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Fighting Poverty to Build Peace

HOWARD J. HUBBARD

OF MANY THINGS

Beginning with the opening of Barack Obama's campaign for the Democratic nomination in Springfield, Ill., and culminating in Mr. Obama's swearing-in with his hand on the Lincoln Bible, the president's identification with Abraham Lincoln has been on public display. In this Lincoln bicentennial year, I confess to being a Lincoln devotee myself, having been shaped by the Lincoln mythology in my youth. Early on I identified with the self-taught young man who would steal away under a tree to read a book or teach himself geometry, with the broken-hearted lover of Anne Rutledge, with the sometime failure who remade himself to be elected president and with the melancholy commander in chief who endured the defeats and unexploited victories of incompetent generals before he found in Grant, Sherman and Sheridan the men to win his war. Most of all, I admired his way with words. I can still visualize myself as a grammar school student working at a drop-leaf table in our living room on Staten Island, memorizing the Gettysburg Address.

I have also been fascinated by the question of Lincoln's religion, a topic on which there are few satisfactory studies. The Kentucky and Illinois frontier where Lincoln grew up was "the burnt-over land" of revivals and contending sects. Frontiersmen were not notably religious; and as settled life took hold, so did a contentious pluralism of Baptists, Methodists, Wesleyans, Cumberland Presbyterians and Campbellites (Disciples). It is not surprising, therefore, that as a self-taught young man Lincoln might keep his distance from the certainties and creedal feuds of his neighbors. Some of his friends regarded him as a skeptic, but he was reticent about his faith, and he publicly affirmed he was never a "scuffer" of religion. Mary Lincoln explained to his law partner and biog-

rapher, William Herndon, that "though not a technical Christian, [Lincoln] was a religious man always" who had a "kind of poetry in his soul."

In mid-career, as he debated the future of slavery, Lincoln's sacred texts were the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, especially the Declaration. His mantra, the text on which he meditated again and again and that stood at the heart of his politics, was, "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal." His devout attention to that line reveals a lot about his later religiosity.

Lincoln pondered things over and over. He "read less and thought more than any man of his standing in America," wrote Herndon. "He read and re-read familiar texts until they were burned in to his memory," comments Richard Carwardine in his recent essay "Lincoln's Religion" in *Our Lincoln*. One is reminded of St. Luke's comment that Mary "pondered all these things in her heart" or St. Ignatius Loyola's advice that we "savor" the things we learn from the Gospel. In bearing down on a text, Lincoln had learned something quite like *lectio divina*.

Only late in life did Lincoln become a regular Bible reader, and he seems to have applied his practice of attentive reading to Scripture. As fruit of his meditative practice, he grasped what few preachers or moralists of the day did: that God is mystery and we ought not identify our causes with God's; that sin is a universal condition that precludes our judging one another; that God will bring salvation to the people, and our responsibility is to "show malice toward none and charity toward all." For Lincoln, biblical language was not simply a source of sound bites; it gave him a felt realization that the deepest patterns of biblical history are interwoven with the events of our own day.

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America

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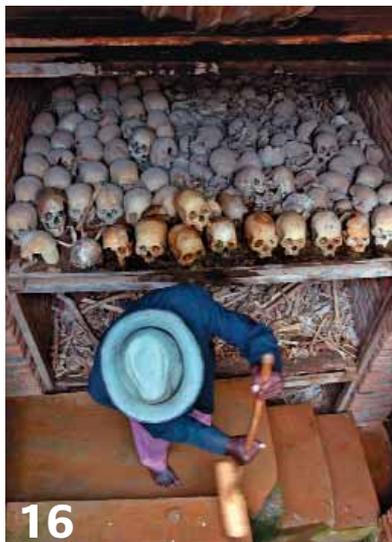
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Cover A boy carries a child in a garbage dump where hundreds of people reside and make a living making charcoal in Tondo, Manila. Reuters/Darren Whiteside.

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All at americamagazine.org.



CURRENT COMMENT

Bottomless

It has become a cliché to say the losses of the banking industry are bottomless. No one, not even among bankers, knows where they end. In the meantime, the government continues to search for ways to rescue the banking business. Some suggest establishing a “bad bank” to acquire all the toxic loans the banks now hold. Others propose “temporary nationalization” of ailing banks, with the government acquiring controlling interest in banks until they repay their debt to the federal government. A third proposal calls for direct aid to mortgage holders to help make their home payments. While not a total solution, aid to borrowers seems the best way to rescue the whole economy and the fairest way to see that the economy revives—from the bottom up.

Too many bankers continue to appear either irresponsible or incompetent. John A. Thain, the chief executive of Merrill Lynch, was forced out by Merrill’s new owner, Bank of America, after he rushed to pay out executive bonuses last December in advance of the completion of the sale of Merrill to BofA. For its part, Bank of America, finding Merrill’s value much less than it had estimated, has had to take another \$20 billion from the federal government to complete its purchase of the brokerage house. Banks need to be disciplined “going forward,” as President Obama has said, but they also need to be disciplined for their monumental errors of the past decade. None so far has shown it is worthy of the public’s trust with further bailout monies.

Financial institutions have abused their social compact in the first stage of the Troubled Asset Relief Program by locking up bailout money as they continued to enrich their executives. If they receive new assets, it should be for the benefit of the people who as taxpayers are paying for the bailout. The major portion of the administration’s new financial rescue plan ought to go into the mortgage market. It is time for the rescue to trickle from the bottom up before it is soaked up at the top and cannot trickle down.

The Webby Pope

President Barack Obama’s big day in Washington, D.C., was not the only inauguration in the news this month. On Jan. 19, the Vatican announced that, in conjunction with the Internet giant Google, Pope Benedict XVI was inaugurating his own YouTube channel. There the pope’s speeches, accompanied by text, will be available for the Web crowd. It is certainly not the first foray of the Catholic Church into the new media. The Vatican has maintained an extensive and helpful Web site since 1995;

and during the pope’s visit to Australia last summer for World Youth Day, he texted his younger fans, or at least those with younger technologies.

The pope also maintains a Facebook page under “His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI.” At last count he has over 26,000 friends, most of whom count themselves as dedicated fans. “Pope Benedict, I would like to meet you,” writes Ziah on the pontiff’s page, “please visit Orange County, California, USA, as soon as possible.” (The pope has not yet responded to Ziah’s request.) Others want more specific help. “Can u please make missing the Australian V8 Supercar race in Bathurst, Australia, a sin in Australia?” asked Scott. But the pope is in good company on Facebook. Boasting satirical pages (unlike the pope’s real one) are luminaries like Karl Rahner and Jesus of Nazareth. Benedict’s fans may be impressed to learn that “Jesus Nazareth,” as he styles himself, had only 24 friends at the beginning of the new year—which means that, at least on the Web, the pope is 1,000 times more popular than his boss.

Miracle on the Hudson?

Many of those involved in Flight 1549’s ditching in the Hudson River joined New York’s Governor David Paterson in calling the survival of all the passengers and crew a “miracle.” Capt. Chesley B. Sullenberger III explained that “circumstance determined that it was this experienced crew that was scheduled on that particular flight on that particular day. But I know I can speak for the entire crew when I tell you we were simply doing what we were trained to do.”

Miracle of God, or a congeries of circumstances? The survival of the 155 passengers and crew may fit the more general description of a miracle as an extraordinary happening attributed to the presence and action of a divine power. But it does not fit the strict Catholic criteria for a miracle. (Even at Lourdes only 68 have been approved).

Yet should we be bound by definitions? Albert Einstein explained that “there are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle.” Most of us are in between. The birth of a child, the size and complexity of the universe, an incident in which we avoid a tragedy, or even a “Hail Mary” pass may seem miraculous. But then we retreat to the ordinariness of everyday life and take for granted the marvel of flight, the amazing capability of the Blackberry, the coded information packed in a human cell. What is most important is not losing our sense of wonder—our perception that even with our scientific ways of explaining reality, there is usually more than meets the eye.

Shelter, Food and the Stimulus

The new administration's projected \$825 billion stimulus package should create jobs not only in traditional ways, like infrastructure improvements on roads, bridges and school construction. It should also focus on offsetting the sharp rise in hunger and homelessness among the nation's rapidly growing number of poor people.

Already, low-income advocates predict that people in deep poverty, that is, those with incomes of less than half the poverty line of \$21,200 for a family of four, will increase by between five and six million if unemployment reaches 9 percent. Barbara Sard, a policy analyst at the nonprofit Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, has said that such an increase would put as many as a million families at risk of housing instability and homelessness. Even those not yet in deep poverty could face homelessness because of home foreclosures that have already pushed many into the rental market, which, because of competition for affordable rental housing, has experienced an increased demand that in turn has caused rents to rise.

And yet, precisely at a time when help is most needed because of the escalating rate of unemployment, homeless prevention programs in some areas are being cut back because of state and local budget shortfalls. Congress should take steps to assist states facing this dilemma to withstand the economic pressures that push more people toward homelessness. In practical terms, housing advocates urge that recovery funds provide new non-renewable housing vouchers that would enable 200,000 families to have access to adequate housing through 2010. Along with vouchers, Congress should also provide an additional \$1.5 to \$2 billion for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's emergency shelter grant program, to prevent an additional several hundred thousand families from becoming homeless. The cost would be only one half of 1 percent of the overall recovery package, and yet such measures would not only lessen the increase in homelessness, but would also provide a short-term stimulus to the economy by injecting funds into local economies.

A similar situation prevails regarding hunger. With the steep rise in unemployment and food prices, participation in the food stamp program is nearing record highs. Between August 2007 and August 2008, caseloads nationwide increased by almost three million persons. But a month's worth of stamps typically covers only three weeks of

the average family's food bill. Consequently, as another component of the recovery package, anti-hunger advocates rightly urge Congress to boost the current food stamp benefits both to make stamps last through the month and to stimulate the economy.

Every additional dollar in food stamps results in \$1.73 in increased economic activity.

Since job loss is so central a part of the overall economic picture, assistance should aim to extend and expand unemployment benefits. Fewer than 40 percent of unemployed workers currently receive unemployment benefits. This is partly because many states follow policies unchanged for decades. As a result, numerous low-wage and part-time workers are ineligible for unemployment benefits when they are laid off. A federally funded increase in benefits, as well as an extension beyond the usual 26 weeks, would help ease the fallout from job losses.

The stimulus package should also include fiscal aid to states facing budget cuts that are weakening Medicaid benefits. As of last December, 19 states had lowered payments to nursing homes and hospitals, and had eliminated certain treatments, like physical therapy, entirely. Cuts of this kind represent a major tear in the health care safety net created by Medicaid in 1965. The federal government should do more to prevent cuts of this kind that affect the most vulnerable populations.

President Obama has spoken of the need to reach out to these populations. That might well begin in the nation's capital, the seat of Congress, which is also a textbook case of the stark gap between rich and poor. Before his inauguration, Obama said on ABC's "This Week" program that "one of the things I don't like historically about Washington is the way you've got one part of Washington...pretty prosperous. Then, you've got another half...that is going through enormous challenges," namely the challenges of poverty. "I want to see," he continued, "if we can bring those two Washington, D.C.'s together." Congress has the power to do that not only in the capital but throughout the nation with a stimulus package that would create both jobs and the protections that poor people need as shields against hunger, homelessness and lack of health care. We hope the president and Congress, acting in a bipartisan spirit, take the needed steps to meet these and related goals.



SIGNS OF THE TIMES

VATICAN CITY

High Hopes for U.S./Vatican Diplomacy

While registering its disappointment over an early presidential decision to restore funding to programs that offer abortions overseas, the Vatican has struck a predominantly positive tone as it opens relations with the administration of President Barack Obama, emphasizing hopes for cooperation on issues of peace and social justice. In interviews over recent weeks, Vatican officials said their expectations for the new administration were highest on international questions of war and peace—most specifically, the Israeli-Palestinian war.

What is expected of the Obama administration, officials said, is an initiative to restart and sustain the Mideast peace process and move it toward a definitive solution. Vatican diplomats were disappointed by the Bush administration's peace-promoting efforts in the Holy Land. They said those efforts came late and that the most promising initiative—the peace conference in Annapolis, Md., in late 2007—was not followed up with diplomatic pressure. While few expect Obama to alter the United States' fundamental support for Israel, Vatican officials said the new president begins his term with a certain amount of much-needed trust and sympathy among Arabs.

The Vatican was also always uncomfortable with the Bush administration's self-proclaimed "war on terror," even though Vatican officials gave qualified support to U.S. military action against terrorist enclaves in Afghanistan in 2001. Vatican sources said the hope is that the antiterrorism effort under President Obama will be carried out with two principles in mind: first, respect for legal rights—that is, a rejection of torture—and second, attention to the underlying causes of terrorism, including injustice and political frustration.

On economic issues, Vatican officials cited potential areas of agreement with President Obama, including his concern for those on the margins of society. They said the hope is that the

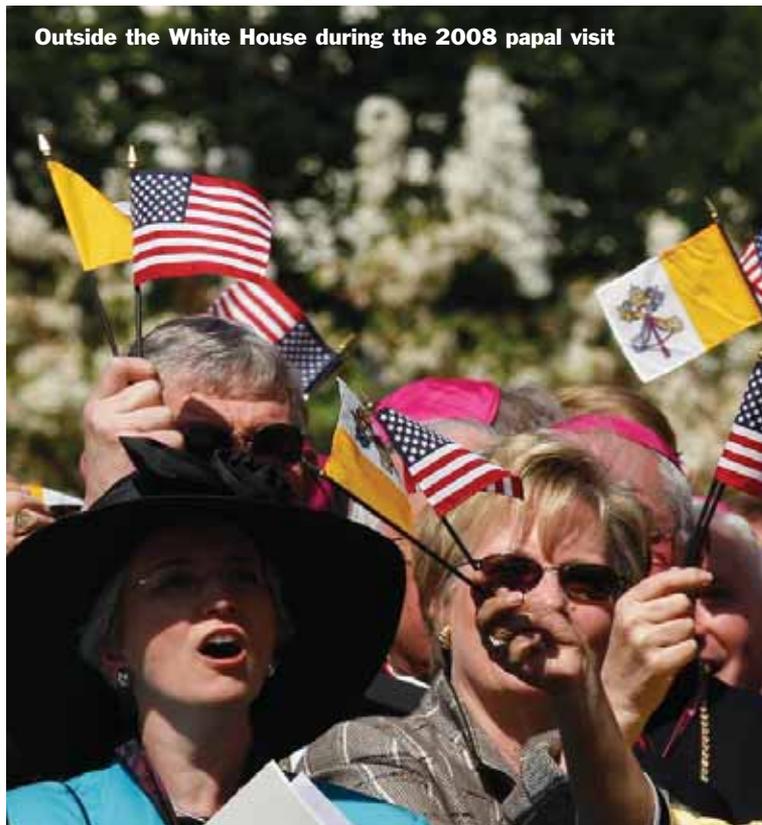
president's stated concern for the poor in the United States will translate into a serious U.S. commitment to help alleviate global poverty. This was an important area of cooperation between the Vatican and the Bush administration, and the Vatican wants that to continue under President Obama.

