America

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Drones at War

MARY ELLEN O'CONNELL • MARYANN CUSIMANO LOVE

OF MANY THINGS

The Quadrennial Defense Review is a Congressionally mandated report by the Secretary of Defense on U.S. strategic goals and the personnel, hardware and financing required to realize them. Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates presented the 2010 Q.D.R. on Feb. 1. His willingness to cut big-budget weapons systems that are relics of the cold war helped to bring the defense budget in line with meeting actual threats and the ongoing missions in Iraq and Afghanistan, but they yielded no overall savings in defense spending.

The report pays attention to the needs of the active military, veterans and their families, who have disproportionately paid the price for war in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The military will be asked to prepare for rescue and relief operations following natural disasters both at home and abroad. Americans should be proud of the transport and logistical capacities that make U.S. help indispensable in complex humanitarian emergencies like the current rescue effort in Haiti.

But the variety of threats cited by Secretary Gates, as well as shifts in military technology, demand further examination, especially as they strain military law and ethics. Counterinsurgency and counterterrorism will continue to be major foci of U.S. defense efforts. Under General David Petraeus, the head of the U.S. Central Command (Middle East and Central Asia), counterinsurgency efforts have begun to reduce civilian casualties, primarily for strategic rather than moral reasons. An army cannot win counterinsurgency campaigns until the people are ready to trust it more than the insurgents.

In the recent Marja campaign, under Petraeus's supervision, the allies gave notice of their intentions well in advance of the attack, so civilians would have time to leave the region; they received prior agreement to the campaign from local elders, and when a rocket went off-target and killed civilians, the weapon was withdrawn from service until the cause of the error could be found.

The military tries to learn from its mistakes. What has not happened in Afghanistan, however, is the disciplining of personnel for inflicting civilian casualties. In northern Afghanistan, when an isolated unit was exposed to prolonged attack by the Taliban, field officers were disciplined for their failure to protect the unit. Similar discipline seems not to have been applied when civilians were killed.

In counterterrorism operations, the problem of instilling accountability for civilian deaths is complicated because the C.I.A., rather than the military, operates many of the drones responsible for collateral casualties. The C.I.A. does not operate under restraints of the laws of armed conflict or the discipline of military justice. Targeting in these attacks is both morally and legally problematic because it involves assassination or, to use a term favored by the Israelis, "targeted killings" (see Jane Mayer, "Predator War," The New Yorker, 10/26/09).

Some argue that these killings are justified acts of self-defense; others, that outside the field of battle they are prohibited by international law. Misleading intelligence from local informants, which has lead to noncombatant casualties, is cited as another reason for not authorizing assassination by drone as a tool of national defense.

As the number of threats against which we feel we must defend ourselves grows and as new political realities like global terrorism and new technologies like drones muddy the old clarities, the need to determine the moral and legal limits under which the military and civilian agents carry on that defense grows more and more necessary. Moral scrutiny, like that by Mary Ellen O'Connell and Maryann Cusimano Love in this issue of **America,** will be required.

DREW CHRISTIANSEN, S.J.

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106 West 56th Street
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Ph: 212-581-4640; Fax: 212-399-3596

E-mail: america@americamagazine.org;
letters@americamagazine.org
Web site: www.americamagazine.org.
Customer Service: 1-800-627-9533

Cover: A United States Air Force technician pushes a Predator unmanned surveillance plane out of its hangar at an airbase in the Gulf on March 10, 2003. Reuters/Chris Helgren

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The Cost of Uranium

President Obama has stated his support for the construction of safe, clean nuclear power plants in the United States but has said little about the methods by which the uranium needed to run them will be obtained. One possible location: the Arizona 1 mine, located approximately 10 miles from Grand Canyon National Park. At this spot in December 2009, uranium mining resumed after a 20-year hiatus. Denison Mines, a Canadian company, will extract up to eight 20-ton truckloads of uranium per day. The mining has begun, despite lawsuits from environmental groups and a two-year ban on new mining claims, to assess the environmental and economic impacts of the mines. Denison's claim is not a new one, however, so the company has been given appropriate permits to move forward. Its decision was spurred by rising uranium prices. But are increased profits worth the increased risk of environmental contamination and health problems?

On the Navajo reservation in northern Arizona, where extensive uranium mining took place more than 50 years ago, the effects are still felt. Sheep graze in the midst of radioactive tailing piles, and more than 2.3 million tons of hazardous waste have been buried near the reservation town of Tuba City, Ariz., covered only by a layer of soil and rock. Contaminated water and soil are thought to have increased instances of cancer and birth defects over time. A recent U.S. Geological Survey concluded that, while 95 percent of the water near the mining strip north of the Grand Canyon was drinkable, contamination could be found in areas near the mines. More work must be done to clean up past contamination and eliminate potential future problems before new mining projects move forward.

Descartes in Pennsylvania

In the mid-1800s an Italian mathematician stole from the Institut de France a stack of letters written by René Descartes. Since then scholar sleuths have recovered 45 of the 72 letters. They should have been looking at Haverford College, a Quaker-founded school in the leafy suburbs of Philadelphia, where one letter was found in February. It had been given to the university's library in 1902 by a donor unaware that it had been stolen. The university's president, Stephen G. Emerson, immediately called the Institut and promised to return the heirloom that had sat more or less unnoticed on his campus for over a century.

Mr. Emerson did the right thing. Often, after works of art with shaky provenances find their way into museums, the original country calls for their return and a legal battle ensues. The Getty Museum in Los Angeles was recently ordered by an Italian court to return the Getty's iconic bronze statue of an athlete. The museum says it did not know the work had been removed from Italy illegally. The judge countered that the museum showed "grave negligence." Around the globe, artworks have been taken and retaken as invading armies plundered palaces and museums; others are housed in museums that have superior resources for conservation. Both issues make deciding ownership a thorny question. Others were simply pilfered from the original sites. The Elgin Marbles, part of the Parthenon, were spirited away in 1801 by Lord Elgin and are still in the British Museum. But Haverford did the right thing. Ownership does not trump ethics. That would be putting Descartes before the horse.

The Urgency of Now

The health care summit meeting on Feb. 25 ended not with a bang but with a grimace. With the Republican opposition determined to remain only that, Democrats are left scrambling to salvage health care reform before its momentum peters out completely. To start over, as Republicans disingenuously suggest—as though they were not present and had no responsibility to participate in the yearlong process—would be to postpone reform indefinitely.

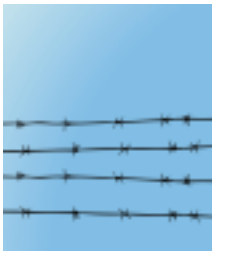
But Congress cannot merely shrug off the vexing problem of health care in the United States or pretend to "fix" it through tepid efforts at cost control. It does not serve the common good to help 3 million additional families pay for health insurance when more than 10 times that number have none. And it is morally unacceptable for 45,000 people to die each year in one of the wealthiest nations on earth for lack of health care insurance.

As a player in the health care debate, the church may not achieve all its goals immediately, though it has already achieved a great deal in protecting the integrity of the Hyde Amendment. It can continue to fight for the protection of the unborn, conscience clauses for medical professionals and health care for immigrant communities through the reconciliation process and future legislative action.

Reform is imperative. The status quo already endangers the nation's economic vibrancy as it diminishes human dignity. Postponing a comprehensive solution means costs will climb and fewer employers will offer insurance benefits. It took courage for previous Congresses to pass Social Security and Medicare against powerful opposition and public uncertainty. That same courage is required today. As Carol Keehan, D.C., president of the Catholic Health Association, insists, the time for reform is now.

EDITORIAL

Administering Justice



Recession-driven prison closings may provide state lawmakers an opportunity to promote a more rational approach to criminal justice that still puts public safety first. Draconian sentences even for low-level offenders have long crowded penal facilities, and over the past two decades the building of new prisons has increased dramatically. In the 1960s and 70s an average of four prisons a year were under construction, but in the 1990s the average jumped to 24 a year. Correctional costs now swallow up huge portions of many state budgets. According to a March 2009 report by the Pew Center on the States, total corrections spending has reached an estimated $68 billion, an increase of 336 percent since 1986.

For some states, this spending has produced disquieting signs of skewed spending priorities. In Michigan, for example, one of the states hit hardest by the recession because of its ties with the ailing automotive industry, the state government spends more on corrections than on higher education, despite having already closed half a dozen penal facilities.

Other states are considering early release for low-level offenders who seem to present little risk to public safety. Arizona, New Jersey and Vermont reduced the sentences of thousands of probation and parole violators who had been returned to prison for violations of various kinds. Early release, though, can work well only if strong re-entry programs are in place—initiatives that provide help with housing, jobs and substance abuse. According to Marc Mauer, executive director of the nonprofit Sentencing Project in Washington, D.C., the commitment to re-entry programs has grown over the past decade—a positive sign of a practice he hopes will continue.

Two of the most effective forms of community corrections, probation (after conviction but before incarceration) and parole (for those who have served time and are eligible for release), have long been underfunded. Yet when adequately funded, both probation and parole can be effective for limiting the overall incarcerated population and reducing recidivism. But with nearly 90 percent of corrections funds devoted to incarceration, Mauer points out, only 10 percent remains for probation and parole. In many jurisdictions, caseloads are too high to permit adequate supervision and services for those released. Cuts in those areas are being made by cash-strapped administrators—a case of being penny-wise and pound-foolish. The Pew report notes that in Sacramento County, Calif., 76 probation officer positions, or 9 percent of the total force, are on the chopping block, as are drug treatment beds.

