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THE FIELD AFAR

DEVOTED TO THE INTEREST OF CATHOLIC MISSIONS

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"TO THOSE WHO LOVE GOD, ALL THINGS
WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD."

VOL. I. No. 1.

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CATHOLIC MISSIONARIES IN JAPAN.

A group of priests, taken at Nagasaki. Bishop Omine stands in purple cassock, in the center. Fr. Carr, of the leper settlement in Komsomolsk, is in the same row, at the extreme left. Fr. Russell standing in the top row at the extreme left. Fr. Ferrand, with lantern under his arm, being near the bishop.

100 Years of Maryknoll

JAMES T. KEANE

JOHN WAUCK ON ROLAND JOFFÉ

OF MANY THINGS

Negotiation is an inoffensive word. It seems only reasonable to expect parties to settle differences by negotiation. Why would one object to the idea of negotiation?

One could object, I suppose, if negotiation became an excuse for playing for time to avoid fair resolution of the problem, or if negotiation became a cover for more unilateral action leaving less to negotiate, or if commitments entered into by negotiation were never implemented. One could object as well if negotiation were circumscribed by other, pre-existing rules that either made some things non-negotiable or prescribed particular outcomes.

In Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations, both sides have used delaying tactics to gain advantage. Over the long term, however, Israel has benefited far more, confiscating homes, lands and natural resources, and expanding settlements on Palestinian territory. By establishing so-called facts-on-the-ground, successive Israeli governments have made sure that the Palestinians have less and less to negotiate with. At the same time, they keep extending their own list of non-negotiables: Jerusalem, the Jordan Valley, major settlements, refugee return and explicit recognition of Israel as a Jewish state.

Appealing to “negotiation” allows the peace process to bolt the traces of international law. From the Nixon administration to the first Clinton administration, U.N. resolutions defined the parameters for hoped-for negotiation between the two sides. In particular, U.N. Security Council Resolution 242, which affirmed the principle of non-acquisition of territory by war, stood as the basis for any later negotiation. It was accepted by Israel in 1968, by other Arab states soon after, and by the Palestine Liberation Organization in 1993. Only in the second Clinton administration did negotiation, sometimes described as negotiation “without preconditions,” become an alternative

framework for the peace process.

President Obama’s “Arab Spring” address of May 19, with its insistence once again on the pre-1967 borders, returned to the older international standard. The president’s proposal was harshly and rudely denounced by Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in favor of a process of pure negotiation.

There is reason to doubt negotiations alone are a suitable way ahead. There is ample evidence that for weaker powers, negotiations with Israel go nowhere. A case in point is Israel’s negotiation with the Vatican. Following the 1993 Oslo Accords between Israel and the Palestinians, the Holy See drew up a Fundamental Agreement with Israel. The treaty was signed and ambassadors exchanged; the treaty was also ratified by the Israeli cabinet and published in the official government gazette, but to no avail. The Israeli Justice Ministry has declared that the treaty is “not legally binding in Israel.”

In addition, for more than a decade the two sides have been negotiating a follow-on agreement about fiscal and property matters—without result. There have been numerous delays, cessations in negotiation and start-overs to reconsider points already agreed. If that is the record of Vatican-Israeli negotiation, where Israel has little to fear or lose, what can be expected of a peace formula like that of Prime Minister Netanyahu, which leaves everything to negotiation? Very little, I think. The Vatican-Israel negotiations are a litmus test for those who would trust unrestricted negotiations as a road to Israeli-Palestinian peace.

The best way to prove to the world that Israel can be trusted to resolve differences through negotiations would be for the Knesset to pass the enabling legislation to implement the Fundamental Agreement and bring to a successful conclusion this year the remaining talks with the Holy See.

DREW CHRISTIANSEN, S.J.

America

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Cover: The cover of the first issue of *The Field Afar*, published Jan. 1, 1907, features a photo of missionaries in Japan taken at Nagasaki. Photo: CNS/courtesy of Maryknoll

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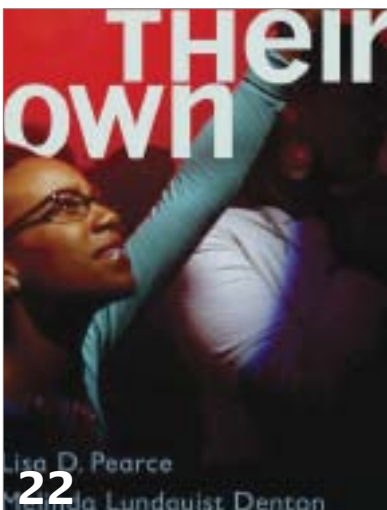
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ON THE WEB

Joseph J. Feeney, S.J., imagines a meeting between **Elizabeth Taylor** and Gerard Manley Hopkins, S.J. Plus, the first in a series of **roundtable podcasts** with the editors. All at americamagazine.org.



Waiting for Gaga

Bob Dylan turned 70 on May 24. Joan Baez turned 70 in January. Paul Simon will do the same in October, Art Garfunkel three weeks later. Paul McCartney just turned 69.

Sadly, the times are not a-changin', and one finds no answers blowin' in the wind or anywhere else. The voices that inspired the hopes and articulated the rage for a generation still make fine music, but—Joan Baez excepted—seem to have nothing to say about the nation's wars today. The sounds are only silence.

The issues, of course, still abound. The outrages of 40 years ago do not go away; they simply turn into clichés. The nation's leaders still turn to violence to show the world that its values are highest, that its ideals are noblest, that it will do anything for the oil it craves. This nation still sends its young to die in Asian backwaters for reasons it cannot explain. This nation still bombs and fires missiles at innocent women and children to get some phantom bad guys.

By now, though, the leadership has learned. It has taken away the fear: the fear of every young man turning 18 that he was about to go off to Asia to kill or be killed, the fear of his family for what might be. And it has taken away the images of horror: the nightly news stories with body bags and flag-draped coffins and taps drifting mournfully across a graveyard. And it has taken away the cost: no new taxes; let future generations pay for what the country spends now.

Where are the prophets the country needs to challenge war today? Who will write the anthems to rally for peace? Has it all come down to Lady Gaga?

That Other Minority

You can see them everywhere—driving taxis, staffing convenience stores, serving as orderlies, nurses and physicians in hospitals. They are a distinguished presence in corporate boardrooms in suits or pantsuits, but they also roam research facilities in lab coats. One of them (Michelle Rhee) served as chancellor of the Washington, D.C., public school system until a year ago. Their young are disproportionately selected to give the valedictory and salutatory addresses for graduation. They are that other minority group—actually several groups—known collectively as Asian Pacific Islanders. Numbering about 5 percent of the U.S. population, they include people with ethnic ties to East Asia (notably China, Japan and Korea), South Asia (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka), Southeast Asia (Vietnam, the Philippines, Laos and Cambodia) and the Pacific Islands (especially Tonga, Samoa and Micronesia).

Only a few make headlines, some on the sports pages as professional athletes. Troy Palomalu (the defensive linebacker from Samoa) and Hines Ward (the part-Asian running back) are both stars for the Pittsburgh Steelers. Tongans and Samoans, usually rugged and big-boned, have long been a force in the sports world, but others in this minority cluster are just as likely to be designing computer software or doing advanced engineering. In numberless areas these Americans have made their mark. Without them our public health systems would be crippled, our science research poorer and our schools far less challenged to perform better.

They do not receive the public attention other minorities get, not even from this magazine. May, celebrated as Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, came and went without attracting much notice. So let this be a well-deserved acknowledgment of the contributions that these ethnic groups have made to their adopted country. The United States is richer for them.

A Brother Journalist

In the Gospel story of the mustard seed (Mt 13:32-34), the seed grows to have impact far larger than its tiny size suggests. That is what journalists do. They observe life and tell what they see. The word spreads. Sometimes, as a result, the world changes.

The Gospel reading at the funeral Mass for Joseph Feuerherd, age 48, editor and publisher of *The National Catholic Reporter*, in the chapel of the Theological College at Catholic University on June 1, was chosen by Joe himself to proclaim his—and our—life's mission. From the day in 1984 when as a Catholic University junior Joe became an intern at N.C.R., his life belonged to that publication, even though he did other jobs on Capitol Hill. He became editor and publisher in 2008. Independence from church authority, he believed, was essential to the paper's success. He exposed scandals in the church he loved and in which he and his wife Becky raised their three children. He compared the paper to a "good city newspaper reporting the foibles of the mayor and city council as they award that latest garbage contract to a favored vendor." But he toured the country talking with public figures, rebuilt the paper's staff and expanded its Web presence to an average of 1.5 million visitors a month. At his funeral the celebrant, Anthony T. Pogorelec, S.S., summed him up: He was a historian, a journalist and a teacher. The church that profited from his leadership mourns his loss. Our job as fellow Catholic journalists is to keep planting those seeds.

Handle With Care

Ten years ago the focus of American foreign policy rested on Asia, though not on Pakistan or Afghanistan. China was on the rise, its juggernaut economy and ruthlessly efficient one-party system posing the first great diplomatic challenge of the 21st century. Two wars and trillions of dollars later, the United States has been depleted by the “war on terror.” Meanwhile, even in difficult economic times, China’s financial strength and political sway continue to grow.

With the death of Osama bin Laden and the possibility of an early drawdown of troops in Afghanistan, some Americans may wish to turn their gaze away from the East, at least for a short time. Yet that is a luxury the nation cannot afford. The emergence of China may be the single most difficult foreign policy predicament the United States has encountered. Addressing that challenge will require sustained attention and a rethinking of the reach of American power.

History has left the United States ill-prepared to deal with modern China. During the cold war, the line dividing Washington from its rival was bright and clear. The Soviet Union was an obvious enemy and was treated as such. In contrast, China today is a unique player on the world stage, both a friend and a rival. From an economic perspective, the United States and China are deeply entwined. Yet their styles of government could not be more different. From its one-party leadership to its one-child policy to its treatment of religious and political dissidents, China’s method of government is at direct odds with the ideals of a free and democratic society.