On pro-life issues, Vatican officials said they hoped Obama, who is seen as a deft politician, would not pick unnecessary fights with the church. Although it was expected, the Vatican reacted quickly to the president's executive order on Jan. 23 to remove a ban on federal aid to programs that promote or perform abortions overseas. Yet pro-life and family issues are not merely U.S. domestic affairs, they said. Vatican diplomats know that questions regarding population control, bioethics, the family and even homosexuality increasingly come up for debate in international forums, includ-

ing the United Nations. While the Vatican and the Bush administration were in close agreement on such topics, there is apprehension about the policies of the new president—and how hard his administration will push those policies.

The Vatican is also closely watching for Mr. Obama's choice of a new U.S. ambassador to the Vatican. An early appointment would be viewed at the Vatican as a sign of the president's interest in the Holy See. The choice of ambassador is, of course, up to the president. One informed Vatican official dismissed an earlier report that the Vatican, in a nod toward conservative Catholics, might veto the appointment of any high-profile Catholic supporter of Obama. Rejecting an ambassador for such political motives is not in the tradition of Vatican diplomacy and would, in fact, be very dangerous, the official said.

Outside the White House during the 2008 papal visit





THE ECONOMY

Nonprofits Face Recession Pressures

As the recession grows and deepens, nonprofit organizations across the country face the prospect of strained services and shrinking donations. The Chronicle of Philanthropy expects that more than 100,000 nonprofit groups will fail during the next two years in the aftermath of the September 2008 financial meltdown. "It'll be a tight year" for funding agencies, said Frank J. Butler, president of the Washington-based Foundations and Donors Interested in Catholic Activities, or FADICA. Butler added, however, that "If you have a good charity and it's run well, you shouldn't be that worried... Your donors are going to stick with you."

The economic slide that has

forced corporations and foundations to tighten their budgets is also pushing agencies large and small to scale back how much they seek from donors. At Mercy Health Partners in Knoxville, Tenn., officials are seeking smaller contributions for hospital projects. "We're scaling back the big \$1 million ask," said Carlton Long, regional vice president of philanthropy for Catholic Healthcare Partners, Mercy's Cincinnati-based parent company. "We're doing more of the \$10,000 and under asks." Citing stock losses and smaller returns on other investments, some individual donors have also slowed payment of pledges for Mercy's most recent capital campaign.

Meanwhile social service nonprofits on the front lines are witnessing the consequences of recession firsthand. "This is the worst economy since Herbert Hoover," said Joseph Hubbard of Catholic Urban Programs in East St. Louis. Hubbard reports that those who just months ago held working-class jobs are showing up in greater numbers than ever at his agency for food, clothing and help paying their heating bills.

Yet the news is not universally bad. At Catholic Charities USA, the country's economic woes have actually had a positive impact on donations. Patricia Hvidston, senior director of development, said the agency took in slightly more in 2008 than in 2007. "The data is showing we have more donors than in '07 and the average gift is down just a little bit. To me that says everybody in this country is hurting, but our donors really understand with compassion that there are others hurting even more," she said.

NAIROBI

Kenya Confronts Food Shortages

As nearly 10 million Kenyans suffer food shortages, the country's Catholic bishops have urged the government to provide assistance and food-for-work programs. While the food crisis has been blamed partly on harsh weather conditions and the country's post-election violence, in which many food stores were burned, the bishops also expressed concern over the sale of maize, the country's staple food, to neighboring countries like Sudan.

"We are concerned also about serious allegations of the export of maize by individuals who seem to be above the law," the Kenya Episcopal Conference said in a statement on Jan. 21. Members of Kenya's Na-

tional Cereals and Produce Board, which regulates the cost of grains, have been accused in an export scandal. The bishops called on the government to be accountable and truthful, as well as to provide subsidies and food-for-work programs. Kenyan media have reported on the food shortages in Kenya, showing pictures of Kenyans eating tree roots to survive. Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki declared a national disaster in mid-January and launched a campaign to raise money to address the food shortages. He said he would "reduce the price of seeds by 10 percent." President Mwai Kibaki also appealed for international assistance and said that the Kenyan government, in collaboration with the U.N. World Food Program, was feeding 1.4 million people under an emergency program.

Pope Seeks to Allay Jewish Concerns

Pope Benedict XVI restated his “full and unquestionable solidarity” with the world’s Jews and condemned all ignorance, denial and downplaying of the brutal slaughter of millions of Jewish people during the Holocaust in a statement on Jan. 28. The pope’s comments came a day after the Chief Rabbinate of Israel broke off ties with the Vatican in protest over the pope’s lifting of the excommunication of a traditionalist bishop, Richard Williamson, who has minimized the severity and extent of the Holocaust. Pope Benedict XVI said he was motivated by a desire for church unity when he removed the excommunication of four bishops of the breakaway Society of St. Pius X. The four bishops were ordained against papal orders in 1988 by the late French Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre. The Vatican has held on-again, off-again talks with the society since 2000.

Iraqi Bishops Seek Synod for Mideast

Iraq’s Catholic bishops called on Pope Benedict XVI to convene a synod to address the mass exodus of Christians from the Middle East and the lack of full religious freedom there. Chaldean Archbishop Louis Sako of Kirkuk said a general synod dedicated to the challenges Christians face in the Middle East would help the church forge a clear plan of action for the present and future. “We can’t do anything by ourselves that would be as well researched, prepared and analyzed” as it would be during a two- or three-week synod, he said. He said topics of top priority for a potential synod would include the problem of Christians fleeing the Middle East,

NEWS BRIEFS

The annual **March for Life** drew tens of thousands to Washington, D.C., on Jan. 22, the 36th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*. A concurrent Walk for Life West Coast drew an estimated 32,000 people. + The Southern African Catholic Bishops’ Conference has called on Zimbabwe’s President **Robert Mugabe** “to step down immediately.” + Pope Benedict XVI has formally accepted the election of Bishop Joseph Younan as the new head of the **Syrian Catholic Church**. + Sister Nirmala Joshi, superior general of the **Missionaries of Charity**, was among 10 people selected to receive India’s second-highest civilian award. + The new patriarch of the **Russian Orthodox Church** is Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, who has been in charge of the church’s ecumenical relations for the past 20 years and has had dozens of high-level contacts with the Catholic Church. + Evan Harris, a Liberal Democrat member of the U.K. Parliament, has introduced a bill that would abolish the sections of the Act of Settlement of 1701 that prevent **British monarchs** from becoming Catholic or marrying a Catholic. The bill will be debated in March.



March for Life

offering Christian witness in a predominantly Muslim world, relations with Muslims, the role of Christians in civil and political life, lack of full religious freedom and Christians’ prospects for the future.

Leon Klenicki, Dead at 78



Rabbi Leon Klenicki, a long-time voice on Catholic-Jewish relations, died Jan. 25 at his home in New Jersey. He had spent 28 years working on interfaith matters for the Anti-Defamation League of B’nai B’rith and was a long-time professor of Jewish studies at

Immaculate Conception Seminary in Huntington, N.Y. He is credited with writing or co-writing 19 books, including *The Holocaust, Never to Be Forgotten: Reflections on the Holy See’s Document “We Remember,”* co-written with Cardinals Avery Dulles and Edward Cassidy. “One can only look back on Leon’s career with gratitude to God for the paths that he opened up for so many religious leaders committed to reversing centuries of estrangement between their own faith community and other traditions,” said Cardinal William H. Keeler, the U.S. bishops’ moderator of Catholic-Jewish affairs. Klenicki is survived by his wife, Myra Cohen Klenicki, and their two children.

From CNS and other sources. CNS photos.



'Faith-Based' Hopes

In 2001 President George W. Bush created the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. I was its first director. Our main purpose was to promote poverty-fighting partnerships between religious nonprofit organizations and federal agencies.

Bless Bush! He put "faith-based" on the federal policy agenda to stay. He was a compassionate conservative at heart. Witness his multi-billion-dollar H.I.V./AIDS initiative in sub-Saharan Africa and his innovative program for mentoring prisoners' children. And he inspired caring souls in state and local governments to launch their own faith-based initiatives.

All good, but legacy-minded Bush loyalists have stretched the truth in their final "fact sheet" on the faith-based initiative issued on Dec. 2, 2008. Its self-congratulatory semi-truths mock the nonprofit organizations, both religious and secular, both national and local, that entered 2009 struggling harder than ever to meet growing health and human services needs caused largely by Bush-era increases in poverty and unemployment.

Take the "150,000 social entrepreneurs" who were allegedly "trained" to have "impact." That counts people who attended brief off-site events that were more like political rallies than training programs.

Or take "more than 110,000 matches." Fine print: not 110,000 live matches between prisoners' children and

adult mentors, but every match ever wholly or partially funded by Washington since the program's inception, including some that lasted less than a year. Bush's original goal was 100,000 prisoners' children matches fully funded and functioning for at least four years, plus a million mentors for other at-risk youth mobilized in partnership with four national secular service organizations.

Spin seduces, but facts matter and history bites. Pseudo-statistics suitable only for presidential library framing are pardonable but will be found out. Besides, self-serving half-truths do not increase actual charitable giving, supply more poor children with health care or bless more inner-city churches with grants.

The whole truth is that America's "armies of compassion" remain much as Bush described them in his maiden campaign speech in 1999: "outnumbered and outflanked and outgunned," needing "more support, public and private" and forced to "make bricks without straw."

The whole truth is that religious nonprofits, large and small, national and local, have been struggling harder than ever to meet human needs begotten by increases in poverty and unemployment. Thanks to well-meaning leaders and staff in my former office, Bush's faith-based initiative had a little post-2006 surge, but the office's "mission accomplished" hype unintentionally masked and mocked the unmet needs.

Now President Barack Obama promises to do better. On July 1, 2008, in a speech and interviews in

Zanesville, Ohio, he outlined his faith-based plan. His advisers consulted me, and I publicly endorsed his plan. In August 2008, I spoke at the Democratic Convention's "faith caucus" meetings. After the election, Obama's transition team consulted with me on faith-based issues. So consider the source.

To succeed, Obama, a former Catholic Charities community worker in Chicago, must insist that all grantees serve all people in need without regard to religion. He must keep the faith-based effort fact-based, bipartisan and open to corrections. And he must honor all campaign pledges to create or expand programs that benefit low-income children and families.

Will he? In any case, heated controversies are unavoidable. Will Obama uphold or rescind the executive orders and waivers that Bush bestowed on worthwhile groups that hire only coreligionists? Will his council track how his policies actually affect religious nonprofits that serve the poor in places ranging from post-Katrina New Orleans to sub-Saharan Africa? Will his administration pull grants from failed programs favored by key clergy supporters?

Our new president truly seems to want to help the civic saints who go marching in to help people in real need. Pray for him, his staff and his faith-based initiatives. At least for his first 100 days, have the audacity to hope that those prayers will be answered.

Religious nonprofits have been struggling harder than ever.

JOHN J. DIJULIO JR. is the author of *Godly Republic: A Centrist Blueprint for America's Faith-Based Future* (Univ. of California Press, 2007).



PHOTO: REUTERS/ELISEO FERNANDEZ



POPE BENEDICT'S CHALLENGE TO THE WORLD

Fighting Poverty to Build Peace

BY HOWARD J. HUBBARD

How will the world most effectively achieve peace? By fighting poverty. This central insight of Pope Benedict XVI's 2009 World Day of Peace message has powerful implications for the current challenges facing the United States. Our nation's internal economic struggles threaten to turn our focus inward rather than internationally. Pope Benedict's focus on poverty around the world proposes a much more global vision, because difficult times demand a complex and comprehensive response. He points out a different way forward, a way inspired by the Prince of Peace. Humanity, Pope Benedict reminds us, is one family in God.

Where do we find solutions to our problems here at home? Candidates in the recent U.S. presidential election focused heavily on the domestic economic crisis and the beleaguered American middle class. Both are valid, critically important areas of focus. But the solutions for such problems, Pope Benedict suggests, also lie in the struggle against poverty abroad. Ultimately, there is no competition between domestic and international needs, nor between poor persons and the middle class. It is self-defeating to demand choices between help for those who suffer in the United States and those who suffer overseas, or between aid for poor persons and those in the middle class. Reiterating Pope John Paul II's warning that "the gap between rich and poor has become more marked, even in the most economically developed nations," Pope Benedict notes that we are dealing with a family matter. Concern for poor persons, both here and abroad, flows from the reality that humanity is one family in God.

Pope Benedict argues persuasively that assisting poor persons, especially in developing countries like Ethiopia, Haiti and Bangladesh, will help create "a world that is more just and prosperous for all." He makes

MOST REV. HOWARD J. HUBBARD, *bishop of Albany,*
is the chairman of the Committee on International Justice and Peace
of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

his point with a vivid image: "It is utterly foolish to build a luxury home in the midst of desert and decay." He emphasizes that concern for the welfare of poor persons strengthens the common good of all and that addressing the needs of the most vulnerable improves the health of all. In the face of seemingly "either/or" choices, Catholic social teaching proposes "both/and" solutions.

Domestic Poverty

Before exploring the global focus of the pope's message of Jan. 1, 2009, it is important to examine domestic poverty. In 2007 the official poverty rate in the United States was 12.5 percent, or over 37 million people. The rate for children was 18 percent, almost one in five. These rates will surely climb in the current recession.