Not all parts of the country are closing prisons. Parts of the South have been moving in the opposite direction. Florida shows no signs of closing any of its penal facilities. And Kentucky has the fastest growing prison system in the nation because of various tough-on-crime measures, like the so-called persistent felon law, similar to the "three strikes and you're out" laws of some states, as well as such other measures as reclassifying some misdemeanors as felonies, which carry much harsher penalties. Kentucky's prisons have become so overcrowded that it has been obliged to pay local jails to house the overflow, and many inmates sleep on the floor. As the Pew report observes, overincarceration is subject to the law of diminishing returns; the greater the number of offenders imprisoned, "the lower the payoff in terms of crime reduction." Similarly, incarcerating more offenders can lead to "the replacement effect," especially in regard to drug crimes: Other drug dealers quickly take over the territory left open by the person behind bars. This is especially true of young people, who are more easily drawn into criminal activity than those in their 30s and 40s. So unless society addresses the demand for drugs, the supply of potential sellers seems virtually unlimited.

Corrections officers unions and local communities whose economies depend on prisons have resisted prison closings. In some rural areas, prisons serve as large local employers, and local employment in turn supports a number of small businesses—a chain of economic dependency. Such resistance is understandable, given the paucity of employment opportunities in such regions, but it raises an important question: How many prisons exist because of the secure jobs they provide rather than for the punishment of crime and promotion of public safety? Robert Gangi, who heads the Correctional Association of New York, has noted that the "administration of justice shouldn't be twisted into a job program for economically depressed upstate communities."

It is time to put in place programs and policies that will depend less on funding and political issues, like those that created excessively stringent drug laws, and ensure a more rational, effective approach to public safety.

IRAQ

Christians March for Peace During Surge of Violence


Iraqi Christians demonstrate for peace in Mosul, Iraq, Feb. 28.

More than 1,000 Christians walked through Hamdaniya, a town 25 miles east of Mosul, on Sunday Feb. 28 in an appeal to Iraq's central government for protection. Many of the silent protestors were praying and carrying olive branches. One banner read, "The blood of the innocents screams for an end to the violence." More than eight Christians were killed in the last two weeks of February in Mosul. A U.N. report on Feb. 28 indicated that 683 Christian families, or 4,098 people, fled Mosul between Feb. 20 and Feb. 27 following the attacks. The Christian families who remain live in fear for their lives.

Iraqi Christians are among the oldest Christian communities in the world. Since the U.S. invasion in 2003 and the sectarian violence that followed it, many thousands have been forced to leave. The recent outbreak of violence against Christians has come just weeks before Iraq's parliamentary election, scheduled for March 7, and has been accompanied by deadly car and suicide bombings in other Iraqi cities.

Archbishop Georges Casmoussa, the Syrian-Catholic archbishop of Mosul, said before the Christian demonstration in Hamdaniya: "The community is shocked and wants to draw the attention of the authorities, who so far have done nothing to stop this killing. The march has no political or electoral motives, only religious ones. The Christians want to stay in Iraq and live their faith in peace."

The date of Feb. 28 is particularly poignant for Iraq's Christian community, as it marks the second anniversary of the kidnapping of Archbishop Faraj Rahho, the Chaldean archbishop of

UNITED KINGDOM

Bishops Welcome Revised Policy On Prosecution of Assisted Suicide

The Catholic bishops of England and Wales welcomed new guidelines governing prosecutions in assisted suicide cases, saying that the most vulnerable people are better protected under the revisions. Archbishop Peter Smith of Cardiff, Wales, praised Keir Starmer, director of public prosecutions, for revising the guidelines in a way that removed some of the provisions that were most dangerous for the sick and vulnerable.

"Our particular concerns were that the interim guidelines gave less protection under the law to disabled or seriously ill people and to those who had a history of suicide attempts and were likely to try again," Archbishop Smith said in a statement on Feb. 25. "There also appeared to be a presumption that a spouse or close relative would always act simply out of compassion and never from selfish motives," he said.

"These factors have been removed from the new guidelines, which now give greater protection to some of the most vulnerable people in our society," he said. "There is also a greater stress on the fact that the law has not changed, that all cases will be investigated and that no one is being given immunity from prosecution under these guidelines."

Starmer was instructed to produce new guidelines following a July ruling in the House of Lords, Britain's highest court, in a case brought by Debbie Purdy, a West Yorkshire political activist who has multiple sclerosis. Purdy demanded to know if her husband would be prosecuted if he helped her to travel to the Dignitas euthanasia clinic in Switzerland to commit suicide.

The court's ruling required Starmer, as Britain's chief prosecutor, to spell out exactly how the state would respond if someone helped a person to commit suicide. More than 100 British citizens have killed them-

Mosul who was abducted and killed in a previous campaign of sectarian violence. No Mass was held in Mosul that Sunday morning. Archbishop Casmoussa explained that the time would be "entirely devoted to an act of protest and silent prayer." He said: "The Eucharist will be celebrated in churches in the afternoon. We will be fasting and praying for peace and for the survival of Christians."

Addressing pilgrims in St. Peter's Square the same day, Pope Benedict XVI appealed to the civil authorities in Iraq to protect the Christian population there. Pax Christi International demanded a response to the desperate situation of Iraq's minorities at the opening on March 1 of the 13th session of the U.N. Human Rights Council in Geneva.

The Pax Christi group noted the "gross and systematic human rights violations of the minorities in Iraq" and warned that these minorities, including Yazidis, Shabaks, Turkoman and Assyrian Christians, "are facing a human rights catastrophe."

According to a Pax Christi statement, "These groups have been systematically targeted, including by Sunni insurgents who regard them as 'crusaders' and 'infidels.'" Making matters worse, Pax Christi reports, is the ongoing regional power struggle between Kurds and Arabs in northern Iraq. "In order to further their aims, the Kurds have offered minorities inducements while simultaneously exercising repression in order to keep them in tow. Kurdish forces frequently rely on intimidation, threats, arbitrary arrests and detentions to coerce the support of minority communities and in some cases have resorted to extreme violence.

"Today the minorities are being threatened from all sides as they find themselves trapped between the two ethnic rivals," Pax Christi warned. "Since the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq's cities in June 2009, the attacks against minority groups have increased dramatically and show no sign of abating." Pax Christi urged the U.N. council to act "swiftly and vigorously" to save Iraq's endangered minorities. "As they face these unprecedented levels of violence, the Christians and other minority groups risk being wiped out."

selves in the Swiss clinic, but there has not been a single prosecution of anyone who has accompanied them. Under British law, the offense is punishable by up to 14 years in jail.

In November the bishops publicly criticized Starmer's interim guidelines for allegedly creating categories of people whose lives would be legally considered less worthy of protection than the rest of society. They said the draft guidelines stigmatized the disabled, the terminally ill, the depressed and the aged and "could encourage criminal behavior" by signaling that it was acceptable to help such people to kill themselves.

The new guidelines insist that assisted suicide is a crime but set out six factors that would make prosecution unlikely, including instances when the suspect was "wholly motivated by compassion" and when the patient had a determined wish to commit suicide. Sixteen factors would favor prosecution. They include pressure on the victim, a lack of informed consent, a history of abuse by the suspect or if the suspect was unknown to the victim. Starmer told reporters Feb. 25 that the revised policy "is now more focused on the motivation of the suspect rather than the characteristics of the victim."

The revisions were still criticized by Paul Tully of the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children, a pro-life lobby group, who said in a statement on Feb. 25 that the element of implicit discrimination against the aged, disabled and sick "is more subtle,

Archbishop Peter Smith of Wales

Church Responds To Chile Quake

As Chile's Catholic Church coordinated aid to victims of the massive earthquake that struck the country's central coast on Feb. 27, church leaders expressed their condolences to families of the more than 700 people killed. Bishop Alejandro Goic Karmelic of Rancagua, president of the Chilean bishops' conference, said, "We ache for our brothers and sisters who have lost their lives, and we pray for their families and friends and those who have lost all their possessions." Chile's President Michelle Bachelet declared the southern regions of Maule and Bio-Bio a disaster area, ordered the army to reinforce the police and imposed a nighttime curfew on the region to halt the looting of stores. Most deaths were in the Maule region, where a quake-triggered tsunami swept through coastal villages.

NEWS BRIEFS

Juan Carlos

If **King Juan Carlos of Spain** signs a new law easing abortion restrictions, as he is constitutionally required to do, the general secretary of the Spanish bishops' conference said on Feb. 25 that no action would be taken against him. ✦ **Mass media attacks on religion** must be opposed, considering "the dangerous effect" they have on social cohesion and interreligious peace, said a statement released on March 2 after the annual meeting of officials from the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt. ✦ A great champion of the Catholic laity and the first woman to hold a position of authority at the Vatican, **Rosemary Goldie**, died Feb. 27 in New South Wales, Australia. She was 94. ✦ On Feb. 21 the Rev. Evaristo Sada, secretary general of the Congregation of the **Legion of Christ**, apologized to anyone whom the order's founder, Marcial Maciel (1920-2008), "harmed with the immoral acts of his private life." ✦ Organizers of the **Atheist Bus Campaign** in New Zealand are considering legal action after their ads—"There's probably no God. Now stop worrying and enjoy your life"—were rejected by the national bus company. ✦ In an open letter to President Obama and the Japanese government on Feb. 26, **bishops from Hiroshima and Nagasaki** called on world leaders to work toward the total abolition of nuclear weapons.

Israeli Heritage Plans Provoke Palestinians

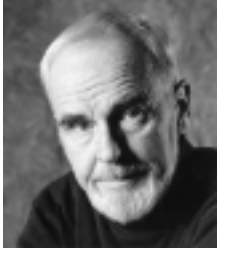
The plans of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel to declare Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem and the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron Jewish heritage sites have generated outrage on the West Bank. The move was perceived by Palestinians as an attempt to formalize a land grab around the sites and close off Muslim worshippers. The Cave of the Patriarchs is known to Palestinians as the Ibrahimi Mosque. An important Muslim spiritual site, it had been one of the most accessible holy sites to West Bank Palestinians. The Palestinian Authority's leader, Mahmud Abbas, called the decision "a dangerous provocation" that threatened to lead to a holy war. Robert Serry, the U.N. Special Coordinator for the Middle East peace process, called on Israel "not to take any steps on the ground which undermine trust or could prejudice negotiations, the resumption of which should be the highest shared priority of all who seek peace." Another apparent seizure attempt threatens the Shepherds' Fields in Beit Sahour near Bethlehem, where tradition says angels announced the birth of Jesus. Israeli settlers now are moving into the area, and Israeli solders have reoccupied a hilltop position that had been returned to the Beit Sahour municipality.