Yet China is not Egypt, where a stagnant economy and lack of jobs helped bring about the demise of the Mubarak regime. The ascendance of the middle class in China makes it less likely that they will agitate for political change. Meanwhile, Beijing’s internal critics are weak and lack sufficient international support. The time may come when the United States can engage with a democratically elected leader in China, but that day is a long time off—and not inevitable.

In the meantime, there is no guarantee that the United States will continue to hold its position of pre-eminent influence. China already owns over \$1 trillion in U.S. debt, and within the next 10 years it is expected to overtake the United States as the world’s largest economy. Meanwhile, the United States faces historic deficits and will likely have to reduce the size of its military presence in East Asia to rein

in costs. The twin engines of U.S. power—trade and military might—may slowly be losing steam.

The U.S. government should continue its current policy of “congame-ment”—a blend of containment and engagement—by working with China when possible while at the same time seeking to limit its adverse influence. That approach may seem at odds with itself, but at least it avoids conflict. It also seeks to advance the cause of reform, if only by small increments. The key is in choosing the correct moment to challenge China’s policies. Here the Obama administration should not shy from condemning human rights abuses, even if it upsets the Chinese government. At the same time, it should not adopt the alarmist tone of hawks who see confrontation with Beijing as inevitable. The United States may have to accept a smaller role in the Pacific theater in the coming decades. Steering this course will test the art of diplomacy and will ultimately succeed only if the White House receives support from China’s trading partners on Wall Street and in Silicon Valley.

China’s rise will also require the U.S. government to reconsider its role in the international community. For some, now is the time for Washington to reassert its old status as Number One. Yet the United States should not, for example, increase its military presence in the Pacific at a time when defense spending is already too high. Nor should it entertain illusions about its staying power on the world stage. The United States may be a superpower for a long time to come, but it is unlikely to be the only one. In addition to China, India and Brazil are gaining economic power and military strength. In the parlance of diplomats, we are moving from a unipolar to a multipolar world.

In the jubilant days after the fall of the Berlin Wall, it looked as if the democratic ideals of the West had won the day. Today’s world presents a more complex reality. Even in Cairo and Tunisia, where peaceful protest brought much-needed change, the road to liberty promises to be long. In this environment the United States’ relationship with China serves as an important model for its dealings with the rest of the world. Striking a balance between confrontation and engagement, persuasion and reprimand, at a time when America’s traditional sources of strength are gradually weakening—this is the principal challenge of the still new century.



SIGNS OF THE TIMES

PAKISTAN

New Report Depicts Christians And Minorities Under Siege

Structural discrimination and a steady increase in violence against religious minorities in Pakistan are creating a system of two-tiered citizenship, one for Muslims and one for non-Muslims, according to a new report from an Islamic research center. The study, *A Question of Faith*, published by the Jinnah Institute in Pakistan, finds that Christians are the primary targets of religious persecution in Pakistan and reviews two critical questions confronting Pakistani society: will the state continue to discriminate against its citizens and “turn a blind eye to the spread of cultures of cruelty and vigilantism,” and will the majority of Pakistanis “condone and collude in the discrimination and persecution of minorities”?

Jinnah’s researchers say recent attacks on religious minorities and the state’s tolerance of this persecution are part of “a longer-term pattern of state complicity at all levels—judicial, executive and legislative—in the persecution of and discrimination against minorities.”

The report was warmly welcomed by the Rev. Mario Rodrigues, director of the Pontifical Mission Societies in Pakistan. Father Rodrigues said he was encouraged to learn that an institution that represents the Muslim intelligentsia in Pakistan was willing to highlight discrimination against reli-

gious minorities. “We know that Sherry Rehman [a member of Parliament and chair of the center] risks her life because she exposes herself on such delicate issues,” Father

Rodrigues said. “We thank her and express our full solidarity.” He added, “I do not think, however, that the government will seriously address the question of religious minorities’ status.



HUNGER U.S.A.

Summer Recess: No More Lunch?

A drop-off in the reach of U.S. summer nutrition programs in 2010 and ongoing budget-cutting at state and local levels suggest that many schoolchildren in the United States will face another summer of hunger this year. According to a new report from the Food Research and Action Center, despite record numbers of children receiving free and reduced-price meals during the 2009-10 school year, participation in federal summer nutrition programs fell nationally in 2010. FRAC reports that

in July 2010 only 15 children received nutrition aid for every 100 low-income students who received lunch during the 2009-10 school year.

According to FRAC, budget cuts in many states caused school districts to eliminate or reduce their summer programs. Fourteen states served less than one-tenth of their low-income children through summer nutrition programs in 2010; five states—Oklahoma, Mississippi, Kansas, Colorado and Louisiana—served fewer than 1 in 15.

The summer programs extend food aid to eligible children when they are out of school at participating sites at schools, parks and public and nonprofit agencies. During the school year, the U.S. Department of Agriculture reports serving as many as 21 million children. But according to the FRAC report, titled *Hunger Doesn’t Take a Vacation*, summer nutrition programs reached just 2.8 million children on an average day in July 2010. That continues a three-year decline despite broad evidence that hunger is increasing as a mostly jobless recovery persists nationwide.

In fact, in the 2009-10 school year, the number of low-income children



At an anti-blasphemy law demonstration in November 2010, protesters demand the release of Asia Bibi, a Christian woman sentenced to death for blasphemy.

But this report gives us hope that something is moving in the public and civil society of Pakistan.”

A Question of Faith documents the progressive deterioration of the social

and economic status of religious minorities and the increasing violence against them. Reviewing the subordinate status of Christians, Hindus and Ahmadis, it notes in particular that “the condition of Christians has deteriorated significantly.” In rural areas, researchers found, Christians are particularly vulnerable to oppression by wealthy Muslims.

“If this situation is to change,” the report’s authors conclude, “transformative corrective action has to be taken by the Pakistani state to encourage and nurture an inclusive and equitable Pakistani identity.” The report recommends “a model of citizenship that can incorporate group identities and the fundamental rights of individual citizens in light of international law and good practice.”

The findings of the report indicate that despite their persecution, religious minorities still connect strongly with a Pakistani national identity. The report also notes that Pakistan will likely be unable to control the violent extremism

of groups like the Taliban unless it resolves its sectarian tensions, which it describes as a critical national security issue. The Jinnah researchers argue, “Fighting extremism is not just about militarily defeating the Taliban, but about departing from the sectarian ideology and oppressive legal frameworks that embolden militants.”

The report offers 23 recommendations for the government of Pakistan, including abolishing or substantially modifying the controversial blasphemy law to prevent abuses in its application, the approval of new articles of the Pakistan penal code to punish those who incite religious hatred or violence, confronting the impunity guaranteed to Muslim leaders who preach in mosques and reforming the police and the judiciary systems. The report calls on the government to review the system of Islamic courts and to establish a new independent authority, that of special ombudsman, modeled on the defenders of citizens’ rights common in the European Union.

eligible for the school lunch program grew by a record 1.1 million. In March 2011, participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program rose to a record 44.6 million people, an increase of more than 4.4 million people over March 2010. “While participation in other federal nutrition programs grew rapidly because of the recession,” said Jim Weill, president of FRAC, “participation in the Summer Nutrition Programs continued to slide. It’s time to reverse this trend.”

The center suggests that summer programs would benefit from better publicity and better follow-through among school administrators as they

plan their summer school sessions. According to FRAC, millions in federal aid to support nutrition programs over the summer is left on the table by some states.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture appears to be aware of the problem. In early June it sponsored Food That’s In When School Is Out, an awareness campaign to promote summer programs and encourage partnerships with not-for-profit and faith-based community groups. (The locations of summer feeding sites are available from the National Hunger Hotline at 866-3-Hungry or 877-8-Hambre.)

“The Summer Nutrition Programs are a vital part of our nation’s nutrition

safety net,” said Crystal FitzSimons, co-author of the report. “There is a foundation on which we can build and which we cannot afford to weaken further.... It’s not too late to make a difference for this summer and for the next.”



Libya Strategy Questioned

As NATO bombs continue to fall over Libya, some challenge the air campaign. A new concept in international relations, “the responsibility to protect,” was a key concern of the U.N. Security Council Resolution authorizing intervention. Gerard Powers, director of Catholic Peacebuilding Studies at the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame, said that while the Libyan leader Muammar el-Qaddafi’s threat to civilians forfeited his government’s right “to be protected by norms of sovereignty and nonintervention,” NATO’s dependence on military action poses a moral dilemma. “If the military objective is really regime change, that’s hard to justify in Catholic approaches to humanitarian intervention,” he said. Instead of military intervention, Powers called for nonmilitary steps, including sanctions, political pressure and diplomacy. “In Libya, we have a disconnect between ends and means,” Powers said. “Airstrikes seem to be a tactic impersonating strategy, and without a viable strategy, military might easily masquerades as humanitarianism.”

A Voice for Survivors

For the first time, an international meeting of bishops’ representatives heard testimony from a survivor of sexual abuse by a member of the Catholic clergy. The testimony was part of an effort to help clerics be more aware of the impact of abuse and how the church can better help victims. The Anglophone Conference on the Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults has been meeting since 1996, and this year organizers invited an Irish survivor of abuse, Colm O’Gordon, to speak

NEWS BRIEFS

Deacon **Bernard V. Nojadera**, director of the Office for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults in the Diocese of San Jose, Calif., has been named to head the U.S. bishops’ Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection.

- Bishop **Eduard Mathos** of Bambari, Central African Republic, escaped a kidnapping attempt on June 2 after his car and an accompanying vehicle from Jesuit Refugee Services were ambushed.
- On June 5 **St. Luke Episcopal Parish** in Bladensburg, Md., became the first Anglican parish in the United States to request to join the Catholic Church.
- The Rev. **John A. Pavlik**, O.F.M.Cap., was appointed on June 7 as the executive director of the U.S. Conference of Major Superiors of Men.
- Warning that “there is no time to waste,” Archbishop **Diarmuid Martin** of Dublin called on June 2 for the quick release of the findings from the Vatican’s visitation of Ireland and its investigation of the sexual abuse crisis there.
- During a speech on June 3 at the U.N. Human Rights Council, the Vatican observer, Archbishop **Silvano Tomasi**, said that multinational corporations have caused “exceptional damage” in underdeveloped countries by ignoring human rights, environmental regulations and labor laws.