The official U.S. definition of poverty is about \$21,000 a year for a family of four. In urban areas with higher costs of living, the effective poverty rate is much higher than the official estimate. Many low-income families living near or just above this income level see themselves as working class or middle class, not poor. But the church's "preferential love for the poor" embraces them as well. This special concern for the poor does not diminish concern for the welfare of those who are middle class or wealthy. Everyone benefits when society more fully promotes the well-being of all, especially those who are poor.

Pope Benedict highlights the importance of building "participatory institutions" and a "civil society" internationally that enables nations to invest in people, fight crime, strengthen the rule of law and reduce poverty. As the former chairman of the U.S. bishops' committee for the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, I have seen C.C.H.D. projects help poor people help themselves through the support of community-empowered, self-help organizations throughout the United States. This is a U.S. example of what is being done internationally to empower poor people to improve their communities.

International Challenges

Reducing domestic poverty will help to reduce global poverty because U.S. foreign policy can be only as strong as the nation is economically. Our country needs a solid domestic economy if it is to have the resources to help reduce global poverty. Paradoxically, in this age of globalization, the United States cannot improve its domestic economy unless it simultaneously invests in reducing global poverty. These investments unleash the potential of poor nations to contribute through fair trade to a robust global economy that benefits the common good of all peoples.

Poverty is widespread across the globe. An estimated 1.4

Previous page: A homeless man sits outside a community kitchen in Valparaíso City, Chile.

billion people live in extreme poverty, defined as living on less than \$1.25 a day. Such poverty assaults human dignity and robs people of their human potential. Fortunately, poverty is a disease with a cure. There are countless stories of poor persons and communities rising above crushing poverty. The mission of Catholics and others of good will is to work with the poor to achieve greater economic opportunity.

Time and again, the world has seen that poverty contributes to conflict and violent conflict contributes to poverty. This vicious circle is true within nations and between nations.

Headlines testify daily to the fact that desperate situations of poverty lead some people to do desperate things. There is vivid evidence of this in the crime rates of poor neighborhoods, and in civil wars and international conflicts. For example, the genocidal conflict in Darfur, Sudan is exacerbated by a competition over scarce resources, such as arable land and clean water; these resources have been diminished by desertification of the land as a result of human carelessness and global climate change. Similarly, the violence and division of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are made worse by the increasingly dire humanitarian crisis in the Palestinian Territories.

Violent conflict destroys lives and property and can reverse years of human progress. War is development in reverse; it deepens poverty. Poverty destroys human potential, breeds despair and violence and undermines human security.

Pope Benedict warns that "immense military expenditures" divert resources "from development projects for peoples, especially the poorest." Excessive military expenditures create "pockets of underdevelopment and desperation" and "paradoxically" become "a cause of instability, tension and conflict." This warning has profound implications for U.S. foreign policy. As the world's leading arms producer, the United States should assume leadership to promote international disarmament and to reduce the arms trade, which the Second Vatican Council called an "utterly treacherous trap for humanity, and one which ensnares the poor."

The Mandate for Development

"The new name for peace is development," Pope Benedict states, alluding to the words of Pope Paul VI. The pope then outlines steps in a comprehensive global development strategy to reduce poverty: improve solidarity between rich and poor countries; redirect military expenditures to human development; address pandemic diseases and the food crisis; and reform international trade and finance to reduce marginalization of low-income countries. He notes that children constitute almost half of those living in deep poverty worldwide, and asks that nations give priority to supporting mothers and families, education, access to vaccines, medical care, clean drinking water and initiatives to protect the environment.

In recent years there has been a debate over the role of development, defense and diplomacy (the three Ds) in U.S. foreign policy. The United States must give development a structure and capacity that raises it together with diplomacy and defense as the “third leg” of U.S. foreign policy.

What specific strategies can help the United States incorporate development as this third leg of foreign policy? First, development with a focus on poverty reduction must become the fundamental goal of foreign aid, including the participation of poor people and the involvement of local governments and civil society. Second, an emphasis not only on immediate humanitarian aid but also on investments in agriculture, health care, education and micro-credit programs will make a global development strategy more comprehensive and effective in the long run, as will the inclusion of strategies to combat climate change and reform international trade policies. Third, such strategies will be bolstered by a gradual increase in foreign aid, to reach the international commitment by wealthier nations to allocate 0.7 percent of national income to global development.

Material and Moral Poverty

Most significantly, Pope Benedict highlights the relationship between material poverty and moral poverty, noting that “every form of externally imposed poverty has at its root a lack of respect for the transcendent dignity of the human person.” Moral poverty that fails to respect human dignity contributes to material poverty. Greed, corruption and materialism undermine the common good of all. Material poverty demands concrete economic, social and political actions; but these actions will be effective only if they are shaped by people committed to what the Holy Father calls “profound solidarity.”

Morality matters in economic policy. The current national and global financial crisis has made this patently clear. Pope Benedict observes that too many economic actors were making decisions “based on very short-term thinking.” They lacked a commitment to “long-term consideration of the common good,” and by pursuing short-term gain in financial markets, they undermined the market itself. For this reason, markets, and financial institutions must be appropriately regulated for the common good.

Morality also matters in developing public policies that too often can be driven by ideology. Some countries promote anti-life population-control policies, although the world has reduced poverty even as its population has grown. Indeed, Pope Benedict says, developed countries “with higher birth-rates enjoy better opportunities for development.” The United States would do well to preserve the Kemp-Kasten Amendment that prohibits giving U.S. “population assistance” funds to any group that supports a program of coercive abortion or involuntary sterilization, and

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Alexie Torres-Fleming, executive director, Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice, the Bronx

Robin Bernstein, executive director, The Educational Alliance, Manhattan

Abdel Hafid Djemil, teacher and mentor, W.E.B. DuBois High School, Brooklyn

SPECIAL COMMENTATOR:

John A. Calhoun, former state and federal administrator of family and child care services, drug abuse and crime prevention programs, and author of *Hope Matters*, which chronicles the role of faith in two dozen community leaders around the country.

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should also reinstate the “Mexico City policy” that denies U.S. funds to organizations that perform or promote abortion as a method of family planning.

Morality also matters in designing effective responses to the AIDS pandemic. The recently reauthorized President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (Pepfar) increased resources for AIDS prevention and treatment, training health care workers and nutrition programs. The bill also provided balanced funding for abstinence and behavior-change programs that research has shown are highly effective in reducing infection rates in countries with epidemics. A bipartisan consensus rejected adding unrelated family planning and reproductive health services that would divert resources from life-saving interventions. Sadly, some advocacy organizations are seeking to overturn that carefully constructed bipartisan consensus. Our nation’s leaders should not go down this divisive path.

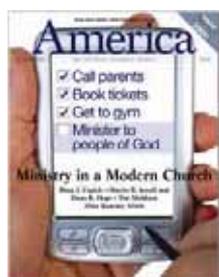
A Call to Further Action

In response to the pope’s call “to fight poverty to build peace,” the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and Catholic Relief Services will reinvigorate the Catholic Campaign Against Global Poverty soon. An initiative called “Catholics Confront Global Poverty” will be launched on Feb. 23 (www.usccb.org/globalpoverty) with a goal of helping to educate and mobilize U.S. Catholics to

defend the life and dignity of people living in poverty throughout the world.

The initiative will offer six specific policy recommendations: first, an increase in poverty-focused foreign assistance to meet humanitarian needs and invest in long-term development; second, the promotion of foreign assistance reform that emphasizes poverty reduction, government accountability and the participation of civil society; third, a new approach to global climate change that focuses on protecting the poor; fourth, reform of trade and agricultural policies to stimulate sustainable development and protect small farmers; fifth, financial and political support of U.N. peacekeeping missions to reduce the violence that impoverishes many nations; and sixth, the application of significant resources for peacebuilding and diplomacy to areas where existing conflicts threaten to turn violent.

Together with the domestic poverty initiatives of the U.S.C.C.B. Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development and the Campaign to Reduce Poverty of Catholic Charities USA, this new initiative represents a “both/and” approach to poverty at home and abroad. In the words of Pope Benedict, it is important that “people everywhere feel personally outraged by the injustices in the world.” Only then can people work together to “redress the marginalization of the world’s poor” and “fight poverty to build peace.” **A**



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Roots of Genocide

Francis M. Deng discusses cultural denial, self-hatred and prejudice.

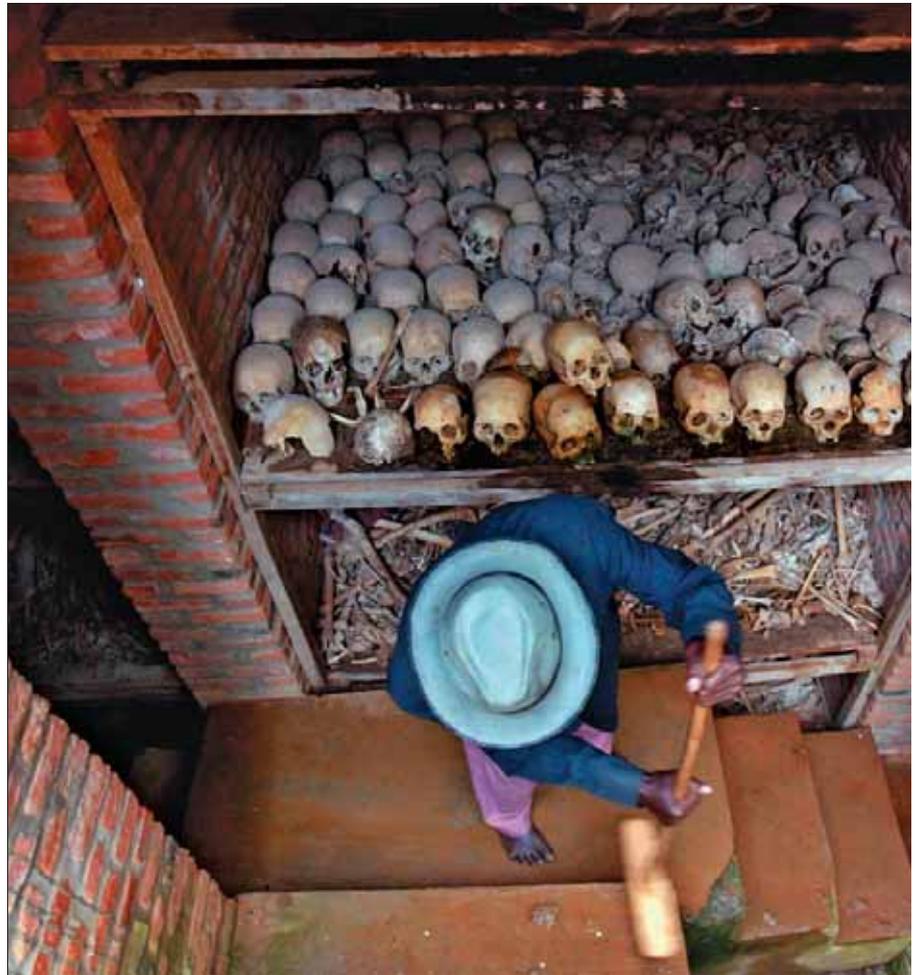
BY GEORGE M. ANDERSON

Francis M. Deng has traveled to some of the most violence-ridden parts of the world. He has visited areas marked by the killing of hundreds of thousands of people, even millions, as in the Holocaust. He is currently the special adviser to the U.N. secretary general for the prevention of genocide. When Deng greeted me in his office one sunny morning, the peaceful view of the East River through the large windows made it difficult for me to think of so painful a subject as genocide. But Deng, one of the busiest members of the U.N. staff, immediately addressed the issue.

“When genocide takes place,” he said, “there is often a general denial by the perpetrators; and those who might be called upon to intervene are reluctant to acknowledge that it is even happening.” That is why it is better to focus on prevention, detecting the problems early on, while positions are still fluid and have not yet hardened into denial. It is also necessary to develop tools that range from diplomatic intercession to well-targeted sanctions, and to realize that many actions can be taken short of military combat.

Deng explained that the International Criminal Court serves as a useful deterrent if those who commit atrocities realize that they will be held accountable, that impunity cannot be tolerated. The arrest of the Serbian leader Radovan Karadzic, now behind bars in The Hague, offers one example of the court’s actions. The fact that Karadzic remained in hiding in Serbia for 13 years, however, is a reminder that judicial efforts can be thwarted by a population that protects a criminal in its midst.

Deng’s homeland is Sudan, where the ongoing conflict in Darfur has led some to label as genocide the approximately 300,000 deaths there. Genocide, he said, “is an extreme form of conflicts of identities. It involves conflicts that may be based on race, ethnicity, religion or nationality; and these in turn are marked by a great deal of discrimination and exclusion.” The problem is widespread and cannot be con-



finned to specific regions or countries, though some are more vulnerable than others. Rwanda, which he visited shortly after the 1994 genocide, comes to mind as one of those vulnerable countries, as do Bosnia and Cambodia under the rule of the Khmer Rouge, with its killing fields.

“I went to Bosnia in 1992 at the peak of the conflict there,” Deng said, “and it was extraordinary to realize that the two groups of people who hated each other so much, Serbs and Bosnian Muslims, were all but indistinguishable in their facial traits. It was mostly only by their names that you could tell them apart.” Hatred in situations like these can also involve self-hatred because of shared characteristics. He said that in Rwanda, “while some people fit the profile of a Hutu or a Tutsi, there are a lot of shared elements, so it’s not always easy to tell them apart.” Deng once asked a

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

foreign minister in Burundi whether it was possible to distinguish between the two, and he replied, “Yes, but with a 35 percent margin of error.” In other words, identifying members of the two groups was not easy.

Using his own country as an example, he observed, “If you go to Darfur, it’s difficult to tell who is an Arab and who is an African, because people there who consider themselves

“What we need to do, even though it might be too late there,” Deng told me, “is to get back to looking at the cause of problems nationally and comprehensively, so that you bring peace to Sudan as a whole and not isolate Darfur from the rest of the country.”

