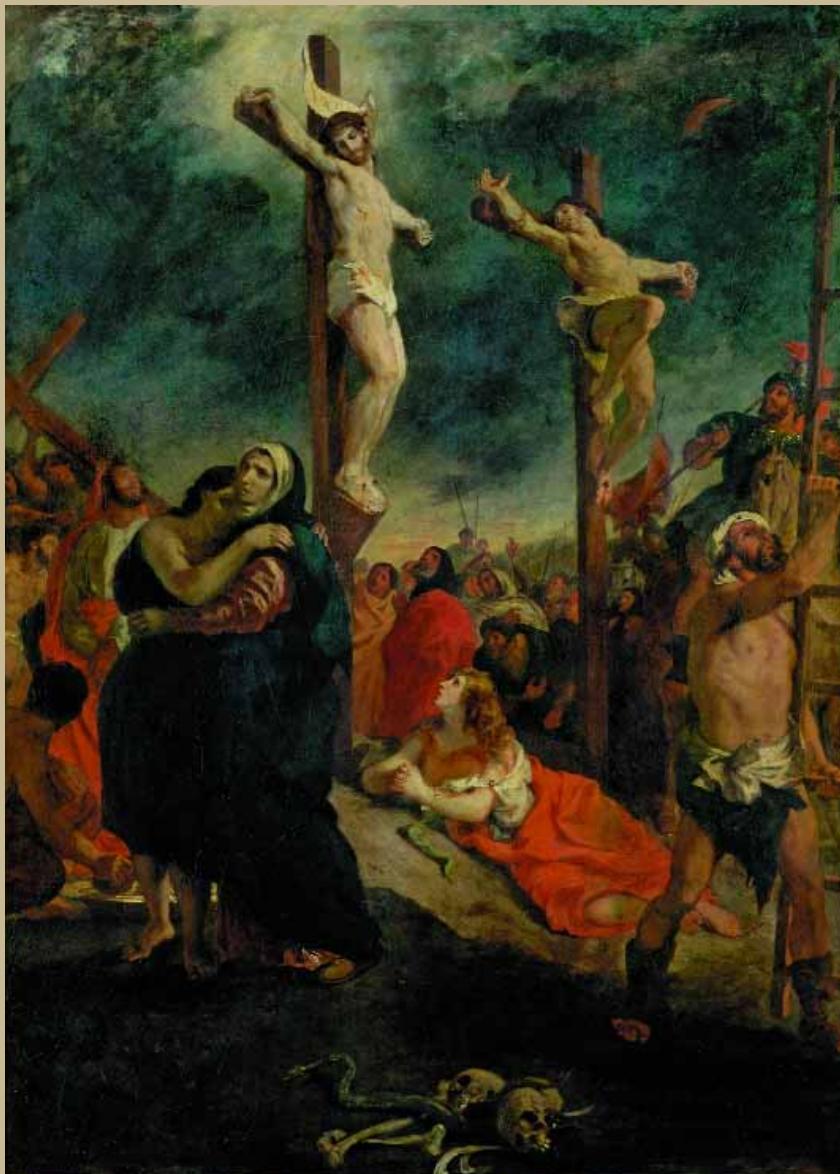


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The Unknown Delacroix
Joyce C. Polistena

Health Care for All
Guy Clifton

Charles K. Wilber on the economy

OF MANY THINGS

It was the feast of the Ascension, and I was searching for a half-remembered quotation for my homily at the evening Mass. I remembered it appearing in Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's *The Divine Milieu*. I didn't find the quote in time for the homily; I did find and use another. But my quick search led me to take up Teilhard's spiritual masterpiece once again, feeling I had much to re-learn from this spiritual master.

If I had to list a handful of books that have influenced my life, *The Divine Milieu* would be at the top. I read it in the early 1960s, just as the Second Vatican Council was taking place. I inhaled its intoxicating this-worldly mysticism. I was strengthened by its explanation of the spiritualization of our activities, not a strong suit in the penitential spirituality of the post-Suppression (1773-1814) Jesuits.

The Divine Milieu offered a symphony of themes that echoed the masters of Western spirituality, the Bible—especially St. Paul—and the divine liturgy. As in monastic theology, phrases, mostly in Latin, dot the text, displaying a mind that has imbibed the Scripture in *lectio divina*, been formed by the recitation of the liturgy and is practiced in savoring the meaning of the simplest phrase. At the same time, there are passages that read like scholastic *responsa*, staking out Teilhard's own orthodox mystical position against heretical alternatives sometimes ascribed to him. All the same, the book reads like a prose poem.

The Divine Milieu is a whole spirituality for the whole person from a Jesuit who found his identity at the heart of the church, even though as a paleontologist he worked at the farthest edges of its mission. "This little book," he wrote, "does no more than recapitulate the eternal lesson of the church in the words of a man who,

because he believes himself to feel deeply in tune with his own times, has sought to teach how to see God everywhere, to see him in all that is most hidden, most solid and most ultimate in the world." Like St. Ignatius Loyola, the Jesuit founder, he sought "to find God in all things" and to teach others to do the same.

Sometimes I think of *The Divine Milieu* as the *Spiritual Exercises*, Ignatius' classic manual of the spiritual life, re-worked for modern times. The whole book is an extrapolation of Ignatius' "Contemplation to Attain Divine Love."

What is strikingly different is that Teilhard does not dwell on the life and death of Jesus the way Ignatius did. The Christ of *The Divine Milieu* is the cosmic Christ of St. Paul, the glorified Christ as the fullness of creation to be united with God at the end of time. But while Teilhard does not contemplate the details of Christ's life, his spirituality is highly incarnational. Its whole effort is to help us see Christ at work in all of life (and history). Seeing Christ's action in matter was vital for him as a scientist, but perceiving him in our creative human activity was all the more important, both because we mistakenly tend to regard our creativity as a threat to God, but also because it is through human endeavor that creation comes to Christ and Christ brings it to the Father.

With this issue we bid farewell to Jim McDermott, S.J., who is moving on to do studies in filmmaking. We are grateful for Jim's time with us. His writing and videography have exhibited skills even he may not have imagined he had. He has authored some of our most difficult editorials and enriched the editors and our readers with a knowledge of America's past. We wish him well.

DREW CHRISTIANSEN, S.J.

America

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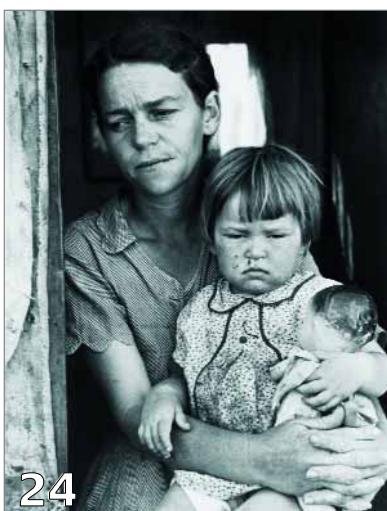
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CONTENTS

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VOL. 200 NO.18, WHOLE NO. 4858

JUNE 8-15, 2009



ARTICLES

11 HEALING HEALTH CARE

Now is the time to make the necessary reforms.
Guy Clifton

14 IS THE CHARTER STILL RELEVANT?

Reassessing the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*
Kathleen McChesney

16 AVE ATQUE VALE

The case for replacing Latin as the official language of the church
Thomas G. Casey

COLUMNS & DEPARTMENTS

4 Current Comment

5 Editorial Too Big to Bail

6 Signs of the Times

9 Column Like a Child *Kyle T. Kramer*

20 Faith in Focus Tea With the Saints *Anne E. Grycz*

24 Hard Times *Lois Spear*

32 Poetry Gems From the Foley Poets *James S. Torrens*

33 2009 Foley Award Poem Ode to the Heart *Brent Newsom*

36 Letters

38 The Word Blood Bond; Fearless Faith

Barbara E. Reid

BOOKS & CULTURE

26 ART Delacroix's religious imagination **BOOKINGS** Reading the economic crisis **BOOK REVIEW** *The Constant Fire*

ON THE WEB

John W. O'Malley, S.J., considers **Barack Obama and Vatican II**, and Dave Nantais reports on the **economy from Detroit** for our podcast. Plus, a selection of Kathleen McChesney's articles on the **sexual abuse crisis**, and Jake Martin, S.J., reviews "**30 Rock**."



Full Disclosure

The governor of Vermont is expected to sign into law in June a new physicians disclosure bill. It would prohibit doctors from accepting the free meals that pharmaceutical companies and the makers of medical devices routinely offer as part of their aggressive marketing campaigns. Even more important is a requirement that, while allowing medical practitioners to accept direct payments from such companies, calls for every payment they accept to be posted on the Web in an annual accounting record available to the public. The record would show how much each doctor has received and from which company.

Courting doctors with meals and payments is expensive, but marketers use such gifts and payments to build loyalty for their brand. They hope loyalty will prompt a doctor to recommend their product to patients—this stent instead of that one; this pill, not that—especially when other alternatives of comparable quality compete for sales. In Vermont (pop. 621,270) pharmaceutical and medical device firms spent \$2.9 million in 2008 in payments to nearly half of the state's licensed health practitioners; specialists received the most, more than \$100,000 each in some instances. Such marketing significantly ratchets up the cost of health care in our country, increasing the cost of products to consumers without adding value.

The disclosure law could convince health care companies that they have little to gain and much to lose by turning doctors into brokers. Doctors might note how their accepting payment erodes trust between them and patients. And patients have a right to know what is behind a prescription, device or treatment—whether their doctor has been paid to boost sales. The new law would promote the health of the body politic by exposing such payoffs and conflicts of interest to the light of day.

Chilly Relations

Even before Pope Benedict XVI arrived for his visit in Israel, the new Israeli government of Benjamin Netanyahu demonstrated it has little, if any, desire to show good will to the church. In a gesture of welcome for the pope, Israel's President Shimon Peres, who is head of state but not of government, had asked the government to end property disputes with the church over several holy places. Among these are the Cenacle in Jerusalem, Mount Tabor in Galilee and Tabgha, a site on the Sea of Galilee associated with Jesus' post-resurrection appearances. Repudiating the president's request, Interior Minister Eli Yishai said ceding the proper-

ties would harm Israeli national security. Then the Great Council of the Chief Rabbinate issued a binding edict forbidding the ceding of sovereignty, though sovereignty was never a question, just the return of confiscated land.

While the pope's pilgrimage continued, the Interior Ministry refused to make provision for multiple entry visas for clergy and church workers, threatening the pastoral work of the local church; and in a ruling on a challenge suit, a court refused to relax rules on Jerusalem residency to permit spouses from the West Bank to live in Jerusalem, threatening the future of Christian family life in the holy city. The decline of the church's good relations with Israel began with the first Netanyahu government in 1996. With ultra-religious and nationalist coalition partners holding key ministries in the current government, the Holy See, international church institutions and especially local Christians may be facing still harder times under Netanyahu II.

Bishops and Politics

One thing is likely to be on the minds of U.S. bishops when they gather in San Antonio on June 17 to 19. The topic will be discussed over coffee, in private meetings and in executive session, but probably not in the televised general sessions. That topic is the conduct of the conference and of individual bishops in public policy advocacy.

"Public policy advocacy" is a term of art. Advocates are neither lobbyists nor politicians. They make a principled case in public debate but hold back from the rough-and-tumble of partisan politics. The recent controversy over President Barack Obama's participation in the commencement ceremonies at the University of Notre Dame has cast doubt on whether bishops are now entering the public square as partisan activists rather than as advocates, "pastors and teachers."

Unhappily, all the bishops have been tainted by the extremist rhetoric of Notre Dame's most vociferous critics. A few bishops even seem to relish the thrust and parry of the culture wars. A bishop's style of advocacy is not just a matter of decorum; it is a question of pastoral responsibility. How are bishops to be pastors of a diverse flock when they over-identify with one party and demonize another? How are they to model Christian witness in the public square when they personalize disagreements and withhold respect from their adversary?

It will be a hard discussion and a long one, not likely to conclude in San Antonio. On its outcome will depend not only the church's public witness but also the internal cohesion of the U.S. church and the conference of bishops.

Too Big to Bail

Despite the Obama administration's optimism about the state of the economy, numerous voices and indicators suggest that its main goal, to restore the major banks, is neither sufficient nor proper to the problem at hand. The ongoing bank bailout shows no signs of ending soon or of resulting in reform of the sector. Much more serious structural adjustment is necessary, including the orderly failure of some banks.

The Dow Jones industrial average has steadily risen in recent months. Yet the basis for confidence remains unclear. Unemployment continues to rise, the American automotive industry is in tatters, waves of mortgage defaults threaten to bring down small and mid-sized banks, and the economic situation in other parts of the world could very well undermine the world economy further. In a recent article in *The Wall Street Journal* (5/18) investors interviewed said their increased investments were based on a sense that things were getting "less worse"—not better, but worse at a slower rate. But even these investors signaled that more substantial signs of improvement were required before further investment of any size could occur.

The Obama administration has found reasons to be encouraged in recent months, especially after the recent "stress test" of the banks. Federal demands that certain banks increase the amount of cash they have on hand is an important step toward ensuring their stability; yet as a whole the recent "stress test" appears to have evaluated more their ability to handle mild indigestion than actual stress. The fact that the banks themselves were given some say in how government regulators reported their condition likewise undermines the report's (and the government's) credibility. It also points to the truth-is-stranger-than-fiction reality that the very men and women who caused the world financial crisis, whose decisions led to the loss of trillions of dollars and millions of jobs worldwide, continue to do as they please.

Today taxpayer dollars are being spent by bailed-out banks not simply on the bailout, executive salaries and bonuses, but also for lobbying against measures that would protect ordinary people against bad bank practices. Taxpayer bailout money, for instance, helped kill anti-foreclosure legislation that would have allowed judges to revise the terms of unaffordable mortgages. Likewise, in the wake of the passage of the credit card reform bill (against which the banking industry lobbied), some banks have begun spreading the word that

they will begin to charge for the use of their cards, yet another way to pass financial responsibility for their mistakes back onto the taxpayers.

