paid by this impecunious reviewer). The tax on capital gains and most dividends is now down to 15 percent. Eighty percent of the Bush tax cuts went to the top 10 percent of taxpayers; nearly 20 percent of the windfall went to the top 0.1 percent. Now if only we (they) could do something about that nasty estate tax.

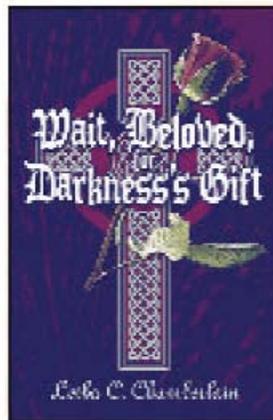
These huge vaults of cash inevitably lead to rather gross modes of conspicuous consumption that Frank delights in describing: \$100-million yachts (which can be chartered, in a pinch, for \$800,000 a week), 70,000-square-foot mansions, \$125 million estates, private jets, helicopters, Bentleys, Rolls Royces, Franck Muller watches (from a mere \$4,800 to an eye-popping \$600,000), artworks of every description (the one investment that cannot fail?), second, third or fourth homes and apartments, \$120,000-a-year butlers and so on.

It would be comforting to think that such profusion was, if not matched, at least slightly offset, by philanthropy; but Frank supplies no serious evidence of this. He cites three semi-detailed annual expense statements: Family No. 1, with a net worth of \$50 million, gives away \$500,000 a year, or 1 percent, an amount equal to what it spends on house staff and personal assistants, and less than what it spends on air charters and cars (\$650,000). Family No. 2 is worth \$80 million, but allots a derisory \$11,000 to charity and political donations counted together (as opposed to \$500,000 on travel). Family No. 3, worth \$1.2 billion, gives \$3,000,000 to charity, which adds up to one-quarter of 1 percent

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# Little Secrets

*after Iqbal*

To Leonard, few of the secrets are given.  
I ask and ask, *What governs heaven?*  
and how to reach the utmost pure thoughts  
that elude my simple mind. With doubts

Of You and Your heavenly Kingdom,  
I don't know why I prefer the foliage  
that shades me from the sun,  
but it's in the darkness I belong.

I sleep in light and work the nights alone,  
some say that's why I'm so forlorn.  
I say the days are too bright to look  
and see at the same time. But the books

I read, like this Iqbal from the Urdu,  
rouse my mind and cure my blues.  
He reminds me of Ralph Waldo  
in another time, disguised. If he

returned and took a different form  
could it please be in my dreams?  
I'm not jesting, the chaos of the dual  
increases my passion for the real.

**Leonard Cirino**

LEONARD CIRINO is the author of 16 chapbooks and 12 full-length collections of poems. His latest chapbook, *The Ability to Dream*, was just published by Phrygian Press.

Editor's note: Iqbal was a poet-philosopher of Pakistan in the early 20th century.

of its fortune—this in a year when the family spent \$20,000,000 on a yacht, with annual maintenance costs of \$1,500,000.

Frank devotes a whole chapter to the inspiring tale of Philip Berber, a Houston-based Irish Jew, who took the swag he made by selling his online trading system CyBerCorp and applied it to some remarkable projects in Ethiopia through a foundation named Glimmer. That's all very well, but most of the men and women in Berber's income bracket seem to be focusing more on Palm Beach, St. Bart's or Monaco than on the Horn of Africa.

In any case, Frank is not much given to moralizing. (If he were, he would not have gotten such broad access to his subjects—the prophet Amos most likely never got invited to dinner by the rich women he addressed as “you cows of Bashan.”) He dutifully charts their entrepreneurial feats, their astronomical salaries, their “liquidity events” (selling one's stake in a company for major bucks), their consumerist follies (alligator-skin toilet seats, 400-square-foot walk-in closets, private hockey rinks). He sympathizes with their troubles: insecurity, rising debt (especially in “Lower Richistan”), their spoiled “aristokids,” who have no notion of working for a living. He has a sneaking admiration for the new breed of rich political activists, the “Lear-jet liberals,” who recently scored some stunning coups in Colorado—snatching a handful of previously safe Republican seats. The only Richistanis he flat-out attacks are uncouth “barbarians in the ballroom,” like the self-promoting arriviste Simon Fireman.