German Bishops Confront Abuse Claims

Germany's Catholic bishops have asked forgiveness from victims of sexual abuse at church-run schools and promised to "learn lessons" from secular institutions that are dealing with child molestation. "We are assuming responsibility. We condemn the offenses committed by monks, priests and their colleagues in our dioceses, and we ask pardon, in shame and shock, from all those who fell victim to these appalling acts," the bishops said in a statement on Feb. 25. In late January, Canisius College, a Jesuit-run high school in Berlin, confirmed there had been persistent abuse by three priests between 1975 and 1983. At least 120 men have come forward since, claiming they suffered abuse by priests or lay teachers at Jesuit schools throughout the country dating to the 1950s. The Jesuit order has apologized to victims and hired an attorney to discuss compensation with them.

From CNS and other sources.

JOHN F. KAVANAUGH



Antidote for Anomie

In early February, I received a packet of letters from eighth-grade students at Saint Joseph School in New York City. The students suggested ways to be both challenging and respectful while discussing politics, and many sounded more mature and honest than some adult Democrats and Republicans or MSNBC and Fox News commentators. I hope that as they grow up, they will not become contaminated by the degraded discourse of our politics and media.

Our political discourse suffers anomie, or normlessness. There is little respect for any position other than self-interest. Instead of thoughtful critique we hear knee-jerk expletives. If you watch the three major networks and PBS, you may not see much of this, although I think it is true that they are slanted to the left. But if you tune in to the cable channels, you will find grist for every mill—pundits who deride Sarah Palin as stupid and pundits who "wonder" if President Obama is a citizen. Watching some of these programs could make a person feel he or she is in a near occasion of sin. Whether you are a liberal or conservative, the sin might be wrath. Worse still, it could be despair.

As for myself, I will take my young correspondents' advice—to respect President Obama but also challenge him. The president was thrust, even before his swearing in, into a daunting state of affairs, a country that was militarily and economically compromised. This does not mean he can blame everything on former President George Bush. President Obama should give Bush credit for the good decisions he had made, acknowledge what programs the new administration maintains and announce what policies it will change.

Most important, he should be ruthlessly honest with us. This is the only way to lance the boil of self-interest inflaming the body politic. But it will be a difficult task, because members of his audience do not want to hear any bad news, at least none that touches them.

Instead of naming and confronting this delusion, it seemed the president, until now, wanted only to please everyone. As it turns out, no one seems pleased. Just look at the health care reform mess. Pro-choice groups claim that a conscience clause for doctors and hospitals is violence against women. Trial lawyer lobbyists do not want restraints on lawsuits. Insurance companies object to interstate competition. Patients oppose limits on the procedures or coverage they seek. The right wants less government and less taxation. The left wants more programs and services. The reason most people are resistant to true health care reform is that they are afraid of losing something.

The president displays many virtues—especially in matters requiring prudence, justice and temperance. What he must call upon on now is his fortitude. He should admit that all of us are going to lose something. And he should ask this: What, specifically, is any of us willing to accept for the common good? More taxation? Fewer entitlements? Both are required of us. But if the answer is a resounding no from the right and left wings of our country, we can be assured that things will only get worse. With trillion-dollar wars and trillion-dollar deficits, the economy will reel. Without health insurance reform, it may come apart.

What is any of us willing to sacrifice for the common good?

In health care, no matter what the upshot of the recent White House summit, we need a single-payer system insuring basic care for all. And we need competition among the insurance plans, even across state lines, for those purchasing a Cadillac, boutique or special options plan. We need the tort reform and limits to lawsuits against beleaguered doctors that will displease many lawyers. But we also need the freedom to buy approved medications from other countries, which will displease big Pharma. And we patients must finally realize that in matters of health, we do not have a right to everything possible.

As Americans, we must be willing to sacrifice a bit of our vested interest, if our economy and health-care system are to be preserved. In late January, the president told Diane Sawyer on ABC's "World News," "I'd rather be a really good one-term president than a mediocre two-term president." He now has the opportunity to prove it. Maybe his fellow Americans will be inspired by his own willingness to sacrifice a second term in order to tell us not what we want to hear, but the truth we need to hear.

JOHN F. KAVANAUGH, S.J., *is a professor of philosophy at St. Louis University in St. Louis, Mo.*

An armed MQ-9 Reaper unmanned aircraft sits in a shelter Oct. 15 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq, before a mission. Larger and more powerful than the MQ-1 Predator, the Reaper can carry up to 3,750 pounds of laser-guided bombs and Hellfire missiles.

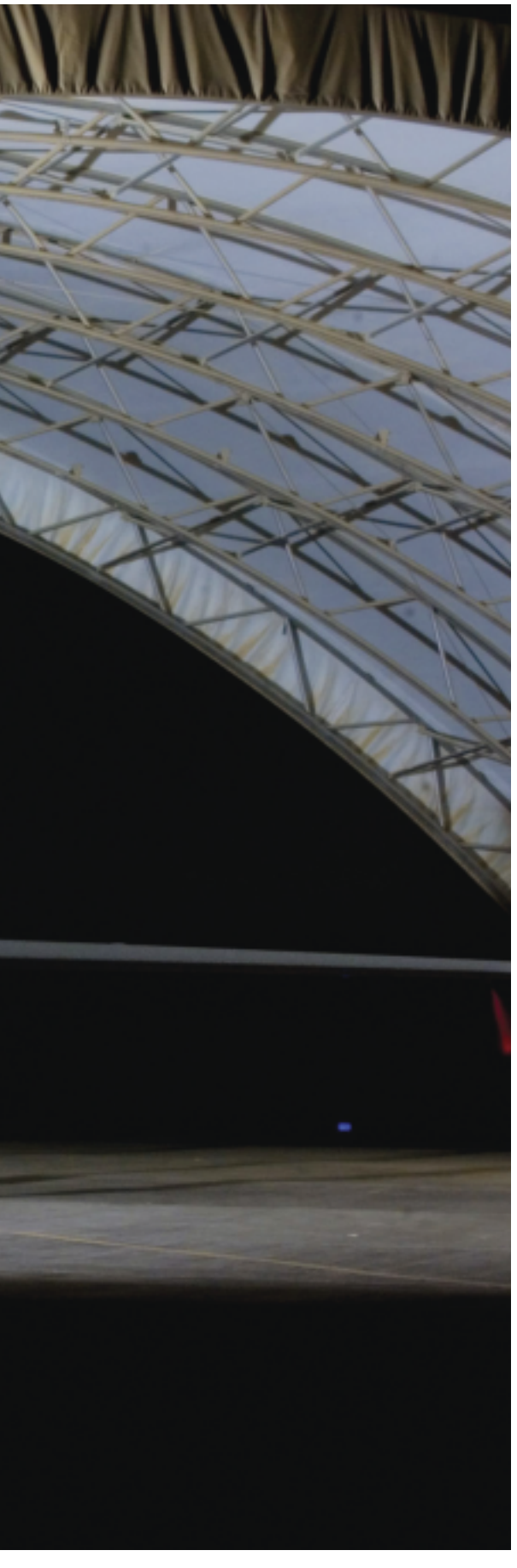


PHOTO: U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTO/TECH. SGT. ERIK GUDMUNDSON

U.S. COMBAT DRONES OPERATE OUTSIDE INTERNATIONAL LAW

Flying Blind

BY MARY ELLEN O'CONNELL

On Dec. 30, 2009, a trusted Central Intelligence Agency informant walked into a base in Khost, Afghanistan, which borders Pakistan, and blew up himself and seven others working for the agency. In the weeks that followed, the United States, possibly for revenge, dramatically increased the number of attacks into Western Pakistan using unmanned aerial combat vehicles, better known as drones.

The attacks in response to the Khost bombing are rekindling the controversy surrounding this new technology of war. The C.I.A., which runs the drone operations in Pakistan, has called them "lawful, aggressive, precise and effective" (New York Times, 1/23), and its director, Leon Panetta, has said that when it comes to disrupting Al Qaeda, drones are "the only game in town." The C.I.A. began using drones in Pakistan in 2004, even though the United States was not engaged in a war with that country. Under President Obama the use of drones in Pakistan has escalated dramatically. Following the attacks in Khost, the C.I.A. increased the attacks to every other day, up from about once a week.

Drones are indeed "aggressive," but whether they are precise and effective is open to dispute. The C.I.A. uses drones to target enemy leaders on its "watch list," but the attacks inevitably kill many people who are not on the list, including innocent women and children. According to David Kilcullen and Andrew McDonald Exum (New York Times, 5/19/09), the United States kills 50 unintended targets for each intended target of a drone attack. As one intelligence source told The Nation: "If there's one person they're going after and there's thirty-four people in the building, thirty-five people are going to die. That's the mentality.… They're not accountable to anybody and they know that."

Even killing the few on the C.I.A. list, however, raises concerns under international law. Neither the Bush administration nor the Obama

MARY ELLEN O'CONNELL *holds the Robert and Marion Short Chair in Law and is Research Professor of International Dispute Resolution at the Kroc Institute, University of Notre Dame. This article draws on research for a forthcoming article, "Unlawful Killing With Combat Drones, a Case Study of Pakistan, 2004-2009" in* Shooting to Kill: The Law Governing Lethal Force in Context.

administration has been persuasive about its legal right to launch attacks in Pakistan. Even with the legal right to use military force, drone attacks must also conform to the traditional principles governing the rules of warfare, including those of distinction, necessity, proportionality and humanity.