Meanwhile knowledgeable economists of various schools of thought continue to insist that the government goal of saving all the banks is neither realistic nor useful. Paul Krugman, winner of the Nobel Prize in economics and a columnist for *The New York Times*, has described the government's approach as a new kind of voodoo economics, in which impenetrable financial rituals enable bankrupt banks to continue as institutional zombies, reanimated corpses with no long-term ability to provide for themselves. Another Nobel Prize winner and a former chief economist of the World Bank, Joseph E. Stiglitz, likewise recently said in testimony before the Joint Economic Committee of Congress that the proper question is no longer whether some of these banks are too big to fail, but whether they are too big to save. And Simon Johnson, former economic counselor and director of the research department at the International Monetary Fund, wrote in the May issue of *The Atlantic* that the current economic situation in the United States closely mirrors the dynamics of the failed economies the I.M.F. regularly encounters in the developing world. The main difference is that in a developing economy, structural change does eventually come, because the government runs out of money. The far deeper pockets of the United States Treasury, on the other hand, are allowing the government to avoid these tough choices. Johnson also believes that bad banks, lacking that financial imperative, are likely to bleed the country and hamper recovery for quite a long time.

Today some banks are holding the government and the country hostage: Continue to bail them out both with money and positive spin, they threaten, or they will bring the economy down. But the orderly, regulated failure of these banks is an important part of economic recovery. It is also a step in the reform of the banking industry. The failure of risky and dishonest practices encourages better practices in the future. President Obama came into office insisting that we need not be trapped in old models, that we can and should think outside the box, that we can make a difference. As for the banking industry, the time has come for the administration to demonstrate that leadership in action.



SIGNS OF THE TIMES

NEW YORK

Are Conscience Protections for Health Workers Endangered?

Signs of erosion" of support for federal conscience-clause protections began to appear about 10 years ago, reports Susan J. Stabile, the Robert and Marion Short distinguished chair in law at the University of St. Thomas School of Law. Ms. Stabile was the featured speaker at the 25th Catholic Healthcare Administrative Personnel Convention on May 21. Conscience clauses are regulations that protect health care providers who object to performing procedures that violate their religious beliefs or moral convictions.

History of Conscience Clauses. Ms. Stabile traced the beginnings of federal health care conscience-protection statutes to the years immediately following *Roe v. Wade*, the 1973 Supreme Court decision that asserted a constitutional right to abortion under certain circumstances. Federal legislation passed between 1973 and 2004 sought to protect individuals and institutions from being discriminated against for refusing to participate in actions they found morally objectionable, including abortion. "Existing conscience laws have come under increasing attack by, among others, abortion-rights activists, who want to require all health care personnel and hospitals to provide 'the full range of reproductive services,' including abortion," Stabile said. In addition, she said, "mainstream medical journals are rife with articles and editorials that show hostility to health care providers who refuse to participate in abortion and other morally objectionable procedures."

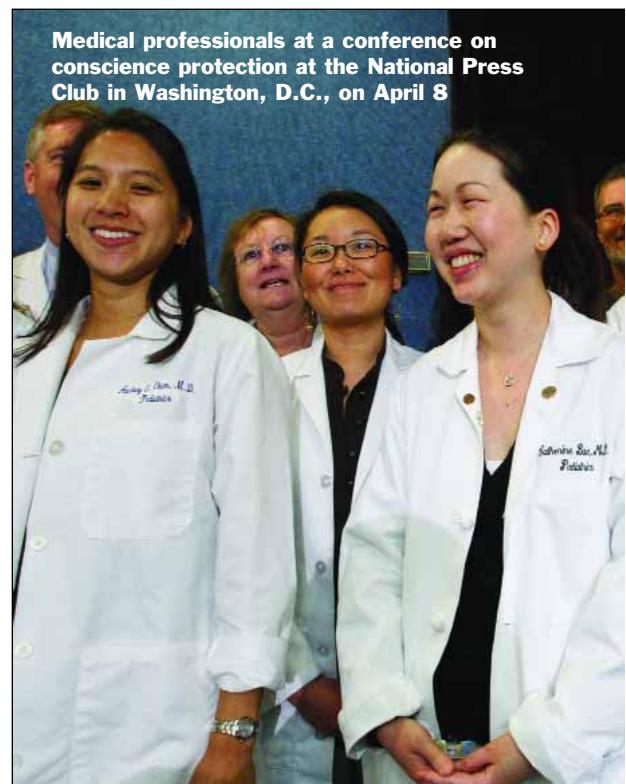
She identified two potential threats to federal conscience clauses and concluded that neither one would specifically result in the loss of conscience protections for health care workers.

Stabile cited as the first potential threat the likely repeal of conscience protection regulations adopted by the Department of Health and Human Services in December 2008. The department proposed rescinding the regulations earlier this year, following the change in administrations. Stabile predicted that the regulations will be rescinded, but said the repeal would have little or no legal effect, because the December regulations did not cre-

ate new restrictions or grant new substantive rights and conscience protection will still be in place under other already existing statutes. Nonetheless, according to Stabile, the move to repeal the regulations reveals that conscience protections are vulnerable to efforts to weaken them by pro-choice national advocacy campaigns, some state governments and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

The second potential threat to conscience protections Stabile identified is the proposed Freedom of Choice Act, federal legislation that would invalidate many existing state laws regulating abortion. But that much-debated piece of legislation, which has not even been introduced in the current Congress, "does not directly address the conscience claims of health care entities," Stabile said. She also said that it is not likely to become law in

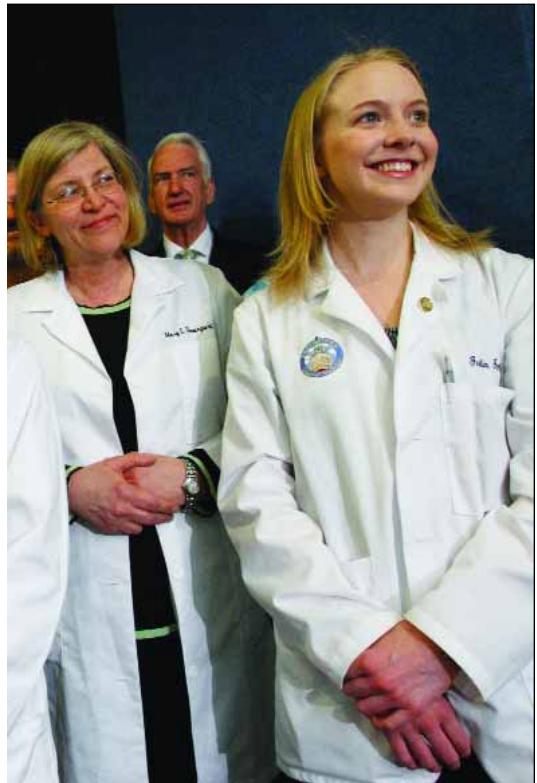
Medical professionals at a conference on conscience protection at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., on April 8



the near future because President Barack Obama has explicitly said that it is not a high legislative priority for him.

Pluralism. Stabile distinguished between Catholic and secular providers of health care and other social services. "For the Catholic Church, running hospitals, nursing homes, schools and other social services is not a secular activity and cannot be completely separated from its core religious mission," she said. "When a Catholic organization cares for the sick and elderly or provides for education, it is performing an act as religious as those that take place inside of the church itself. We know that means that when Catholic entities provide social services they must do so in a way that is consonant with its religious principles."

Still, Stabile said the issue is complicated in a pluralistic society. "We



don't all share a set of common assumptions about what is right and what is wrong. That raises a question as to what personal moral decisions we ought to protect.... We can't really argue in a pluralistic society with separation of church and state that the government should respect only those claims resulting from a well-formed Catholic conscience."

UNITED KINGDOM

New Archbishop Stresses Church's Public Role

The new Archbishop of Westminster, the most visible Catholic prelate in Britain, urged Catholics during his inaugural homily to express their beliefs with

confidence. "Faith is never a solitary activity, nor can it be simply private," said Archbishop Vincent Nichols on May 21 during his installation Mass at Westminster Cathedral. "Faith in Christ always draws us into a community and has a public dimension."

Addressing a congregation of more than 2,000, Archbishop Nichols said the Christian community "reaches beyond ethnicity, cultural differences and social division, opening for us a vision of ourselves and of our society, as having a single source and a single fulfillment."

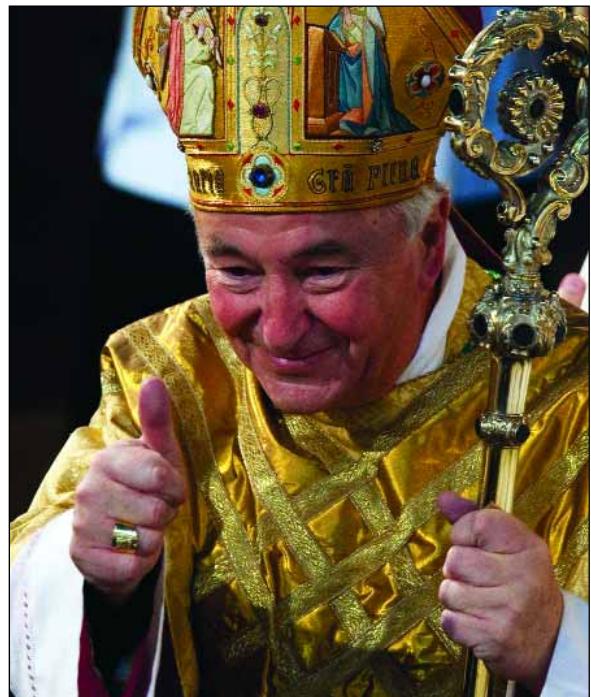
"Faith builds itself in community and it expresses itself in action," he added. "As a society, if we are to build on this gift of faith, we must respect its outward expression not only in honoring individual consciences but also in respecting the institutional integrity of the communities of faith in what they bring to public service and to the common good."

The archbishop, who in recent years has been at the center of high-profile campaigns in defense of publicly funded Catholic schools and adoption agencies in Britain, challenged people to work together even in areas where they do not agree. "Let us be a society in which we genuinely listen to each other, in which sincere disagreement is not made out to be insult or harassment, in which reasoned principles are not construed as prejudice and in which we are prepared to attribute to each other the best and not the worst of motives," he said.

Archbishop Rowan Williams of

Canterbury addressed Archbishop Nichols on behalf of the Church of England, saying that closer relations were "a sign that we all recognize common challenges and a need to pray and act together." "The Roman Catholic and Anglican communities in England and Wales have the God-given task, along with all our other brothers and sisters in the faith, of making the good news of Jesus compelling and attractive to a generation deeply in need of hope and meaning, in need of something they can trust with all their hearts," Archbishop Williams said.

Lord Alton of Liverpool, a Catholic member of the House of Lords, said "Vincent Nichols is an archbishop for our times... his gift of speaking to people directly and humanely, and his appreciation of the stress and pres-



Vincent Nichols

sures of modern life, will enable him to speak with clarity and compassion." Lord Alton also noted that the new archbishop will face his share of oppo-

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

sition "as the public face of Catholicism in England" and added that he "deserves our unfailing practical support and prayers."

Archbishop Nichols, 63, succeeded Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, 76. In his remarks at the end of the Mass, Cardinal Murphy O'Connor said he expected his successor to face many battles to "sustain our Christian community in our secular society."

High Casualties From Use of Banned Arms

Sri Lankan government forces killed or injured 25,000 to 30,000 civilians in the span of just a few days during its final offensive against Tamil militants, say humanitarian workers. One worker said that the high number of casualties was caused by "a generous use" of weapons, such as cluster and chemical bombs, which are banned by international treaties. Today the conflict zone of Vanni "is like a burial ground, nothing left behind, no buildings, no churches, utter destruction," he said. The aid worker said he could speak only on condition of anonymity because he was an eyewitness to numerous atrocities carried out against civilians in the battle zone. He worked for an international humanitarian organization and had been serving in Sri Lanka's Vanni district for more than a decade until he fled in mid-May at the height of the Sri Lankan military assault against the last Tamil-held areas in northeastern Sri Lanka.

Activists Push Changes in U.S. Cuba Policy

One month after President Barack Obama announced the relaxation of regulations governing travel and remittances to Cuba, activists were pushing

NEWS BRIEFS

The Vatican has condemned the latest round of **nuclear testing by North Korea**, warning that such acts of aggression threaten "the very survival" of the country's own people by exacerbating its isolation. • Catholic Relief Services has announced that the agency will focus on helping families who are housing hundreds of thousands of **Pakistanis displaced** by an army crackdown in the northwestern part of that country. • Pope Benedict XVI has accepted the resignation of Archbishop Paulin Pomodimo, 54, of the Central African Republic following an **investigation into priests** of his diocese who live more or less openly with women and the children they have fathered. • For the first time in its nearly 80-year history, **Vatican Radio is opening up to advertising** in the hopes of easing the strain on its budget, the Vatican announced on May 26.



Kim Jong Il

to lift travel bans on all U.S. citizens. Members of Congress, representatives of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and Human Rights Watch called for an end to the ban on U.S. travel to Cuba and encouraged the Obama administration to take other steps to open "person to person" dialogues. "The more we change, the more Cuba will change," said Representative James McGovern, Democrat of Massachusetts, one of 154 co-sponsors of the Freedom to Travel to Cuba bill, introduced in February. Twenty-six senators are co-sponsors of the Senate version of the bill. Andrew Small, an Oblate priest who is a U.S.C.C.B. foreign policy adviser, said the U.S. bishops are fully behind both bills. "We need not just incremental change but robust, bold change," he said.