Redefining National Sovereignty

Deng underwent extensive preparation for his work on genocide prevention through his previous assignment as the U.N. secretary general’s representative for internally displaced persons. The term “internally displaced” can cause confusion. As Deng explained it: “People sometimes refer to them as refugees; but refugees, in fleeing violence in their own country, have been able to cross international borders and therefore qualify for assistance through the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees. I.D.P.’s, on the other hand, although fleeing violence too, are trapped within the boundaries of their own nation.” Deng found that identity was a painful factor in the lives of people trapped within their own borders.

In many of the countries he visited as the U.N. representative for internally displaced people, there was a virtual crisis of identity in terms of how a nation is defined. Disadvantaged groups demanded recognition as citizens with all the usual rights of citizenship. That, however, is frequently thwarted because “all over the world when conflicts displace people, I have found serious divisions based on factors like race, ethnicity, religion and culture.

“So instead of being cared for by their own governments, these displaced populations are neglected, sometimes even persecuted, as if they were allied with the enemy.” Although they must look to the international community for relief, the same nation that is dispossessing its own people may invoke national sovereignty to prevent international access to these people. That, Deng continued, “is when in our work on the I.D.P. mandate, we began to recast sovereignty as responsibility, a concept which we had developed at the Brookings Institution’s Africa program.”

When speaking with displaced persons, Deng said, “I would ask, ‘What message do you want me to take back to your leaders?’ Invariably they would say, ‘Those are not our leaders, we have no one in this government who speaks on our behalf.’” He described one such situation while visiting displaced persons during a mission to a country in Latin America. “In the eyes of the government here,” the people told him, “we are not even citizens; we are no better than criminals; and our only crime is that we are poor.” According to Deng, internally displaced persons are not only marginalized; they are often neglected or persecuted.

A nation “should be ready to call on the world for help to

Above left: A worker cleans a tomb of massacre victims outside a church in Nyanza, Rwanda.



‘When genocide takes place, there is often a general denial, and those who might be called upon to intervene are reluctant to acknowledge that it is even taking place.’

Arabs can be darker skinned than Africans.” Appearance is not enough to distinguish them. “If you hate a group on the grounds of race, and yet you have some of their racial characteristics,” Deng said, “you are really hating a part of yourself.”

The seeds for what is happening in Darfur go back to the 1950s and 1960s, when southern Sudan endured a 17-year civil war that Deng said was “just as atrocious as what is happening in Darfur.” The conflict stopped for a decade but resumed in the 1983; over two million people were killed, with exactly the same kinds of atrocities. Although human rights groups tried to call attention to the situation, sometimes even calling it genocide, Deng said “the world at the time did not give it as much attention as is now being paid to Darfur.”

A proliferation of regional conflicts is affecting Sudan.

do what was its responsibility in the first place,” Deng observed. “If you apply the idea of sovereignty as that kind of responsibility, you can also apply it to the prevention of genocide.” The U.N. General Assembly adopted the so-called responsibility to protect at the World Summit of heads of state and government in 2005. Deng’s earlier work on sovereignty as responsibility contributed to the development of the responsibility to protect.

Genocide sometimes includes what Deng referred to as “culturocide.” Take the case of Sudan, for example, said Deng: “A group might seize power and promote its own self-perception in terms of ethnic, racial and cultural identity. But Sudan is a country of multiple cultures and ethnic groups; and since gaining independence from the United Kingdom, the dominant group that calls itself Arab—though in fact they are actually a mix of Arabs and Africans—has been trying to fashion the country in its image as an Arab nation, trying to Arabize and Islamicize everyone.” Had they succeeded, the result would have amounted to culturocide because, Deng said, “a human being is not just a physical entity, but a cultural entity too. If you destroy a people’s culture and thereby assimilate them, you have also in a sense eliminated them.”

According to Deng, the extreme poverty of one group within a population may result in conflict that leads to mass violence. To the extent that poverty implies a disproportional

sharing of basic resources like water and grazing land, such disparity can generate a reaction among disadvantaged groups that leads to deadly internal strife. The dominant group might retaliate with a war that becomes genocidal.

Denial of responsibility for genocide can also play a role in the aftermath of conflict, as was the case in Germany after the Holocaust, which took the lives of six million Jews. In Germany after World War II, Deng said, “there was general denial of any wide responsibility, as if the millions of deaths in concentration camps were the work of one evil human being. I would hear people say, ‘Thank God he’s gone, Hitler wasn’t even German, but Austrian by birth.’” But now and then Deng encountered someone who would admit to having supported Hitler: “I met one man who had been a member of Hitler’s youth group who said, ‘I once thought Hitler was the best thing that had ever happened to Germany.’” At least he acknowledged where he had come from in his thinking. But for a while it was as though the nation at large was in almost total denial, attributing the horrific crimes of the Holocaust to a single individual. Germany has since widely been acknowledged as having faced up to its history that there was a national responsibility for what happened. “Instead of denying such evils, and attributing them to individuals,” said Deng, “we should ask ourselves what conditions produce a universal evil like the

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Holocaust. By doing that, we can better deal with a Hitler in our communities and in ourselves. What's involved is a universal fault."

Universal Human Dignity

Deng spoke of a tendency to demonize others when we fail to recognize that human dignity is universal and carries with it certain inalienable rights. "During my work with internally displaced persons, I was once in an Asian country where there was conflict. In a provincial town, I was joined at my table for breakfast by a lawyer who was strongly on one side of the conflict. When he learned that I was in his country looking into the human rights protection for those displaced by the war, he said that those 'were not human beings but animals, and therefore had no human rights.'"

Deng recalled a childhood memory as a member of the Dinka tribe, the largest in southern Sudan: "We knew of other tribes we feared were human lions. Some filed their teeth, which confirmed for us that they were man-eaters. But once my brothers and I left home for our studies and got to know these groups, we realized we had unfairly demonized those groups." Every group, he said, tends to see itself as the ideal of what humans should be and to perceive others in negative terms. By traveling and encountering many types of human beings, said Deng, "you begin to free yourself of the constraints created by a

narrow circle that inculcates all kinds of prejudices against the outside world. Ideally, the sooner we get to know one another, the greater chance we have of getting rid of our prejudices. Unfortunately, it doesn't always work that way. The assumption that education will free us of our prejudices is displaced, because it depends on the content of the education."

"When conflicts have gone on for decades," Deng said, "instead of questioning why we are allowing our people to suffer and die, we should be asking what is causing this and how can we get to the roots of the problem and find a solution." In the end, he said, it is a question of what recognition you give people, what equality you guarantee them along with basic respect and social recognition. That recognition, he added, would have to include a fairer distribution of resources, beginning with such basics as water and grazing land. "It requires a degree of wisdom to recognize that sharing is in the mutual interests of everyone," said Deng. "It's so basic, yet many are unwilling to think in those terms." But what is particularly needed, he reiterated, is prevention—worldwide programs to raise awareness about what causes mass conflicts and genocide and how, being detected early on, they can be prevented. It is also important to look for models of successful management of diversity to be emulated and models of mismanagement of diversity leading to conflict, which should be avoided. **A**

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What's Good for Business?

The ethical legacy of Catholic business schools

BY GERALD F. CAVANAGH

In a number of public financial scandals over the past decade, chief executives of such companies as Enron, Adelphia, Qwest, WorldCom and Imclone have gone to jail. Yet recent revelations concerning the subprime loan debacle and speculation by hedge fund and private equity firms show that ethics and social responsibility are still missing within the business sector. Many executives of the firms garnering negative publicity for their actions are graduates of our "best" graduate business programs. Have business schools in the United States failed to convey ethics, social responsibility and good moral habits to their graduates?

Most business schools would claim that that is not their purpose, nor do they have the skills to imprint such habits. Increasing profits, including the short-term share price, is the goal presented by most business programs, and especially by economics and finance teachers. This narrow goal promotes outsourcing, layoffs, sweatshops and pollution, while neglecting research, development, the reputation of the firm and the future of the business and the community. Ethics and moral principles might moderate this short-term, competitive viewpoint, but less than one-third of U.S. business schools require students to take courses in ethics or social responsibility, even after a cascade of ethical disasters in the last decade.

A Catholic Difference

What can we say about Catholic business schools? Are they better than others at communicating that the goal of business is to serve people, and that profits are merely one measure of that service? In a number of ways, they are slightly better than their peers: nearly all Catholic business schools require a course in ethics and social responsibility; and most of the textbooks on business ethics and the social responsi-

bility of business are written by authors who have been educated at Catholic business schools or teach at them. This is true in the United States and in much of the rest of the world. Liberal education with a core in the humanities, philosophy and theology can provide a foundation from which educators can clarify ethical issues and provide critical principles to aid business people. Catholic schools run centers that study and communicate business ethics to faculty, students, business people and the general community, such as those at Santa Clara University, Boston College, the University of Notre Dame and Duquesne University.

Many of the schools underscore global business responsibility. They highlight the work of Muhammad Yunus, the Nobel Prize-winning economist who makes tiny loans to poor women in developing countries (microlending), and the new interest in providing goods for poor people "at the bottom of the pyramid." They examine the work of Lester

Brown, a well-known environmental leader, who provides an outline of global ecological problems and solutions in his book *Plan B 3.0: Mobilizing to Save Civilization*.

Many professors use other tools to stress the importance of social justice

in the world of business. These include Berlin-based Transparency International's annual ranking of the nations of the world from least corrupt to most corrupt, which is an attempt to reduce bribery by embarrassing those nations and leaders at the bottom of the list. Some use two sets of global ethical codes for business: one by the Caux Round Table of top business executives, and the other by the United Nations Global Compact with Business. While the first is more detailed, each provides a benchmark for global business responsibility.

Most Catholic business schools encourage students to engage in "service learning," which takes them into the inner city to work with people at soup kitchens, homeless shelters and struggling schools. This is often an eye-opening experience for young professionals. It broadens horizons when an ambitious young business student recognizes that "this

**Social justice is best communicated
when most faculty integrate the
subject into their class discussions
in all disciplines.**

GERALD F. CAVANAGH, S.J., is interim dean and Charles T. Fisher III Chair of Business Ethics and Professor of Management at the University of Detroit Mercy. He is author of *American Business Values: A Global Perspective* (Prentice Hall, 2006).

homeless person could have been me, if not for the good luck of where I was born.”

Business programs were first established at Catholic universities to provide the knowledge and skills that immigrant Catholics needed to succeed in their careers. Today most Catholic business schools are located in large cities. They are interreligious in terms of faculty and student body, which widens their influence considerably beyond the Catholic community.

The Wealth of Church Teaching

How does the Catholic character of a school affect teachers, courses and other activities? This question was addressed in June 2008, when 250 business faculty members met at a conference entitled Business Education at Catholic Universities: The Role of Mission-Driven Business Schools, initiated by St. Thomas University in Minnesota and held at the University of Notre Dame. The participants came from 118 universities and 24 countries on six continents. A month later a second conference, Business and Education in an Era of Globalization, brought another 200 faculty members and deans of Jesuit business schools from around the world to New York City. Formal papers and discussions at these two conferences raised such issues as global ethics, stewardship, service learning and moral formation, and how such an emphasis can provide a competitive advantage to Catholic business schools as students choose which school to attend. Many of these presentations are on the Web site of the Catholic studies program at St. Thomas University.

Social justice is best communicated when most faculty members integrate the subject into their class discussions in all disciplines. Not all teachers at Catholic business schools, however, support an emphasis on social justice; some think that it clouds an otherwise clear result of “running the numbers” to determine the most financially profitable option. The core of those who are less enthusiastic tend to teach finance and economics. Even so, Catholic social thought, which takes its origin from Jesus’ teachings, provides a wealth of insights for business teachers and business people.

Catholic social teaching stresses the common goals of all

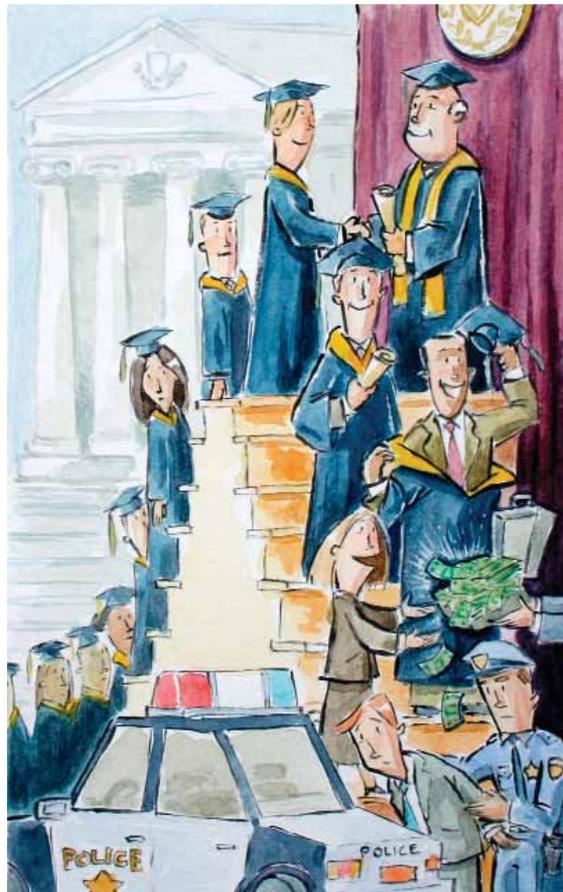
nations, religions and peoples. The accumulated wisdom of Jesus, the fathers of the church and countless theologians since provides an excellent test for assessing ourselves and our world. The *dignity of every human person* is the most basic of these principles. It is reflected in ethical principles of justice, rights and duties and caring; these norms are used in making decisions. The principle of the *common good* or *solidarity* is a critical balance for our self-centered, individualistic selves. We see the need for appreciating the common good when we realize how rarely—even during discussion of national policy—we hear the common good mentioned. Yet recognizing the importance of the common good is essential for any community, whether small or global, if it is to survive.