Bernard Nojadera

before the conference. Teresa Kettelkamp, head of the U.S. bishops’ Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection, said it was critical for church representatives from countries where the abuse problem has not yet been fully addressed to hear directly from a victim. She said, “We can always learn more of how we can better help victims-survivors heal and find reconciliation, but actually hearing directly from them and the impact the abuse had on them is always very powerful.” The conference met in Rome from May 30 to June 3.

Amazon Eco-activists Get State Protection

After the recent assassination of four activists, the Brazilian government is offering police and army protection to Amazonian environmentalists “deemed

to be in the greatest danger.” Members of Brazil’s cabinet decided on the dramatic measures at an emergency meeting on May 31. The latest of the four Amazon activists to be killed was Adelino Ramos, a farmer and leader of the Corumbiara Peasant Movement in the state of Rondonia, who was gunned down on May 27 as he was selling roadside vegetables. José Claudio Ribeiro da Silva and his wife, Maria do Espirito Santo da Silva, were murdered in the state of Para, and the farmer Eremilton Pereira dos Santos was found shot to death in the same area. Police have found no link between the killings, which occurred as lawmakers debated changes to Brazil’s forest code. The church’s Pastoral Land Commission maintains a list of 125 people who have received death threats.

From CNS and other sources.



With God on the Docks

As soon as the chaplain hands me a hard hat and a high visibility jacket I realize that this is not going to be a walk in the park. We drive around the wharves and loading piers of the docks, and I know that what he has told me is true: We have entered an invisible world. The chaplain, representing the Roman Catholic charity Apostleship of the Sea, has made his home here in this continually shifting and apparently godforsaken world that extends for many miles along the northeast English coastline, and his profound love for the place shines out of his eyes. The remaining millions of us switch on our lights without a thought for the men who have been at sea for the last nine months, carrying coal across the ocean to make this possible. But the chaplain sees the invisible. He knows that God is here.

His very modest room overlooks the quayside, and no ship enters or leaves the port without passing beneath his loving scrutiny. The walls reveal jagged cracks from the juddering of huge cargo ships through the narrow lock just below his window. His constantly changing companions in this inhospitable wilderness are the thousands of foreign seafarers—Filipino, Chinese, Ukrainian, Iranian, Indian and so many more—who pass through these docks, literally like ships in the night. They would be anonymous if he did not shake their hands, ask their names and make them welcome. They would be stranded for as long as their ship is moored if he did

not ferry them back and forth to the chaplaincy center. They might well be unpaid and undefended if he did not make it his business to watch out for exploitative practices and alert the law enforcement authorities.

We make our way through showers of coal dust and iron ore and towering stacks of containers, carefully observant of the movements of huge overhead cranes, and board a newly arrived vessel. The chaplain points out the discs attached to the top of the ropes to prevent the wharf rats clambering on board. He remarks that the tide is low and the climb up the gangplank will be easy this morning. High tide would mean a much steeper gradient to scale.

A Filipino seafarer asks him for help wiring money home to his family. No problem. We take him to a place where he can do this as cheaply as possible. On the way back he tells us it is school enrollment week in Manila. His regular pay has not been sent to his home account for three months. The school will not wait. He needs to send the pocket money he has saved. When the transaction is complete, his relief is palpable. The simple offer of a ride to the money exchange office means that three Filipino children will now be able to go to school for another year. Mighty trees can grow from tiny seeds of kindness.

Another seafarer has never seen his little son, born several months ago. In the chaplaincy he can talk by Skype with his wife back home. The tears flow as he proudly shows his little one on the screen. Here the Gospel is a

phonecard or a webcam bringing sight to the blind, reconnecting the disconnected, mediating God's love to these lonely, far-from-home fathers.

Not infrequently the crews of ships sailing under flags of convenience, for which no nation considers itself responsible, speak with the chaplain about withheld pay, insufficient food, physical abuse or even the manifest unseaworthiness of their vessel. He

has been around these docks for decades now, and he knows how to evaluate such complaints. The Coast Guard trusts his judgment. A call to the maritime police can cause the vessel to be detained and investigated. The Gospel here is a watchful eye from someone who cares enough to

take those first steps to set captives free and bring support to the oppressed and the afflicted.

The chaplain has asked one newly arrived crew whether there is anywhere they would like him to take them while they are moored. They come back with their astonishingly modest request: "Father, would you take us to somewhere where we can walk on grass?" they ask. He takes them to a nearby park, where they take off their shoes and socks. Worn, calloused feet that have trodden only heaving steel for the past many months rejoice to feel the cool firmness of the fresh and living grass.

"Anyone would think I had given them the earth," the chaplain comments with a quiet smile. And, of course, he has. Along with a glimpse of heaven.

The chaplain
sees the
invisible.
He knows
that God
is here.

MARGARET SILF lives in Scotland. Her latest books are *Roots and Wings*, *The Way of Wisdom* and *Compass Points*.



Early Maryknoll Fathers (left to right): Thomas F. Price, Francis Ford, James A. Walsh, Bernard Meyer and James E. Walsh at Maryknoll, N.Y., in 1918.

Inset: a family of Maryknoll Lay Missioners, flanked by Maryknoll priests in Juárez, Mexico, in 2010.

HOW MARYKNOLL DEFINED
A CENTURY OF MISSION WORK

Outward Bound

BY JAMES T. KEANE

A century ago, an attentive subscriber to the Catholic mission magazine *The Field Afar* might have noticed the following announcement in its pages: “Youths or young men who feel a strong desire to toil for the souls of heathen people and who are willing to go afar with no hope of earthly recompense and with no guarantee of a return to their native land are encouraged to write, making their letter personal, to the Editor of *Field Afar*.”

That year, 1911, was far from the heyday of American Catholic missionary enterprises; rather, the editor, James A. Walsh, M.M., was addressing readers in the United States, whose church had been removed from the Vatican’s roster of mission territories only three years before and for whom the notion of sending missionaries abroad was a foreign one indeed. In the words of the historian Msgr. John Tracy Ellis, the first decade of the 20th century was a time when the Catholic Church in the United States finally “attained ecclesiastical adulthood.” The great migrations of European Catholics to the United States were ongoing, and Catholics were trying to take root in a culture more or less hostile to “popery.” As a result, the energies of the institutional church were often directed inward. Out of the 17,000 Americans serving as Catholic priests at the time, for example, the number serving in foreign missions was 14.

The story would change dramatically over the next few decades, however, as the psychology of the U.S. Catholic Church reversed from that of mission territory to that of missionary culture. A driving power behind that transformation was the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, the Congregation of Maryknoll Sisters and, eventually, the Maryknoll Lay Missioners—collectively known as Maryknoll. The Maryknoll congrega-

JAMES T. KEANE, S.J., *a former associate editor of America, is a student at the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley, Calif.*



tions were the first Catholic institutes founded in the United States with a specific focus on overseas mission. Over the next century they would send thousands of men and women religious as well as lay missionaries across the globe in the service of evangelization and work with developing peoples.

As the Maryknoll family celebrates its centennial throughout 2011, a look back at its history makes clear that alongside its evangelical mission, Maryknoll also played an important sociopolitical role in U.S. culture. For many Catholics around the world, the Maryknoll missionary became the public face of the American “brand” of Roman Catholicism for much of the 20th century. At the same time, the inspiring and sometimes tragic stories of Maryknoll missionaries overseas had a powerful effect on the American national imagination, a phenomenon that continues today, not only in religious circles but in political and social realms as well.

Founding Fathers and Mothers

The history of Maryknoll begins with three names: James A. Walsh, Thomas F. Price and Mary Josephine Rogers (known as Mollie and later as Mother Mary Joseph). The first, a Boston priest who had been appointed diocesan director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith in 1903, was also founder of *The Field Afar*, an English-language magazine designed to support foreign missionaries.

Mollie Rogers was a schoolteacher and a 1905 graduate of Smith College. She traced her own desire for mission work to an experience she had while a junior at Smith when she witnessed some of the school’s brightest students dancing in public in celebration of their pledge to go to China to work in Protestant mission schools or hospitals. “Something—I do not know how to describe it—happened within me,” she wrote. “I passed quickly through the campus to St. Mary’s church, where, before Jesus in the tabernacle, I measured my faith and the expression of it by the sight I had just witnessed. From that moment I had work to do, little or great, God alone knew.”

She met Father Walsh in December of 1906, and the two shared their interests in missionary work in foreign lands, particularly China. With his encouragement, Ms. Rogers organized a Mission Study Club for Catholic students at Smith in 1906. While working as teacher in the following years, she volunteered at *The Field Afar* as an editor and translator.

Thomas F. Price was a diocesan priest from North Carolina (the first native-born Catholic priest ordained in the state). He founded the Catholic periodical *Truth* for the people of North Carolina at a time when scholars estimate there may have been as few as 800 Catholics in the entire state. He also founded an orphanage and a regional seminary for “home missionaries” in North Carolina, serving as

rector of the latter from 1902 to 1909.

It is worth noting that James Walsh is the only one of the founders whose story of entering religious life can be seen as fairly typical for a Catholic in the United States at the time. Both Father Price and Father Rogers were anomalies, the former accustomed to working in non-Catholic contexts in the American South and the latter college-educated in non-Catholic schools. Neither had any experience of convent life or traditional missionary work, and none of the three were members of European-style religious communities.

After years of correspondence, Father Price and Father Walsh met in Montreal in 1910 at the 21st Eucharistic Congress, where they shared their similar vision of an American “foreign mission” enterprise. In April of 1911, with the encouragement of Cardinal James Gibbons of Baltimore, the two priests submitted to the U.S. bishops their proposal for a new institute of foreign missionaries and on June 29, 1911, gained official sanction for the new “Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America,” with Father Walsh as its first superior general.

The first group of six seminarians joined in the fall of 1912, when the order also moved its headquarters to a hilly 93-acre farm in Ossining, N.Y., which they named Mary’s Knoll. They were joined in 1912 by four women, including Mollie Rogers, who became the superior of the Teresians. While Father Walsh seems to have envisioned them as a kind of ladies’ auxiliary assisting in the quotidian operations of the seminary, Mollie Rogers retained her vision of direct overseas service.