Not until his final pages does Frank drop the breezy, insouciant tone and ask some hard questions. Given the increasing gap between haves and have-nots, what does the Richistan phenomenon portend? More heliport-and-pool-equipped yachts cruising far offshore from more Katrina-homeless? “If we accept,” Frank concludes, “that the rich aren't the cause of the current inequities”—that is kind of him—“but merely the lucky beneficiaries, we can also hope that they will use their wealth to help target society's deepest problems.”

Well, hope away. Even with icons like Bill Gates and Philip Berber setting a noble example, the odds of a majority of the rich seriously contributing to, much less entering, the kingdom of heaven look about as bad as ever. **Peter Heinegg**

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# Letters

## Facing the Truth

"Of Many Things," by Drew Christiansen, S.J., (10/29) is a perfect example of why I subscribe to **America**. It was beautiful writing about a very painful subject that we all must face someday, the end of a parent's life. What is really important in life is the individual human spirit and the fact that God is present in every one of us. Once we all can understand and accept this fundamental truth, the answers to all of the world's problems become clear.

*David Morris  
Sea Girt, N.J.*

## Medical Culture

I applaud the views presented by Myles Sheehan, S.J., in "A Struggle for the Soul of Medicine" (11/5). A parallel and growing concern is the medical environment in which young physicians will find themselves. In an increasing number of health care systems, countless words are spent upholding notions of "personalized care," "patient safety," "continuity of care" and "physician wellness"; but the real money is spent on all things efficient and all varieties of technology. In addition to training these young physicians how to care, perhaps some attention should be given to the cultures of medicine in which they will find themselves, and how they might survive and continue to thrive within them. Better yet, perhaps some of these young physicians, mentored well, will be inspired not only to practice patient-centered medicine but to become the new and needed leaders in health care reform.

*Mary V. Clemency, M.D.  
Berkeley, Calif.*

## Unsubstantiated Claims

In "Church Records and the Courts" (10/29), William W. Bassett says there is a "sea change taking place in jurisprudence in the United States concerning the rights of religious institutions." While it is true that laws that many never expected to be applied to religious entities are now being applied, this is because of the religious organizations' wrongdoing, not any

change in the law.

Bassett argues that previously confidential documents are now being forced into the public. Yet if religious entities believed that their internal documents were privileged, they either received bad legal advice or have been deluding themselves.

Religious entities have been subject to neutral, generally applicable laws since the Supreme Court's first free exercise case in the 19th century.

Bassett also recommends a system of purging files of "rumors, hearsay, anonymous notes and unsubstantiated claims."

Given the hierarchy's record of rejecting legitimate clergy abuse survivors' claims as "not credible," one can only imagine what will be left in the employment files if "unsubstantiated claims" are the basis for purging. One need only review the recent case of the Jesuit priest Donald J. McGuire, who was just arrested by the federal authorities, to see the shortcomings of this advice. Parents allegedly sent letters of complaint about McGuire to the order in 1993, 1994, 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003. Under Bassett's system, if the Jesuits had engaged in an annual purging, they might well have deleted one of

those claims after another as otherwise "unsubstantiated."

*Marci A. Hamilton  
Princeton, N.J.*

## Coalition of the Willing

After reading **America's** editorial "Amnesty and Abortion" (10/29), I propose a logical response to Amnesty International's recent decision to support the so-called right to abortion. Like many Catholics, I have enjoyed my past 25 years volunteering with Amnesty as a group coordinator, area coordinator and financial contributor. I have witnessed firsthand the tremendous good resulting from Amnesty's tireless grass-roots activism combined with painstaking case research and savvy political pressure. Amnesty has filled a unique, blessed role, helping some of the most abused and hidden souls on earth. I have been proud to serve alongside my fellow volunteer activists and Amnesty's talented staff.