Court Upholds Ban on Same-Sex Marriage

Speaking on behalf of his fellow Catholic bishops in California, Bishop

Stephen E. Blaire of Stockton praised the California Supreme Court for upholding the voters' affirmation of marriage as the union of a man and a woman. The ruling upheld the constitutionality of the state's Proposition 8 declaring that "only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California." Bishop Blaire said he and his fellow bishops "are strongly committed to protecting the dignity and worth of every human person" and supported "the intent of law to provide equal protection for all."

The intent, however, "does not have to trump the natural and traditional definition of marriage between a man and a woman," he added. "The law has found other ways to regulate civil unions without destroying the traditional understanding of marriage. We believe—as do the majority of Californians—that marriage between a man and a woman is foundational to our culture and crucial for human perpetuity," he said.

From CNS and other sources.



Like a Child

Many of us sleep poorly these days. But to my surprise, it is not the tanked economy or my decimated retirement account keeping me up, nor my various worries about climate change, loose nukes or extractive agriculture. The reason for my difficult nights is far more tangible and close to home: our fitful-sleeper, toddler son Elijah.

Although I must admit that my wife Cyndi has done far more nocturnal soothing than I have, one recent night I rocked Eli until his sobs became snuffles, and his snuffles became snores. His little frame went slack and heavy against me, as I gazed out the darkened bedroom windows at the moonlight-bathed fields of our farm and the bright constellations in the black sky above. In that golden, peaceful moment of gratitude, I so loved this little sleeping miracle, my son, flesh of my flesh, and I felt the profound bond between us. Gently I put him back in his crib.

When Eli woke us up for the third time that night, however, my blessed sense of paternal connection began to wane. In a fog of exhaustion, I lay in bed and tried to calm him with soothing assurances and by sending him what little remained of my loving energy. But his crying gained momentum, and soon he was screaming in an angry tantrum, demanding to be picked up and held. At this, my parental good will disappeared, and in its place I felt the unwelcome surge of my own anger and resentment.

I believe that love is a universal, hard-wired instinct, one of the divine

ground rules of the universe. In moments of deep connection with our children, the love I feel between us does seem to resonate with something far larger: a love that, as St. Paul described it, "binds everything together in perfect harmony." At other times, though, I am astonished at how quickly and easily my love for them turns to frustration and anger, which also (and unfortunately) feels just as instinctual. I can feel guilty and ashamed of these feelings or ascribe them to fallen human nature and the shortcomings of my own character. But none of this lessens their power as I respond to my crying son.

My anger tends to flare when my own wishes and expectations crash against reality and reality stubbornly refuses to yield. The vocation of good parenting entails countless numbers of these collisions, these small daily crucifixions, in which parents must die to their own agenda for the sake of their children's needs, with a self-emptying, *agape* form of love. In my experience, however, the ego rarely yields without a fight. Given this struggle, how can one respond selflessly to others and to recalcitrant reality in general, day after day and night after sleepless night, with equanimity and without resentment?

One cannot—or at least I cannot. As trivial and fleeting as I know they are in the big picture, our nighttime wrangles with Eli have nonetheless brought me up against the very real limits of my capacity to love, my all-too-finite supply of patience and kind-

ness. That night, it became clear to me that I cannot love Eli on my own power alone.

Often it is only at the end of our rope that revelation becomes possible. In bringing us to the boundaries of our own love, parenting opens the door to a love that has no limits: a steadfast and everlasting love in whom we live and move and have our being. As I held my shrieking son once more,

**Often it is
only at the
end of our
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possible.**

I realized that I was likewise held, with unfathomable gentleness, by the one who alone can soothe my own angry and screaming ego, loosen its hold on me and work through the cracked earthen vessel of my imperfect love. In this embrace, Eli and I somehow made it

through that dark night.

Until I became a parent, whenever I read in the Gospel how Jesus welcomed the little children into his arms and claimed that no one would enter the kingdom of God except by becoming like a child, I always imagined the children gathered around him to be angelic, innocent and pure. Real children, though, are both sweetness and struggle, and real parenting—like prayer—is a school of conversion that requires daily practice and constantly lays bare the grappling of egos and the limits of human love. Perhaps to enter the kingdom of God is simply to recognize that on some level, each of us is like a child, sometimes sweet and sometimes screaming, but held at every moment in God's infinitely patient, perfect and abiding love.

KYLE T. KRAMER is the director of lay degree programs at Saint Meinrad School of Theology in Saint Meinrad, Ind., and an organic farmer.



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/ACESHOT



NOW IS THE TIME TO MAKE
THE NECESSARY REFORMS.

Healing Health Care

BY GUY CLIFTON

Anne Casey lived in Houston, Tex., supporting herself by providing in-home care for the elderly and by making jewelry. My wife's best friend, Phyllis, who was also a friend of Anne's (not her real name) from high school, referred me to her. I came to enjoy sitting in her home studio on Saturday mornings, chatting and picking out materials from which she would create the most striking pieces of jewelry.

In 2007 a black lump appeared on Anne Casey's neck; she had the fair Irish skin that is prone to cancers. She could not afford health insurance, so she paid cash for a dermatologist to biopsy the lesion. The doctor was notably concerned after seeing malignant cancer cells under the microscope and told her that she needed surgery right away, though he could not do it, since he was not a surgeon. Anne had a malignant melanoma, a potentially fatal skin cancer that is normally removed as rapidly as possible to prevent its spread throughout the body. The down payment alone for a hospital admission would have been \$10,000—money Anne did not have.

Fearing for her life, Anne began the process of obtaining a "gold card" that would permit her to use the public hospital system in Houston. After four weeks of bureaucratic processing she received her card and, after four weeks more, a clinic appointment. The doctors who were to perform the surgery needed to determine the extent of the cancer through an M.R.I. scan. The problem: Ben Taub General Hospital, which had to serve the county's 1.2 million uninsured, was the only public hospital with an M.R.I. scanner. Anne lay in the hospital for six days

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waiting for the study.

Phyllis, who each day was growing more anxious, called a radiologist friend, who agreed to perform the study free. Meanwhile, as Anne and Phyllis watched in horror and helplessness, the black growth on Anne's neck grew larger every week. The M.R.I. was performed, but weeks passed without the anticipated call to come in for surgery. Phyllis, desperate to help her friend, called the doctor who had performed the biopsy and insisted that he telephone the doctors at the public hospital to expedite the process.

Four months after the diagnosis of her life-threatening cancer, Anne Casey finally underwent surgery to remove the malignant melanoma. Always gracious, she told me in early 2008 that she felt she received excellent care and was thankful for it. I thought too that she had been lucky, until I learned that Anne Casey died on Thanksgiving Day, 2008. I know the doctors had done the best they could with the limited resources available to them. It is ironic, however; had she been insured and had her surgery been delayed for four months for any preventable reason, the episode would have been classified as medical malpractice.

For 20 of the last 30 years that I have practiced neurosurgery, I have worked at the Texas Medical Center. It is a 700-acre complex of tightly packed medical facilities housing over 6,000 hospital beds, the largest concentration of medical resources in the world. Some of its hospitals have billions of dollars in reserves, with lobbies like fine hotels, complete with china cabinets, and valet and concierge services. Serving these hospitals is a mile-long row of gleaming professional office towers. Ben Taub General Hospital, on the other hand, where Anne was forced to seek treatment, lies in forlorn isolation in the back of Texas Medical Center and is the anchor for the care of the region's uninsured, nearly one-third of the population. The facilities for the uninsured in Houston can be likened to a town of 30,000 with one operating room and one clinic. Houston is not unusual and Anne Casey's story is not unique. Delayed diagnosis and treatment is the reason that 22,000 uninsured Americans die prematurely each year. Her story is a metaphor for the U.S. health care system.

Unbridled Consumerism

The goal of expanding insurance coverage is solidly obstructed by a fact well known in Washington, D.C.—soon the United States will not be able to afford its existing

public programs. According to Thomas Saving, a Medicare trustee, in 2006 Medicare accounted for 11.6 percent of income tax spending. By 2020 the program will consume 21.2 percent; by 2030 over one-third of income tax revenue (at current-law taxes and premiums) will be spent on Medicare. Without action now we are less than a decade away from an unplanned health care reform conducted under duress with unpredictable results—a circumstance that is now familiar to Americans.

The good news is that there is plenty of money to work with, and these problems can be solved. Conservative estimates indicate that unnecessary medical services account for one-third of medical spending, or some \$700 billion. In other words, the U.S. health care system could insure the uninsured seven times over with the amount of documented money wasted annually.

Unnecessary services come in three categories. The first and largest source of waste is the poor management of chronic diseases. If doctors in

regions where spending for Medicare patients is high were to treat patients as doctors do in areas where Medicare spending is low, Medicare costs could be decreased by almost 30 percent—with improved quality. In higher spending regions, patients with chronic illnesses are hospitalized more often for longer stays, are more likely to end their days in a hospital rather than at home (regardless of their wishes) and are the recipients of more tests, consultations and minor procedures than in lower spending areas.

The best predictor of whether an area will spend highly on Medicare is an abundance of hospital beds and specialists. In most market economies the supply of a product or a service increases only when the demand for it increases. In medicine, the opposite is true—regions with a large supply of medical facilities will see a rise in demand that keeps them full. It is not as if a cabal of doctors gather in a room and decide to deliver a lot of services. It is that doctors are paid by the volume and complexity of the services they render. In the absence of any accepted or measured standards of medical practice, they all simply provide whatever services are required to keep themselves busy at their craft. On measures of quality, however, including mortality rates, low spending areas tend to perform better. In other words, more health care is not necessarily better health care.

A second source of waste is inefficient hospital processes. According to the 2007 semiannual report of the National Surgical Quality Improvement Program, the incidence of

complications of surgical procedures (adjusted for factors like age and medical condition) is three or four times as high in some hospitals as in others, and cost likely varies accordingly. Hospitals are not safe places either. A patient is at greater risk of being subject to a medical error in a hospital than he is of having his bag misplaced by an airline.

The third source is the too-frequent performance of major procedures that are beneficial in many, but by no means all, of the groups of patients who undergo them. In the course of doing research for my book *Flatlined: Resuscitating American Medicine*, I calculated that major procedures of doubtful or unproven indications account for about 6 percent of hospital spending. A good example is back fusion surgery. Over half of these procedures are performed for unproven indications. In other words, the procedure could just as well cause additional back pain as cure it.

Principles for Reform

We face a crisis because of our success in financing and inventing new treatments, which are often developed in the absence of rigorous evaluation; by the public's view of medical care as a service to be consumed instead of managed; and by a fragmented system of medical care in which profits flow exclusively from the volume and complexity of the procedures and services provided. The power of modern technology has outgrown the system through which we deliver it and the methods by which we pay for it. The only way to reduce the cost of health care so as to improve its quality is to create an efficient health care system. The alternative to efficiency is price cutting and rationing of services, which will worsen quality. For the uninsured, eliminating waste from health care is a matter of justice; for the insured it is a matter of quality and affordability.

Substantial reform of the system requires universal participation, guided by three principles: 1) pay providers for the quality of their care rather than its quantity; 2) each person should have one primary care doctor as the first point of contact with the medical system; 3) benchmarks for high quality medical practice should be measured and reported.

Primary care doctors (internists, family doctors and pediatricians) are trained to manage patients with chronic illnesses, to provide early diagnosis and treatment of new conditions and to prevent illness. The fee-for-service system pays a doctor on the basis of the manual difficulty of a medical intervention. For example, Medicare pays a primary care doctor \$50 for a half-hour visit at which a colonoscopy to detect colon cancer might be recommended. The gastroenterologist who performs the procedure in the same amount of time, however, is paid \$500. The result is that primary care doctors must see 30-35 patients a day, virtually a health care assembly line, to earn an annual income of \$120,000 to \$180,000. This is one-third to one-fifth of what a specialist

can make. Under these circumstances it is no wonder that Americans have only a 55 percent chance of receiving standard treatments, such as aspirin for heart trouble or vaccination to prevent pneumonia, when they go to a primary care doctor. The United States has a procedure-driven health care system. The role of primary care doctors must change, and their payment should reflect it.

No primary care payment or quality scheme can be successful unless patients are anchored themselves to one primary care doctor or clinic as their first point of contact with the medical system. The average Medicare patient sees seven doctors in four practices, none of whom are likely to know what the others are doing. The public must allow one clinic of each patient's choice to manage the patient's care and should expect that clinic to be available to the patients, to know them and to make judgments in their best interest.

Similarly, hospitals are paid their cost plus profit, even if their cost is for treatment of complications that could have been prevented by more attention to detail, training and use of systems to manage care better. A better way to pay hospitals and hospital-based physicians is a bundled fee based upon the patient's condition on admission—not based on how sick they become by the time of discharge—and indexed to the cost of the most efficient hospitals and specialists, not the least efficient.

Finally, the only standards for medical practice are now at the extremes. To operate on the wrong limb, for instance, is a "never event" for which there is no excuse. Yet there are currently no agreed-upon standards for what constitutes excess testing, unnecessary hospitalizations and futile use of an intensive care unit, excess consultations, unnecessary surgery or unacceptable hospital complication rates. Doctors in Miami provide two-and-one-half times as many interventions for patients with the same diagnosis as do doctors in Minneapolis. Who has it right, the Miami doctors or the Minneapolis doctors? Is it acceptable that a patient does not know whether he lying in a hospital with a 4 percent rate of hospital-acquired pneumonia or one with a 12 percent rate? Are the two hospitals equally acceptable?

In the end, America's health care problems are collectively owned by the public and by providers, and they can therefore be solved only by a collective effort. If we address the problem of medical consumerism now, we can fund the uninsured, improve the quality of everyone's health care and reduce its cost. We can also redeem ourselves for what we have permitted to happen to people like Anne Casey. □

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Is the Charter Still Relevant?

Reassessing the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People

BY KATHLEEN MCCHESNEY

During the coming year, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops will conduct its second review of the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* to determine whether the document, which has been the guide for preventing abuse of minors by Catholic clergy since 2002, should remain in effect. The bishops may choose to modify the charter, as they did in 2005, or archive it, deeming it a useful but no longer relevant manual that has served its purpose.