The Rise of the Drones

Drones were invented not long after the Second World War. The United States began using drones equipped with cameras to gather intelligence during the Vietnam War. By 2001, the U.S. military had modified them to fire missiles and drop bombs. Today drones have the ability to remain in the air for long periods, record data and respond immediately with lethal force when a target is detected. The U.S. Air Force first deployed weaponized drones in Afghanistan in November 2001. Drones were used by the Air Force in 2003 during the invasion of Iraq; they have been used in Pakistan since 2004; and since 2006 the United States has used drones in Somalia.

Killing with drones is made easy for operators, who often work at great distances from the scene of attack. An Air Force "pilot" may be in Nevada, while C.I.A. operatives are in Langley, Va., and others, including private contractors, are in Florida, Pakistan or Afghanistan. An operator may launch an attack from a trailer in Nevada viewing a computer monitor and using a joystick. The operators never see the persons they have killed. The pilot of a fighter jet flies over the place where the attack will occur and risks being shot down; a drone pilot never experiences the place where the attack occurs and knows he or she is in no personal danger. The operator can go home at the end of the shift [see sidebar].

In his 1996 book, *On Killing*, Lt. Col. Dave Grossman describes factors that can overcome the average individual's resistance to killing, such as "the distance from the victim." For Grossman, this includes many kinds of distance, like social distance, perceiving someone to be of a different social class; cultural difference, identifying racial and ethnic differences that permit "dehumanizing" the victim; and mechanical distance, engaging in combat through the intervention of "a TV screen, a thermal sight, a sniper sight, or some other kind of mechanical buffer." All of these features characterize killing by drone in Pakistan. They help explain why so many are dying in the U.S. government's attempt to kill a few.

As to the right to kill by drone in Pakistan: Under the United Nations Charter, resort to military force on the territory of another state is permitted when the attacking state is 1) acting in self-defense to an armed attack, 2) acts with U.N. Security Council authorization or 3) is invited to aid another state in the lawful use of force.

The only recent attack on the United States that could give rise to the right of self-defense occurred on Sept. 11, 2001. The Security Council stated in Resolution 1368 that those attacks permitted force in self-defense, but it did not determine who was responsible for the attacks or whether a response in self-defense would meet the other limits in general international law on the resort to force—in particular, the principles of necessity and proportionality. Pakistan did not attack the United States and is not responsible for those who did. The United States has no basis, therefore, for attacking in self-defense on Pakistani territory.

Fighting Al Qaeda

Some argue that the United States is engaged in armed conflict with Al Qaeda and other militant groups outside the combat zone of Afghanistan. The United States is not, however, fighting with Al Qaeda anywhere but in Afghanistan. An armed conflict, as defined by international law, requires the presence of organized armed groups engaged in intense fighting. Once or twice in 2009, the United States aided Pakistan in its attempt to use armed force against militant groups in that country. Otherwise, the United States has not engaged in intense fighting with Al Qaeda in Pakistan. Al Qaeda remains a violent terrorist group, but it should be treated as a criminal organization to which law enforcement rules apply. To do otherwise is to violate fundamental human rights principles. Outside of war, the full body of human rights applies, including the prohibition on killing without warning.

Another attempt to justify drone attacks is based on "hot pursuit." In Afghanistan militants are killing U.S. soldiers, then retreating to Pakistan. There is, however, no right of hot pursuit on land. Hot pursuit at sea requires law enforcement agents to have jurisdiction and to remain in visual contact with the suspect until the arrest.

The only basis for the United States to lawfully use force in Pakistan is with the consent of that country's political leaders. Attacks into Afghanistan by Pakistani militants, even if they target U.S. soldiers, are still attacks on Afghanistan. Afghanistan, not the United States, has a right to respond, but it has no right to use major force for low-level cross-border incursions. The International Court of Justice has ruled in several cases that measures short of military force must be used.

In May 2009, the United States pressed Pakistan to begin a military campaign against various Taliban groups in the western provinces. With an invitation from the Pakistan government to aid in its campaign, the United States would have the right to resort to drones. Yet it remains unclear whether our government has a valid invitation. What is clear is that many of the ongoing drone attacks by the United States are not part of Pakistan's cam-

ON THE WEB
Drew Christiansen, S.J.,
on the just war theory after 9/11.
americamagazine.org/pages

A Troubling Disconnection

Although it may seem counterintuitive, surveys show that the military operators of drones (note that C.I.A. operators were not in the survey) suffer post-traumatic stress disorder at higher rates than do soldiers in combat zones. Why? First, instead of going to war with a unit that offers community, cohesion and military support services, drone operators are commuter warriors who go to their battle stations alone, with few support systems.

Second, the operators see in detail the destruction and grisly human toll from their work, whereas a traditional bomber sees little of what happens after dropping a bomb. As Col. Pete Gersten, commander of Unmanned Aerial Systems at Creech Air Force Base in Nevada, put it: "A lot of people downplay it, say, 'You're 8,000 miles away. What's the big deal?' But it's not really 8,000 miles away, it's 18 inches away. We're closer…than we've ever been as a service. There's no detachment. Those employing the system are very involved at a personal level in combat. You hear the AK-47 going off, the intensity of the voice on the radio calling for help. You're looking at him, 18 inches away from him, trying everything in your capability to get that person out of trouble."

Third, there is a troubling disconnect for drone operators who kill by day, then go home to their families at night. As one Predator drone pilot described it, "You're going to war for 12 hours, shooting weapons at targets, directing kills on enemy combatants. And then you get in the car and…within 20 minutes, you're sitting at the dinner table talking to your kids about their homework."

Fourth, for those in the Air Force, drone warriors are often seen as second-class citizens in military culture. Operators seldom volunteer for this duty, which is derided as the "chair force." Over half the current generals in the Air Force were fighter pilots; operating a drone is considered a career-killer.

Finally, because there are too few operators, the working tempo for drone operators has been excruciating. It is 24/7, grinding shift work, with no end in sight, and the sleep deprivation and lack of time off take a toll. As P. W. Singer, author of *Wired for War,* writes, "We have 5,000 years in one kind of combat, and we don't really understand all of the stresses of it, so it's a little bit arrogant to think we would understand the stresses of this new kind of combat after only four or five years."

MARYANN CUSIMANO LOVE *is a fellow at the Commission on International Religious Freedom.*

paign. Pakistan's president has told U.S. leaders not to attack certain groups that have cooperated with Islamabad. The United States has done so anyway, insisting that Pakistan use more military force and threatening to carry out attacks itself if the government refuses. None of this can be squared with international law.

The elected government of Pakistan is, to be sure, weak; the military and intelligence services sometimes pursue their own agendas separate from elected officials. Yet these agencies cannot give the United States permission to use military force. The United States has a major interest in a stable, democratic Pakistan, a goal it undermines by sending drones over the government's protests. The United States needs to respect the government and defer to its authority in Pakistan.

Conduct of Force

Under the international rules regulating the use of force (*jus in bello*), four fundamental principles must guide the use of lethal action: distinction, necessity, proportionality and humanity. The most important is distinction. Under international law, civilians may never be intentionally targeted. The International Committee of the Red Cross puts distinction first in its study of the customary law of war, and the Geneva Conventions, in Additional Protocol I of 1977, also strongly emphasize the need to distinguish between combatants and civilians.

Persons with a right to take direct part in hostilities are lawful combatants; those without a right to do so are unlawful combatants. Lawful combatants may not be charged with a crime for using force. Incidentally, C.I.A. operatives, like the militants challenging authority in Pakistan, have no right to participate in hostilities and are unlawful combatants. C.I.A. operatives do not wear uniforms, are not subject to the military chain of command and may be charged with a crime for killing with drones.

Attacks even on lawful targets must respect the principles of necessity and proportionality. Necessity refers to military necessity: Force is to be used only if necessary to accomplish a reasonable military objective. Proportionality prohibits that "which may be expected to cause incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians, damage to civilian

objects, or a combination thereof, which would be excessive in relation to concrete and direct military advantage anticipated." These limitations on permissible force extend to both the quantity of force used and the geographic scope of its use. At a ratio of 50 to 1, the disproportionate impact of drone attacks in Pakistan represents a serious violation of the traditional rules of war. (Since Kilcullen and Exum reported their findings, U.S. authorities have issued a series of responses disputing their calculations. Yet the authorities have little information about who is being killed, other than that many victims are not on the C.I.A. lists.)

The situation in Pakistan is not like the invasion of Iraq, where U.S. forces met large, organized units of the Iraqi Army on the road to Baghdad. Before the United States reached Baghdad, its use of drones to launch missile attacks might have protected civilians from bombs dropped from airplanes. (Recall the hundreds killed in high-altitude bombing during the Kosovo conflict.) But can drones ever be precise enough to comply with the rules of distinction and proportionality?

The case of western Pakistan presents particular challenges. There suspected militant leaders wear civilian clothes, and even the sophisticated cameras of a drone cannot reveal with certainty that a suspect is a militant. In such a situation international humanitarian law gives a presumption to civilian status (see the Red Cross's "Interpretive Guidance on the Notion of Direct Participation in Hostilities"). Even when a drone operator is reasonably certain that his or her target is a militant, the United States is obligated to do all it can to minimize injury to civilians. Little information is available as to whether the United States takes such precautions. In close cases, the dictates of humanitarian law support decisions in favor of sparing life and avoiding destruction.

The use of drones is also difficult to justify under the terms of military necessity, which holds that force should only be used when there is a reasonable prospect of success. In Congressional testimony in March 2009, David Kilcullen said drone attacks give "rise to a feeling of anger that coalesces the population around the extremists and leads to spikes of extremism well outside the parts of the country where we are mounting those attacks."