Subsidiarity, or placing responsibility for actions and policy on the people who are closest to the problem, is another insight derived from Catholic social thought. Subsidiarity requires individuals, families, neighborhoods and local communities to take responsibility for local issues and urges organizations and government hierarchies to support such local control. Unfortunately, here we find a paradox, because the Catholic Church itself often violates this principle. Two decades ago the Catholic bishops of the United States inspired more interest in social justice than at any time before or since when they wrote their two highly regarded pastoral letters on world peace and economic justice. The bishops wrote two initial drafts of each and asked for comments from laypeople, clergy and religious before issuing a

final letter. Vatican authorities, however, told the bishops that they were not to write such letters again without Vatican approval. Another apparent violation of the principle of subsidiarity occurred recently when the U.S. bishops requested a certain English translation of the liturgical eucharistic prayers, and the Vatican insisted on a centralized version.

‘Catholic’ as a Brand

Catholic social teaching is a treasure, but there is an obstacle to naming it. The word “Catholic” does not speak well to students in Catholic universities, either in the United States



or in Europe. To many young people the word suggests “what one may not do,” especially prohibitions with regard to sex. Teenagers are naturally rebellious, so given the church’s overemphasis on sexual ethics and its own sexual abuse scandals, it does not help to call an emphasis on moral or ethical principles Catholic. The label can be a hindrance. For this reason, many professors explain the social principles without identifying them as Catholic. They judge that communicating the content of the teaching is more important than identifying its origins. That is unfortunate, because the church’s influence and the authors of the teaching deserve to be known. Many instructors wait until after their students begin to appreciate the social principles; then they reveal their origins in Catholic tradition.

For similar reasons some Catholic universities do not explicitly acknowledge their Catholic roots in their mission statements, although they certainly do not try to keep them a secret. To many in our rationalistic, postmodern nation, the word “Catholic” does not suggest free inquiry and a willingness to ask tough questions, which are at the heart of any university. Pope Benedict XVI may be gradually changing that perception. Meanwhile, most Catholic universities settle for simply indicating their Dominican, Mercy,

Benedictine, Jesuit or diocesan origins even as they highlight ethics and social responsibility in their curricula. Catholic universities support spirituality in business, and scholars support business firms that encourage voluntary groups to gather to pray on company premises, but not on company time.

Catholic universities and business schools also support the development of personal character. The ethical failures by the managers of Enron, WorldCom, Adelphia and Qwest, as well as those of so many executives in hedge funds, private equity and financial services, have made it clear that some business executives suffer from a lack of character. One might loosely define a person’s character as a constellation of that person’s virtues and vices. Virtues and vices are moral habits, and habits are developed by repeated actions. An atmosphere in which students deal with peers and teachers in an honest, one-on-one way, and have opportunities to help others, including the poor, is an environment that encourages the development of good acts and moral habits. Whenever our schools provide such an environment, they contribute to the development of ethical and socially responsible business practices at home and around the world. **A**

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Cold Warrior

America's battle with Senator Joe McCarthy

BY JAMES T. KEANE AND JIM McDERMOTT

One of the most persistent legends about **America** has it that Robert C. Hartnett, S.J., **America's** editor in chief from 1948 to 1955, was ordered by his provincial superiors in May 1954 to stop criticizing the fiercely anti-Communist Senator Joseph McCarthy and that, a year later, they removed him as editor for what he had written.

That legend of his removal is false; but the truth behind Hartnett's ongoing battle with McCarthy is that in an era when attacking McCarthy was professional suicide, Hartnett did so repeatedly. Many of his fellow Catholics, including many Jesuits, did not approve. Yet Hartnett's holy boldness had another side that would prove his undoing.

The Everlasting Man

Robert C. Hartnett, S.J., came to **America** as editor in chief on Nov. 30, 1948, his new doctoral degree in philosophy from Fordham University in hand. A tall, broad-shouldered man, Hartnett had the ability to write nuanced essays accessible to readers without a Ph.D. He had abundant gifts as a speaker and an apologist, too. Indeed, he was a controversialist in the classic style of Hilaire Belloc, G. K. Chesterton or Frank Sheed, who loved to match wits with all comers on almost any question, but especially in defense of the church, and his wit was usually devastating. When the polemicist Paul Blanshard attacked the church in his 1949 book, *American Freedom and Catholic Power*, Hartnett took him on not only in **America** but on shared podiums and platforms. Time magazine described Hartnett in one such performance as "personable, brilliant." He was viewed by Jesuit provincial superiors and the **America** staff as "a certain kind of genius" with an "extraordinary capacity to work."

As editor in chief, though, Hartnett was an autocrat of Shakespearean dimension. In theory he saw the other editors as advisors, but in practice he had a tendency to treat them as debate opponents, giving no quarter to their ideas and demanding that his own interpretation be applied to most everything they wrote. Little seemed to satisfy him; according to the magazine's board of Jesuit overseers, he

JAMES T. KEANE, S.J., and JIM McDERMOTT, S.J., are associate editors of **America**. This is the fourth in a series of articles on the history of the magazine.

would make "tactless comments like 'No one on the staff can write'" and often rewrote editors' copy. He also sent many written complaints about various staff issues to John J. McMahon, S.J., the superior of the Jesuits of the New York Province and a member of **America's** supervisory board. These letters were usually five or six single-spaced, typed pages, with important phrases or whole passages underlined or capitalized. Using language more appropriate for a prosecutor, he said employees had "given testimony" to him, and that he was providing "evidence." And once he focused on a "problem," he had trouble letting it go.

The magazine's board regularly praised Hartnett for his talent and work ethic, but showed concern over his treatment of the editors. In 1952 McMahon noted "the Editor's failure to discuss questions calmly, to listen to advice, to recognize value in the ideas of others." A year prior McMahon had written, with no little wit, "The Editor has made it clear to the Fathers Provincial how much he esteems the men under him; how loyally they cooperate and how indefatigably they work.... Perhaps he could take occasion to say the same thing to the men themselves." The (irony and the point) were lost on Hartnett.

Up Jumped the Devil

When Senator Joseph P. McCarthy stood up at a meeting of the Republican Women's Club in Wheeling, W.Va., in February 1950 and claimed to have in his hand the identities of 205 Communist infiltrators working in the State Department, he was an unlikely candidate to become the favorite son of American Catholics. Although McCarthy was a lifelong practicing Catholic, a veteran of World War II and a Marquette University-educated lawyer, his career in public life had been grimy with mudslinging from the start. He won the Senate primary by accusing his opponent, the respected four-term Republican Senator Robert LaFollette, of draft dodging and war profiteering. McCarthy also claimed that he had flown 32 missions as a soldier, when in fact he had a desk job, flying only in training exercises. Halfway through his first term as a senator he was already facing accusations about his war record, tax evasion and possible bribes from Pepsi-Cola. Critics called him "The Pepsi-Cola Kid."

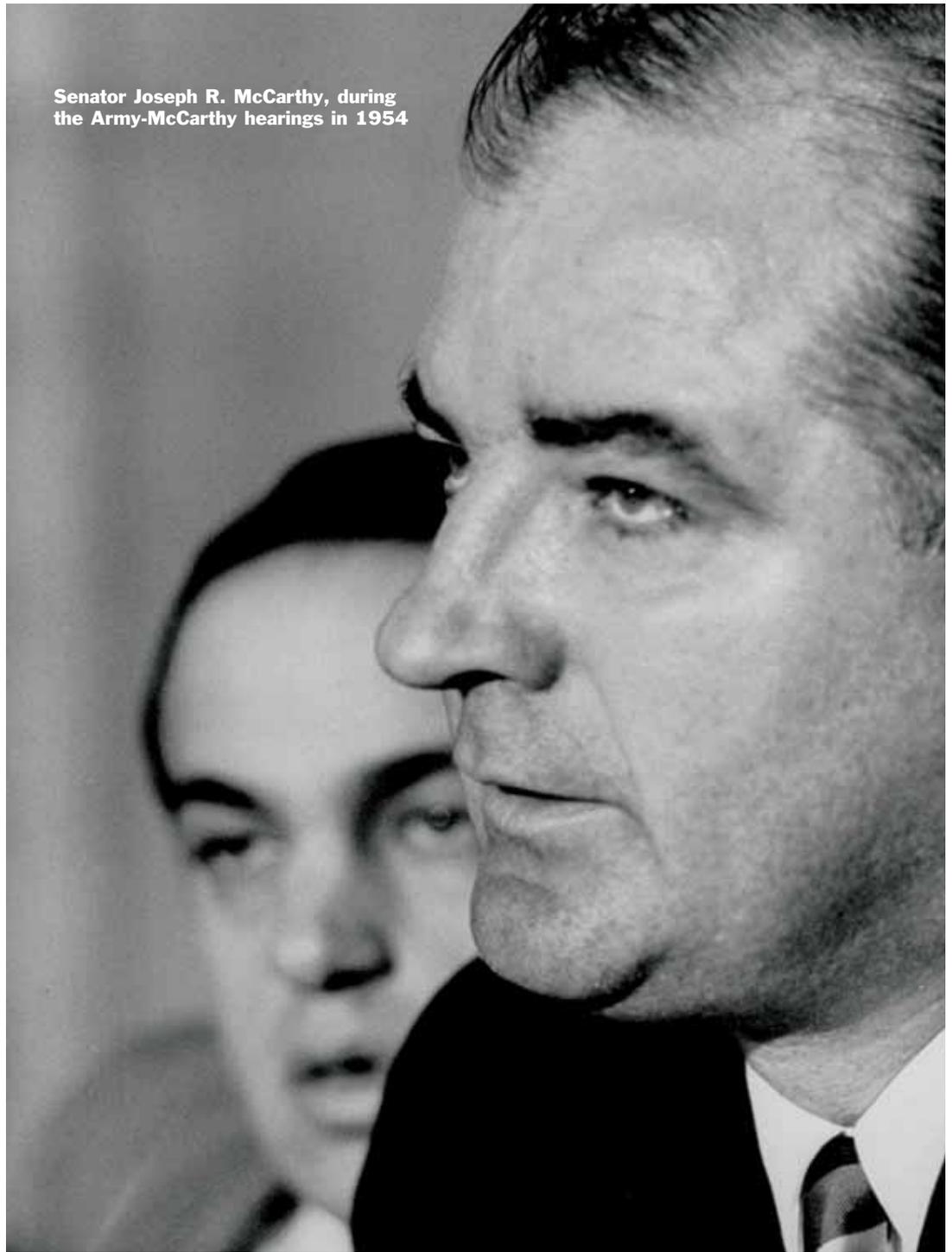
But in February 1950, McCarthy's accusation tapped into festering American anxiety. During the previous year the Soviet Union successfully tested an atomic bomb earlier than had been thought possible, and the Communist leader Mao Zedong evicted the Kuomintang from mainland China. The year 1950 would uncover acts of domestic espionage, including those of Alger Hiss, a high-level State Department agent, and Julius and Ethel Rosenberg. The Communists were coming; many feared they were already among us.

American Catholics had a special investment in this conflict. Church encyclicals had long condemned specific propositions of Communism; even so, the political status of American Catholics remained in some quarters an open question. Blanshard's screed against American Catholicism was a bestseller in 1949 and 1950, as well as a Book of the Month Club selection. When the Yale Law School sponsored a public debate between Blanshard and Hartnett in early 1950, the question posed was: "Is the Catholic Church fundamentally hostile to American democracy?" For a group still being asked to prove its trustworthiness, anti-Communism was a means of signaling loyalty. For many Catholics, McCarthy's relentless pursuit of traitors over the next four years expressed the passion of their commitment to the United States.

Unstoppable Force, Immovable Object

At the inception of McCarthy's hunt for Communist subversives, **America** was open to both sides of the question. "The Senator from Wisconsin has tried to prove too much," the editors wrote on April 22, 1950. "But if he can produce well-informed witnesses to prove *something*, we contend, against much of the public press, that he should have his

Senator Joseph R. McCarthy, during the Army-McCarthy hearings in 1954



innings." A month later, in "Is the Red Peril a Distraction?" they argued that finding fault in others was not sufficient action for Catholics; one needed to participate in something positive. Furthermore, they stated, "we ought to be very careful...not to identify ourselves too closely with anti-Communists like Senator McCarthy, who has never identified himself closely with the Catholic social movement."

Over the next two years, the magazine published many articles about the domestic and international challenges of communism. About McCarthy himself it remained open, attacking *Time* for turning a biographical piece about him into a hatchet job, and criticizing the Democrats for down-

playing the very sort of serious breach in security from the State Department that concerned McCarthy. It also noted with concern “hatemongers in the guise of anti-Communists” and criticized McCarthy for his “boorish manners.”

Then, in late 1952, McCarthy publicly referred to Adlai Stevenson, the Democratic presidential candidate, as “Alger, I mean, Adlai, Stevenson,” and said that the Communist Daily Worker had just endorsed Stevenson’s candidacy. Hartnett espoused many of the ideals of the Democratic Party; in fact, some critics had accused him of being in President Harry S. Truman’s pocket. Hartnett found that The Worker had made no such endorsement. So he took McCarthy on, calling the insinuation a “cheap stunt” that exemplified “what are euphemistically called McCarthy’s ‘methods.’”

This was a bold move; in 1952 one risked much, even one’s career and livelihood, in attacking McCarthy. He responded in kind, calling Hartnett’s criticism “completely and viciously false” and condemning the magazine for having failed in its “heavy duty to the vast number of good Catholic people who assume that at least in a Jesuit-operated magazine they can read the truth.” In private he also put pressure on McMahan, the provincial, to rein Hartnett in. McMahan offered only a polite reply, saying he had read McCarthy’s letter “with interest.” Hartnett, however, published McCarthy’s letter in *America* and wrote a detailed response to his every criticism. McCarthy’s address, he said, was a “tissue of innuendoes.”

Boom Goes the Dynamite

The magazine then returned to its prior equilibrium, discussing McCarthy along with a range of other issues, and frequently calling on anti-Communists to be concerned not simply with the domestic scene but international issues as well. In a piece on April 18, 1953, about academic freedom, Hartnett condemned academia for the “inexcusable mistake” of “rallying to the defense of ‘persecuted’ professors, including (so it turns out) the pinks and even the Reds.”

Then, in October 1953, McCarthy began an investigation into possible Communist infiltration of the Army, including the secretary of the Army. This new move provoked consternation even within his own party; to take on the secretary was implicitly to attack fellow-Republican President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

The next spring Hartnett wrote an editorial opining that McCarthy’s actions encroached upon the jurisdiction of the executive branch, and calling on President Eisenhower to protect the balance of powers. Two weeks later a second edi-

torial by Hartnett argued that anyone who asserts that his or her approach is the only approach regarding Communism has lost perspective—dangerously so.