The bishops should ask themselves three key questions to help them decide the future of the charter. The answers to these questions will likely help to clarify the reasons for retaining the charter and to motivate the bishops to make improvements that would make the charter an even better plan for dealing with a crisis that is far from over.

1. Has the charter been effective in meeting its goals of reconciliation, healing, accountability and prevention of future acts of abuse?

Within the first year after the bishops made their historic commitments to protect and heal, nearly every diocese and eparchy in the United States had initiated, if not completed, charter-mandated programs to deal with cases of sexual abuse. These programs have now improved to the point that several have become models for other religious and youth-

serving organizations; and their accomplishments, as measured by statistics, are impressive. By early 2009 more than 1.9 million members of the clergy, employees and volunteers in parishes had been trained to prevent sexual abuse of chil-



Archbishop Harry J. Flynn of St. Paul-Minneapolis answers a question on June 12, 2002, at the Catholic bishops' meeting in Dallas.

PHOTO: CNS/BOB ROLLER

dren, and over 5.5 million children had learned how to recognize abuse and ask for help in potentially abusive situations. Background checks were completed on nearly 1.9 million adult laypeople and clergy in order to prevent pedophiles from gaining access to children through church activities. The most important preventive steps were, of course, the pastoral outreach extended to thousands of victims and their families, and the establishment of lay review boards to provide perspective and expert recommendations to the bishops.

These statistics represent an unprecedented attempt by church leaders to meet their stated goals, but until the effectiveness of these programs is demonstrated, many will won-

KATHLEEN MCCHESNEY served from December 2002 through February 2005 as the first executive director of the newly established Office for Child and Youth Protection of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

der whether the establishment of the programs has been worth the diversion of time and resources from other ministries. Over \$113 million and countless work hours were spent on the church's child protection efforts between 2004 and 2008. While there is every reason to believe that these programs achieved their goals, no research has been conducted to evaluate the programs' effectiveness. This research is desperately needed now to enable the bishops to make informed decisions about the content of the charter and to combine good shepherding with good stewardship. (The data I cite in this article can be found in the *2008 Annual Report on the Implementation of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, U.S.C.C.B., Washington, D.C., May 2009.)

2. Does the number of current and past reports of abuse indicate that the problem of sexual abuse of children no longer exists in the Catholic Church?

The number of new allegations involving victims who were still under 18 years of age when the allegations were made appears to be diminishing, dropping from a high of 22 in 2004 to a low of 4 in 2007. Although many victims wait years before reporting sexual abuse, there is no indication that large numbers of incidents have occurred in recent years that have not yet been reported. On the other hand, the number of reports of "historical cases," that is, allegations of abuse that occurred in previous years, is significant. The number of reports decreased from 1,083 in 2004 to 796 in 2008, but most of those incidents took place between 1965 and 1974. Still, as long as there are any allegations of sexual abuse of children by Catholic clergy, past or present, the problem exists and the charter is relevant.

3. What is the likelihood that without the charter, bishops and priests will revert to their old methods of dealing with allegations of abuse?

It is difficult, even risky, to speculate on what actions a bishop or priest might take relative to a future allegation of sexual abuse. Even after the charter took effect, a few bishops and religious superiors did not follow the charter's guidelines when they received new reports of abuse. Those few but notorious incidents reinforced the perception of many Catholics that the clergy could not yet be trusted to put the needs of children first. Nevertheless, even if every church leader were to handle every allegation properly from now on, this is not the time to "throw out the playbook."

The underlying principles of the charter are strong, and it is reasonable to assume that an evaluation of the effectiveness of its programs would reveal that they have been successful in making children and vulnerable adults safer in

church environments. This year's mandated review of the charter also presents an opportunity for the bishops to consider additions that will make it a more comprehensive and useful abuse-prevention tool. Additions might include: identifying acceptable ways of dealing with clergy who have been removed from public ministry; extending the audit process to parishes, schools and religious communities; and providing more specific guidance on transparency and communication with the laity.

Much has been done to prevent the abuse of children in Catholic environments in the seven years since Pope John Paul II declared "there is no room in the priesthood for those who would harm the young" and the charter was approved. The charter's mandates caused bishops to extend their outreach to victims, to create an awareness of the problem of sexual abuse of minors among responsible adults, to reject potential employees and volunteers who were not suitable to work with children and to remove dangerous predators from the priesthood.

Nonetheless, the stain of the sexual abuse scandal has so deeply permeated the fabric of the Catholic Church that, even as it appears to fade, it will never be totally eliminated. As the bishops conduct their review, surely they will recognize that the charter is a promise to the faithful that ought never to be broken.

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Ave atque Vale

The case for replacing Latin as the official language of the church

BY THOMAS G. CASEY

Latin is the official language of the Holy See and the Vatican City State, but the working language of the Vatican is Italian. Given its location in Rome, the Vatican's use of Italian makes perfect sense. As for Latin, though, fewer and fewer seminarians and priests today are familiar with it, and laypeople seldom study it; but official church documents are still published in Latin.

Latin remains essential to the church's tradition and identity. Anyone who wants to study canon law or to understand great Catholic thinkers, like Augustine or Thomas Aquinas, needs a good working knowledge of the language. As the Papal Latinist, Reginald Foster, O.C.D., puts it: "You cannot understand Saint Augustine in English. He thought in Latin. It is like listening to Mozart through a jukebox."

None of this necessarily means that Latin should continue to be the official language of the church.

Since Spanish is the most common language among Catholics worldwide, it might seem an ideal replacement for Latin. But English is (to use an Italian expression) the lingua franca of international trade, business and technology, the international language for communication with the greatest global reach, binding our diverse world in myriad ways. English is also a much more significant international



language for the Roman Catholic Church than Latin. Is it time for the Holy See to change its official language?

The question of language arouses emotional resonances linked to questions of history and identity. The European Union, for example, recognizes 23 official languages, including Irish, which is spoken as a first language by fewer than 50,000 people. In principle, each E.U. language has official status; but in practice, without any official pronouncement to this effect, English has become the working language of the European Union. In some member states English is no longer considered a foreign language. More and more European companies have made English their official language.

Does tradition require the Vatican to retain Latin as its official language? In fact, the opposite is true; retaining Latin defies the whole dynamic of its history. The

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PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/SZ AKOS

widespread assumption that Latin has always been the language of the Catholic Church is mistaken (in this article, I use the term Catholic Church as synonymous with Roman Catholic Church). The assumption arises from the fact that Christianity was born during the reign of the Roman Empire. Today the received wisdom among a small but vocal group of Catholics is that the church, being based in

language most Christians used among themselves, it would have been easier in many ways had they made Hebrew the church's official language. After all, Hebrew was the revered language of the Jewish Scriptures and the language in which God first revealed his love to the chosen people, and the very earliest Christians (the Apostles) were predominantly Jewish. Yet the church's surprising decision to switch to Greek paid enormous historical dividends.

The church produced its most creative theology during its first millennium, because it was audacious enough to take Greek as its language. It took the best from the Greek world of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle and brought it together with the wisdom of Judaism. This development of the church's theology can be traced through the seven major ecumenical councils, starting with the First Council of Nicaea in 325 and culminating in the Second Council of Nicaea in 787. All of these defining gatherings of the Catholic Church in the first millennium were held in what is today modern Greece and Turkey. Most of the participants in these councils came from the Eastern or Greek part of the Catholic Church. Every one of these seven councils was conducted in Greek, and all the decrees were issued in Greek.

Given the historical importance of Greek in the first centuries of Christianity, it is surprising today to encounter zealous young seminarians and priests who are enthusiastic about Latin, thinking it is rooted in a 2,000-year-old connection with the church. They imagine they are returning to the genesis of Christianity, but they have unknowingly erased the first centuries of church history.

Such selective amnesia was also evident in Mel Gibson's controversial film "The Passion." In the film Gibson has the Roman soldiers speaking Latin, a historical blunder. Was Gibson led to this mistake because of his attachment to the Latin Tridentine liturgy and the conservative Catholic lens through which he views early Christianity? Scholars agree that the common language of the Roman Empire in the Middle East was Greek. Greek was, in fact, widely used in Italy and Rome at the time of Jesus. There is little doubt that Pilate and Roman military officers garrisoned in Palestine would have been Greek-speakers.

The Switch to Latin

In the fourth and fifth centuries Latin replaced Greek as the language of the Mass. This shift was a brave response to the changing times. First, the church had come to recognize that the center of Christianity was in Rome. Latin was the language of that city and the language of the world's major power at the time, the Roman Empire. Second, the church recognized that Latin was the lingua franca throughout western Europe, and it wanted to reach all the people there. The decision to take on Latin had major ramifications: By



Perhaps it
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use.

Rome, inevitably promulgated its dogmas and conducted its liturgies in Latin. In their view, the decision of the Second Vatican Council in 1964 to allow and encourage the use of vernacular languages, however, led to further erosion of authentic doctrine and practice. For such people, the restoration of Latin would return the church to the internal discipline and high moral high ground it so unwisely surrendered.

Why the Church Chose Greek

The historical facts are quite different. Christianity at its origins made a surprising decision: it adopted Greek as its language. The earliest documents of the Christian community were written in Greek. Although Greek was the lan-

A Latin inscription on the obelisk in St. Peter's Square, Rome.



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identifying with the Roman Empire, would the church appear to endorse imperialism? Why would it throw in its lot with the Roman Empire, which in many respects was antithetical to Christian ideals and values? Would it be more appropriate to retain Greek?

Yet Latin won the day. One can recognize the great potential of Latin simply from observing the beauty and economy of this most resourceful of languages. The very structure of Latin gave new clarity and precision to the teaching of the church. Although common or “vulgar” Latin deteriorated into a series of dialects that were to become the basis of languages like Italian, French, Portuguese and Spanish, classical Latin itself remained unchanged. Since it was no longer used daily, this more refined Latin was not subject to alteration. It thus provided the Catholic Church with a stable norm by which to evaluate the correctness of doctrinal and theological expressions in other languages. For centuries, Latin continued to be a critical point of reference for the Catholic Church.

A Case for English

Has the time now come to change the official language of the church to English? Introducing English does not mean jettisoning Latin. Latin has been around for a long time, and long may it continue. The Catholic Church, because of its universality, should be able to draw on the rich storeroom of tradition. But perhaps it is time for the official status of Latin to correspond to its actual use.

There would be many advantages to the adoption of English as the official language of the Roman Catholic Church. First, English is already spoken across many different nations. It is the official language of roughly 50 countries worldwide and is used at least to some degree by almost two billion people. Second, English is an extremely flexible language: many nouns can be used as verbs—for instance “mention,” “book,” “proposition”—or as adjectives, as in “vegetable soup.” English incorporates new words and expressions to respond to cultural shifts and changes: “information superhighway” or “search engine.” Third, English is an extraordinarily inventive language. New words and expressions are continually being coined: bad hair day, carjacking, road rage, soccer mom. The language never stops venturing into new territory. As such it is ideally suited to our constantly changing world.

Then there is the truth behind something Ludwig Wittgenstein wrote: “The limits of my language are the limits of my world.”

In the medieval world, Latin enabled the church to shape the contemporary intellectual culture in a decisive way. Could English provide a similar resource for today’s church? It may be time for the church to make a brave linguistic leap of faith. As Virgil once wrote, *Audentes fortuna iuvat*: “Fortune favors the bold.” **A**

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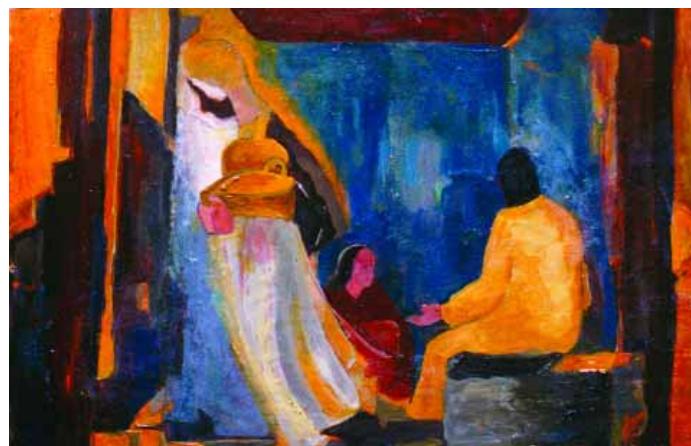
I was in one of my periodic funks that winter. A single woman with two adult children, I was and am employed in ministry in an active, progressive diocese with a fine bishop. The incentive to work hard and long in building the reign of God is a strong one for me. In winter 2002, however, a combination of overcommitment at work, the demands of family and an attempt to keep up with friends and maintain some semblance of a social life was more than I could handle. I found myself short-tempered, impatient, judgmental and with little energy or inclination to pray.

A wise Jesuit spiritual director suggested that I set aside some time (sooner rather than later) to initiate a conversation with Martha and Mary of Bethany. He pointed out that I needed balance between activity and contemplation, between serving God by doing and serving by being. His sense was that these two biblical women would understand what I was going through and would be of help to me. And he advised me specifically to invite them into my living room rather than into my office.

I am fairly good at following directions when they make sense or when I trust the person who is giving them. In this matter I relied on trust. The advice sounded odd. What I did not know was that this would be my intro-

duction to the use of imagination in prayer.

I did as I was directed and asked Mary and Martha for tea. I imagined their arrival and greeting, what they looked like, what they were wearing,



how they liked their tea (lemon, milk, sugar—one lump or two?). It felt awkward at first, but I explained why I had invited them, talked about my current state of stress and anxiety, and asked for their help. I heard them express sympathy and understanding, offer suggestions on how to cope, a promise of prayer and readiness to return whenever I needed them. Afterward I breathed a prayer of gratitude for such a graced encounter.