Officials in Washington state again and again that the use of drones in Pakistan is imperative. Kilcullen is one of many independent observers who argue that drones are, in fact, exacerbating the problems of terrorism, violence and instability in Pakistan. The United States has other options besides launching missiles. The alternatives, generally law enforcement, do take more time and patience. And law enforcement is working with increasing arrests of high-ranking Taliban leaders in Pakistan. Law enforcement is not as fast-acting as drones, but it is lawful, ethical and effective—a real place to put our faith. A

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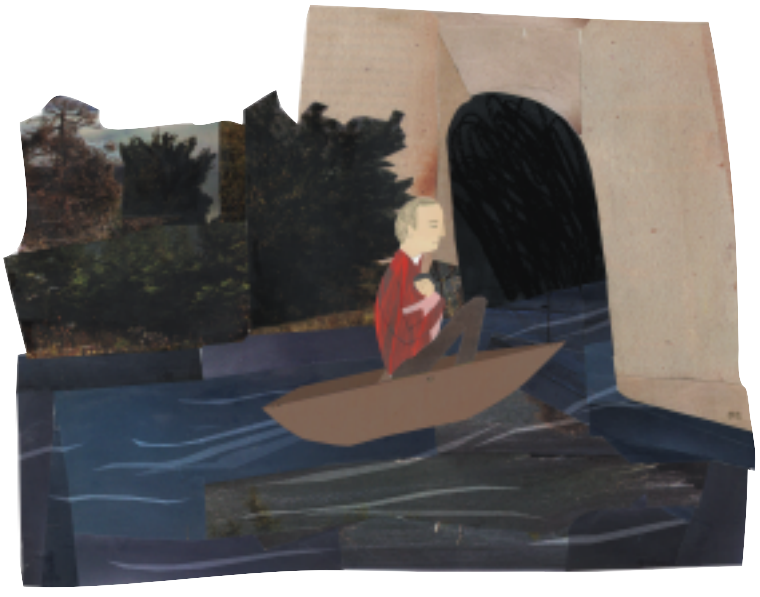
A Season of Grace

BY CHRISTOPHER M. BELLITTO



We did not get ashes on Ash Wednesday last year. Late in the evening a few days after our three-year-old daughter's heart surgery, I realized what day it was. We would not make it to the parish in time to receive ashes, I told my wife. With pitch-perfect insight, she turned to me. "Babe," she said, "we've been wearing ashes for a month."

I do not feel guilty about it. We couldn't pull it off. Our heads were somewhere else: the hospital, doctors, medications, five weeks of appointments, medical testing, sleepless nights and nightmares when we did doze. Yet there we were on Ash Wednesday with an excellent prognosis for our little girl. The prior Friday, she'd had successful surgery by a caring medical team, a pediatrician and cardiologist, and she was doing fine—better than we were. Grace was not yet in the clear, but she was out of the woods.

Ash Wednesday felt more like Easter.

That's the mystery. I have always been fascinated by the liturgical paradox of Lent and Easter. As an altar boy years ago, I helped set up for the triduum and served at all the liturgies, so I got into the rhythm of Lent. Yet even then it seemed like play-acting. We mournfully get ashes on a cold winter Wednesday, knowing how the story turns out. Even if the calendar and weather don't agree, we already know that Easter comes, bringing a springtime of eternal life.

Reflecting on decades of Lents and last year's blurry Ash Wednesday, I wonder about something that dogged me all last year: trust. Lent is ostensibly a question of trust that all will be well. But what merit is there in pretending to trust when we know, from the very beginning on Ash Wednesday, that Easter Sunday is the end of the story?

I got a glimpse of the real thing last year, a month before Ash Wednesday, when our daughter was diagnosed with a congenital heart defect. A 15-minute check of a heart murmur turned into three hours of utter fear that we had to mask while our little girl squirmed through an extensive ultrasound and other tests. When you don't know how something terrifying will turn out, that's when trust comes in.

Heavily influenced by the Jesuits, I knew that the way to pray was to say, "Take, Lord, receive." At that moment, it was fear, anger and despair, rather than faith, hope or trust. It is hard enough to put ourselves in God's hands, but easy compared with giving over someone you love into God's hands, which is how I looked at the hands of our daughter's doctors and nurses. St. Ignatius Loyola came to mind, but so did St. Teresa of Ávila. I always loved her candid remark after she was thrown off her horse and landed in the mud: "If this is how you treat your friends," she told God, "no wonder you have so few."

I wondered: Where is God in all this; or more basically, How is God in all this? I felt like Abraham or Mary, who had to hand over their sons Isaac and Jesus. Mary had made a commitment more than 30 years before to be the mother of Jesus, wherever that path led, and surely Abraham also felt that he had trusted God this far, so he had to keep going. Still, I took comfort in identifying with them. Even though Abraham and Mary knew they had to

CHRISTOPHER M. BELLITTO *is assistant professor of history at Kean University in Union, N.J., and the author, most recently, of* 101 Questions and Answers on the Pope and the Papacy *(Paulist).*

ART: STEFANIE AUGUSTINE

hand their sons over, I'll bet they still wondered what God could be thinking. They did not know how their sacrifices would turn out.

But we didn't have a choice. Our daughter needed heart surgery. We could not pray her condition away. Maybe there was no merit in handing her over, but there might be spiritual growth in hoping and praying, which is all we could do. For me, it was not a matter of trust—it was a matter of faith. I didn't trust that all would be well.

Handing my daughter over reminded me that faith and trust are not about us. Handing over is about God, about God's plan for each of us, about serving God in everyone around us. It is about St. Peter not understanding why Jesus had to wash his feet but somehow knowing he had to do it. It is about all the healing themes we hear in Lent. One Monday about halfway through these 40 days, we heard how Elisha healed Naaman the leper. A week later, a royal official with a sick son will implore Jesus to save his boy. Jesus responds, I imagine with a tsk-tsk in his voice, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will not believe." The royal official pulls no punches with Jesus, demanding without a pause: "Sir, come down before my child dies."

I read this story last year, a few weeks after Grace's surgery, and immediately identified with this royal official who spoke so boldly to Jesus. Grace's surgeon, an hour before the procedure, assured us that everything would be fine. All I could think, toward him and toward God, was that it had better be.

Approaching this Lent, I think about surrender. On Good Friday, Jesus will say, "Father, into your hands, I commend my spirit." Jesus had faith and trust in his Father's plan. Do we have faith and trust every day? I don't. I try to have faith, and I am growing into that trust. A

TELEVISION | REGINA NIGRO

WOMEN'S WORK

'Damages' and 'The Good Wife' look at female ambition

Portraying ambitious women has always proved challenging for playwrights, screenwriters and television writers. Lady Macbeth, for example, entreated the spirits to "unsex" her because seating your husband on the Scottish throne and making yourself queen is a tricky business, especially if you are biologically hardwired to nurture and care for life. Competing with men often seems to require a repudiation of the feminine—being powerful is being ruthless is being masculine.

But does success really require women to become less "female"? Two television series, **Damages** and **The Good Wife**, grapple with the interplay of strength and femininity, focusing on female protagonists in the male-dominated legal profession.

For three years "Damages," which airs on FX, has followed the journey of a young attorney, Ellen Parsons (Rose Byrne), and her complex relationship with her calculating, ruthless boss, the senior partner Patty Hewes (Glenn Close). Each season begins, in a sense, at its end, establishing a single plot with countless labyrinthine twists told through flashbacks. Viewers were introduced to Ellen in the first moments of the series premiere, when bloody, bruised and disoriented, she is hauled into a police station to discuss the murder of her fiancé. The audience is then immediately thrown into her past, when a bright, polished Ellen appears for a job interview at a prestigious law firm. But seeds of conflict are sown early. Ellen's upcoming interview with Hewes and Associates, her first choice, is rescheduled for a Saturday—the day of her sister's wedding. Torn between her family obligation and her ambition, Ellen agonizes before telling Patty Hewes that she cannot meet with her.

At the wedding, Ellen toasts her sister's and brother-in-law's happiness before dashing to the ladies' room, where she stares at herself in the mirror. As Ellen silently wonders if she has made the right decision, Patty emerges from one of the stalls. Patty says she had to meet Ellen "because, kiddo, you're the first person stupid enough to turn me down." Though Close delivers the line with irony, we are meant to understand that Patty is not joking. Sacrifice—of family, relationships, personal well-being—is not optional if you plan on earning her respect. In Patty's world, "damages" means more than civil recompense; it suggests emotional damage: How much harm is one willing to bear for the sake of her ambition? No machination is beneath Patty. Killing

Glenn Close, left, and Rose Byrne in "Damages"

PHOTO: BARBARA NITKE/FX

the beloved pet of a key witness to manipulate her into testifying? That doesn't scratch the surface of what she will do to win. In spite of Ellen's "wrong" (for Patty) decision, Patty still wants to hire her if she is up to the task.

Julianna Margulies as Alicia, right, and Archie Panjabi as Kalinda in "The Good Wife"

Ignoring the warning signs, Ellen, hopeful and confident, accepts the offer. She does not yet see a conflict between her job and her personal life. Ellen's hope that she can balance work and love strikes Patty as adolescent idealism. Over time, testing Ellen's commitment to the job becomes a game for her boss. Faced with completing a crucial legal brief before her upcoming engagement party, Ellen sacrifices sleep to accomplish both. When an exhausted Ellen delivers the brief, Patty tells Ellen to enjoy her party but requests that Ellen hand-deliver the brief to the judge. Assured by Patty that this face-to-face encounter will benefit her career, Ellen arrives at the judge's chambers only to be informed that he is running late. Ellen waits patiently. And waits. Even as his secretary packs up for the evening and Ellen's fiancé phones to tell her the party has started, Ellen stays the course. She will prove, to Patty and to herself, that her grasp does not exceed her reach.