It took the letter columns of two successive issues to present the responses to these editorials. Reactions ranged widely from “I am proud of *America*” to “It is my conviction that your charge to the effect that Sen. McCarthy is splitting the Republican party, etc., is a lot of first-rate potash.” Hartnett himself proved unable to hold back from the fray, attacking critics for considering theirs the only orthodox point of view. “The McCarthy issue is one of conflicting *opinions*,” he admonished.

A month later Hartnett returned to the issue again. In substance his editorial reworked old material, suggesting that the McCarthy hearings challenged the balance of powers. But he took the further step of suggesting that McCarthy’s actions amounted to a “peaceful overthrow” of the presidency. Hartnett published this editorial without showing it to any other editor.

The piece was political dynamite. The Associated Press immediately picked up the story. *America*’s phone lines were flooded with calls, and letters poured in, many of them written on the back of *America* subscription cards: “Remember McCarthy in your prayers, not scandalize him in your weekly.” “*Wake up*. You are not helping the faith.” “No irony when I say that I would not have your paper as a gift.” “*I WANT NO MORE AMERICAS*.”

Even among Jesuits there was backlash. The Brooklyn Tablet and other publications were host to numerous, strong criticisms of *America* by Jesuits who wanted it made clear that the magazine did not speak for the Society of Jesus. In some Jesuit communities in New York City the divisions were so strong that the topic of the McCarthy editorials simply could not be broached.

Intervention

On May 29, 1954, McMahan informed Hartnett that *America* was not to write about McCarthy for two months: “*America* has stated clearly its position. We think it is best for *America* to let the matter rest there, at least for the present.” He also reassured Hartnett of the board’s backing. “We do not wish you to interpret this Directive as a vote of no confidence. It is not that. You are not asked to retract or change your position. You still have our support.” McMahan even left open the possibility of *America* writing about McCarthy in the future, subject to the board’s approval.

Still, Hartnett pushed back strongly: fellow editors felt “a sudden silence would be equivalent to a public announcement” that they had been ordered to stop writing about McCarthy,



he said; furthermore, no matter the written indication of support, the silencing of an editor constituted “about the strongest possible disciplinary action against him” short of ordering him to retract. Hartnett suggested the staff be allowed to censor itself: “We ourselves regarded our May 22 editorial as, so to speak, the *climax* of our criticism of Senator McCarthy... We took our stand and are grateful that the Provincials support it. They need not fear that we want to become a ding-dong anti-McCarthy sheet.”

The provincials immediately modified their stance. So long as two other members of the staff had seen and approved anything considered, further publication about McCarthy would be allowed. Still, they reminded the staff that “they should not treat of this subject at all unless they seriously judge that the good of the Church and clarification of Catholic principles require it.” Their concern was the discord growing within the church: “The McCarthy-Army controversy has become a matter of dispute even among Catholics, in which bitter recriminations have not failed to injure charity.”

Letters From Rome

John Baptist Janssens, S.J., the superior general of the Jesuits, however, was also troubled, particularly over the public dissension among Jesuits. In a series of letters to the provincials he noted that the magazine’s founding document directed editors to avoid questions of dispute among Catholics, “provided there is no question of danger to the integrity of the faith,” and spoke with concern about the spirit behind some of Hartnett’s work.

It was not the first time the general had broached such concerns with the magazine. In August 1951 he had written to Hartnett directly, after the magazine had published the results of a survey about the opinions of Catholic teachers in Chicago toward African-Americans. The article revealed deep prejudices, but also stirred no little resentment.

After hearing from Janssens, the provincials wrote Hartnett again. They noted a “personal animus that has been allowed to express itself in certain editorials” and also in Hartnett’s initial appeal, which had included the comment “to give the Senator this victory rather hurts.” Their response was direct: “The only thing *America* should be interested in is that the truth may appear, not in triumphing over a Senator or anyone else.”

While their letter did not rescind their prior cautious permission, the message was clear. On the 27th of June Hartnett wrote to concede that the magazine would no longer speak directly on the issue of McCarthy. It had been “the most trying of my six years as Editor.”

A Ghost Forlorn

McCarthy’s world was in disarray by late 1954. Televised hearings over whether McCarthy had interfered with the operations of the Army had destroyed his credibility. “Joe Must Go” became the new slogan; and in December, the Senate officially condemned his actions. He remained in the Senate a broken man until his death in 1957 from alcoholism.

In the summer and fall of 1954, *America* followed issues that had arisen from the controversy, particularly the importance of freedom of opinion, but Hartnett was publicly silent about McCarthy. A year later he announced his retirement. His explanation: exhaustion. “The fact of the matter is that I really have not had the stamina you showed and ran out of gas about a year ago,” he wrote to former editor in chief Wilfrid Parsons, S.J.

Despite stories to the contrary, Hartnett’s account is accurate, if slightly opaque. When the *America* board made its annual visitation to the magazine in February 1955, they found things had changed very much for the better. Hartnett “has meticulously avoided anything that might involve *America* in a useless or harmful controversy,” Thomas C. Henneberry, S.J., the new superior of the New York Province, reported to the Jesuit superior general. And though Hartnett still had a tendency to debate everything, he also demonstrated a remarkable new respect for the work of his staff. Whereas at their 1954 meeting some of the provincials had suggested replacing Hartnett, Henneberry reported, “There is no present need of making a change.”

But Hartnett suddenly and inexplicably returned to his old ways, “rewriting all that they submit; asserting that only Fr.

Masse and himself can write, discussing with individuals the shortcomings of other members of the Staff,” being inaccessible and so on, according to a later memo from Henneberry to Janssens. Three of the editors wrote letters of complaint; so did Hartnett, who said, in Henneberry’s

words, “the Staff that in February was very good now cannot write.” Frustrated with what he perceived to be a disproportionate burden being placed on him, and fearing total collapse, Hartnett soon asked to step down. He would go on to be dean of arts and sciences at Loyola University Chicago and later a professor of political science there.

In his February letter, Henneberry noted that while Hartnett steered the magazine clear of further controversy post-McCarthy, “he lives in an atmosphere of puzzlement.” The issues surrounding what had happened haunted him, and he still talked about them privately. His dogged unwillingness to compromise or be satisfied had given Hartnett the courage to take a bold stand against McCarthy; but it had also kept him from trusting his peers. He left *America* dazed and exhausted, admired but in many ways alone. **A**

ON THE WEB

From the archives, letters on
America’s coverage of Joe McCarthy.
americamagazine.org/pages

Finally, God's Voice

BY FRANK MOAN

I am in my 81st year of life, my 63rd “in religion.” And like many of you, my readers, I have had long, dry experiences of the God Who Is Silent—all those meditations when I kept looking at the clock: Will this hour never be over? What is it you want of me, God? Speak to me. Give me five minutes of consolation.

Well, no more. This year I have seen the light. Better still, I have heard the voice, God's voice, and my meditations are completely different. I still look at the clock; that has not changed. But now the questions are: What more do you have to say to me, God? Will you not let up for a minute? Will you give me no rest? Why did you hold up this grace for so long? Is it because I could not have handled it well before now?

It seems that retirement has given me the leisure finally to understand that God never stops speaking to me. Perhaps I could not have borne it while I was in an active ministry. Or perhaps I let what I thought was God's will for me deafen me to the God who was constantly talking to me. Now the light has dawned and the voice is loud and clear. God speaks to me every moment in multiple ways on every subject under the sun. I no longer need to go aside and rest awhile to hear God's voice. It is there constantly, bidding me to respond.

As a consequence I have never been more fully alive, when one would think



I should be counting my last hours. Only a few physical infirmities prevent me from engaging in what younger people would call “a more active life.”

A Breakthrough

My breakthrough is the result of realizing what St. Ignatius Loyola, a master of the spiritual life, meant when he wrote in the first prelude of the contemplation on the Incarnation in his *Spiritual Exercises*: “to call to mind the history of the matter which I have to contemplate: how the three divine persons were regarding all the surface or circuit of the whole world, full of men; and how, seeing that all were going

down into hell, they determined in their eternity, that the second Person should become Man to save the human race; and thus, when the fullness of time had come, they sent the angel Gabriel to our Lady.”

How sterile those words now seem as I type them! They hardly convey to me what the impact of those words has come to mean to me after 63 years of religious life. Yet it is so simple: God is involved in this world. God the transcendent, the immanent, God the person, God the other, beyond my or anyone's comprehension, is dealing with me, is talking to me, is leading me through this created, fallible, finite (or infinite?) world in which I live and move and have my being.

That is why something I heard many years ago is now so clear: “Read Scripture as if it were the daily newspaper, and read the daily newspaper as if it were Scripture.” What I ingest from the media is God's holy word to me. Everything speaks to me of how God works in this world for my continual salvation and eventual new creation.

To what can I ascribe this light that struck me? To grace, of course. At some point all those prayers I uttered over the years to the Holy Spirit to teach me how to pray were answered.

Grace Working on Nature

Grace works on nature. I should not forget that. Some physical and psychological adjustments helped to make a difference. In my youth, in my middle age, in all those times when I was

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ART: DAN SALAMIDA

engaged in active ministry, I used to do my “mental” prayer the first thing in the morning. I was taught to get it out of the way or other things would interfere.

In retirement, however, I can adjust my prayer life as I wish. And what I wish to do is to become fully alive and responsive before I began to pray. So I put off reading the Divine Office and spending time in prayer until 10 or 11 a.m., sometimes until 4 p.m. Maybe you cannot do that. But I found that particular change greatly improved my prayer. I still look at the clock, and the meditation still drags at times. But at other times during prayer I have to say, “Hold off, God, I cannot absorb all your messages right now. Give me a break.”

Of course, I have as background all those years of prayer, of spiritual reading, of liturgical celebrations, of interaction with friends who opened up for me vistas of prayer. These vistas are all still with me, a cushion to my prayer. The brunt of my daily meditations, however, comes from the world in which I live each day—from the media, from social interaction, from commitment to a way of life and a particular form of spirituality, the Ignatian way. An annual eight-day retreat is balanced by the daily newspapers. I might even be accused of making the daily New York Times or CNN a fifth Gospel.

For whom am I writing this? For myself, as a way of saying to God: “Thank you” for this belated grace, and for my peers who may want to stop and thank God for similar graces. I would hope these words might also give an impetus to the young, who could learn from my mistakes and move beyond my stumblings.

Whatever your age, may you learn the richness to be found in prayer—a prayer life that will make you creators of a new world and that will reflect the “God who speaks through creation.” **A**



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LIVE TOGETHER OR DIE ALONE

The spirituality of 'Lost'

Everyone we left behind...they die, too, if I don't come back," says the lead character, Jack Shephard, in the teaser for the fifth season premiere of the ABC television drama "Lost." Another character replies simply, "Well, thank God for second chances." Driven by themes charged with existential significance and peopled by broken, downtrodden characters, "Lost" has consistently offered its viewers more than just popular entertainment.

Enlisted in a spiritual odyssey, viewers have followed the narrative of Jack (Matthew Fox), a hero-everyman and one of the 42 survivors of Oceanic Flight 815, a plane that crashed in the

South Pacific in 2004. After four months stranded on a mysterious island (shown over four television seasons), salvation arrived in the form of a freighter sent by a wealthy businessman interested in harnessing the island's unusual powers. When Jack and some of the "Losties" force their way onto the freighter, Jack demands that all the survivors be removed from the island. But given the vagaries of chance, only six of the survivors, including Jack, are able to leave.

Once off the island, Jack's mental state begins to deteriorate; wracked with guilt over those he left behind, he becomes addicted to alcohol and painkillers. Obsessed with returning

to the island, he boards many transpacific flights in the hope of crashing again (one of the island's puzzling characteristics is that it is nearly impossible to locate). But Jack's thirst for redemption predates his tenure on the island. Prior to the plane crash, he had been coping with the recent death of his father, with whom he had a strained relationship, and a failed marriage. He is, as another character describes him, "a man of science" and a brilliant "fixer," which has served him well as a spinal surgeon. But Jack has not been able to fix his profound psychological wounds and shattered emotional bonds. He could do nothing for the alcohol problem that plagued his father (and that ultimately led to the schism between them), nor could he save his marriage to a former patient, a woman who would have remained paralyzed if not for Jack's surgical skill. "You will always need something to



The cast of "Lost"

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fix,” she says, as she leaves their home. Since he has already fixed her, Jack has mentally “checked out” of their marriage; he is more interested in the medical challenges presented by his work than in the deeper challenge of maintaining their relationship.

In the aftermath of these losses, Jack seemed headed down a solitary path. Instead, the catastrophic crash thrust him into a ragtag community in need of his leadership. In an early episode Jack tells his fellow survivors: “We can’t do this. ‘Every man for himself’ is not going to work...we’re all here now. And God knows how long we’re going to be here. But if we can’t live together, we’re going to die alone.”

The “live together or die alone” credo has been a steady refrain throughout the show’s run, underscoring what has become a central theme: the value of living in community. So when Jack boards a helicopter on his way to safety while 40 other survivors remain stranded, he cannot escape the feeling that he has failed. Jack condemns himself to exile, anesthetizing his psychological pain and gradually coming to the realization that what he needs is a chance to set things right.

Redemption, like the need to “live together,” has long been a part of this hit show. In fact, the island has given nearly all of the survivors a second chance. Jin and Sun Kwon (Daniel Dae Kim and Yunjin Kim), freed from the constant threat of Sun’s crime-boss father, rebuild their marriage and commitment to each other; James “Sawyer” Ford (Josh Holloway), an expert con man, discovers the value of self-sacrifice; Kate Austen (Evangeline Lilly), a former fugitive, runs headlong into danger to save her friends; Sayid Jarrah (Naveen Andrews), an ex-interrogator/torturer for the Iraqi Republican Guard, confronts the

specter of his past wrongs.

Perhaps the greatest and most powerful example of redemption at this point in the series, however, is Michael Dawson (Harold Perrineau). Desperate to recover his son, Walt, who was kidnapped by a rogue band of “Others,” who have lived on the island for many years, Michael accedes to their demands to kill two of his fellow crash survivors and lead four others into enemy territory. He is rewarded for his treachery when the Others spirit him and his son from the island.