Asking for the intercession of the saints was familiar to me, although I found this a new way of doing so. Years earlier my mother, who longed for a child, made a novena to St. Anne, promising that if she were to have a girl she would name her Anne. On July 26, the feast of St. Anne, my mother went to the doctor and learned she was pregnant. True to her word, she named me Anne. As I was growing up, every July 26 my mother would recount this story

and wish me a happy feast day.

I have long been interested in the lives of these holy people; the communion of saints is a doctrine dear to my heart. As a young girl in grammar school, two of my favorite books were

Fifteen Saints for Girls and *St. Patrick's Summer*, both long out of print (How I wish I still had them!). Among my favorites now are Robert Ellsberg's *All Saints; Friends of God and Prophets*, by Elizabeth Johnson, C.S.J.; and *My Life With the Saints*, by James Martin, S.J. Yet little did I know that with that winter tea party I would embark on a friendship with six biblical women who

would become through prayer my companions, guides, friends and co-workers.

A short time later I approached Mary, the mother of Jesus. She and I had a rather checkered history. When I was in high school she was held up not only as a model, but also as a means of keeping us in line. I remember exhortations to silence, compliance and "Mary-like dress." Things were not much better after I married and had children. One particularly trying day when my 5-year-old had spilled a quart of milk on the kitchen floor and my 4-year-old had taken her red wagon and collected the neighbors' mail, I muttered in exasperation, "Of course Mary was the perfect mother, she had only one child, and he was perfect. I'd like to see her try her hand with my two."

Since then Mary and I have laughed about the rocky start to our relation-

ANNE E. GRYCZ is director of the Institute for Leadership in Ministry for the Diocese of San Jose, Calif.

ship. I have discovered in her a friend who understands my hassles and concerns, who has a delightful sense of humor, and who is my advocate. On one occasion when we were talking about mothers, she pointed out to me that while friends sometimes mother one another, I might want to talk with her mother, Anne, for whom I am named. It was then that Anne joined the company.

Baptized Anne Elizabeth, I have always had a fondness for Elizabeth, too, the cousin of Mary. On the feast of the Visitation, I was reflecting on Elizabeth's faith and her role in Mary's life. I asked her help in dealing with a delicate family situation and found a wisdom and practicality that stood me in good stead. She agreed to be a part of the group.

The last invitation went to Mary Magdalene. In my spiritual journey I have become aware that God often speaks through my body. As one who is more comfortable in her head and who sees herself as clumsy and uncoordinated, I am challenged by Mary Magdalene to break out of negative images and to accept God's revelation in whatever way God chooses.

Most of the time I spend with these six women is early in the morning, when I take an hourlong walk. Sometimes the whole group is with me; at other times just one or two, depending on what is going on in my life. As a group they are a wonderful council of wisdom; as individuals they challenge, advise and take care of me.

When I come to these women as a group for some insight into a problem, each of them gives me her take on the issue and each promises to pray for me and to be with me when I need her. In these instances they serve as a council of mentors, advocates and friends. At other times I seek a particular individual and find in her the help I need.

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gently suggests that I bring these distractions and feelings to God. When I have had a particularly consoling experience, she rejoices with me. When I am feeling overwhelmed with too much to do or, conversely, when lethargy takes over, Martha reminds me that I am loved for who I am, not for what I do. When I have accomplished a difficult task or completed a project I had put off, she is the first to congratulate me. When I feel my years and am faced with the reality of growing older, Anne tells me to eat carefully, exercise, get enough sleep and let whatever will happen, happen. She shows me the positive side of aging.

When family tensions arise and solutions seem to be out of reach, Elizabeth is there with practical advice, often pointing out the humor or irony of the situation. She makes me laugh. When I am tired and feel unloved and unlovable, Mary Magdalene suggests that I schedule a bubble bath, a massage or a pedicure. She refuses to allow me to play the old tapes in my head that tell me only my intellect is of value. Mary the mother of Jesus and I talk about all kinds of things: her Son and my children, the state of the church and the world, work, my shortcomings, failures, joys and triumphs. She is a wonderful listener and a profound presence in my life.

I am blessed in these wise women who walk with me each day through prayer of the imagination. They serve as icons pointing to a good God, a God who is in love with his creation, a God who knows each of us by name, a God who cares passionately about humanity, a God before whom we can bring anything, no matter how trivial or silly it may seem. My prayer, expectation and hope is that at the end of my life, these six friends will meet me at the entrance to heaven and escort me into the presence of the triune God, the God whom they serve so well. And together we will rejoice! **A**

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John W. O'Malley, S.J., is currently University Professor at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. He has held a number of prestigious fellowships including ones from the Guggenheim Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

His best known work, *The First Jesuits*, has been translated into ten languages. John O'Malley has been writing on the councils of the Christian church for many years, with special attention to the Council of Trent and the Second Vatican Council. His latest book, *What Happened at Vatican II*, was published in 2008 by Harvard University Press.

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Hard Times

Memories of the Great Depression

BY LOIS SPEAR

Winter has departed, but concerns about rising unemployment and the volatility of food and utilities prices remain. Behind these concerns lies a still darker fear of another depression. Those of us who lived through the Great Depression of the 1920s and 1930s look for similarities, but the two periods are different in many ways. For example, farm foreclosures, rather than a housing crisis, marked the beginning of the Great Depression. Economists, concerned about inflation, kept interest rates high. Do nothing more, they advised. Let the market right itself, and the new market will be leaner, more efficient; and the country will experience a moral uplift as people learn how to live simpler lives with fewer wants. That advice, however, failed to address the human needs incurred by increasing unemployment and foreclosures.

My first encounter with unemployed people came when they arrived homeless and hungry, at our Iowa farm, a 235-acre plot of land on a dirt road seven miles from the nearest town. Like most farmers, we were cash poor but land rich. We did what we could for the new arrivals. My mother fixed sandwiches with huge slices of homemade bread and leftover roast beef and served them to our unexpected guests. We were fortunate. Though we had no electricity or running water, we had plenty of food. Our furnace burned wood we collected from the

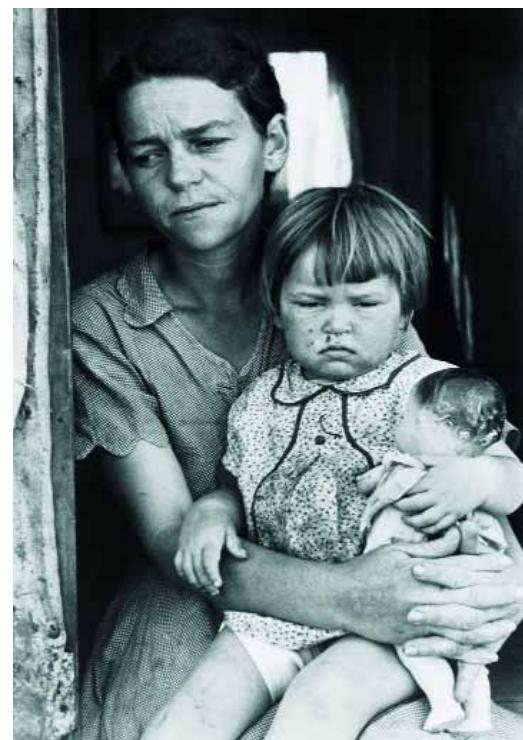
farm, and my mother made and repaired our clothing using a Singer sewing machine powered by a foot pedal.

The trouble began when the price of farm commodities dropped to a new low. Corn sank to 10 cents a bushel, and cattle and hogs were not worth the expense of shipping them to market. It became impossible for my father to find the money to pay off the debt he had contracted when he bought the farm. The promissory note he signed was negotiable, with a clause requiring payment on demand. At the time we were not concerned about that clause, because the banker who granted the loan was a member of the local community.

Family Crisis

Then the bank closed its doors and went into bankruptcy. The bank's assets, including my father's promissory note, were sold to pay creditors. If the note's new owner called for immediate payment of the debt and the borrower defaulted, the next step would be a sheriff's auction of the livestock, farm equipment and any unsold crops. If collected funds were insufficient, the land would be sold to make up the difference. In our case, the creditor was one of the largest farmers in the region. He demanded instant payment of the loan, hoping for a larger gain—namely, the speedy auction of our rich Iowa farm that he could buy for a fraction of its worth.

My parents were desperate. They had heard of Milo Reno, organizer of the Farmers' Holiday movement, groups of farmers from across the country who faced foreclosure and sale of their land. The organization's tactics



were to stop a sale in progress and then force both sides to negotiate until they reached a compromise. Only when a creditor refused to negotiate would the Holiday group use radical tactics like displaying a hangman's noose or refusing to leave the farm until the dispute was settled.

I learned about Farmers' Holiday on the day the foreclosure process began. As the youngest child, I was the only one in our family still attending the one-room rural school about a

LOIS SPEAR, O.P., is retired and lives at her order's motherhouse in Adrian, Mich.

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES/HULTON ARCHIVE

mile from our farm. My parents and five siblings decided not to tell me what was about to happen for fear I might spill the news to my classmates, thus spoiling the surprise the group was planning. When I arrived home that afternoon, our driveway was full of cars.

The sheriff, a friend of the family who sympathized with the farmers, had gone to the pasture to collect the cattle. He took his time gathering them, stopping frequently to enjoy the view. By the time he returned with the herd, my parents had called Farmers' Holiday and a crowd had gathered.

We needed to locate the creditor in order to begin negotiations. He appeared, red-faced, from around a curve in the road nearby, where he had been waiting for the cattle to be driven past. Then began an intense negotiation that ended in the early hours of the next day when a compromise was reached. The discussion had been angry and at times threatening, but on the whole it had been respectful. The sheriff's presence guaranteed that there was no violence.

A Saving Compromise

The compromise saved our farm. The negotiators, as I remember it, reduced the face value of the note to a sum comparable to the amount borrowed by my father when times were prosperous. We were to pay off the debt in a series of yearly installments. The arrangement did not please everyone in the community. My father described an incident that occurred the day following the averted foreclosure. The owner of a gas station in our small town was a friend of my father's. They had been business partners. The owner scolded my father in front of other farmers at the station. "You should have paid back the entire loan," he said. "What you did was dishonest." For a man like my father, who had a reputation for honesty in his business dealings, the statement was dev-

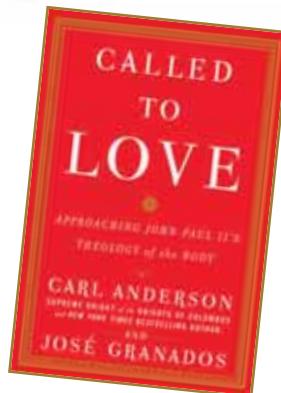
astating. I wondered how anyone could consider it just to pay a debt with money worth more in value than the original debt.

As I look back on those years, I am not sure we learned anything useful. Yes, as economists predicted, we lived simpler lives during that last decade before World War II. We were too poor to do otherwise. No, the market did not right itself. Production returned to former levels only after factories geared up for arms production. I do not believe we were strengthened morally either. Millions of people lost their jobs with the concomitant loss of human dignity and the ability to support their families.

The positive element of the Great Depression, as I see it, was the way people worked together, neighbors helping neighbors. We can imitate their example because we have something to build on. Neighborliness happens often in the small cities like Adrian, Mich., where I live. Each winter we gather at one of the churches to make pot pies for sale to support the work of Habitat for Humanity; we serve meals to the hungry at Daily Bread; we gather food for food banks, provide shelter in winter through a Share the Warmth program and support other charitable groups.

Taken a step further, we have the ability to become a nation of neighbors committed to support and affirm our new leadership as they attempt to change the disastrous policies that pushed this country toward depression. People are losing their homes and livelihood. They need help, both physical and emotional. Even if we help only a few people—driving someone to a job interview or taking a food basket to a family in need—we will be helping to form a more just and peaceful world, in which neighbors trust one another and show a willingness to use the tools of negotiation and compromise to settle disagreements. **A**

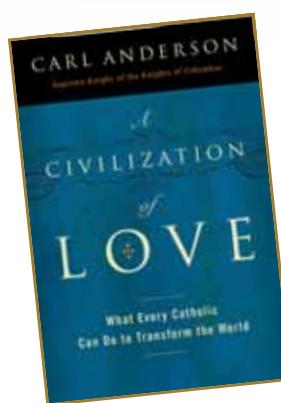
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BOOKS & CULTURE

ART | JOYCE C. POLISTENA

THE UNKNOWN DELACROIX

The religious imagination of a Romantic painter

Eugène Delacroix (1798-1863), considered the greatest painter of the Romantic period, is probably best known for his painting "Liberty Leading the People." He is far less known and appreciated as an important painter of religious subjects. Yet the 120 pictures and over 220 drawings depicting traditional subjects, like the Pietà or Christ on the cross, initiate the style of modern religious art. Although Delacroix has been characterized as a radical and an unbeliever who found religion irra-

tional, these pictures challenge claims that Delacroix's religious subjects were few in number, mere commissions remote from his personal interests.

To say that Delacroix is an important painter of religious works is a controversial claim, given the canonical labeling of Delacroix as a hero of modern painting and the equation of modernity with secularity. But Delacroix's sympathetic and sustained interest in religion suggests that he found there something more than a tool to spur his pictorial imagination.

Others have said as much. In 1885, 22 years after the artist's death, the art critic Ernest Chesneau wrote: "When one considers the religious subjects that Delacroix has treated in the course of his life of painting, one arrives at an enormous total... one must conclude that, without being a mystic nor a devout, Delacroix had not only poetry but a religious soul."

Delacroix's religious paintings were informed in general terms by the Romantic penchant for introspection that defined the aesthetic experience as a sign of the spiritual. More specifically, many of his subjects were influenced by the progressive theologies that flowed from the surprisingly swift religious revival in the early decades of the 19th century.



"THE LAMENTATION," BY EUGÈNE DELACROIX. PHOTO: CHRISTIAN MURIN, PARIS

At a minimum Delacroix's interest in religious themes emerged from circumstances in which he came to identify intuitively with Catholic culture.