In September 1918 the first group of Maryknoll men left for China. Father Price was appointed the group’s superior but died in Hong Kong almost exactly a year later of appendicitis. The first group of Maryknoll women religious was missioned to China in 1921.

Over There

In China and Korea, the adaptability of the mostly young, mostly American members of the first mission groups proved valuable. China’s interior was not only isolated but underdeveloped by Western standards. Everything from travel to catechetical methods to cloistered living needed adaptation from the Euro-American norm. The American background of the early Maryknollers made them uniquely suited for foreign mission work. Untethered to geographic locations or class distinctions, their attitudes and lifestyles differed markedly from more traditional expressions of Catholic religious life. A more freewheeling approach was also encouraged in their training as missionaries, where both Father Walsh and Sister Rogers stressed that adaptability and individuality could be positive virtues in the missions, rather than simply temptations toward disobedience or pride.

The importance of the “American style” became apparent

soon after in Kaying, one of the Maryknoll mission territories of China. After a visit from Sister Rogers in 1923 produced much excitement among the local population (who had never seen a Western woman in direct evangelical work), the local superior, Father Francis Ford, created the Kaying Method, in which religious women were sent out in pairs, living among the local populations for a month at a time or traveling from remote village to village, training lay catechists and establishing contacts with unevangelized areas. They were cut off from the sacramental life of their communities for long periods and also lived with far less pri-

number of new missions in South America and Central America. Within two decades, more than 25 percent of Maryknoll's members were working there; by 1948, the Maryknoll Sisters had expanded to Africa.

These efforts were supported financially by donations from the United States, many of them inspired by the stories of missionary efforts told in *The Field Afar* (later Maryknoll magazine). The magazine's circulation had soared past 90,000 within a few years of Maryknoll's founding and enjoyed strong popularity for its stories of typically American young men and women toiling humbly but heroically in exotic foreign places.

Maryknoll also benefited from publicity in secular newspapers and magazines enamored of the all-American stories and images of Maryknollers overseas. As a result, for several generations of Americans the image of the Maryknoll missionary became a powerful symbol of the American church's evangelical zeal and reach.

The association of Maryknoll with the international fight against Communism became more pronounced after the Communist rise to power in China in 1949 brought Maryknoll some of its first martyrs. Many suffered in virtual anonymity, though the stories of two Maryknoll bishops became famous in the United States: Francis X. Ford, who created the Kaying Method; and James E.

Walsh. Both had been among the first group to arrive in China in 1918.

Ford had been ordained a bishop in China in 1935. He and his secretary, Sister Joan Marie Ryan, were arrested by Chinese Communist authorities on charges of espionage in 1950 and publicly beaten by mobs as they were taken from town to town in the region. The last American to see Bishop Ford before his death in prison in 1952 described him as so emaciated that another prisoner carried him "like a sack of potatoes."

Father James E. Walsh served for 18 years as superior of the Maryknoll missions in China and was ordained a bishop in 1927. He was arrested in 1959 on charges of espionage and given a 20-year prison sentence. He served almost 12 years in nearly complete isolation before his sud-



Maryknoll sisters prepare an issue of *The Field Afar*.

vacancy than was customary for religious women, making the method controversial. By 1939, however, because of the success of the model (and the large numbers of Maryknollers volunteering for such work), the Kaying Method received a commendation from the Vatican, and its use became widespread throughout mission territories in China.

When the all-encompassing violence of World War II (and the U.S. entry into the war in 1941) drastically curtailed Maryknoll's ability to send new missionaries to Asia, its superiors were quick to adapt. Although many missionaries chose to remain in their assignments (some suffering persecution at the hands of Japanese occupiers as supposed American spies), most of the established missions were cut off. Within a year, Maryknoll superiors had established a

den release in 1970 at the age of 79, presumably as sop to U.S. President Richard Nixon before his visit to China. The high public profile and obvious suffering of the two Maryknoll bishops made headlines in the United States, where they were lionized in the popular press for their anti-Communism as much as for their religious commitment.

A New Direction

Following the Second Vatican Council, the mandate for reform of religious orders brought new challenges and opportunities to the Maryknoll congregations, particularly from that council's explicit calls for greater solidarity with the poor, new approaches to evangelization and a greater role for the laity in the mission of the church. The presence of Maryknoll missionaries on the front line of evangelization efforts in the developing world gave particular urgency among Maryknoll's members to the implementation of all three aspects of this vision in the decades that followed. The political and ecclesial implications were to bring Maryknoll's missionaries into the forefront of the American imagination once again, with new champions and new detractors.

Instead of China, the new flashpoint was Central America, where the work of Maryknoll missionaries on behalf of the poor and marginalized aroused the ire of repressive governments and raised again the specter of martyrdom. The most famous of these martyrs are "the churchwomen of El Salvador," Sister Ita Ford (a Maryknoll missionary and cousin of Bishop Francis X. Ford), Maura Clarke (a Maryknoll missionary), Dorothy Kazel (an Ursuline missionary) and Jean Donovan (a Maryknoll lay missionary). All four women were working in El Salvador in the late 1970s in various church ministries aiding the poor and refugees from that nation's bloody civil war.

At a Maryknoll conference in Managua in December of 1980, Sister Ford read from a homily of Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador, who had been assassinated earlier that year: "Christ invites us not to fear persecution because, believe me, brothers and sisters, the one who is committed to the poor must run the same fate as the poor, and in El Salvador we know what the fate of the poor signifies: to disappear, be tortured, to be held captive—and to be found dead."

Upon returning to El Salvador, Sister Ford disappeared along with Sister Clarke, Sister Kazel and Ms. Donovan. Their bodies were discovered days later; all four had been tortured, raped and murdered by members of the Salvadoran National Guard. The news reached the United States almost immediately, and the public outcry grew after the publication of clumsy and conflicting statements by Salvadoran government and military officials attempting to deny or distance themselves from the crimes. For many


Americans, the martyrdom of the four missionaries was their first public exposure to a new face of American missionary efforts against structural injustice and political repression—the latter often perpetrated not by a demonized "red menace" but by foreign governments propped up by American financial and military support as a supposed bulwark against Communism.

A U.N. commission later established that the murder of the four women was not only premeditated; it had been ordered by officials in the highest ranks of the Salvadoran military. Press coverage in the United States of the murders and ensuing political machinations played a significant role in bringing some of these officials to justice, as well as the eventual suspension of military and economic aid to the Salvadoran regime. In the decades since, the churchwomen have become symbols of the church's evangelical efforts against structural economic injustice and political repression, just as in earlier generations Bishops Ford and Walsh had inspired Catholics attuned to the dangers of the oppressive and atheistic Communist regimes.

Quo Vadis?

The mid-1990s brought efforts at re-evaluation and reorganization to all branches of the Maryknoll family. As vocations to religious life have remained at historic lows in recent decades in the United States, the Maryknoll congregations have an increasingly international face; new members are as likely to come from one of the 37 countries in which Maryknoll missionaries work as from the United States.

This global membership parallels a greater emphasis on the dangers and opportunities of globalization in Maryknoll's evangelical work. A vision statement released by the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers in 1996 called on its members to "join the struggles for justice of the poor, indigenous peoples and women against economic, social and cultural oppression" and "in announcing the healing, reconciling and liberating Jesus."

It is not the language of a century ago, when Father James A. Walsh called for American missionaries to serve in foreign lands "to toil for the souls of heathen people." That message found a favorable welcome among a generation of American Catholics seeking to serve a newly confident church's efforts in a particularly American enterprise. So too did later generations find inspiration in the efforts of Maryknollers in China, in Central America and in countless other locales. As Maryknoll begins its second century in a church that sometimes seems to be turning inward again to deal with its own concerns, can the outward thrust and global mission of its congregations offer a similar challenge to a new generation of American Catholics? 

ON THE WEB

From 1981, a tribute to Bishop James E. Walsh. americamagazine.org/pages

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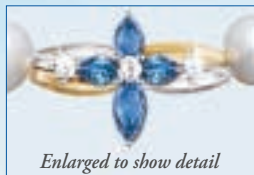
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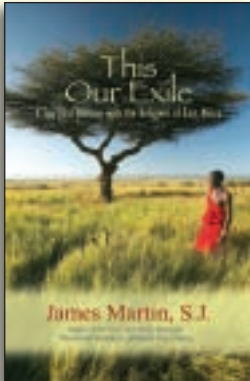
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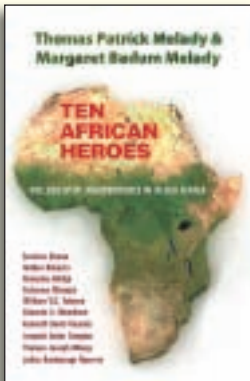
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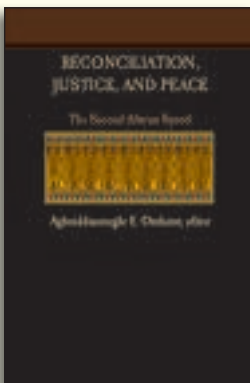
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Forgive Us Our Debts

What Victor Hugo taught me about justice

BY WILLIAM J. O'MALLEY

Most Christians, one supposes, are just. But I cannot bring myself to accept Christian justice as a unique form of moral behavior. The very juxtaposition of *Christian* and *justice* is not only paradoxical but much too stingy. The evidence against the fittingness of fusing those two priceless realities is legion: “Turn the other cheek, walk the extra mile, give him your jacket, too”; “Love your enemies, do good to those who torment you”; “Does no one condemn you? Then neither do I”; “Your brother was dead; we simply had to celebrate”; “You strain out the gnat, but you gulp down a camel”; “Forgive us our trespasses just as we forgive those who trespass against us”; “Forgive 70 times seven times”; “This is the cup of my blood. It will be shed...so that sins may be forgiven.”

Christianity's two overriding laws are not strictures but limitless invitations, and its sole determinative assessment of one's life at the end is not about conformity but about attentive kindness. Then there is that last-minute kicker, from the place of Jesus' execution, “Father, forgive them. They know not what they do.” All this puts Christianity light years beyond the reach of “justice.”