This year, I regrettably ended my relationship with Amnesty, as did many other Catholics and defenders of the unborn. But rather than looking too long at the closed door behind us, let's see the door that has opened for us. Let's mobilize the existing army of activists at our Catholic high schools and colleges (and



CARTOON BY PAT BYRNES

# Letters

nonstudents like me) to carry on the fight for human rights. Properly organized, we can work right alongside Amnesty and other human rights organizations, while remaining true to the consistent ethic of life that we hold so dearly. Leaders at our Catholic high schools and colleges should seize this opportunity to band together the brothers and sisters of the human rights movement, who, like me, feel like troops dropped among those from a different army.

What a powerful and logical response this would be coming from the Catholic Church, whose founder was relentlessly persecuted, publicly tortured, wrongly convicted and willingly executed.

*Stephen Kaneb  
South Hampton, N.H.*

## Captive Audience

The disingenuousness of many of the statements in your editorial "Thanking Our Soldiers" (11/12) took my breath away. Our soldiers are being manipulated for geopolitical advantage, as are the Iraqi people themselves.

You ask us to "pray for a quick and just conclusion to these wars." It seems a bit too convenient to launch an unjust war and then expect God to bring it to a just conclusion. Why do you not mention that the American Catholic bishops are

on record as having concluded that, even if one holds to the just war doctrine, the invasion of Iraq did not meet the criteria? A better reformulation of your prayer would be: "Dear God, please fix what we allowed our reckless administration to get us into."

I work on a campus that has a peace and justice institute. As on many "main-line" Christian campuses, such institutes are tokens, nothing more. They allow university administrators to say that the difficult teachings of Jesus are preached according to the institution's mission statement, while at the same time effectively marginalizing those teachings and ensuring that they remain unattainable ideals. I cannot even imagine our university going on record as opposing the government's policies in any significant way.

Unfortunately, your editorial is strong evidence of what Marcus Borg has called "the imperial captivity of much of the church in the United States."

*Barbara Quintiliano  
Malvern, Pa.*

## My Peace I Give You

After reading "Thanking Our Soldiers" (11/12), I sincerely tried to find an appropriate way to thank them. While I support them as individual fellow human beings, I simply cannot find a way to

thank them as you suggest for their sacrifice and mission. I am convinced from my reading of the Gospels that one cannot achieve peace through war, or love from hate, and still imitate Christ.

I have come to believe that our Jesuit colleges and universities and other Catholic institutions that continue to allow R.O.T.C. training are an enormous scandal to the witness of Christ. What the church should be teaching is Christian ethics, with its primary value of Christlike love of friends and enemies alike. My love for our soldiers perhaps can best be exemplified by asking as many of them as I can to consider laying down their weapons.

Let us also remember that, ironically, on the same date as Veterans Day, we also celebrated the feast of another soldier, St. Martin of Tours, who upon his conversion to Christ-like love renounced war and violence.

*Tim Musser  
Cleveland, Ohio*

## Hidden Riches

Thank you for Margaret Silf's article, "Treasures of Darkness" (11/5). The phrase "I will give you the treasures of darkness and riches hidden in secret places" came up in neon lights for me, as did her statement "Sometimes I think the darkness is one of God's richest gifts to us. Things grow in the darkness."

With a lot of help from God and Margaret Silf, I feel I have pushed through some dark and heavy earth in the past couple of years.

I am cheering you on to have many more Silf articles. They really hit at the level of heart and soul.

*Anitra Hansen, S.S.J.D.  
Toronto, Ont., Canada*

To send a letter to the editor we recommend using the link that appears below articles on America's Web site, [www.americamagazine.org](http://www.americamagazine.org) or mailing it to the address on page 2.