Excerpts from the artist's *Journal* indicate his ongoing participation in Catholic rites and his sympathetic interest in religion up to his death in 1863:

I was much impressed by the Requiem Mass. I thought of all religion has to offer the imagination, and at the same time its appeal to man's deepest feelings....

By the 1820s, progressive theologies promoted by German thinkers were signaling change in the religious climate in France. Incendiary hortatory reformers like the popular Père Lamennais called the people to democratic ideals and to a realignment of authority in the church. Romantic theologies paralleled those of the Baroque period, in that the status of humanity was elevated in relation to God. Suddenly, or so it seemed, liberal principles began to have a far-reaching impact on the themes and symbols of religious art. Portrayals of Jesus Christ focused on his humanity and on themes that stressed Christian virtue, rather than on more dogmatic or sacramental themes. By the 1830s the working classes preferred the figure of Jesus as the savior of the poor or as the Good Shepherd; political activists and liberals popularized an image of Jesus as the leader of the oppressed masses; the elite, educated bourgeoisie preferred the image of Jesus as the suffering, solitary hero of Gethsemane. As a class, this last group included Delacroix, his intimate friends and fellow artists, and critics. As long as

humanitarian and progressive Catholic philosophies dominated, religious paintings that depicted these principles flourished.

"The Holy Women Tending to Saint Sebastian" illustrate a similar vision of *caritas*. The art critic Paul Mantz wrote in the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*



"CHRIST IN THE GARDEN OF OLIVES" BY EUGÈNE DELACROIX. PHOTO: GIRAUDON/ART RESOURCE, NY

As the Romantic style of painting became identified with modern art, that is, with subjects of passion, horror and violence—from Gericault's "Raft of the Medusa" (1819) to Delacroix's "The Tiger Hunt" (1854)—modern religious painting became increasingly identified with novel subjects that expressed communal spirituality, humanitarian values and greater intimacy with God. Like his patrons, Delacroix was attracted to themes of faith with hope in benevolent care, witnessed by the nearly 11 versions of Christ asleep during the tempest. He twice painted "The Disciples and the Holy Women Carrying Away the Body of Saint Stephen" in which the focus of the composition is on the actions of the community of believers, not the fallen martyr. His images of "The Good Samaritan" and many versions of

in 1859 of the St. Sebastian painting of that same year: "This scene of pious devotion, by the melancholic expression which it brings out, this little picture is a hundred times more religious than most of the compositions printed in bloody pages of martyrology."

What did it mean to be 100 times "more religious"? It suggests that Delacroix's contemporaries perceived in his works something authoritative and transcendent: a beneficent and vivifying energy pulsing through the vibrant color, the expressive brushwork and the intricately compressed linear patterns. Although his works are layered with narrative, dogma and art-historical antecedents, Delacroix understood well that sensory experience offered a language for encountering the transcendent.

Delacroix's first major religious painting was "Christ in the Garden"

(1826-27), a theme that the artist would paint many times. In an early version Delacroix used vibrant, saturated colors to great effect, simultaneously surprising the viewer with a portrayal of Jesus in a reclining, almost sensual pose that is both languid and tense. With handsome features and a nearly regal countenance, Jesus looks serenely resigned to his fate. The concept is not solely a burst of artistic imagination, because the idea is found in the Gospel of John (10:17) where Jesus says to his disciples: "I lay down my life.... No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord...."

Delacroix's early work is in marked contrast to his later versions, which were created in a variety of media from the 1840s through the 1850s. The later pictures demonstrate a transformation from the solitary, strong, heroic figure to a more austere and vulnerable personality, posed in a stark and haunting vision of suffering as described in the Gospel of Mark.

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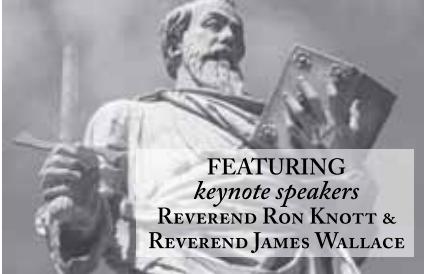
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Delacroix, so often described as an atheist or a Voltairian skeptic, writes enthusiastically about wanting to read a widely popular book based on mystical revelations of Christ's Passion by Sister Anne Catherine Emmerich (1774-1824). This is surprising, because the nun's record of a divine revelation is written with deeply devotional language, rich in tradition and evocative of profound piety.

The Lamentation

In Delacroix's painting "The Lamentation," the body of Jesus is a tightly compressed form, folded at a sharp angle; his right leg is drawn with a deep cleft-mark at the calf that makes it appear strangely entangled with the other limb. These contortions imply the violence of Jesus' death. In the same way the bloodied right hand lies limp and folded at his waist, while the left arm hangs down. Jesus' eyes are closed, but even in death his brow remains furrowed from the agonizing pain, his mouth drawn in a downward slope and lips slightly parted. His corpse is dramatically lit from an unknown source at the upper left, so that the color of the body is startling with its ghastly white pallor and greenish tones, highlighted with flecks of purples and blues. Delacroix makes use of his signature bold red hue with color accents not only on the body of Jesus but also on the shroud and on the surrounding figures, thereby creating a circular pattern that unifies the composition.

Because this large painting (11-1/2 feet by 15-1/2 feet) was originally intended for the Chapel of the Virgin in the church of Saint-Denis du Saint-Sacrement in Paris, it is likely that Delacroix conceptualized Mary's role in the drama as the most important. In doing so, the Virgin's tear-swollen face, her delicate and expressive hands and outstretched arms pull us irresistibly into the moment. Her face displays a grimace of pain with her downcast

eyes, the slightly arched left nostril and her lips that curl upward while the corners of her mouth slope downward. One might even interpret her features as an expression of repugnance at the capacity for violence on the part of sinners. Our attention is drawn to the mother and son, who are molded into a single human form. Michelangelo's "Pietà" in St. Peter's Basilica was an obvious model for Delacroix, although the merged figures in the painting are not as successfully united as in the famed sculpture. Upon seeing this painting, the critic Grimouard de Saint-Laurent said he believed that Delacroix had gone too far: "We consider the bursts of sadness in all the scenes of the Passion, and especially in this Lamentation, as a defect...."

Conversely, in 1885 the art historian and critic Charles Blanc, in *Les Artistes de Mon Temps*, singled out Delacroix's work as able to move even non-Christians to contemplate the depth of the sacrifice: "Although there are a thousand others [paintings of the "Pietà"]...this time it is so profoundly sensitive, so human, and so heart-rending that all men, Christian or pagan, must be moved to their innermost selves...."

The Crucified Body

In one relatively brief period, Delacroix created a quartet of images of the passion of Christ that, taken together, come closer to portraying Christological theology than nearly any other 19th-century contemporary artist. "The Crucifixion," "The Lamentation," "The Entombment" and "The Appearance of Jesus to Saint Thomas" (also known as "The Incredulity of Saint Thomas") illustrate the sacred body as anointed, adored, caressed, carried, lanced and probed, wrapped and mourned over. Delacroix captures the same quality that he praised in Michelangelo. Here painted flesh appears tangible and vivifying. What he wrote about

Michelangelo's figure of Christ in "The Last Judgment" is true of his own painting: "C'est Dieu lui-même..." ("It is God himself") (*Revue des Deux-Mondes*, 1837).

Perhaps it is sufficient to clarify that orthodoxy did not disappear from art after the Baroque period but re-emerged in the Romantic era. Delacroix was not an atheist; his admiration for Christianity was partly a response to feelings of doubt or despair as he sought a rationally ordered moral compass. As he wrote in his *Journal* in 1857, he was open to the possibility of the supernatural and receptive to the consolation he found in meditation and in the faith of others.

I love churches; I like to rest in them nearly alone, and to sit on a pew, and remain there in calm reverie.... It appears to me like a tapestry of all the prayers that suffering hearts have echoed there rising to heaven. Who can replace these inscriptions, these ex-votos, like paving stones...used by the knees of generations who have suffered and in which the old church has measured their last prayers.

JOYCE C. POLISTENA teaches art history at Pratt Institute in New York and is the author of *Eugène Delacroix 1798-1863: the Initiator of the Style of Modern Religious Art* (Edwin Mellen Press, 2008).

third, the book by George Soros, contains four new chapters and has changed the title's wording from the "credit crisis" to the "crash" of 2008. The books yet to be published will attempt to explain what caused the crisis and what should be done. They will range from blaming the market and deregulation to blaming government interference with normal market processes. These four books were basically written in the early stages of the developing crisis and, therefore, they can be judged on how well they got it right. Did they foresee the depth and extent of the crisis?

Boom and Bust

The Ascent of Money is Niall Ferguson's excellent but uneven guide to the history of finance and financial crises. A professor of history at Harvard, Ferguson shows how money and credit have helped raise humans from subsistence farmers in the ancient world to "Masters of the Universe" on Wall Street. "The ascent of money," he argues...

has been essential to the ascent of man. Far from being the work of mere leeches intent on sucking the life's blood out of indebted families or gambling with the savings of widows and orphans, financial innovation has been an indispensable factor in man's advance from wretched subsistence to the giddy heights of material prosperity that so many people know today.

As a history of money and the evolution of financial markets, Ferguson's book is sketchy but fascinating to read. A key lesson is that this financial history was always characterized by boom and bust cycles, with sooner or later every bubble bursting with all the attendant destructive effects before the cycle started over again.

What has been true of the financial

BOOKINGS | CHARLES K. WILBER FINANCIAL FALLOUT

If you have been reading the newspapers, you have some understanding of what caused the current financial and economic crisis. Banks got themselves and the whole economy into trouble by over-leveraging—that is, using relatively little of their own capital, they borrowed heavily and bought extremely risky real estate assets. In doing so, they used confusing, complex instruments like collateralized debt obligations. The prospect of high returns and thus high compensation led account managers to accept excessive risk rather than seek more prudent investments. Banks made all these mistakes unknown to the public, because so much of what they were doing was off-the-books financing. Regulators, in the meantime, appeared to be asleep, failing to use what little power the waves of deregulation had left them.

Expect a deluge of books on the economic and financial crisis to pour

out in the coming months. The four books discussed here were published during 2007 and 2008, with two of



them republished in late 2008 and early 2009 with new prefaces accounting for rapidly changing events. A

system has been true of the economic system as a whole. Two facts stand out from an examination of the history of capitalist development. First, it has produced unprecedented amounts of goods and services, a growth that has proceeded unevenly between countries and within regions, creating great disparities of wealth and income. Second, it has always proceeded cyclically, through euphoric booms and painful busts in every country and region. This process has extended to individual industries and even households. One of the great economists of the 20th century, Joseph Schumpeter, emphasized the positive side of this dynamic process, calling it creative destruction. Such a vision, however, is scant solace to workers thrown out of their jobs, farmers facing a collapse of demand for their produce or towns and villages that progress leaves behind.

There are two possible responses to this reality. The first proclaims that there is no alternative to allowing the "natural" laws of the economy to work themselves out. Attempts to reform capitalism will only cause greater harm. The second argues that in fact capitalism can be, needs to be and has been reformed without destroying the creative dynamics of the system.

From the beginning the great economic debate in the United States has been about the question: Can the destructive side of the capitalist development process be mitigated while not doing significant damage to the creative side?

With stock markets collapsing, financial institutions going bankrupt and governments around the world stepping in to bail out failing companies, the prospects for investors, the financial community and taxpayers are not bright. And with the effects of recession on employment in other sectors almost certain to result in continuing job losses, the impact from the current market turmoil is going to be

widely felt. That is, the bubble has burst on financial speculation and the real economy has entered the recession phase of its boom-bust cycle. This double whammy creates a perfect storm of challenges for policy makers.

How Did We Get Here?

Charles R. Morris, in *The Two Trillion Dollar Meltdown*, shows how we got into this mess. He explains the arcane financial instruments, the chicanery, the policy misjudgments, the dogmas and the delusions that created the greatest credit bubble in world history. This global crisis originated in the United States, though many other countries jumped on the bandwagon. Morris explains:

At its core, it was a crisis of the classic "Argentinean" variety—a debt-fed party, marked by a consumer binge on imported goods, and the strutting of an ostentatious new class of super-rich, who had invented nothing and built nothing, except the intricate chains of paper claims that duller people mistook for wealth.

This has led to such distortions; Morris believes that only a serious recession can squeeze out the dross that cripples the economic system—too much consumption, too few savings, over-leveraged financial institutions and ruinous amounts of toxic assets. He points to how Paul Volcker slew the inflation dragon in the early 1980s and set the stage for the high performance economy of the 1980s and 1990s. The required restructuring for the current crisis will be at least as painful as the very difficult period of 1979-83.

Morris's solutions include allowing the recession to do its job, reregulating the financial system and then redirecting subsequent growth with invest-

ments in infrastructure and health care. His praise for Volcker, however, should give us pause. It was Volcker who, as chairman of the Federal Reserve, pushed up interest rates and contracted the money supply, thus triggering a worldwide recession that caused devastation in many poor countries.

What Is Needed

In both editions of *The Crash of 2008 and What It Means: The New Paradigm for Financial Markets*, the legendary financier George Soros argues that a new paradigm is urgently needed if we are to understand better what is going on. The paradigm used until now by most economists holds that markets are self-correcting, that they naturally tend toward equilibrium. Economists have therefore frequently argued against regulation or government intervention of any kind, since it would interfere with the natural forces of the market.

The new paradigm that is needed, according to Soros, must incorporate what he calls the theory of reflexivity. Reflexivity examines the relationship between thinking and reality. In the investment world, this means that when investors are promoting, say, housing or mortgage-backed securities, their values are driven up, not because they become intrinsically more valuable but because everyone else is thinking they are more valuable. That is, what we think affects the reality by our acting on what we think.