In an interview with Catholic News Service, Professor Edward Peters, canon law professor at Detroit's Sacred Heart Seminary and a top adviser on that subject to the Vatican, excoriated Bishop Howard J. Hubbard of Albany for not publicly refusing Communion to New York's Gov. Andrew Cuomo, since he is a public sinner. Newspapers far and wide had trumpeted the fact that the governor, divorced with three children, is living with his girlfriend, Sandra Lee, a well-known television personality, yet still dares to approach the sacraments. Mr. Peters declared, for all to hear: “If he approaches for Holy Communion, he should be

WILLIAM J. O'MALLEY, S.J., teaches at Fordham Preparatory School in the Bronx. He recently published *The Wow Factor: Bringing Catholicism to Life (Orbis)* and *On Your Mark: Reading Scripture Without a Teacher (Liturgical Press)*.

denied the august sacrament in accord with Canon 915.” Who could deny those “facts”?

Yet in at least three places in the Gospels, Jesus reacted quite differently to sharing food and drink uncritically with manifestly public sinners. At a dinner hosted by Simon the Pharisee, a woman “known as a sinner in the town” broke in indecently, wept on Jesus' feet and dried them with her hair. Not only did Jesus not reprehend her, but he told his indignant host, “Much has been forgiven her because she has loved much.” Elsewhere, Jesus met at the well of Sichar a Samaritan woman who had already had five husbands, “and the man you're with now is not your husband.” In a small town, six men would guarantee a woman a considerable reputation, but Jesus immediately dropped the subject and spoke of more important mat-



ters, like eternal life. And when he encountered the feisty enemy collaborator Zaccheus, peering down at him from a sycamore tree, Jesus boldly invited himself (and his entourage, one supposes) to the tax man's house for lunch. Neither the Samaritan woman nor Zaccheus forced themselves on Jesus' hospitality. On the contrary, he imposed himself quite blithely on theirs.

Moreover, there is reliable evidence that Jesus washed Judas's feet and shared food with him at his farewell dinner, the model for our eucharistic celebration, even knowing what the disciple was about to do. How shockingly non-judgmental!

Laws are not only laudable but utterly necessary, of course, especially for people unable—or unwilling—to think. But the first sign of a dying society is a new edition of the rules. Conformity begins to outweigh conviction.

A story that poses the justice/Christianity contrast is the segment in *Les Misérables* about the bishop's candlesticks. The gendarmes return Jean Valjean to Bishop Bienvenu with the silverware Valjean has stolen. In justice, the bishop has a right not only to the return of his property but also to some kind of retributive penance because of the betrayal of his hospitality and kindness. But no! “Ah, my brother! Here

ART: “JEAN VALJEAN.” WIKIMEDIA COMMONS/GUSTAV BRION

you are! How is it you forgot I gave you the silver candlesticks, too!" That is not justice. Even to the minds of some professed and diligent Christians, such a way of behaving is rank foolishness. Unmerited forgiveness is an attitude that would corrode the entire fabric of our usurious and litigious society.

As a teacher of religion for close to a half century, I have frequently been tempted to violate the school administration's "laws"—at times, I think, to worthwhile effect. Once while reading English essays, I found two that were not only similar, but identical. When I spoke to the two students, it was clear they had not collaborated; each had copied the essay verbatim from an Internet provider. They asked me with anxious interest what I intended to do. I told them I thought it was pretty serious, so I would let them know the next day. The following morning, while presiding at a small Mass for teachers and staff, I mentioned the cheating during the prayers of the faithful and said that rather than summarily "turning them over to the *Polizei*," I would like to handle it in the way Jesus might, but I had yet to find a way. Afterward, one teacher was irate and insisted the matter be brought to the attention of the office. Instead, I saw the two students separately and asked them to write an essay covering three points: What does integrity mean;

what does it feel like to lose it; and how does one get it back?

One boy wrote that it was the first time in his life he understood what Christianity really meant. The other came to confession "for the first time since eighth grade." The angry teacher, meanwhile, went to the administration to report the matter. Although I reported the results of my attempt to be Christian, I was told, "All well and good, but their cheating has to go on their records." I refused, because this was one of those rare occasions when I myself felt how good Christian conversion feels—for both sides.

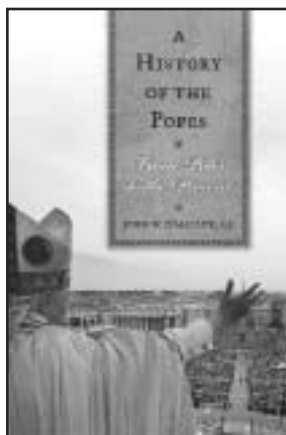
I am fairly sure those students, as confused as Jean Valjean was with a basket of silverware in one fist and two silver candlesticks in the other, will remember that event more than they would remember prolonged detention or even suspension. Perhaps public sinners might more meaningfully be lured home if authorities depended less on judgment and more on imagination.

Mr. Peters has certainly spent many hours pondering church law. But since he has sat in public judgment on both a governor and his bishop, one might legitimately ask of him publicly whether he has adequately pondered the intentions of the Person who occasioned the law.

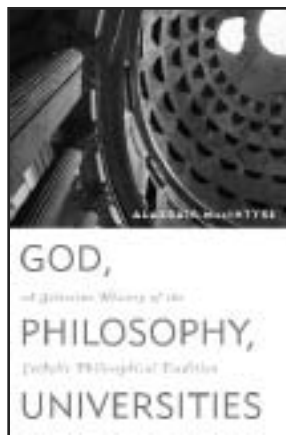
Justice is so much easier than Christianity. A

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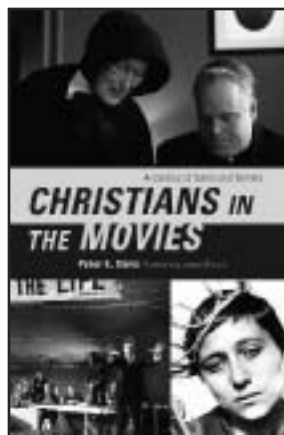
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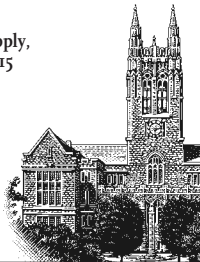
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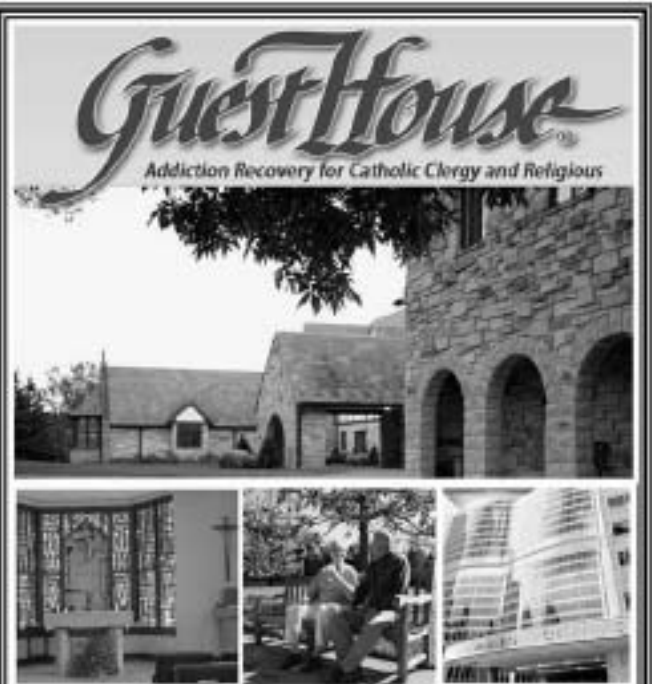
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You'll be doing what Daniel Berrigan did in "The Mission." That is how the director Roland Joffé described my job as a consultant on "There Be Dragons," a film he wrote and directed that features as one of its central characters St. Josemaría Escrivá, the founder of Opus Dei (see *Am.* 5/16/11).

Mr. Joffé asked me to the set to help

the cast and crew bring to life a distinctively Catholic milieu—Escrivá's world from 1908 to 1937. In the summer of 2009, I headed to Argentina to spend four months working amid cameras, cranes, artists, electricians and actors. Almost no one on the set was a practicing Catholic, and the movie was not intended for a Christian audience. For me, it was a

chance to see a saint through the secular eyes of modern nonbelievers.

When people hear about the movie, they are often surprised. How, they ask, could a thrice-married, former-Trotskyite, British agnostic produce a sympathetic portrayal of a Catholic saint? What does an agnostic see in someone like St. Josemaría?

But the phenomenon should not come as a surprise: Catholic saints have been attracting the admiring attention of nonbelieving and non-Catholic writers for centuries.

The father of this peculiar literary



Roland Joffé working on the set of "There Be Dragons"

genre may well be the 18th-century German writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, who once described himself as “not anti-Christian, nor un-Christian, but most decidedly non-Christian.” Though he had little use for Christianity, Goethe nevertheless took Philip Neri as his “patron saint” during his sojourns in Italy in the late 1700s and wrote a lengthy, appreciative essay about St. Philip entitled “The Humorous Saint.”

It was a Jewish playwright from Prague, Franz Werfel, who gave the world the 1942 novel *The Song of Bernadette* (later made into a popular film) about St. Bernadette Soubirous, to whom the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared in 1858 in Lourdes. At the beginning of World War II, before escaping from France through the Pyrenees, Werfel and his wife had spent time as refugees, hidden by families in Lourdes, who told him the tale of Bernadette. After settling in the United States, he wrote his novel as a token of gratitude.

And it was the novelist Willa Cather, an Episcopalian, who in 1927, inspired by the quietly heroic story of the French missionary Jean-Baptiste Lamy and his efforts to establish a diocese in the territory of New Mexico, wrote *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, one of the great works of American fiction.

Oddly enough, two other noteworthy examples of non-Catholics writing about saints involve the same saint, Joan of Arc, and authors quite hostile to Catholicism. Joan is not only the heroine of George Bernard Shaw’s play “Saint Joan,” but also of Mark Twain’s book *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc*, which he claimed was his finest work: “I like *Joan of Arc* best of all my books,” he said. “And it is the best.” More than a century after the book was published, it remains something

of a shock that, in Twain’s usually jaundiced eyes, a medieval female saint was “easily and by far the most extraordinary person the human race has ever produced.”