But at what cost? Missing her own engagement party is merely the beginning of the deterioration of Ellen's personal life. The psychic struggle between professional responsibility and interpersonal responsibility intensifies when Ellen's role in a high-profile case is directly responsible for the murder of her fiancé. Her career has literally killed her relationship. For an ambitious woman marriage, at least as I see it, should not be the apex of one's life. But setting aside the joys of love and resigning yourself to choosing only one path—whether career or love—is dangerously myopic.

Ellen spends much of the second season plotting vengeance against Patty, mimicking Patty's ruthlessness. She disingenuously tells a reporter that working for Patty has "taught [her] something about being a woman...seeing how [Patty] balances work and her personal life, what she prioritizes, how she prioritizes...." But Ellen has already started down a similar path.

The first season provides glimpses of how well Patty prioritizes. We learn about her strained relationship with her teenage son, Michael (Zachary Booth). Absent a genuine connection, Michael has learned only one lesson from his mother: how to manipulate. He lies to school counselors, spinning a wild fiction about his fear of death, recycling a nightmare that Patty had as an excuse for his recalcitrance in school. Michael is Patty's equal in viciousness and wields it as a weapon. He mocks her openly: "People either leave you or they die; those are the only two endings possible with you." And he resists her pleas for better behavior.

The sad irony is that Patty's maternal legacy contains only the destructive talent of alienation; she and Michael are united in their ability to isolate themselves from the world and from each other. The tension between them continues into the second season, when Michael rebels by dating an older woman, and when Patty's marriage to her second husband, Phil (Michael Nouri), falls apart after his infidelities and backdoor business deals, which hurt Patty, come to light. Patty may have successfully "unsexed" herself, but it is a hollow victory. Her relationships shattered, she is left with only a career that makes her fear for her life.

"The Good Wife," a recent addition to the CBS lineup, begins with Alicia Florrick (Julianna Margulies) literally standing by her man, the philandering State Attorney Peter Florrick (Chris Noth), who has been imprisoned on charges of political corruption. Now the breadwinner, Alicia returns to work as an attorney after a 15-year absence from the profession. The title of the show and its opening scene seem to define Alicia by her role as a "good wife"—a woman who sacrificed a budding career at a top law firm to care for her family and attend to being the selfless wife of a public figure.

ON THE WEB
William Van Ornum reviews the film "Extraordinary Measures."
americamagazine.org/culture

But returning to the workplace is a challenge. A slightly older female attorney, Diane (Christine Baranski), offers advice: "Men can be lazy. Women can't. And I think that goes double for you. Not only are you coming back to the workplace fairly late, but...you have some very prominent baggage. But," Diane says, gesturing toward a photograph of her with Hillary Clinton, "if she can do it, so can you." Baranski's Diane is firm but empathetic, softer but no less competent than Patty Hewes. Whereas Patty wants Ellen to "unsex" herself and demonstrate a willingness to sacrifice all to prove her commitment to the firm, Diane's counsel does not aim to position Alicia's reentry into the legal world against other aspects of her life, like marriage and motherhood.

One of the most refreshing qualities of "The Good Wife" is its refusal to assert that strong women need to be less feminine or that femininity is weakness. Alicia does not need to bury the "good wife" in her to be successful. In fact, the compassion and understanding required to raise a family, support a husband and forgive that husband's transgressions do not threaten her ability to litigate; they strengthen it. In an early episode, Alicia represents a friend's son, whom she used to babysit, against charges of illegal drug possession and assault. Alicia's role in this case is distinctly maternal; she once cared for his basic needs as a babysitter, a mother figure; now those protective instincts inform her work. Her emotional stake in the case is so great that she heads to the scene of the crime in the middle of the night and inadvertently secures a crucial piece of evidence.

Not only do her experiences as a woman and a mother improve the quality of her work, but rather than sidelining her maternal instincts, her career has sharpened her ability to defend her children. At Peter's bail hearing, where her son, Zach, unexpectedly appears, Alicia rebukes a prosecutor for his impertinent line of questioning about her husband's sleeping arrangements: "My son is here.... What's your goal? To embarrass me? To do the bidding of your boss? I'm suggesting you stop asking invasive and irrelevant questions...." Zach later tells his mother that she "kicked ass."

Another episode features a no-nonsense opposing counsel, Patricia Nyholm (Martha Plimpton), who tries to bully Alicia in an effort to throw her off her game. Nyholm is fierce; she is also visibly pregnant. Like Alicia, she does not need to be unsexed or masculinized to convey strength.

On "Damages," to be as successful as a man requires trading empathy for ruthlessness. "The Good Wife" presents a more optimistic vision: commitment—not cruelty—is required for success. And a good wife probably knows something about that.

REGINA NIGRO *is the assistant literary editor of* **America**.

BOOKS | OLGA BONFIGLIO

PLAYING GOD

FAITH-BASED WAR
From 9/11 to Catastrophic Success in Iraq

By T. Walter Herbert
Equinox Publishing. 224p $26.95 (paperback)

Despite all the experts, technology and intelligence available to the Bush administration, the war in Iraq, now going into its eighth year, was undertaken with "ardent devotion to a misplaced faith," maintains T. Walter Herbert, emeritus professor of American literature and culture at Southwestern University in Georgetown, Tex. and author of this insightful new book. This faith was derived from a faith-filled narrative

with roots in our Puritan heritage.

The Puritans saw themselves as God's chosen people, to whom was given the Promised Land in America. The only thing stopping them from settling it were the savages who sought to kill them. The frontier hero emerged to rescue them from their plight.

This hero re-emerged in the 19th-century Wild West as the Indian fighter who saved the lives of hapless pioneers. Later, white-hatted good guys like Wyatt Earp also took on mythic proportions by bringing black-hatted outlaws to justice.

During the 1970s, the frontier hero becomes Clint Eastwood's Dirty Harry, the blunt, cynical, unorthodox detective who overcomes his incompetent bosses to apprehend violent urban criminals.

President George Bush's resolve to "get" the people responsible for the attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, also harkened back to the frontier hero, a role he played with moral certitude despite the poorly planned invasion and occupation, says Herbert. The president knew we could win in Iraq because we were doing the right thing. Besides, as a chosen people, America does not lose wars.

Meanwhile, Bush's "phobic anger" about being right checked any advisers who expressed doubt in the mission. General Tommy Franks found that out before the war began when he questioned the number of troops needed.

"[E]xpressing unshakable faith…was the mark of a team player" in the Bush leadership ethic, Herbert writes. Likewise, any administration officials bearing bad news were silenced into "drinking the Kool Aid" of "religious delusion."

By emphasizing his role as the war president and looking tough in the face of pressure and opposition, Bush attempted to allay any doubt that America was doing the right thing. Besides, Herbert wryly suggests, expressing doubt might have led to moral awareness, something that couldn't be risked, especially when boots were on the ground.

ON THE WEB
America's Book Club discusses *Let the Great World Spin.*
americamagazine.org/podcast

The decision to go to war also involved its chief advocate, the Christian Right, the author points out, with its militarist religious vision seeking to avenge nonbelieving evildoers by executing God's righteous wrath. The Muslim terrorists proved to be a good target on all counts.

While Herbert lays most of the blame for the war on President Bush, he criticizes the American people as well. Americans, he says, have learned to perceive war as an irresistible good not only because it has become the "center of value for the society" but because military power in the second half of the 20th century is seen as "the truest measure of national greatness."

The most intriguing part of *Faith-Based War* is Herbert's explanation of the Hooded Man of Abu Ghraib prison. This haunting symbol of the Iraq war stirred most Americans' shock and shame to learn that we, who usually think of ourselves as the "good guys," had not only used torture but justified its use.

One of President Bush's first comments after 9/11 was the question: "Why do they hate us?" It played well with the American people because it evoked our feelings of innocent victimhood. Going to war against Iraq, however, moved us, as it did the Puritans, to a peculiar level of culpability because we tried to defeat the forces of evil by violating human law in the name of establishing God's law.

After reading this acerbic account of the decision to go to war with Iraq, readers might wonder what will become of the frontier myth in the dangerous world of the 21st century. And Herbert might answer: distinguishing between reality and religious faith would be a good start.

OLGA BONFIGLIO *is a professor at Kalamazoo College in Kalamazoo, Mich. and author of* Heroes of a Different Stripe: How One Town Responded to the War in Iraq. *She has written for several national magazines on the subjects of religion and social justice.*

Ahimsa

He let the flies land freely on his face
as if they were not there, or he were not,
then ate his porridge with a simple grace
without an urge to move, or move to swat,
and in the wild untouched and timeless wood
he'd made his home years back unto his youth
he spoke of ways that I—and all men—could
approach the substance of our deepest truth.
But I of stubborn old unbending ways
had settled fancies, and still loved them too,
so left his side, though filled with newfound praise
for things that monks and martyrs tend to do,
and back within the city, thought it quaint
that, swatting flies, I could not be a saint.

EDWIN L. MILLET

EDWIN L. MILLET, *retired after 35 years of teaching public middle school and high school in Florida and Illinois, now drives the school bus.*

AARON KHERIATY

GOD'S CREATURES ON THE MARCH

THE PURPLES ARE COMING!

By Ilow and Sheri Roque
Rock House Press. 50p $17.99

A good book is hard to find. It is a doubly rare treat to find one worth reading aloud to your children. As a father of four boys, three of whom have reached the ages of heavy book consumption (nine, five and three), I have plodded through my share of disappointing children's books, cringing every time my child reaches for *The Berenstain Bears*, or the latest installment in the *Franklin* series, gratefully smiling when they turn instead to the old-school Beatrix Potter or *Winnie the Pooh*.