If a physicist predicts that a liquid heated to a certain temperature will boil, the prediction has no effect on the outcome. But if an economist predicts that the stock market will rise next week, this can change participants' thinking and thus their behavior and can in turn change the outcome. Thus, Soros argues that the natural science methods used by economists do not work. The think-affect mechanism that drives the market

up is self-reinforcing but ultimately self-defeating. The market can go from euphoria to despair overshooting the top, and ultimately the bottom too. Witness today's housing market.

In the new Part III, Chapters 9 to 12, Soros now recognizes that the financial crisis is more severe than he earlier thought. He never expected the financial system actually to break down and the global economy to collapse. He now sees the effect on the global economy of allowing Lehman Brothers to go into bankruptcy "was equivalent to the collapse of the

banking system during the Great Depression." While admitting he underestimated the depth of the crisis, Soros claims that the standard efficient market hypothesis "has been well and truly discredited by the Crash of 2008."

This is an important book but probably not bedside reading. The author's major interest is in arguing for his theory of reflexivity. Thus much of the book is abstract and technical despite the fact that it offers many interesting examples. Moreover, Soros never convinces me that his theory is workable, even if prevailing market theory is no better.

In *The Squandering of America*, Robert Kuttner also attacks the free market orthodoxy that has ruled politics and economics since the 1980s, but he expands his target from the financial

sector to the economy as a whole. Many of the policies, institutions and regulations put in place by liberal administrations from the 1930s to the 1980s have been abandoned in favor of a more business-friendly orientation.

Kuttner argues that these changes have further enriched the already wealthy at the expense of America's lower and middle classes, exacerbating inequality and systematically weakening the economy.

Writing in 2006-7, Kuttner points out time and again that many of the prerequisites for financial disaster are already in place. First and

foremost there is too much money in the hands of too few people. Second, the repeal of the Glass-Steagall Act in 1999 paved the way for the rampant and irresponsible financial speculation that we have witnessed over the past 10 years. Kuttner also points to hedge

funds and private-equity firms as major culprits in this deepening crisis. But most of all he points to the dismantling of the government protections enacted before 1980 and to the free market policies enacted since then:

...the precarious prosperity of the past fifteen years has been built on cheap money and a series of asset bubbles. Broad-based prosperity has been erod-

ing since the 1970s because of the assault on managed capitalism, but debt has kept the economy on artificial life support. For workers and consumers, increased borrowing partly substituted for declining real wages. People increased their credit card debt and borrowed against their homes.

Kuttner believes the financial and economic crisis facing us today is the result of misguided free market policies and can be combated by establishing institutions for a managed capitalism. "There is a coherent alternative to what is occurring," he writes. "It requires a cogent ideology and politics of a managed, rather than laissez-faire, brand of capitalism."

Certainly some kinds of government regulation—from truth-in-advertising to food-and-drug laws—can reduce distrust and thus economic inefficiency, providing gains for all concerned. Government regulation, however, has its limits. Where the regulated have concentrated power (electric companies or financial firms, for example), the regulators may end up serving the industry more than the public—which was clearly the case with the Securities and Exchange Commission. In addition, there are clearly situations in which government operates to serve the self-interest of

ON THE WEB
A review of "30 Rock."
americanmagazine.org/culture

the members of its bureaucratic apparatus. Government can serve the common good, but it has clear limits.

Kuttner says at one point that "the risks of writing a book predicting economic trouble are multiple." That may be, but his book seems prophetic—as do the other three. Their proposed solutions, however, await trial.

CHARLES K. WILBER is emeritus professor of economics at the University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Ind.

GEMS FROM THE FOLEY POETS

Gems, by definition, are rare—especially when it comes to the arts. In the case of poetry, there is much to execute and coordinate: insight, apt imagery, distinctive wording, well-formed lines, cohesive structure and a detectable music. Success depends on some bright impulse or strong line, to start off, and then good poetic resources to bring it to fruition.

St. Thomas Aquinas spoke of art as *recta ratio factibilium*, “the right conception of things to be made.” The Latin *ratio* is elusive, here denoting a conception to be realized.

What helped me through the chore of screening 850 poems for this year’s Foley poetry

competition was real pleasure in the little gems, an occasional phrase or line or couplet that jumped out at me, like this from “Walking to Work,” by Kathleen Flanagan: “From an apartment above, a mother yells to her son/ ‘Go, you’ll be late. Go! You’re handsome enough.’” Rose Marie Quilter, R.S.C.J., writes: “When you pray/ Befriend silence/ The native tongue/ Of God.” Concerning trees Sarah Baglin says, “They watch and wonder/ They are sad for us.” Thomas Forsthoefel, in his list poem “Grace That Suffuses Everything,” celebrates “firemen clambering up fatal steps” and the minister who “bears his loneliness with dignity and a sip of gin.”

Here is Minhjan Dangs beginning “The Carthusians”: “Night is their

diocese/ silence is their ministry/ their world is a mystery.” Excellent! And here is a riff from my favorite entry, six poems by teenagers at Rice High School in Harlem in New York. Among them, Henry Victor praises his girlfriend with a coinage he may

not have been aware of: “In the darkness shone your immaculance.”

Liam McNamara begins “My Sister’s Place” with this glimpse of her dementia: “She’s there now, in that house of not remembering.” And in “The Layoff” Mary Jane Ponyik ponders the all-too-current headline “150 TO BE LET GO.” She imagines a gazelle in the savannah,

when lightning touches off a grass fire: “Her heart pounds; she turns to run.” Just then the wind changes, the flames turn away. The animal acts as correlative for the author: “Stunned, she wonders/ why she was spared.”

As poetry editor of *America*, I confess that I look above all for musicality—a pattern of sound, obvious or subtle. One tactic of musicality, serving so well in songs, is the refrain. In “The Road,” John Pudelski, who writes from confinement, keeps coming back to the line: “I always find myself on this road.” Meskerem Kinfe writes in “Brothers” of his old pals, sitting on a corner gabbing, whistling at the girls, with this refrain, “I knew these brothers then.” In a poem to a deceased mentor, Teresa Locke keeps



summing him up as exemplifying “how to dance in the rain.”

Submissions to the Foley contest came in from everywhere, including Norway (a Trappist nun), Nepal, South Africa, Japan, Ireland and England. From Nairobi came “The Match,” a long, lively account of boys happily playing soccer from morning till night. We received “Winged Worship,” about the butterfly, from Francis Gonsalves, S.J., at a theology school in Delhi: “You feast on pollen plate/ sipping from petal perch/ say, what is it you fly for/ as stubbornly you search?”

I counted about 25 poems from priests and brothers, including one retired bishop in California, and about 40 from women religious. Among the latter, Sister Jacqueline Dorr starts off a riddle poem entitled “Fascination”:

I like the SOUND of them
The FEEL of them
Alluring TEASE-APPEAL of
them

I like the CRISPY-CRUNCH
of them

Their TEXTURE, SHAPE, AND
SIZE.

Sister Jacqueline is writing about words, the gems we all have at hand. The principal gem in the Foley contest, as decided by three judges and appearing here as the winner, is “Ode to the Heart,” by Brent Newsom, a doctoral student in creative writing and a brand new parent. Three runner-up poems are in our winner’s circle, to be published in the course of this year: “State of Dementia” by Mary Damon Peltier; “In Which I Forgive the River,” by Charlotte Muse; and “Sarah’s List,” by Kilian McDonnell, O.S.B. My last word to the Foley gemsmiths of 2009 is: “A deep bow to you all.”

JAMES S. TORRENS, S.J., poetry editor of *America*, is the superior of the Jesuit community in Fresno, Calif.

The editors of **America** are pleased to present the winner of the 2009 Foley Poetry Award, given in honor of William T. Foley, M.D.

Ode to the Heart

Sixteenth Week

Beyond lithe triceps, bulging biceps,
above taut calves and washboard abs,
unsurpassed by lats and hams
is our mother muscle hustling
blood through her brood of tubes,
muscle by which all other muscles flex.

What-what-what-what-what-
wafts through the Doppler mike
held against the slight, gelled
swell of your mother's uterus.
Your body's first voice
utters a stutter
I have no answer for.

Praise the four-chambered
orchestra playing staccato
sonate da camera in your chest,
percussive as the timpani,
or more so: *allegro, vivace, presto*—
how would Mozart mark
one hundred sixty sixteenth notes
per sixty seconds? *Prestissimo*.

We'll take you home to four small rooms—
one just for you. We'll paint your name
in bubble letters on the wall, hang balloons
in a corner. Your mother hugging you
to her breast, we'll step through the door
of our old, asthmatic apartment
with an April wind rushing in behind,
fresh oxygen borne in our blood.

B R E N T N E W S O M

Brent Newsom is a doctoral student in English at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Tex. His work appears in the spring 2008 issue of *The Southern Review* and is forthcoming in *New Texas*.

MISGUIDED NOTIONS

THE CONSTANT FIRE

Beyond the Science vs. Religion Debate

By Adam Frank

University of California Press. 304p

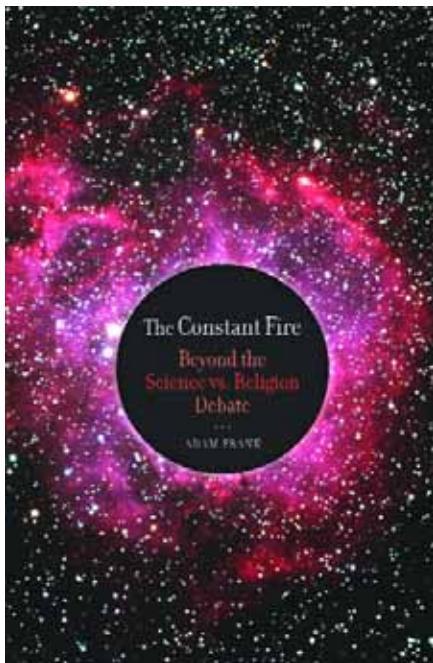
\$24.95

ISBN 9780520254121

In his classic novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the late Oscar Wilde proclaimed that the true mystery of the world is the visible, not the invisible. Wilde's flash of insight encapsulates *The Constant Fire* by Adam Frank, an astrophysicist at the University of Rochester and a regular contributor to *Discover* and *Astronomy* magazines. Frank describes himself as an avowed scientist, enamored of science as the revealer of nature's inner secrets. This disciple of the universe publicly admits that the physical world has an immense spiritual dimension. His book seeks to map out a new path to the spiritual depths of nature by weaving together science and the human spiritual endeavor or what he calls "the constant fire."

Frank's goal is not to supplant science with spirituality but to recognize that science is a means to wisdom. His new spiritual path echoes *The Sacred Depths of Nature*, by Ursula Goodenough, a biologist and naturalist for whom nature bathed in the purity and simplicity of mystery is religion itself. Like Goodenough, Frank's path is nontheistic. His project is formed by three main themes: science, myth and the sacred. In the first section he explores these themes in light of the constant fire of the sacred, which he describes (following William James) as experience, intuitively apprehended. He examines the conflict between science and religion followed by a new way to view the sacred in science through religious experience. He also

expounds the power of myth in science and religion through the work of Mircea Eliade and Joseph Campbell. In the second main section he describes the universe story and the wonders of cosmological and ecological nature, and identifies some of the



main problems facing us today. In the final section he attempts to find ways to recapture the sacred in nature that can lead us to a higher plane of knowledge and wisdom.

Frank writes well and is especially clear when describing aspects of science. His account of the universe story is superb and enlightening: "New Jersey seems like an unlikely place for the origin of the universe to reveal itself, but that is exactly where the story of the Big Bang starts." No one before has ever identified New Jersey as the birthplace of the universe.

But there are weaknesses, too. Frank is poorly informed in the area of religion and hence of the encounter of religion with science. The author contends that organized religion is an

enemy of science; hence his desire is to move beyond the science and religion debate. The antagonism Frank perceives is based on the tenets of creation science and the intelligent design movement. He labels the devotees of creationism as the "Sullen" because they harbor an inborn anger toward science. Frank is equally critical of the New Age movement's appropriation of the new science. In his view, the New Age movement conflates quantum physics with specific religious doctrine (such as Buddhism) or uses quantum mechanics to prop up ideas that have no connection to it. He calls these folk the "Silly" because they embrace a dominant scientific paradigm and use it to explain traditional religious beliefs, sometimes reducing the science to a pulp where it is hardly recognizable.

While some efforts in this regard are inane, I would hardly describe Fritjof Capra's work as silly. Capra is a professionally trained physicist who has drawn together aspects of the new physics with certain tenets of Buddhism in a highly engaging manner, helping many people to open up their worldviews to a much different universe than the one Newton described. What Frank fails to realize is that others too are trying to make sense of the world as science describes it by identifying deeper connections and fundamental human values.

Although Frank does not want to associate himself with formal religion, his book is suffused with the question of religion. Because he does not adequately engage a discussion of religion, however, his argument rests on the shifting sands of the postmodern slogan "spiritual but not religious." His argument is like an etch-a-sketch. He briefly recounts the ancients' pursuit of true knowledge as a spiritual discipline but then jumps to the modern conflict between religion and science, as if there might have been nothing in between these two extremes. I think

Frank would enjoy reading St. Thomas Aquinas, Roger Bacon or Robert Grosseteste in this regard. He insists that the expression "science and religion" is a battle cry between science and the Judeo-Christian God who tends to be willful. Yet science, as we have come to know it, grew out of the Christian tradition; and unless we come to appreciate what the Christian tradition has to say, we fail to plumb the secret depths of nature. Frank wants to "step off the old road and set off in a different direction," but others have already traveled this path; and some, like Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, S.J., have made a difference.