But back home in New York, Michael is haunted by the memory of his betrayal and tries several times,

unsuccessfully, to commit suicide. Unable to live or die, he is given a chance to return to the island, where he ultimately sacrifices his life disarming a bomb, saving the lives of the same people he once endangered.

The significance of individual choice extends even to the show’s narrative style. “Lost” employs parallel storytelling (juxtaposing a character’s pre-crash flashback with a current island crisis), providing several points for meditation on the nature of good and evil, people’s obligations to one another, the power of love and the endless struggle between faith and doubt. Placing moral crises in the context of a struggle for survival lends a sense of urgency to the choices made. When characters stumble—in one instance, Sayid uses the interrogation tactics he had renounced to torture Sawyer, who he believes is hoarding life-saving medical supplies—they threaten not only their own interpersonal relationships but the strength of the only civilization they have. In a sinister world where all the characters have is one another, their decisions become much more important.

While “Lost” is too nuanced for simple allegorical mapping, the island

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Regina Nigro discusses “Lost”
with Jim McDermott, S.J.
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is essentially our world writ large. While we are not plagued daily by murderous polar bears, an ominous “smoke monster” or creepy forest whispers, the island setting merely makes the challenge of living in community more apparent. The consistent message is that treating each other with dignity, respect and love is paramount; and it is no coincidence that every second chance awarded is oriented toward living together, not dying alone.

Fittingly, in the fifth season, where the main focus is the rescue of the survivors who were left behind, all of those who returned home must reunite and go back together (the

island seems to have some very specific dictates about who can come and go). Jack, the initiator of this quest, seems destined for leadership. His father, the portentously named Christian Shephard, is a recurring presence in several characters’ flashbacks, which serve as an interconnecting thread between people who are otherwise strangers. Jack is using his second chance to fulfill a greater legacy, steering his friends toward deeper commitment to and love of one another, a value that is as critical for them—and us—as survival itself.

REGINA NIGRO is literary assistant at *America*.

or Church life” and leads her reader on an expedition of spirituality in a new and fresh way, one that is open to the world around us, free from the often cited rites, rubrics and rules of the Christian tradition: candles, hymns, prayers, prostrations, rosaries, holy water and saints. Rather, she takes up what Kathleen Norris has identified as the quotidian mysteries, or put in another way, spirituality or holiness of the everyday. Brown reminds us that even cleaning toilets can be a spiritual endeavor if done with the right attitude of grace, love and devotion for a clean house!

The main theme throughout these 12 chapters is that spirituality is not meant only for Sunday, but is for everyday living. One cannot confine God to the four walls of a church building. The prophet Ezekiel tells us as much, when God’s shekinah, his glory, left the Jerusalem Temple to dwell with his people in Babylon. Spirituality is meant to be lived, explored and incarnated in everyday living, whether at home with family, at work with colleagues or with one’s next door neighbor. Furthermore, what we may consider routine every-

day chores can be seen as pathways to the divine. Brown draws from her vast experience in parish ministry as well as her recent teaching at Piedmont College to bring home her point, sharing stories about her class trips to various houses of worship in nearby Atlanta as well as her own life experience living in rural

Habersham County, Ga.—through farming, raising chickens and such everyday tasks as hanging clothes on the clothesline.

BOOKS | WILLIAM C. MILLS

EVERYDAY SACRED

AN ALTAR IN THE WORLD

A Geography of Faith

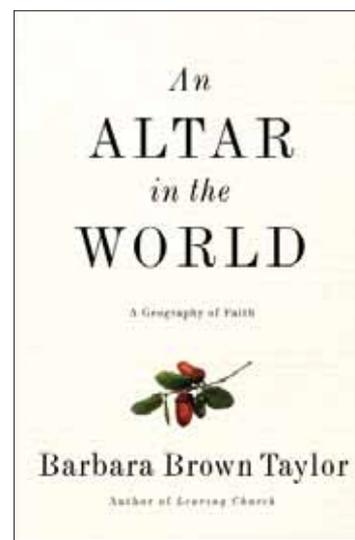
By Barbara Brown Taylor
HarperOne. 240p \$24.99
ISBN 9780061370465

First, an acknowledgment: I am not new to the work of Barbara Brown Taylor. Years ago when I was in seminary, a friend of mine recommended her collection of sermons, *Home By Another Way*, as well as her thoughts on preaching called *The Preaching Life*, both of which I quickly devoured. Her sermons captivated my attention because she managed to take the Bible and bring it to life, drawing from her personal experiences or through everyday metaphors and images. Brown’s earlier writings are primarily collections of sermons, but more recently she has published a memoir entitled *Leaving Church*, a story of her long-time struggle leaving full-time parish ministry, as well as short essays for *The Christian Century*.

Though I have never had the

opportunity to hear Brown preach, I can only imagine that her proclamation is as captivating as her writing. Her conversational writing style evokes that of Frederick Buechner, Nora Gallagher, Patricia Hampl and Kathleen Norris, who likewise write about holy and divine things in a nontechnical manner. Writers serve as prophets and translators, pointing out God’s work in the world to the rest of humanity, bearing witness to the Word through their written narratives. Both prophecy and writing are hard work, even painful at times, and Brown has earned her reputation by the sheer volume of publications, including her newest work, *An Altar in the World*.

With *An Altar in the World*, Brown leaves the confines of strictly “ecclesial



The book's title also reinforces her main theme, since Brown finds that God's altar is not found just in the church sanctuary, near the pulpit and adjacent to the choir and organ, but in the middle of the created order—among the trees, rivers, streams and hills, as echoed throughout the Hebrew Bible (“Bless the Lord, streams and rivers...”). Enjoying the creation around us, even performing routine chores of everyday life can be sacramental. Reading Brown's narrative reminded me of an essay that appeared a few years ago in The New York Times travel section, describing a rural village in Italy where every year in the summertime villagers closed off the streets to traffic in order to set out long tables in the streets. For several days the villagers, numbering a few hundred, ate dinner al fresco, under the Tuscan moonlight, with crusty bread, jugs of Chianti and of course plenty of pasta. This is as sacramental

as it can get, people gathering together and sharing their joys, pains, hurts and struggles with one another while consuming a good meal, providing care and comfort; here echoes of the Eucharist abound.

We are still tempted, however, to keep God in a box, which we call church, opening it for a few minutes on occasion only to return it back to the shelf. Yet Brown rightly reminds us that this version of God might be too small; and I agree. *An Altar in the World* is a delight to the eyes, mind and heart, a book I will certainly return to again at a later time, if only to remind myself of the spirituality of everyday living.

THE REV. WILLIAM C. MILLS is the rector of the Nativity of the Holy Virgin Orthodox Church in Charlotte, N.C., and an adjunct professor in the department of philosophy and religion at Queens University. His book *Walking With God: 30 Days Towards Spiritual Renewal* will be published by Paulist Press later this year.

CHARLES R. MORRIS

AHEAD, OR KEEPING PACE?

CLOSING THE INNOVATION GAP

Reigniting the Spark of Creativity in a Global Economy

By Judy Estrin
McGraw Hill. 272p \$27.95
ISBN 9780071499873

Judy Estrin is clearly a brilliant and accomplished woman. She is a serious technologist who has co-founded seven tech companies, one of which was purchased by Cisco Systems, the leading provider of Internet infrastructure hardware. She then rose to become chief technology officer of Cisco, one of the half dozen most important technology jobs in the world.

She has also written an utterly vac-

uous book on the “innovation gap.” But that says more about the inanity of most business book publishing than about Estrin, for it is fairly typical of the pap that clogs the business book shelves.

What is the “innovation gap”? Estrin never says. Other than assuming it in her title, she provides not a shred of evidence that it exists.

In fact, it is an interesting and difficult question. Study groups often propose proxy measures, like number of patents issued, but they are notoriously unreliable. There were alarms over a “patent gap” with Japan in the 1980s, for instance, but it

was an illusion—Japanese companies tend to file a multiplicity of patents on the same technology.

The hysteria over the Japanese technology threat peaked precisely at the time that Americans were racing ahead of the rest of the world in the technologies that were at the root of the computer and communications revolution of the 1990s, especially microprocessor-based computing and the Internet. A similar scare, absent any confirming data, has arisen about an alleged innovation threat from China and India.

The history of technological innovation suggests that it proceeds in fits and starts, rather than in a smooth glide. Innovative bursts build on specific enabling technologies, like the railroads and telegraph. (They were symbiotic technologies. Railroads provided the rights of way for telegraph lines, and their station masters were the operators, while the telegraph allowed railroads to track their far-flung rolling stock.) Other enabling technologies, mostly pioneered in the United States, include the machining of standardized parts, a precondition of mass consumer production; electricity, which allowed the decentralization of industry; digital processing; and most recently the Web and the Internet.

There is no consistent pattern of government versus private sector initiative in those examples. Most countries recognized the opportunities in railroads and the telegraph early on, and both were heavily subsidized everywhere. The government was also heavily involved in the advance of 19th-century machining technology through arms procurement, but its spread into the private sector was a long, gradual process. Electricity was powerfully advanced by



private-sector companies like Edison's and Westinghouse's, while the Internet and its core supporting technologies were developed almost solely on the government's dime. Private companies like I.B.M. and Microsoft resisted adoption of the Internet until they were shouted into submission by the geek community.

There are clear stages in all those examples: an extended and relatively invisible development of a core technology, followed by a burst of headline-grabbing innovation as it achieves critical mass and, finally, a period of consolidation and standardization. Plausibly, perceptions of an "innovation gap" will differ dramatically depending on what stage of a cycle we are in.

Estrin, however, has nothing to say about such things. Instead, in the style of most business books, she starts with a set of mantras for a culture of innovation: "questioning, risk-taking, openness, patience, and trust." (The same mantras might work for a book on marriage counseling.) She then proceeds to cite a grab-bag of successful innovations that arguably demonstrate one or the other mantra. She would like to see more "superb teachers to inspire and inform the next generation"; she likes charter schools, wants more government spending on research (the United States spends far more than any other nation); thinks we should reduce regulation of industry; and, quite correctly, argues that it is dumb to restrict visas and work permits for talented scientists, as our security apparatus is currently doing. One is amazed that 200 pages and more could be occupied by such anodynes.

Estrin does stress the importance of stocking industry and government with well-qualified scientists. That is clearly an issue of national importance, but she has no numbers to bound the extent of the problem. It took me only a half hour or so to

track them down, and I found them surprising. According to the National Science Foundation, between 1993 and 2003, the year of the most recent census, the number of Ph.D. scientists employed in the fields of their specialization grew by 172,000, or by about a third.

There has also been a pronounced shift toward the harder sciences. Ph.D.'s employed in "soft," or possibly ersatz, sciences like economics and sociology, dropped fairly sharply. Mathematicians and statisticians, however, are up by 37 percent; computer and information scientists have more than doubled; physicists and

astronomers have increased by 20 percent and Ph.D. engineers by 44 percent.

In today's world, maintaining competitiveness in core sciences is of crucial importance. Do we have an innovation gap? Are we falling behind or keeping pace? The N.S.F. numbers look rather positive, but what should we be comparing them against? These are important and difficult questions, but Estrin's book sheds no light on the subject one way or the other.

CHARLES R. MORRIS is the author of *The Trillion Dollar Meltdown* (2008); *The Surgeons* (2007); and *The Tycoons* (2005).

WILLIAM A. BARRY

CONFOUNDING THE STRONG

MOTHER TERESA'S SECRET FIRE

The Encounter That Changed Her Life and How It Can Transform Your Own

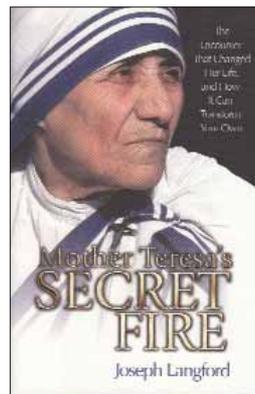
By Joseph Langford
Our Sunday Visitor. 320p \$19.95
ISBN 9781592763092

Father Joseph Langford, co-founder with Mother Teresa of the Missionaries of Charity Fathers in 1983, believes that her spirituality is a gift for all people of our time; hence he has undertaken this labor of love to make her spirituality more accessible. By and large he succeeds, although there are flaws in the book, both in its structure and in its style. But let's first note the successes, which are considerable.

Langford begins with the simple fact, underlined by St. Paul, that God uses the weak things of this world to confound the strong. Mother Teresa

herself could hardly believe that she would be the one singled out for a special mission to the poor of Calcutta. But she was. And if she had not accepted the mission, think of what the world would have missed. Father Langford over and over makes the point that each one of us can make a difference in our world because each one of us is the object of God's love. All we have to do is what Mother Teresa did: open ourselves to God's love and thirst for us. God wants a world where all know of the divine love and thirst, and live in it and from it. But God's desire for such a world cannot be realized without our cooperation.

Why Calcutta for Mother Teresa? That is where millions of desperately poor people lived and died without hope and without any sign of God's love. God, it seems, was so pained by the plight of these millions that he asked this diminutive Sister of Loreto



to do the impossible, to bring his light and love into their lives without anything but herself and her faith in God. As I read this book I caught a glimpse into the sorrow of God at the horrors so many people suffer in this world he creates and sustains. In this sorrow Mother Teresa was asked to share, and her acceptance of God's request may explain her nearly 50 years of darkness in prayer, a darkness she lived out in great faith and love for God and for God's people. Langford writes, "Mother Teresa's whole desire was to bring the poor, forgotten by society, and seemingly forgotten by God, to see themselves as God sees them—as *beloved*." To those who would say that only the beautiful are loveable, she would say—and spend her life demonstrating—"that God's love bestows beauty on all things."

In Chapters 8 and 9 Langford details the "legacy of light" left by Mother Teresa's spirituality. What comes across is the loveliness of God and God's infinite desire for our friendship. God will stop at nothing to convince us of divine love and to win our love. The centerpiece of Mother Teresa's spirituality comes from Jesus' words on the cross, "I thirst." These words speak of God's thirst for us, for our good, for our companionship. Langford shows how this spirituality of God's thirst suffused Mother Teresa's actions and words. When people met her, they were transformed, because they met the God whom she allowed to suffuse her heart, mind and soul. And the God they met in her was warm, smiling, tender, caring and all-inclusive.