In the 1960s, the English playwright Robert Bolt, an agnostic, made St. Thomas More into a quasi-existentialist hero of authenticity in both the stage and screen versions of “A Man for All Seasons.” It seems fitting that Bolt should introduce his play with a quotation from Jonathan Swift (the Mark Twain, one might say, of England, if Twain could have donned 18th-century Church-of-Ireland clerical attire). In language Twain might well have known, Swift called Thomas More “the person of the greatest virtue these islands ever produced.”

What we see in each case is a non-Catholic or nonbelieving author who discovers some distinctive human virtue that stands out in the God-directed life of a Catholic saint: the joy of Philip Neri, the steadfastness of Jean-Baptiste Lamy, the astonishing courage of Joan of Arc, the integrity of Thomas More.

In this broader context, Joffé’s decision to write about Escrivá seems less exceptional. Ironically, the seed of his screenplay was itself a film. His interest was piqued by video footage from the 1970s in which Escrivá responds to a Jewish girl in Chile who says that she wants to convert to Catholicism but her parents won’t let her. Escrivá’s response—about the love we owe our parents and his own love for Jews—took Joffé so much by surprise that he dedicated the next three years to a film inspired by that moment.

Beyond the precedents, there seems to be a deeper Catholic logic at work. The notion that sanctity should be attractive to those who do not see with the eyes of faith is implicit in the Christian message. There is a pro-

ON THE WEB
Elizabeth Taylor meets
Gerard Manley Hopkins, S.J.
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of the Men
Behind the
Papal
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MICHAEL WALSH

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found link between human and divine beauty. We can hear it in the famous words of St. Irenaeus of Lyons: “The glory of God is man alive.”

Theologically, it makes sense to say that the more of a saint you are, the more of a human being you are. The holiness of someone like Blessed Teresa of Calcutta did not make her less of a woman. Quite the contrary. Sanctity does not erase personality. What a colorful collection of characters we meet in the liturgical calendar: Joan of Arc and Thomas More; Augustine and Benedict; Thomas Aquinas and Francis of Assisi; Cardinal Newman and Ignatius of Loyola; Teresa of Ávila and Thérèse of Lisieux.

The personal stories of writers like Goethe, Shaw, Twain and Bolt may attract our attention largely because they do not involve a religious conversion. But if we are looking for evidence of the natural value of Christian holiness, it would be a mistake to look only to the experiences of nonconverts. The same dynamic—a recognition not of the error of one’s nonbelieving ways but of their fundamental correctness—is at work in conversions that represent a confirmation of one’s natural inclinations.

Not all conversion stories are dramatic interior revolutions like those of, say, Walker Percy and Thomas Merton. In *Orthodoxy*, G. K. Chesterton compares his situation to that of a sailor who discovers a “new” island only to realize that it is, in fact, his old home: he discovered in Christianity precisely the things that he had always loved. About her own conversion, Muriel Spark remarked, “There was no blinding revelation in my case.” On another occasion she said, “The reason I became a Catholic was because it explained me.” In short, there may be much more support for the theological principle than the few famous “anomalous” cases I mentioned would suggest.

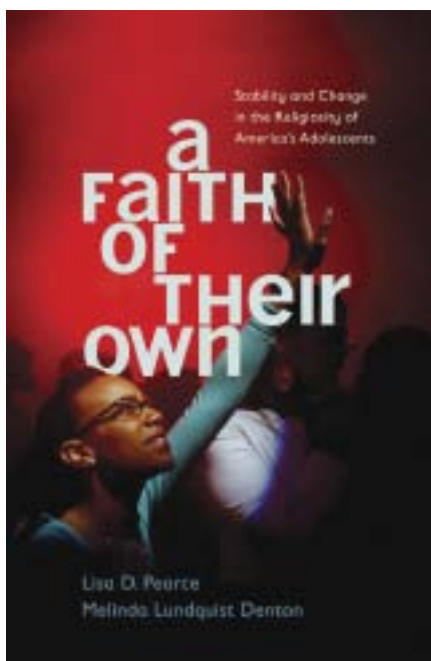
Writing and directing “There Be Dragons” did not make a Christian out of Roland Joffé, who still describes himself as a “wobbly agnostic.” But in an interview before the film’s premiere in Madrid, Joffé told a reporter what he had taken away from his encounter with a modern-day saint: “It’s wrong to imagine a saint as a kind of

Superman, a sort of ‘Super-Christian,’ who flies around in his cloak and makes everything come right! In fact, a saint is a human being....a saint is someone who is *really* human.”

REV. JOHN WAUCK is a priest of Opus Dei and professor at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross in Rome.

BOOKS | JOHN A. COLEMAN

TEENAGE FAITHLAND



A FAITH OF THEIR OWN **Stability and Change in the** **Religiosity of America's** **Adolescents**

By Lisa D. Pearce and
Melinda Lundquist Denton
Oxford Univ. Press. 284p \$24.95

Those who know and rightly admire the adroit sociological analysis of Christian Smith and Melinda Denton’s groundbreaking 2005 study of the religious lives of teenagers, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* will surely also want to read carefully this new

study. *A Faith of Their Own* is based on a second wave of surveys and in-depth interviews of parents and teenagers in the National Study of Youth and Religion.

The same teenagers, first interviewed in 2002, when they were between 13 and 17 years old, were followed up in 2005, three years later, to determine what if any religious changes took place as the teenagers began to drive their own cars, engage in nonmarital sex or cohabitation, and grow closer to planning their educational and career aspirations.

Lisa D. Pearce and Melinda Lundquist Denton have written a most helpful book. Their main thesis is that religiosity among teenagers (as among adults) is multidimensional. It does not lend itself to crude unidimensional indices of low versus high, without further ado. They postulate a threefold index for religiosity based on content, conduct and centrality. To assess content they probed respondents’ belief in God (and the kind of God they believed in: personal and engaging versus more detached or even just a cosmic principle) and belief in the exclusiveness of their religion (few American teenagers think there is only one true religion). For conduct, they analyzed responses about religious attendance, private individual prayer and helping as a volunteer.

Finally, to assess centrality they used three measures: importance of religion to the respondent; how close he/she felt to God; and what each thought was the meaning of life.

Although the authors drew mainly from surveys, their intent was to hew as closely as they could to “lived religion.” They knew that most respondents are not totally consistent across the three measures. They can be strong in attending services (perhaps under parental pressures) but weak in claiming religion is important. Conversely, many who attend church only sporadically may pray daily, say religion is important to their lives and think often about the deepest meaning of life.

Based on their measures, Pearce and Denton profile five distinct religious types: abiders, adapters, assenters, avoiders and atheists. Abiders tend to come from intact families whose parents also attend services regularly. They do show a kind of congruence across content, conduct and centrality measures. They are, in one sense, the most religious (although the authors shy away from narrowly comparative judgments on religiosity). But they also show a kind of vulnerability when doubts arise. As the authors note: “When those who are highly religious become less religious, they tend to do so across the board, not just in public religious practice.”

Adapters are more likely to pick and choose among religious beliefs and, compared with abiders, are more lax in attendance at weekly services, although they may be more fervent in personal prayer than abiders, more likely to volunteer and stronger in claiming religion is central to their lives. Often enough, adapters may come from broken families or families of a lower income status, where parents may have night or weekend jobs that make church attendance difficult. The authors remind us that not all religious disengagement is a personal

choice of the adolescent.

Assenters are lower on the centrality of religion to their lives or on personal prayer than the adapters, although their attendance at religious services may look the same.

Avoiders believe in God but in other ways avoid religion. Not that they oppose it, but the avoiders seem to have a congruence in their behaviors that displays initiative and ambition. There are few teenage atheists.

Overall, most teenagers (81 percent) in the second wave surveys remained in the same profile type they were in earlier. Continuity is the stronger characteristic of teenage religiosity than change. When change occurs, it tends to be one rung downward on the ladder: e.g., from abider to adapter or from an adapter to assenter. Some religious types (e.g., abiders) are less likely to engage in risky behaviors, such as drug or alcohol use and premarital sex.

Pearce and Denton also probe the role of peers, parents and religious institutions in supporting or helping teenage religiosity. As the earlier study, *Soul Searching*, showed, most teenagers are largely inarticulate about their beliefs. Often enough they are moralis-

tic deists. Nor do they talk very much with their peers about religion.

Parents’ religiosity and roles are crucial. Religiously practicing parents more likely inspire practicing teenagers. Teenagers who report being close to one or both parents are more likely to be abiders or adapters than lower on the scale. Parents who pray daily for their children are more likely to have religious children. Key also is what the authors call “scaffolding.” This refers to parental help, guidance and their ability to talk to and give congruent and useful support for their children both in religious exploration and in dealing with their doubts and questions and achieving autonomy.

One key finding of the study is that teenagers who successfully personalize their own religion (as opposed to just acting out their parents’ expectations) were more likely to claim they had become more religious over the three-year span of the surveys than less, even if their religious attendance at church was more sporadic. Under-scaffolding (parental neglect or absence) and over-scaffolding are equally bad. Restrictive approaches that do not allow honesty about teenagers’ questions and doubts are not helpful.

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The role of congregations in teenage religiosity was also probed. Two questions sought answers to whether teenagers found their local parish/congregation's services boring and whether there were adults in the parish with whom the teenager could honestly talk about religious questions, including doubts. Most teenagers reported positive responses about their local congregation.

As a sociologist of religion, I would strongly recommend *A Faith of Their*

ON THE WEB
 Jason Berry discusses his book *Render Unto Rome*.
americamagazine.org/podcast

Own to my confreres for its supple methodology for measuring and tracking religiosity. As a parish priest I would also recommend it highly to parents who may be perplexed or confused about their teenagers' religiosity. I would especially urge religious educators of youth and/or youth ministers in parishes to peruse its findings.

JOHN A. COLEMAN, S.J., is a sociologist and assistant pastor at St. Ignatius Church in San Francisco, Calif.

and transforming it, can occur. Mystics also struggle with sham varieties: "Even in mysticism," Egan comments, "nothing is sometimes only nothing."