Frank's goal is noble, but his method of inquiry is impotent and raises the question, who has the authority to plumb the sacred? One cannot help admire Frank, a hard-core scientist, for identifying the sacred in nature, but he succumbs to the same problem for which he berates the "Silly" and "Sullen"—engaging a dis-

pline (in this case, religion) without sufficient foundation. Is this not the reason for dialogue between scientists and theologians, so that together we may come to a deeper understanding of the world? Frank too easily dismisses God and thus never really plumbs the sacred depths of nature or the meaning of science itself. In the end, the constant fire of the book's title is a constant problem of misguided notions of religion. Frank might have done well to look to a writer like Teilhard, for whom the universe was not simply an object of scientific inquiry but something alive, throbbing and pulsating with energy that he approached with deep reverence and a sense of wonder. Maybe Frank can still learn from Teilhard that the constant fire is not the undefined sacred but the divine heart bursting with love.

ILIA DELIO, O.S.F., is a professor and chair of the department of spirituality studies at Washington Theological Union.

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LETTERS

A True Scandal

How disappointed I was to read your editorial calling for the U.S. bishops to narrow their policy regarding speakers and awards at Catholic institutions. Indeed, at least in my part of the world, the decision of the University of Notre Dame to grant an honorary degree to Barack Obama has been seen by some people as evidence that the church is en route to a substantial dilution of its commitment to the constant struggle against intrinsic evil, which in turn alters the moral judgment of those persons.

For Notre Dame to generate such an effect is true scandal. I pray that the bishops hold strong to their stated policy.

(REV.) JAMES E. CONNELL
Sheboygan, Wis.

No More Litmus Tests

I found "Sectarian Catholicism" to be quite timely and to state truths about the tactics in the church of those who would call themselves "orthodox." We need our Catholic scholars and our

Catholic universities to be able to examine freely all the so-called "life issues." At the same time, we need to stop putting constraints on our people and issuing litmus tests, especially on Catholics who serve in higher office, where they have to consider all the people they serve, not just Roman Catholics.

BETTY DAWSON
Alexandria, Va.

Sharing the Stage

Re your editorial on sectarian Catholicism: It is clear that much of the opposition to Barack Obama speaking at Notre Dame is based on partisan politics. As an observer of New York politics, I have often seen cases in which Catholic opponents of legalized abortion provided a forum to pro-choice politicians.

As far as I know, no one in the pro-life movement thought less of Cardinal John O'Connor for jointly writing a book with Mayor Ed Koch. No one questioned the pro-life credentials of Bill Donohue, president of the Catholic League, when he held news conferences jointly with Mayor Rudy Giuliani. No one has questioned the New York State

bishops for their frequent expressions of thanks to Assemblyman Vito Lopez for sponsoring legislation that would avert a bill allowing retroactive lawsuits over clergy sex abuse. In fact, bishops have often held news conferences with Lopez, who is rated pro-choice by the National Abortion Rights Action League.

It is clear that O'Connor, Donohue, the New York bishops and the University of Notre Dame held the Catholic church's position on abortion, even when they shared the stage with politicians who were pro-choice.

PAUL MOSES
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Lack of Charity

It is a well-known fact that American Catholics are seriously divided on the issue of abortion. The president of the University of Notre Dame, Father John I. Jenkins, C.S.C., precisely because he is an intellectual, should have been able to exercise better judgment than to invite President Barack Obama to speak. It is never legitimate to scandalize so many people, for that amounts to a lack of charity. In this particular situation, that lack of charity was directed toward fellow Catholics who, polarized or not, subtle or not so subtle, love their church and try the best they can to follow its teachings.

I personally doubt the uproar would have grown to such magnitude if Obama were invited only for the commencement speech without being granted an honorary degree, which by all accounts is a powerful symbolic action.

JOANNA IONESCU
Toronto, Ont.

All the Right Enemies

The negative responses to your editorial on sectarian Catholics—and they will certainly come—will focus on intrinsic evil, Democrats and moral rot at your magazine. They will be angry

CARTOON BY DAVE LONDON



and corrosive. By and large, they will serve to demonstrate the accuracy of the editors' perceptions, values and writing. Me? I think the editorial superb. Keep on.

JOE TETLOW, S.J.
Lake Dallas, Tex.

Open Doors

For over 30 years I have subscribed to **America** and supported it. It has challenged me intellectually, and there were points of agreement and disagreement over those years. But when I read your editorial "Sectarian Catholicism" (5/11), I thanked God **America** has been an important part of my faith journey.

At a time of many strident voices, you have put the issues in perspective and described well the Catholic faith that I am proud to be part of. You draw upon the wisdom of Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Paul VI in suggesting how we can meet the challenge of political partisanship. Closing doors and windows is certainly not the answer.

Hopefully, the four steps you propose will be taken to heart and enable us to put the teachings of the Second Vatican Council into practice as we face this latest challenge.

(MOST REV.) JOHN J. SNYDER
St. Johns, Fla.

The Costs of War

Thank you to David O'Brien for his meditation on the death of Pfc. Jonathan Roberge ("A Death in the Family," 5/18). John Paul II was right: "War is always a defeat for humanity." And yet established tyranny, it would seem, can only be removed by war.

To send a letter to the editor we recommend using the link that appears below articles on **America**'s Web site, www.americamagazine.org. This allows us to consider your letter for publication in both print and online versions of the magazine. Letters may also be sent to **America**'s editorial office (address on page 2) or by e-mail to: letters@americamagazine.org. They should be brief and include the writer's name, postal address and daytime phone number. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

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Therefore, we Christians must learn to recognize the seeds of tyranny when and wherever they may appear and uproot them before they can bear bitter fruit. Only then will such sacrifices as that made by Private Roberge be unnecessary. In the meantime we Christians should be grateful for his sacrifice and continue our efforts to establish and maintain peace throughout the world.

EDISON WOODS
Gulf Breeze, Fla.

Flor y Canto

Deirdre Cornell's article on Mary ("Our Mother, Our Advocate," 5/18) contains insights that can only be acquired by someone who has lived in Mexico. As the author indicates, it is natural for the native Indians of Mexico to think of Mary as "mother." Mexicans refer to their nation as the "Mother Land," and include their maternal name in their legal name.

Unlike the U.S. experience, the mixture of the European and native races is evident in the predominantly mestizo people of modern Mexico. While European culture tends to analyze life through the articulation of philosophical concepts, Mexican indigenous culture expresses itself through nature, music, art and dance (*flor y canto*, as the ancients put it).

There is also something significant and refreshing about insights on Mary from a feminine perspective. Most of our written Christian heritage comes from a male viewpoint. For instance, one would think a feminine hand in the Book of Genesis would refer to a divine mandate to "nurture" nature, not "dominate" it.

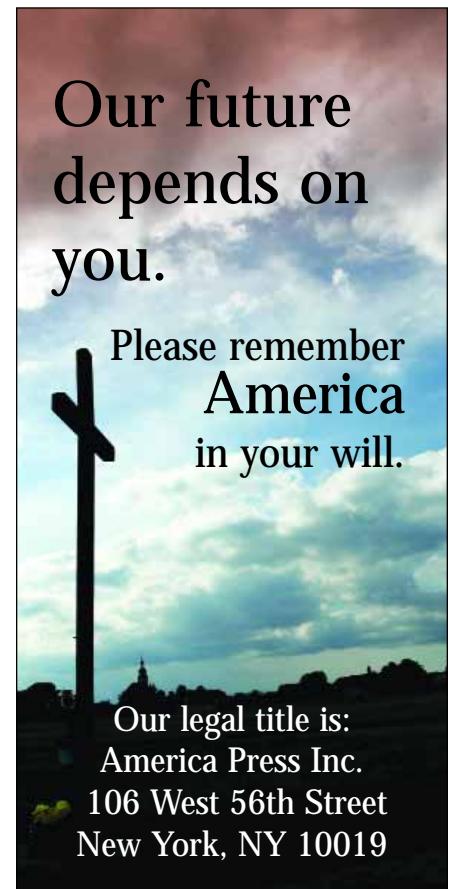
Our church continues to restrict severely the role of women in governance and official ministry. I always found it strange, for example, that the Scripture passage about the pain and joy of a mother giving birth (Jn. 16:21) can only be proclaimed and preached during the eucharistic assembly by a man, who has never had that experience. Fortunately for us, the Spirit can work around these obstacles.

(REV.) CHARLES A. HAMMOND
Sandusky, Mich.

Upon This Rock

While I am indeed grateful to be reminded of Popes Hormisdas and Silverius (Current Comment, 5/25), aren't you overlooking an even more famous married pope? St. Peter, of course (Mk 1:29-31), though I can understand why intellectual consistency might make you reluctant to ascribe to him a title that only came later.

NICHOLAS CLIFFORD
New Haven, Vt.



Blood Bond; Fearless Faith

BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST (B), JUNE 14, 2009

Readings: Ex 24:3-8; Ps 116:12-18; Heb 9:11-15; Mk 14:12-14, 22-26

"This is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed for many." (Mk 14:24)

As youngsters, we had ways of sealing the bond of friendship with our best friends. We girls would exchange friendship rings, pledging our undying loyalty to one another. Our brothers would make a small cut on their finger and then mingle their blood with their buddy's to signify the unbreakable bond between them as "blood brothers." Today's readings evoke this symbol of blood bonds that can never be broken.

In the first reading, Moses sprinkles half the blood of a sacrificed animal on the altar and the other half on the people. The blood signifies the life force that seals the commitment between the Holy One and Israel. Not only are God and the people bound together irrevocably, but the people themselves are united to one another. The twelve pillars erected at the foot of the mountain represent the whole of the people. They acclaim with one voice their loyalty to all the words and ordinances of God.

In the same way Jesus' blood, shed for all, reaffirms God's unbreakable bond with us. What Jesus says and does at the Last Supper is the culmination of an entire lifelong pouring-out of himself in love. The words and gestures echo God's life-sustaining self-gift to Israel in the wilderness, symbolized in manna (Ex 16:12-35), and Jesus' feeding of the hungry multi-

tudes during his Galilean ministry (Mk 6:30-44; 8:1-9). These continual manifestations of God's commitment to us reach their climax in Jesus' gift of self. In Mark's Gospel, the Last Supper is a Passover meal, recalling how the blood of lambs smeared on the doorposts kept the fleeing Israelites safe from the destroyer, and how the flesh of the lamb was consumed in haste for the journey to freedom.

So Jesus' flesh and blood sustains, protects and frees us as a people who then embody for others his unbreakable commitment of love. His blood seals this covenant for all people. Four times in describing the preparation for the meal Mark uses the word *math'tai*, "disciples," signifying all the women and men who have followed Jesus and who have ministered with him. In the words over the cup, Jesus says his blood "will be shed for many." This reflects a Hebrew idiom, where the contrast is between "one" and "the many." "Many" does not mean that some are left out; instead it signifies the totality.

This blood bond is already a reality for us, yet it awaits perfect fulfillment, as Jesus' final words in today's Gospel reading indicate. In our eucharistic gatherings we make present again Jesus' gift of self while we also celebrate

a foretaste of the eternal feasting, where we will experience perfect oneness with the Holy One and with one another.



PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

- How have you experienced God's undying commitment to you through an unbreakable bond with a loved one?
- Meditate on how "the cup" symbolizes both suffering and the life force that empowers us to endure.
- Reflect on how every time we say "Amen" at Communion, we recommit ourselves to our bond with the Holy One.

ART: TAD DUNNE

TWELFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (B), JUNE 21, 2009

Readings: Job 38:1, 8-11; Ps 107:23-31; 2 Cor 5:14-17; Mk 4:35-41

"Why are you afraid? Do you not yet have faith?" (Mk 4:40)

In our most fearful moments, several things can quell our terror. An imagined threat passes; the light of day reveals that the forms so scary in the night were only shadows; a real, well-founded terror is dissipated when loved ones bear it with us. In today's Gospel the disciples are terrified that the sea will swallow them up. It is a frequent occurrence on the Sea of Galilee, especially late in the after-

BARBARA E. REID, O.P., is a professor of New Testament studies at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, Ill.

noon, that strong wind squalls surge suddenly. The lake is ringed by hills that funnel the wind, which whips up the waves. The disciples' fear is well founded as their boat begins to be swamped. Meanwhile, Jesus is peacefully asleep, like those the psalmist describes who rest undisturbed, having placed their trust entirely in God (Ps 3:5; 4:8).

When the disciples rouse Jesus, he rebukes the wind in the same way that he rebukes demons and unclean spirits (Mk 1:25; 3:12; 9:25), and it immediately obeys. Jesus' questions to the disciples, "Why are you terrified? Do you not yet have faith?" are not so much a rebuke to them as they are a way of teaching them how to cross over from fear to faith. The disciples have addressed him as "Teacher" when they cry out to him (v. 38), and Mark portrays this as a teachable moment.

As frequently happens in the books of Wisdom, instruction is given through probing questions that lead the learner into deeper insight. This is the technique God uses with Job in the first reading for this Sunday. It is not with an accusatory tone that God asks Job about the primordial days. Job is in terrible anguish and has cried out in misery to God.

God's answer in the midst of the storm is to point Job to the awesomeness of creation. The Creator speaks of having birthed the sea as it "burst forth from the womb," and then of having put boundaries around it. Just as a mother wraps a newborn with "swaddling bands," giving the child a sense of security as it enters a new and frightening phase of existence, so God bound the sea at its creation.

God does not explain or take away Job's suffering as uncontrollable waves of loss threaten to swallow him up. Rather, the Holy One redirects Job to the awe and beauty of the created world and to the divine power that recreates it in ever new and magnifi-

cent patterns of generativity. Turning from his own misery toward the inscrutable designs of the Creator, Job allows himself to be transformed through the pain.

So too in the Gospel, Jesus' questions point the disciples toward deeper understanding of the power of the Creator at work in himself and in them. It is a power that creates and recreates through patterns of death

and rebirth. As God does with Job, Jesus does not explain away the disciples' terror, but redirects them toward the One who is the creative power at the center of the universe. He leads them through their fear, enabling them to cross over into awe at the One whose re-creative power is manifest in Jesus' stilling of every storm.

BARBARA E. REID



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Friday, June 26, 2009 at 8 p.m.

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FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC • Reception following the Lecture



DR. JIM D. DAVIDSON
Professor of Sociology
Purdue University

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