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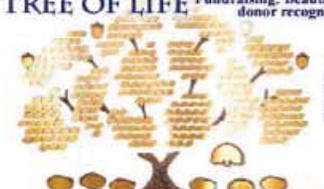
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# Promise and Fulfillment

Second Sunday of Advent (A), Dec. 9, 2007

Readings: Is 11:1-10; Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17; Rom 15:4-9; Mt 3:1-12

*“But a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse” (Is 11:1)*

THE SCRIPTURE readings for Advent promote a promise-and-fulfillment approach to the Bible. Most Christians view the Old Testament readings as divine promises that have been fulfilled in Jesus. Almost every official Catholic document on biblical interpretation (including the Second Vatican Council’s “Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation,” No. 16) quotes Augustine’s observation that the New Testament is hidden in the Old, and the Old Testament is made manifest in the New. The two dangers associated with this approach are that we will not take the Old Testament seriously on its own merits and that we will imagine all its promises have been completely fulfilled in the Christ-event (and that we can therefore dispense with the Old Testament). Nevertheless, as the experience of Christians for two millennia has shown, the promise-and-fulfillment approach is almost irresistible for us.

One of the major Advent characters is Isaiah the prophet, who exercised his ministry in Jerusalem in the late eighth century B.C. Isaiah gave political and spiritual advice to kings and leaders as well to the people as a whole. Although much of his advice was rejected, Isaiah remained faithful to his prophetic task and was vindicated by the events of history. Today’s reading from Isaiah 11 is a good example of why Isaiah is a great Advent character and his book is sometimes described as the fifth Gospel. In it Isaiah looks forward to a future ideal ruler in Israel. That ruler is to be a descendant of King David, whose reign around 1000 B.C. represented the high point of Israel’s experiment with monarchy.

Isaiah, however, hoped for an even

better version of King David. Isaiah hoped for a wise ruler, one who would combine wisdom and fear of the Lord, who could teach others the ways of God and would exemplify proper reverence and respect toward God. He hoped for a just ruler who would judge not by external appearances only but according to the principles of equity and fairness. He hoped for a ruler who would inaugurate an era of peace and mutual understanding even among natural enemies. And he hoped for a ruler with significance and attractiveness both for his own people and for all the nations of the world. Isaiah’s hopes are echoed in today’s responsorial psalm (Psalm 72), which looks forward to an ideal king who will rule with perfect justice, protect the poor and needy in society and have universal significance.

Neither Isaiah nor the psalmist lived to see his hopes fulfilled. But early Christians were convinced that these hopes had come to at least partial fulfillment in Jesus of Nazareth. A descendant of King David, Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit and so was endowed with great wisdom. He was just in his dealings and taught others to be just. He took the side of the poor and oppressed. He was a man of peace and declared peacemakers to be especially blessed. And he has had remarkable significance for Israel and for all the world’s nations. Jesus is arguably the most important person who ever lived on earth.

The dynamic of promise and fulfillment also appears in today’s selection from Paul’s Letter to the Romans. There Paul asserts that Israel’s Scriptures were written “for our instruction that...we might have hope.” He goes on to state that Jesus took up his ministry of service for Israel “to show God’s truthfulness, to confirm the promises to the patriarchs.” Even when God’s people proved faithless, God remained faithful to his promises. As



ART BY TAD DUNNE

Christians we believe that God’s promises to Israel are fulfilled through Jesus’ life, death and resurrection. For us Jesus is the incarnation of God’s promises to Israel. As the Word of God, he is God’s promise made flesh. Through him God’s mercy and the benefits of God’s promises have been made available to all the peoples of the world.

John the Baptist, another great Advent figure, also illustrates the promise-and-fulfillment dynamic. On the one hand, his appearance in the desert fulfilled the prophecy of Is 40:3, his lifestyle evoked the figure of the prophet Elijah (2 Kgs 1:8) and his ministry raised hopes for Elijah’s return before “the day of the Lord” (Mal 3:24). On the other hand, Matthew’s summary of John’s preaching (“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand”) matches his summary of Jesus’ own preaching (Mt 4:17) and reminds us that absolute fullness of God’s kingdom is yet to come and that we must continue to pray, “Thy kingdom come.” The New Testament is hidden in the Old Testament; the Old Testament is manifest in the New Testament. And we continue to trust in God’s promises.

*Daniel J. Harrington*

## Praying With Scripture

- What promises have you made during your life? How seriously do you take them?
- To what extent has Jesus fulfilled biblical Israel’s hopes for an ideal ruler? Why has not “all Israel” agreed?
- For what do you hope when you pray the Lord’s Prayer?

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