The book also traces the evolution of mysticism. Earlier Eastern mystics tend to shy away from describing their own mystical experiences, centering upon prototypes who are like mirrors reflecting our possible deification. Western mysticism, from Augustine's *Confessions* forward, tends to focus upon the self's journey through dark nights and unitive states. Gregory of Palamas's descriptions of the hesychast's mystical process of deification is an equivalent Eastern development, presaged in Symeon the New Theologian's writings (the term hesychast is Byzantine and describes anyone who practices methods of breathing, like the Jesus Prayer, to attain stillness).

The reader discovers a growing stress upon service, struggling with forms of spirit-body dualism and integrating the ecological and cosmic. St.

Francis of Assisi's befriending of nature and animals was a hint of something new. Our global age echoes Christian mystical dialogues with the Far East. Karl Rahner's "everyday mystics" and St. Thérèse of Lisieux's "little way" find the sacred in the ordinary. Thérèse and Mother Teresa seem to identify mystically with the modern atheist.

Are there texts written by married mystics? Egan does not think so. It would be interesting to hear his view of Evelyn Underhill or Baron Friedrich von Hügel, in my view two married mystical theologians, mystagogues (those who guide others on

WILLIAM THOMPSON-UBERUAGA

LISTENING TO GOD'S WHISPERS

SOUNDINGS IN THE CHRISTIAN MYSTICAL TRADITION

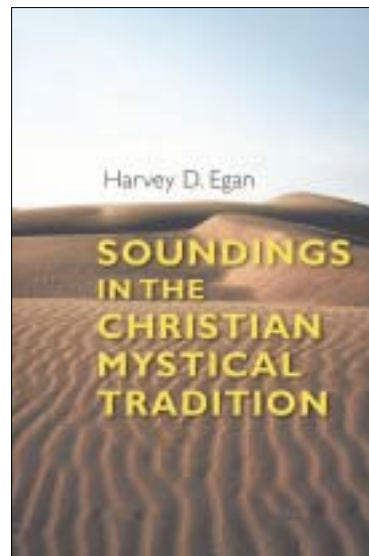
By Harvey D. Egan, S.J.
 Liturgical Press. 440p \$29.95 (paperback)

"Show, don't explain," an editor suggested to me. Premature explaining closes off participation; showing invites it. Harvey Egan, S.J., a professor of systematic and mystical theology at Boston College, wagers that a broad showing of mystical writers will surface the titans, central themes and neglected writers of the mystical way. From the authors of the Hebrew Scriptures to the Jesuit William Johnston, mystics of East and West, impressive female mystics from the medieval period forward, the Protestants Johann Arndt and George Fox, the "almost churched" Simone Weil—these and many others are represented here.

Some themes emerge repeatedly. Mystics drink differently from the biblical well, typically discovering paradigms of the mystical way to full

love and service. Jesus' Trinitarian mystical consciousness through the Spirit brings that about, finding expression in Paul's "in Christ" and John's "abide in me." Other common themes include the ascetical foundations of mysticism and the mystical foundations of asceticism, mysticism's prophetic and apostolic dimensions and a supportive connection between church and mysticism, albeit with some tensions.

All of these are rooted in Jesus' union of divinity and humanity, which generates creative tensions between the kataphatic (incarnational) and apophatic (transcendent) poles. Phenomena of a "secondary sort" (levitations, stigmata, etc.), kataphatic signs of the divinity beyond expression reverberating within the human



mystical paths) and mystics of the most profound sort. The overwhelmingly Roman Catholic perspective of this book may play a role here, for the celibate religious orders possess the institutional framework within which mystical texts might emerge, be published and achieve notoriety, although this is changing ever so slowly, sometimes through the religious orders' developing of lay associates. But I agree with Egan's view that sexual intimacy must achieve a radical de-centering for marital mysticism to move to its full potential.

A brief and solid introduction offers helpful perspectives. Egan accepts Bernard McGinn's view that "the mystical element in Christianity [expresses] the consciousness of, and the reaction to...the direct presence of God." Thus the mystical, as part of a living tradition, is not unchurched or without dogma, and God's "presence" is mysticism's goal, though Egan would add an occasional consciousness of God's

absence. Distinguishing between mystic, mystagogue and mystical theologian, Egan considers Bernard Lonergan, S.J., for example, to be a mystical theologian but not a mystic or mystagogue. At times who is one or the other remains unclear, perhaps deliberately on the author's part. While the relation between mysticism and sanctity is fluid for Egan, they should not be completely confused. A married saint, for example, can brim with love, but not necessarily be a mystic.

Unless one eliminates the one thing necessary for authentic mysticism in the judgment of most of the mystics, namely love, cannot any saint be a mystic? Perhaps not a writer of mystical texts, but then again, do all mystics need to have the charism of writing? Mystagogues and mystical theologians would tend to have the writer's gift. Perhaps the words "mystic" and "saint" highlight specific features of one and the same reality (St. Teresa of Avila's many rooms of one castle)? This

understanding would jibe with Egan's view of the fluid relationship between them, implying that a distinction cannot be a separation. The martyr's de-centering—a centering beyond the self and toward the Other—is temporally speedy but qualitatively radical, perhaps implying a rich fluidity between martyrdom and mysticism.

Egan's style is open and positive as he engages the serious reader. A true son of St. Ignatius of Loyola, he will first attract and then guide the reader to Jesus Christ, the mystic paradigm, but in a way that draws along the full potential of the reader. The book has no conclusion—which perhaps suggests we will have to supply one from our own experience walking the mystical way.

WILLIAM THOMPSON-UBERUAGA, of *Meridian, Idaho*, is emeritus professor of theology at *Duquesne University*. His most recent book is *Jesus and the Gospel Movement: Not Afraid to be Partners* (Univ. of Missouri Press).

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LETTERS

On Bishop Morris

The outrage over the removal of Bishop William Morris from his Australian diocese (*Signs of the Times*, 5/23) is not limited to Down Under. Almost 100 priests from 33 U.S. dioceses and five religious orders have sent a letter of commendation to the National Council of Priests of Australia. They wrote:

We write to bring our hearts into solidarity with the National Council of Priests of Australia, as it issued its 3 May 2011 “expression of sadness at the forced early retirement of Bishop William Morris of Toowoomba.” We admire this exercise of the NCP’s willingness to represent its respectful challenge to a papal decision....

Because we are not familiar with enough of the details, we do not pretend to comment on Bishop Morris’ public positions and performance which brought him Vatican disapproval, but we are most trusting of your communal reaction and pray that similar organizations of the clergy emerge throughout the universal church to give the Holy Spirit instruments to renew the Church that emerged from Vatican Council II.

Among the signers are a number of priests who are presidents of priests’ groups: Len Dubi, president of the Association of Chicago Priests; Dave Cooper of the Milwaukee Priests’ Alliance; Neil McCauley of the Association of Pittsburgh Priests; Thomas Ivory of the Newark Archdiocese; and Robert Perkins of the Richmond Diocese.

(REV.) BERNARD SURVIL
Diocese of Greensburg, Pa.

Priests Need Justice Too

In “The Bishops’ Priorities” (5/30),



Our priests are messengers of hope

A friendship waits to be born between a family in Illinois and a little girl living in poverty in Honduras. Before long a teenage boy in the Philippines and a parish youth group in Connecticut are going to become acquainted through the exchange of encouraging letters. In Idaho a woman with grandchildren of her own will soon enter into a blessed relationship with an elderly woman in need of help in Kenya.

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Bishop Cupich has well described the efforts made to protect children. But medications that heal can also have bad side effects. Efforts to protect children can have the bad effect of removing innocent priests from the ministry. The primary concern is children, but innocent priests must also be protected. Cardinal Avery Dulles, S.J., in "The Rights of Priests" (*Am.*, 6/21/04) severely criticized the Dallas charter for putting innocent priests at risk. Some bishops remove priests with little or no investigation. Priests frequently say, "If you get an allegation, you're dead."

As a canon lawyer, I deal frequently with accused priests, some innocent, some not. One priest from outside the diocese was removed in a context that defamed him, because the bishop misread a letter from another diocese. I prepared an air-tight case against the bishop, but there is no avenue for appeal.

Bishops enjoy a special immunity. Only the pope can judge them. My priest suffered a grave injustice at the hands of the church structure. I wrote to the president of the U.S. bishops' conference and to committee chairs for three years urging that the charter be revisited. Each reply said "Revisit scheduled for 2010." The meeting came and went. Nothing, nada, zip. The charter and U.S.C.C.B. procedures remain flawed.

(MSGR.) HARRY J. BYRNE
Bronx, N.Y.

It's Murder

In response to the editorial "Slippery Slope" (5/23): Murder is murder. It

cannot be sugar-coated or wrapped in a national flag. Vengeance is our nation's official response to 9/11.

MICHAEL JOYCE
Sandy Springs, Ga.

Is This What We Stand For?

I read with much interest and agreement the "Slippery Slope" editorial (5/23). One thing that has distinguished the United States from other superpowers is our moral principles. I wish the administration had said, "Our plan was to take Osama bin Laden alive and put him on trial but, unfortunately, once the mission unfolded, that was impossible to achieve. As a result, he is dead." I hope that was the plan; but the lack of clear articulation of it leaves me wondering whether the ultimate action really set the desired example of conduct that we want all countries to display.

MICHAEL F. VEZEAU
Bluffton, S.C.

A Clear Denunciation, Please

For years I have enjoyed a subscription to *America* only because in my poverty a friend provides it as a Christmas present. It is a Christmas that lasts—until you publish something like "Slippery Slope" (Editorial, 5/23). I longed for something on the rage and wrath over Obama's "killing" Osama, and I got an editorial that was more the slow-livered slush of compromise. Every Christian principle concerning conflict has been violated in this nation's raging, righteous furor over the slaughtering of Osama. And whatever is left of international law is swept away. It is not a "slippery slope." It is

indiscriminate warfare, when the United States can enter any nation with skilled troops to execute whomever we please. Could we not just for once have a plain, clear denunciation of willful revenge?

JAMES MCCORMICK
Kansas City, Mo.