And so it was with cautious trepidation that I first cracked open *The Purples Are Coming!* To my relief, I was not disappointed. Here is a children's picture book that breaks the mold—delightfully. The husband and wife team Ilow and Sheri Roque have apparently cast aside today's publishing industry conventions to produce a book that both children and the grownups who read to them can enjoy. The use of poetic verse, not so unusual among children's books, avoids the heavy-handed rhyme scheme and tedious cadence that render many modern children's books oppressive to the ear. In the realm of vocabulary, we are treated to "crimson" rather than "red," and "dappled" in place of "spotted." (It feels a bit like Gerard Manley Hopkins for 6-year-olds: "Glory be to God for dappled things…"). Birds are of multiple species—characters include "wrens" and "kingfishers," rather than the more familiar and pedestrian pigeons and crows that typically populate the genre.

How often do we encounter lines like the following in contemporary children's literature: "The three of them stood there, Bella, Derdle, and Dink...stacked one on top of the other just like one lamb, one kingfisher, and one wren might stack, you would think."

Unlike the prose of some children's books, *Purples* has a spritely, imaginative style. We get a wink and a nod, for who has the slightest idea (assuming first that one knows what these animals are) how they might stack? But of course, that's precisely the point. And as for the forward-leaning vocabulary, I am reminded of the oft-quoted publishing rules dictated by the children's literary cognoscenti: "Never use words that a 6-year-old might not know"—forgetting that 6-year-olds daily encounter novel words without seeming to display any bewilderment. They would not ask you to open a dictionary; literary context is all they typically require. New words—insofar as their novelty even registers to the first grader—will delight the child, as does anything new.

But more important, this is a story worth reading. It is a tale of friendship and spiritual insight that introduces the reader to a troupe of comrades on a journey of hope and anticipation. I am reminded of Pope Benedict XVI's admonition that "life is not just a succession of events, it is a search for the true, the good, and the beautiful." Only in encountering these transcendental attributes do we find happiness. And so it is with this tale. As the journey proceeds, the original cast is joined on their "happiness march" by others, who like-

wise are eager to see the "purples"—dazzling fields of new flowers in bloom. The amusing names did not fail to escape comment from my 5- and 9-year-olds, who saw the humor in Ladislaus Molski (the educated mole concerned about his failing eyesight) and Hubert Epineux (the spiritually ambitious hedgehog who uses stilts to get closer to God). They were also amused by the peculiar (perhaps neurotic) idiosyncrasies of Gracie O'Hare, a nervous, fretful rabbit. The friends are bound together by the hope of the journey, and by their shared faith and piety.

All modern children's books are evangelical, in the sense that they preach a gospel of sorts. The gospels of diversity or of environmentalism seem to be especially favored these days. More pedantic exercises in preaching—"do your homework," or "tell the truth"—also characterize numerous books within children's literature. Religious books (including Christian ones) also abound, though most are stocked in strictly Christian bookstores or relegated to the "religion" section of secular stores. The safe bets are usually retellings of Bible stories, which offer countless variations on Noah's Ark or the Nativity story. These are important, of course, but equally important is the availability of a variety of reading options.

Stories of pilgrims on a journey reflect the lives of ordinary Christians and remind us of our status in this world. Indeed, the greatest merit of *The Purples Are Coming!* is its celebration of ordinary life—which for all its everydayness, can still be understood as a divine adventure. The group of friends is introduced to the thrilling notion that even they (with all their frailties and follies) can be apostles of prayer. (Dink hears the message as "popsicles of prayer," but is given a gentle and amused fraternal correction.) Ordinary life, and an ordinary journey, is the setting for these Christians to live out their faith and hope, and to practice a charity rooted in friendship and confidence.

All this is refreshingly conveyed without the least trace of preachiness or pious condescension. Eye-catching, colorful and lively illustrations complement the verse: memorable characters sparkle in the foreground, against a soft backdrop of rolling fields and wildflowers.

Youngsters will thoroughly enjoy following this adventurous journey, while seeing how God's grace suffuses nature's beauty.

AARON KHERIATY, M.D., *is the director of residency training and medical education, and the founding director of the Psychiatry and Spirituality Forum in the department of psychiatry at the University of California, Irvine.*

ILIA DELIO

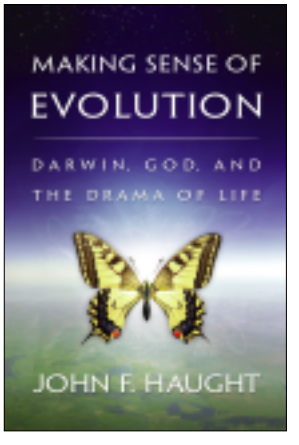
A WINDOW TO THE DIVINE

MAKING SENSE OF EVOLUTION

Darwin, God, and the Drama of Life

By John F. Haught
Westminster John Knox Press. 144p
$19.95

In his provocative book *Christianity and Evolution*, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, S.J., raised the question, "Who will at last give evolution its own God?" Teilhard grappled with this question throughout his life, as he sought a new understanding of God at work in an evolutionary universe. Similarly, the theologian John Haught confronts the question of God and evolution, and one might see in Haught's work an answer to Teilhard's question. Unlike Teilhard, who pursued a new synthesis of God in the world, Haught assumes a conversation "between Charles Darwin and Christian theology on the question of what evolution means for our understanding of God and what we take to be God's creation."



His latest book continues a series of books based on Darwin's "dangerous idea," evolution's unsuspected liberation of a truly biblical God. Haught states that "Darwin dropped a religiously explosive bomb into the Victorian culture of his contemporaries, and Christians ever since, including some but not all theologians, have been scrambling to defuse it or toss it out of harm's way." We can no more get rid of evolution, however, than we can rid ourselves of the universe. Darwin's major work, *On the Origin of the Species by Means of Natural Selection*, "launched an intellectual and cultural revolution more sensational than any since Galileo." The problem, however, is that many religious people refuse to accept this new understanding of life in the universe, and many scientists see evolution as a self-sufficient explanation of life. Thus religious fundamentalists remain entrenched in a literal reading of the Bible and an outmoded cosmos, and scientific materialists dismiss religion as puerile.

In 11 chapters marked by an alliteration of D's (Darwin, Design, Diversity, Descent, Drama, Direction, Depth, Death, Duty, Devotion, Deity),

Haught takes on the challenge of scientism, the debunking of religion and new theological interpretation in light of evolution. His slim volume is densely packed. On one hand he confronts the cryptotheology of scientific materialists, and on the other hand he elaborates a new understanding of God in an evolutionary world. He challenges the "either-or" criticism of popular atheists like Richard Dawkins and Daniel Dennett by pointing out their superficial reading of Scripture and their primitive understanding of God.

He indicates that bad theology, like bad science, simply leads to bad results. Religious reductionism, like scientific reductionism, fails, according to Haught, to see the big picture. By reducing God to a literal designer colored by a stroke of dualism (good God/bad God), scientific atheists wind up making dogmatic claims on the incompatibility of religion and science. He suggests that there is a religious yearning even in the best of atheists who cannot admit of God because they refuse to move beyond a primitive knowledge of God.

As Haught moves his discussion from the misplaced concreteness of scientific materialism to theology, he articulates a new understanding of God, brought about by evolution. In his view, Darwin's gift of evolution liberates the God of promise and hope, the God of the future, who is the God of Jesus Christ. Evolution does not dismiss God but opens up a new window to the divine mystery. "The God of evolution is a humble, self-donating liberality that avoids any unmediated manipulation of things." God is at home in this unfinished creation, allowing the created world to be at play, to mess up and to go forward into a new future. Haught emphasizes that drama is inherent in this evolutionary creation; it is an unfolding story of beauty, goodness and love. Only within the context of drama and story, he indicates, can we make sense of tragedy and suffering. "If God had not opened up the universe to novelty and drama from the start, there would have been no suffering, but there would have been no increase in value or beauty either." The reality of tragedy and sacrifice in nature is an essential part of evolution's forward movement in the drama of life toward greater unity and beauty.

In the last chapter Haught discusses the God of evolution in light of Teilhard de Chardin, and rightly so. No other modern thinker has done more to unite evolution and the Christian God than Teilhard. To this day Teilhard's theology is not well understood and even less accepted within the mainstream of academic theology. He remains a marginal thinker in the same way that evolution remains a marginal theory for Christian theology. And this is Haught's persistent plea: that theology wake up to the reality of evolution. "What is needed theologically," he writes, "is a thoroughgoing reinterpretation of Christian teaching about God, Christ, creation, incarnation, redemption, and eschatology in keeping with Darwin's unveiling of life's long evolution and contemporary cosmology's disclosure of the ongoing expansion of the heavens." This is not, in Haught's view, just a reality check; this is revelation. He invites us to encounter anew the God of incomprehensible love, the God of the future who lures us to new levels of life, to new possibilities and to a new way of being in the world. John Haught is not simply one of the best theologians of our time; he, like Teilhard, is a prophet.

Any serious thinker will find in his book a rich banquet of thought, a depth of insight and a God who belongs to evolution.

ILIA DELIO, O.S.F., *is a senior fellow at Woodstock Theological Center, Georgetown University, where she concentrates on the area of science and religion.*

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Positions

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PRINCIPAL NEEDED, Cathedral High School. Founded in 1925, Cathedral High School, of El Paso, Tex., is a private, all-male Catholic high school with an average enrollment of 475 young men in grades 9-12. It seeks a principal who understands and embraces the Catholic and LaSallian mission of Cathedral High School and who will provide vision, leadership, empowerment and inspiration for the faculty, students and their parents. The candidate should be a visionary individual able to develop and implement a long-range strategic plan and articulate the school's vision in providing our students an educational experience defined by faith, learning, leadership and service—the cornerstones of Cathedral High School's mission. The Cathedral curriculum is designed to shape young men who can and will be an effective force in our changing world. The school, in its LaSallian tradition, offers extensive extracurricular activities not only in sports and fine arts but also an expanding community service component. Students are actively involved in the life of the school and in the surrounding communities. Contact Elizabeth Anne Swartz, S.S.N.D., Superintendent, at (915) 872-8426 for application or download an application at www.dioceseofelpasocatholicschools.org. Deadline is March 15, 2010.