This is not a book for dilettantes of the spiritual life. The author wants readers to let God touch them the way Mother Teresa allowed God to touch her. Each of us is the "apple of God's eye" and an image of God created to share in God's dream for our world. Her secret, she said, "is simple...I pray." That's not much to ask.

Moreover, as Langford notes more than once, no one but I can satisfy God's longing for me. He also writes: "Years later she reflected that had she *not picked up that first person dying on the street*, had she not risked beginning something entirely new in mid-life, she *would not have picked up the thousands later on*." Each one of us can surely say something similar. Taking the first step toward another, prompted by love or compassion, changes our lives and those around us.

Mother Teresa's Secret Fire deserves to be read by many, for, as the author notes hopefully, it will change readers'

lives. I wish, though, that the structure had been clearer; it is difficult to figure out why one chapter follows another at times. And a care for more inclusive language would have made the book more accessible to women, who find references to human beings always in the masculine disconcerting, if not aggravating. These quibbles aside, Langford's book is a reliable guide to a spirituality God has given for our time.

WILLIAM A. BARRY, S.J., is co-director of the *tertianship* program for the New England Province of the Society of Jesus, a retreat director and editor of the periodical *Human Development*.

St. Martha

*"She had a sister called Mary,
who was seated at the Lord's feet, listening to His word."
—Lk 10:37*

A silly child she ever always was—
our mother said so a thousand times—
her quick eye caught by the flight or buzz
of some pretty creature's mastering wings.
Lazarus tried to keep her out of sight,
to spare his clever sister women's tasks.
I hauled the water, rose before first light,
set bread upon the board before they asked.
The day You came to us our prayers were granted.
My hands obeyed the rhythms of my labor
while Mary sat beside You like a man,
embraced within the circle of Your favor.
I stood apart, Your beauty kept from me,
and only when You left us did I see.

ANGELA O'DONNELL

ANGELA O'DONNELL teaches English and American literature and American Catholic studies at Fordham University and is associate director of the Curran Center for American Catholic Studies.

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Further information about this position and application is available on St. Xavier's Web site, or contact Michael McGraw, Succession Committee Chair (mcmcgraw@rgmcgrawinsurance.com). Review of applications will begin Feb. 1. All applications are due by Feb. 15.

PRINCIPAL SEARCH. St. Thomas Aquinas High School in Dover, N.H., seeks highly qualified applicants for the position of Principal, who will assume the position July 1, 2009. Applicants for this position must have a thorough understanding of the mission of Catholic education and its integration throughout the learning experience, demonstrate successful collaborative leadership and exhibit effective interpersonal skills. Applicants must be practicing Catholics, have a minimum of five years' successful Catholic school teaching/administration experience and hold an advanced degree in school administration or a related field. All application materials can be found on the diocesan Web site at www.catholicnh.org. Additional school information is also available on the school Web site at www.stalux.org. Completed applications should be mailed to: Superintendent of Schools, Diocese of Manchester, 153 Ash Street, P.O. Box 310, Manchester NH, 03105. All applications must be submitted by March 1, 2009.

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SAN DAMIANO RETREAT, Danville, Calif., located just 35 miles east of San Francisco announces the following retreats: Rusty Shaughnessy, O.F.M., and Paula Jenkins presenting a Lenten Weekend Retreat, March 13-14. Our retreat team presenting the Holy Week Retreat April 9-12. Private retreats with or without spiritual direction also available. We offer a peaceful, prayerful environment for rest and renewal. Call (925) 837-9141 or visit www.sandamiano.org.

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LETTERS

Elephantine Issue

In "Making a Mark" (1/5), Richard G. Malloy, S.J., writes eloquently of the danger of not acknowledging "the elephant in the sacristy" when writing about vocations to the priesthood: gay priests, and the impact the current church climate has on both these priests and their heterosexual brothers. Sadly, the current climate is one of "Don't ask, don't tell." This lends itself to problems in seminary formation, in which candidates fear that discussing their sexual orientation (even with a spiritual director) may lead to their dismissal. This creates the very climate in which serious problems develop later in life, as psychotherapists like myself can attest.

The challenge for the church is to accept the gift of gay priests in a way that is authentic, and that needs to begin with bishops and religious superiors acknowledging their presence.

CHARLES G. MARTEL
Boston, Mass.

The Other 99 Percent

When I saw the title of the Jan. 5 issue was "The Harvest Is Great: Vocations in a Modern Church," I was filled with hope and enthusiasm for what you had to say. But this issue has articles about the call to become a priest or a nun. Where are the articles by lay women and men who also know they are called by God to be married or single, divorced or widowed, mothers or fathers, construction workers, secretaries, teachers, nurses, lawyers, doctors and more?

The Second Vatican Council acknowledged all of us as the people of God. The majority of the people of God are laypeople, who bring God to their daily lives and workplaces. Loving God totally is what we are all called to do as children of God; this is not just the expectation of those who choose to live a celibate life.

Openness to the reality of options that allow marriage and family life is important for the Catholic Church in order for it to thrive in the long term.

ROSEMARY MCHUGH, M.D.
Wheaton, Ill.

Faith and Science

Thanks to Peter Schineller, S.J., for the martyrology "based on contemporary biblical scholarship and science" (*Of Many Things*, 12/15). I found it exciting and extremely encouraging for contemporary conversation regarding faith and science, evolution and the eternal significance of the veracity of Jesus' birth and life. Happily, the astounding history of the Word in creation from before the nativity of Jesus, in our common era and even into the potential future indicates a timetable sufficient for the demands of love to take hold of us and whoever comes after us.

PATRICK HIGGINS
Seattle, Wash.

Informed Opinion

Thanks to Bishop Joseph W. Estabrook of the military ordinariate for his report on all the good work and

Christian witness of his chaplains, and of the progress in training them to respond appropriately to conscientious objector claimants ("A Response to 'The Chaplain's Dilemma,'" 1/19). The Catholic Peace Fellowship wants to maintain the respectful and cooperative spirit we established with the military ordinariate when Cardinal John O'Connor was in charge.

I must note, however, that my "opinions" are hardly "uninformed" after more than 40 years of working with conscientious objectors, many in the military. Anecdotal evidence abounds and keeps coming. The military considers conscientious objection detrimental to morale. For chaplains to offer positive support is to go against the grain. More power to those who do, and God bless them!

(DEACON) TOM CORNELL
Marlboro, N.Y.

Photographs and Memories

The reflections of George M. Anderson, S.J. (*Of Many Things*, 1/19) were a beautiful expression of the sanctity of human relationships, a



CARTOON BY HARLEY SCHWADRON

sanctity that rises above ideology, ecclesiology, political inclinations and sexual preference. We can see later, when time and age have whitewashed our prejudice and bias, that photographs of times past and of people whose lives have crossed our path reveal the simple truth that we are all God's children.

TED ROSEAN
Wilmette, Ill.

Lack of Action

While "A Pope in Wartime," by Gerald P. Fogarty, S.J. (12/15), added much-needed information about the actions of Pope Pius XII during World War II, the article (like many others I have read on the subject) did not address the following question: What would have been the possible result if the pope had condemned the Nazi government?

In July 1942 the Dutch bishops wrote a letter to be publicly read in churches, condemning the S.S. At the last minute Protestant ministers withdrew their support, and as a result only Catholic converts from Judaism were arrested and deported. St. Edith Stein was among them. Had the pope done the same as the Dutch bishops, the consequences would have most likely been similar or worse.

In 1924, an immigration law was passed in the United States that cut the torrent of people coming to the United States to a trickle. This, too, had an impact on the number of Jews later trying to find asylum in our country. We as Americans need to accept responsibility for our lack of action as well.

The article could also have included a comparison of what the pope was

able to do and what leaders of other faith communities did or did not do to save the Jews. Rather than pointing a finger of blame, this information could serve to remind us all of the terrible price of the silence of so many voices.

LOU ELLA HICKMAN, I.W.B.S.
Corpus Christi, Tex.

More to Learn

The very thoughtful article by Rabbi Daniel F. Polish ("When a Little Unbelief Is Not a Bad Thing," 2/2) illustrates how much we Catholics can learn from Jews in dialogue. Thanks to you for publishing it, and I hope we will hear more from him.

EUGENE FISHER
Great Falls, Va.

Open Hearts, Open Minds

As a part-time faculty member teaching theology, I immediately decided to let my students avail themselves of "When a Little Unbelief Is Not a Bad Thing," by Daniel F. Polish (2/2). I thought it would ultimately help to drive home some of the points I make semester after semester. We can only be guided by Scripture and the wisdom of our tradition, because how our faith plays out for us is entirely within our own power to shape.

I beg my young students who already declare themselves agnostics and atheists to keep their hearts open for (and their minds receptive to) the possibility of divine influence in their lives at a later time. No human mind or heart can fully comprehend the timetable and agenda of God; however, closed minds and hard hearts may pose a greater challenge, even if nothing is impossible with God.

MONSERRAT MELLA-OCAMPO
Mineola, N.Y.

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Submissions must be post-marked between Jan. 1 and March 31.

Poems received outside the designated period will be treated as regular poetry submissions, and are not eligible for the prize.

The winning poem will be published in the June 8-15 issue of America. Three runner-up poems will be published in subsequent issues.

Cash prize: \$1,000.

Send poems to: Foley Poetry Contest
America, 106 West 56th Street
New York, NY 10019

America (ISSN 0002-7049) is published weekly (except for 12 combined issues: Jan. 5-12, 19-26, March 30-April 6, May 25-June 1, June 8-15, 22-29, July 6-13, 20-27, Aug. 3-10, 17-24, Aug. 31-Sept. 7, Dec. 21-28) by America Press, Inc., 106 West 56th Street, New York, NY 10019. Periodicals postage is paid at New York, N.Y., and additional mailing offices. Business Manager: Lisa Pope; Circulation: Judith Palmer, (212) 581-4640. Subscriptions: United States, \$48 per year; add U.S. \$22 postage and GST (#131870719) for Canada; or add U.S. \$32 per year for overseas surface postage. For overseas airmail delivery, please call for rates. Postmaster: Send address changes to: America, 106 West 56th St. New York, N.Y. 10019. Printed in the U.S.A.

Bringing Outsiders In

SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (B) FEB. 15, 2009

Readings: Lv 13:1-2, 44-46; Ps 32:1-2, 5, 11 (7); 1 Cor 10:31-11:1; Mk 1:40-45

“He remained outside in deserted places” (Mk 1:45)

Those who suffer chronic illness may experience themselves as being outside all of the usual spheres of human activity. As the workplace carries on without them and their family goes about its business, they can feel isolated, out of the loop, helpless to contribute to the daily doings, left alone with their own suffering. While Christianity does not have regulations concerning ritual uncleanness and separation from sick persons, certain contagious conditions may require physical isolation. Even when this is not the case, however, many avoid persons with illness. It can seem to such a person that even God is keeping at a distance. The loneliness can be as bad as or worse than the illness itself.

In today’s Gospel, a man with leprosy leaves his prescribed separate space and reaches out for Jesus’ help. He is tentative in his request, “If you wish, you can make me clean.” Jesus responds with deep emotion. The verb *splanchnizomai*, usually translated “moved with compassion,” literally means to “have a gut reaction,” that is, to be moved in the inward parts, the entrails. Ancient peoples considered the intestines as the seat of emotion. Mark’s use of this strong verb emphasizes the depth of Jesus’ feeling for the person with leprosy. Instead of recoiling from the man, Jesus reaches

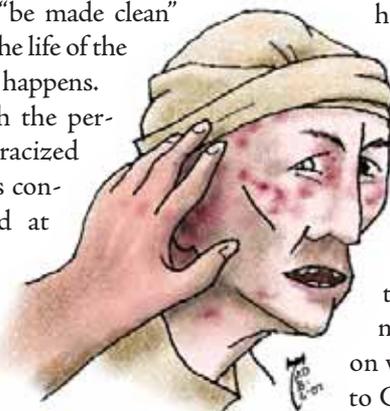
out his hand to him, touches him, and says how much he wants to be with the man and to see him “be made clean” and reintegrated into the life of the community. And so it happens.

Jesus’ oneness with the person who had been ostracized because of his leprosy condition is emphasized at the end of the episode, when Jesus experiences an outsider status similar to that of the man with leprosy. Jesus “remained outside in deserted places,” perhaps not only because of the crowds who kept coming to him, but also because he deliberately sought to be in solidarity with those who were relegated to isolated places, offering them the compassion of God who wants to be one with them.

This Gospel offers encouragement to those who suffer illness or disability, that they may reach out in prayer to Jesus and to the believing community, to ask not only for compassion, but also for incorporation into the community of faith. Likewise, it reminds those who are well not to avoid or to relegate to the sidelines those who are ill or who have disabilities, but to stretch out their hands to them, recognizing the gifts they bring for spreading the Gospel. At the end of today’s Gospel, the man who had leprosy proclaims the story everywhere. Some translations render the

expression *keryssein ton logon*, as “publicize the whole matter,” but it literally says “preach the word.” There is a powerful word to be preached both by those who are well and by those who have an illness or disability.

In the second reading Paul tries to keep the Corinthians from breaking themselves up into insiders and outsiders. When he says he tries to “please everyone in every way,” he is not talking about changing his stripes to fit others’ expectations or having no firm moral convictions. Rather, Paul is advising them that they must always seek the common good and make their choices based on what will best give glory to God. This passage is the



PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

- How have you experienced God’s compassion through illness or disability?
- How do persons with chronic illnesses or disabilities proclaim the gospel in your faith community?
- How do you know when you should stick up for what you believe and when you should relinquish your own preferences so as to advance the common good?

conclusion of a lengthy discussion about whether it is proper for Christians to eat meat sacrificed to idols. Some thought it permissible to do so, while others were adamantly opposed to it. Paul sides with the former, but urges those who think as he does to forgo exercising what they believe to be their right. Paul, as a good pastoral leader, offers to these Corinthians his own example of relinquishing his preferences for the sake of the common good.

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