Driven to Drink

Reading your editorial "How Old Is Old Enough?" (5/30), I remember conversations on this topic while our three children were at Middlebury College. It was said that when the drinking age was 18, students would wander from the campus on foot down to the local pub and have a couple of beers and wander back. I think our oldest son, a nondrinker, put it well. He said that if you knew you could have a drink when you felt like it, it was less likely that a lost weekend would occur on a Friday night drinking binge. Instead, when the drinking age was raised to 21, the small local bars closed for lack of business, and the students went elsewhere, in cars, on weekends to drink.

WINIFRED HOLLOWAY
Saratoga Spring, N.Y.

Beer on Deck

I agree with the editorial "How Old Is Old Enough?" My 18-year-old son and his friends will go to college this fall, and I am sure they will drink there. Yet I could be arrested if any of these young men had a glass of wine with dinner in my home or drank a few beers while eating crabs on my deck this summer. This would be a great time for them to learn to drink like adults. Instead they will probably do what my class did, the first under the new 21-year law in my state. When we could get our hands on alcohol, we drank as much as we possibly could. I would rather my children learn moderation at home than binge at college.

CATHY STAMPER
Gambrills, Md.

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Consumed by Christ's Life

SOLEMNITY OF THE MOST HOLY BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST (A), JUNE 26, 2011

Readings: Dt 8:2-16a; Ps 147:12-20; 1 Cor 10:16-17; Jn 6:51-58

"We, though many, are one body" (1 Cor 10:17)

Scientists tell us that we are literally connected to one another and to all things—part of one vast web of life in our universe. It is not a metaphor or a symbol; it is true that the material of all of our bodies is intrinsically related because it emerged from and is caught up in a single energetic event that is the unfolding of the universe. Our common ancestry stretches back through life forms and into the stars, back to the primeval explosion of light that began our universe. Atoms that may have been part of Jesus' body are now part of our bodies.

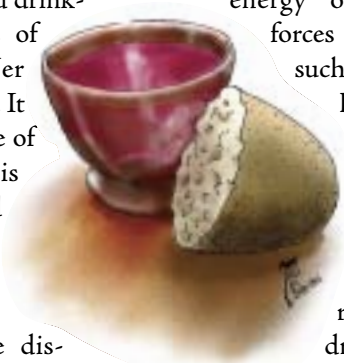
Today's readings invite us to claim this interconnectedness with Christ and with one another, for the ongoing life and flourishing of the world. In the Gospel Jesus urges his followers to eat his flesh and drink his blood. The phrase "flesh and blood" is a way of expressing the totality of a person; believers partake wholly in the full being of Christ. At the same time, this language of eating flesh and drinking blood is offensive. The Greek word *trogein*, "eat," in verse 54 is a very graphic one that literally means "to gnaw" or "to munch." Moreover, in other places in the Scriptures, "eater of flesh" is an expression applied to an adversary who is seeking to destroy a person (Ps 27:2). Drinking blood would be equally abhorrent to Jesus' disciples, as blood is regarded as the life force over

which only God has power, and is therefore not to be consumed by humans (Gn 9:4; Dt 12:23; Acts 15:20). Eating flesh and drinking blood also speaks of brutal slaughter (Jer 19:9; 46:10; Ez 39:17). It is no wonder that some of Jesus' disciples found this saying too difficult and decided they would no longer follow him (Jn 6:60-66).

The Bread of Life discourse is immediately followed by the note that Jesus did not wish to go about in Judea because his opponents were looking for an opportunity to kill him (Jn 7:1). Likewise the synoptic Gospels connect Jesus' gift of his flesh and blood to his impending death (Mt 26:26-29, Mk 14:22-25, Lk 22:14-23).

This context gives us some insight into the meaning of Jesus' offer of his flesh and blood for us to eat and drink. When his own flesh and blood are about to be devoured in brutal slaughter, he pre-empted this act by offering his flesh and blood, the whole of his being, to those who believe in his manner of bringing life to the world. Who and what he is cannot be consumed or annihilated by those who would want to inhibit the life-giving forces Jesus has unleashed in the world. When his disciples take in and become all that he is, the life forces he enfleshed continue to be offered for the life of the world.

In recent years a number of experiments have shown the power of groups who intentionally focus their energy on undermining violent forces and effecting peace. One such project was the National Demonstration Project in Washington, D.C. During the two months of the summer of 1993 when a group of 4,000 persons meditated, the rate of violent crimes dropped by as much as 48



PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

- As you say Amen when receiving Communion, let it be a yes to our interconnectedness with Christ and with the whole of the cosmos.
- Let yourself be consumed by the power for life that Christ unleashes in us.
- Envision peace and direct Christ's life force to situations in need of transformative love.

percent. It immediately rose again after they stopped meditating. (For other similar experiments, see www.worldpeaceproject.org/news/.)

The interconnectedness of all persons and all life in the body of Christ is not an abstract concept; it is palpable and visible. One can choose to be a destructive eater of flesh and drinker of blood or to consume and be consumed by the one whose intent is for the ongoing life of the whole world.

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.

ART: TAD DUNNE

Light Burdens

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (A), JULY 3, 2011

Readings: Zec 9:9-10; Ps 145:1-14; Rom 8:9, 11-13; Mt 11:25-30

“My yoke is easy and my burden light” (Mt 11:30)

A mother, with a child balanced on one hip and a huge sack atop her head filled with items to sell in the market, carefully makes her way through the crowded streets of La Paz, Bolivia. In addition to this physical load, she carries other burdens: economic stress, poor education, health challenges, racial discrimination. Like her sisters the world over, her daily life is characterized by valiant struggle against unimaginable obstacles.

When Jesus promises rest and an easy yoke in today’s Gospel, it is as if he knows precisely how such burdens feel. In this section of Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus takes on the persona of Woman Wisdom, speaking with words and images attributed to her in Proverbs, Wisdom, Sirach and Baruch. In the verses preceding today’s Gospel, the witness of both Jesus and of John the Baptist is rejected, just as was that of Woman Wisdom (Sir 15:7-8; Wis 10:3; Bar 3:12). Jesus, identifying himself as Wisdom incarnate, concludes with the assertion, “Wisdom is vindicated by her deeds” (Mt 11:19). This is followed by Jesus’ denunciation of those

towns that have rejected him (vs. 11:20-24). Today’s Gospel is the final section of this chapter, where Jesus, like Woman Wisdom, is a sage who reveals mysteries, interprets Torah and calls disciples.

Jesus, like Wisdom (Sir 51:26), invites disciples to take up his yoke, that is, his instruction. In other places in Scripture, *yoke* signifies an oppressive burden unwillingly placed on the people’s shoulders, like enslavement in Egypt (Lv 26:13) or exile in Babylon (Is 47:6). God breaks such weighty bonds (Jer 2:20) and replaces them with the yoke of obedience to Torah. Similarly, to take up Jesus’ yoke is to live by his interpretation of Torah. The lightness of Jesus’ yoke is not a lax interpretation of Torah—quite the contrary. He teaches his disciples that merely keeping the law is not good enough; they must go further (Mt 5:21-48). If the law allows “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth” (Lv 24:20), Jesus’ disciples must instead try to short-circuit cycles of violence by taking nonviolent action that confronts evildoers, while praying for and loving such enemies (Mt 5:38-48).

Instead of being a restrictive and burdensome way to live, this teaching is freeing; it lightens burdens of oppression. This is the opposite of what some of the other religious leaders of Jesus’ day do: “They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on the shoulders of others, but they themselves are unwilling to lift a finger to move them” (Mt 23:4). By contrast, disciples of Jesus are yoked with him and with one another, intent on lifting the weight born of injustice from the backs of the downtrodden.

The rest that is promised by Jesus echoes that bestowed on those who let themselves be yoked to Woman Wisdom’s teaching (Sir 6:28). It also echoes that of the Creator (Gn 2:1-3), who rested in order to delight in the

PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

- Allow Jesus to speak to you as Woman Wisdom. What do you hear?
- Reflect on how Jesus’ gift of rest is linked to taking up his yoke.
- How is your faith community working to lift the yoke of injustice from those who are unjustly bound?

goodness of all that had been made while setting creation free to flourish. Woman Wisdom, also present at creation (Prv 8:23-31), shares in this unbounded joy.

When believing communities gather to share Sabbath rest, we celebrate the divine delight in creation (Ex 20:8-11) and our participation in the recreative and liberating work of the Holy One, embodied in Jesus, who is Wisdom incarnate, intent on teaching the way that lifts heavy yokes.

BARBARA E. REID



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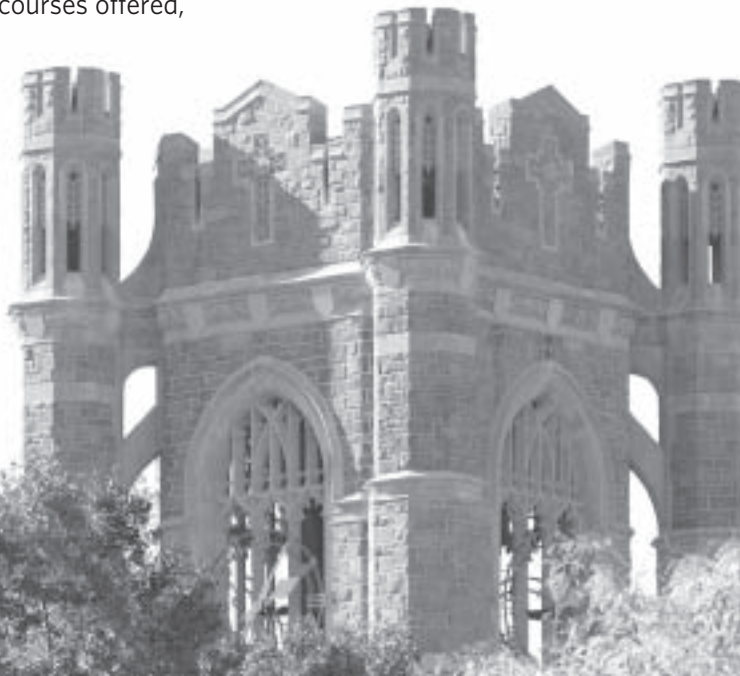
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