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Retreats

BETHANY RETREAT HOUSE, East Chicago, Ind., offers private and individually directed silent retreats, including Ignatian 30 days, year-round in a prayerful home setting. Contact Joyce Diltz, P.H.J.C.; (219) 398-5047; bethanyrh@sbcglobal.net; www.bethanyretreathouse.org

BETHANY SPIRITUALITY CENTER, Highland Mills, N.Y., offers the following retreats: "Preaching the Just Word," May 10-14, for clergy and other ministers of God's word, with Rev. Raymond Kemp and Nancy Sheridan, S.A.S.V. Visit www.bethanyspiritualitycenter.org, or call (845) 460-3061; "Praying With Creation: An Exploration of Ecological Spirituality," June 3-6, with Alexandra Kovats, C.S.J.P.; "Sacred Spaces," July 2-9, with Margaret Silf.

WISDOM HOUSE, Litchfield, Conn. Retreats include: April 9-11, "Introduction to Enneagram," Mary Fahy, R.S.M.; April 17, "Writing Your Grief," for parents who have lost children, Sharon Charde. Visit the M.L.T. art gallery, labyrinth, chapel. Contact: (860) 567-3163; e-mail: programs@wisdomhouse.org; www.wisdomhouse.org.

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LETTERS

States Right$

Maryann Cusimano Love ("The Defense Dilemma," 3/8) points out the incredible waste in defense programs. To her credit she allots blame not just to the military and their contractors but also to the legislators. Bureaucracies are inherently wasteful and inefficient. The Defense Department and the Department of Health and Human Services are bureaucracies.

In my opinion, the root of the problem with defense spending rests with the Congress, not with the military. Take as an example, the F-35 fighter jet program. It is unnecessary and should be replaced with considerably less expensive Unmanned Aerial Vehicles. But the problem is that the production of the aircraft is spread over 44 states. Which congressman or senator is going to blink?

MICHAEL COLLINS
Myersville, Md.

A Gift

The Of Many Things column by James Martin, S.J., on March 8 was a magnificent tribute to John W. Donohue, S.J. I was a senior at Fordham when Thomas More College for women was founded, and I was enormously blessed to hear Father Donohue speak on occasion. What a gift he was to **America,** as you all know better than I. Praise God for this great priest.

TIM COLLINS
Vienna, Va.

America and John W. Donohue, S.J., have been part of my life for many years now. This reflection brought tears to my eyes. Well done, Father Jim.

J. PETER NIXON
Concord, Calif.

Father John W. Donohue was a very strong influence on many of us New York seminarians through elective courses he taught in education at Dunwoodie Seminary. Insightful, witty, topical, engaging, cultured, patient—all that and more. And because of him I came to know of and read The New Yorker then and ever since!

(MSGR.) KEVIN W. IRWIN
Washington, D.C.

Eye-Witness Reaction

Re "The Other America," by Tim Padgett (3/8): The author's description of what happened here is as off-base as was the CNN Español channel's slanted coverage of what transpired. I've been living here for several years, and I disagree that Honduras would have been better off with Zelaya in office.

The author's statement that "Zelaya's proposed nonbinding plebiscite never mentioned re-election" is misleading at best. Everyone living in this country had been listening to him and knew exactly what he was up to. He planned to follow Chávez and others and stay in office. His wanting to "take a poll" on the issue was just a way of stirring up a frenzy that he

anticipated would sweep him into continuous presidential status.

What Micheletti did was quite simply to save democracy in Central America. His actions contradicted the status quo in Central America, where presidents have been figuring out ways to stay in office. CNN Español covered the pro-Zelaya marches more than Micheletti's pro-government marches; thus world opinion was swayed by biased news coverage.

I witnessed the marches personally. The Micheletti marches, referred to here as the "pro-government" marches, were civilized and the numbers were huge. The people were average, everyday working class Hondurans trying to keep their country from becoming another Cuba or Venezuela. The Zelaya marchers were bused in from rural areas, paid $20 a day and were a bunch of hoodlums. They burned businesses, painted graffiti on everything and did thousands of dollars of damage to property.

And contrary to what a lot of media reported, the military did not take over Honduras. They were simply the tool used to physically remove Zelaya. This was not the perfect solution. A democratic process to oust Zelaya would have been better. But this is a country still trying to claw its way into the 20th century. The end result was that a free democratic election was held; and Honduras, imperfect though it is, is still a democracy.

ROBIN JAMES
Tegucigalpa, Honduras

Preachers' Aid

Domestic violence (Editorial, "Behind Closed Doors," 3/8) tears the heart and soul out of so many, especially children. In 1993, the U.S. Catholic Bishops Conference made a superb 12-minute video, "When You Preach, Remember Me," a challenge to all preachers to speak out boldly against domestic violence. This topic is too rarely addressed from the pulpit. Maybe **America**'s Web magicians could find and then run the 1993 video on **America**'s Web site, or link to the U.S.C.C.B.'s more recent offerings on the topic.

RICK MALLOY, S.J.
Philadelphia, Pa.

Children's Rights

Re "Friendly Persuasion," by Robert Barron (Books & Culture, 3/8): I think that the pro-abortion forces have defined the argument: It is not a children's rights issue, it is a women's rights issue. Until we shift the ground and make it a children's rights issue, Roe v. Wade will stand, with support by a plurality of the American public.

ROBERT DAVIS
Nairobi, Kenya

Ambiguity Versus Precision

Re "Friendly Persuasion," by Robert Barron (Books & Culture, 3/8): Indeed, that one simple scene from "Juno" seemed to speak more powerfully than years of arguments by even the most impassioned defenders of the unborn (which often repel as much as they attract or persuade).

Unfortunately, many would fault "Juno" for being too ambiguous or for not taking a clear stand. But I think you affirm the important point that God speaks to us at the intersection of ambiguity and imagination, if we allow it to, at least as often as—if not more often than—at the intersection of precision and reason. Thanks for the reminder!

MARK MOSSA, S.J.
Bronx, N.Y.

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The Finger of God

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT (C), MARCH 21, 2010

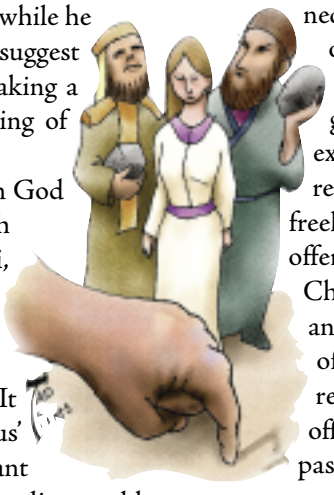
Readings: Is 43:16-21; Ps 126:1-6; Phil 3:8-14; Jn 8:1-11

"Jesus bent down and began to write on the ground with his finger" (Jn 8:6)

It is easy to point a finger at someone caught red-handed in a sinful act. While someone else is in the spotlight, the chances diminish that my own wrongdoings will be found out and draw others' attention—at least for the moment. Joining the mob of accusers also keeps me from self-examination and the possibility of repentance. It is much easier to point out other peoples' shortcomings.

In the Gospel today the case seems clear-cut. A woman is caught in the very act of adultery. The evidence is indisputable, and the law is clear. It is just a matter of carrying it out. Jesus' opponents are not interested in the circumstances that led to the woman's actions—and one must wonder how her partner escaped judgment when both were caught in the act! The scribes and Pharisees are intent on being able to charge Jesus with transgressing the law. They quote the law of Moses to Jesus and press him for his judgment. While they wait for an answer, Jesus bends down and begins to write on the ground with his finger.

Much ink has been spilled by commentators who speculate on what Jesus wrote. St. Jerome proposed that it was the sins of the accusers. Others suggest that Jesus was imitating Roman legal practice, where the judge first writes the sentence and then reads it aloud. Still others propose that Jesus is doodling, buying time while he ponders his response. I suggest that the Evangelist is making a connection with the giving of the law to Moses.



Ex 31:18 says, "When God finished speaking with Moses on Mount Sinai, he gave him the two tablets of the covenant, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God." It is not the content of Jesus' writing that is important here; otherwise the Evangelist would have told us what it said. It is Jesus' action of writing with his finger, replicating God's action in the giving of the law, that helps us understand that Jesus' interpretation of the law is in line with God's intent. The law was never intended as an instrument of condemnation but was to guide believers in a godly way of life.

Like Jesus' opponents in the Gospel, Christian teachers and preachers have struggled to understand how Jesus could let a blatant sinner off without punishment. St. Ambrose worried that the Gospel could produce anxiety in the inexperienced and tried to dismiss the idea that Jesus could have made a mistake. John Calvin assured his followers that although Jesus remits our sins, he does not subvert the social order or abolish legal sentences and punishments. While the latter may be true, Jesus does, indeed, abolish the notion that our relationship with God is contained within rules and law. While these are necessary for the peaceable ordering of any organization, whether civil or religious, law does not express adequately how we relate with God. It is God's freely given gift of forgiveness, offered to us in the person of Christ, that binds us to God and invites us to a new way of life. It is a gift that is replicated every time we offer forgiveness and compassion to one another.

PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

- While you pray, keep in mind the image of the finger of God that points toward compassion rather than condemnation.
- How might you be holding back from touching the finger of God?
- What does Jesus say to you when you face him in prayer with your sins?

ART: TAD DUNNE

A marvelous image is given us by Michelangelo on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in Rome: God, surrounded by cherubs, with his left arm draped around a female figure, strains his right arm forward, with his index finger extended toward Adam. Instead of pointing the finger of guilt at humankind, God is exerting every effort to draw the human creature into the divine loving embrace. Their fingers almost touch. If he wanted to, Adam could complete the connection.

BARBARA E. REID

BARBARA E. REID, O.P., *a member of the Dominican Sisters of Grand Rapids, Mich., is a professor of New Testament studies at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, Ill., where she is vice president and academic dean.*

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