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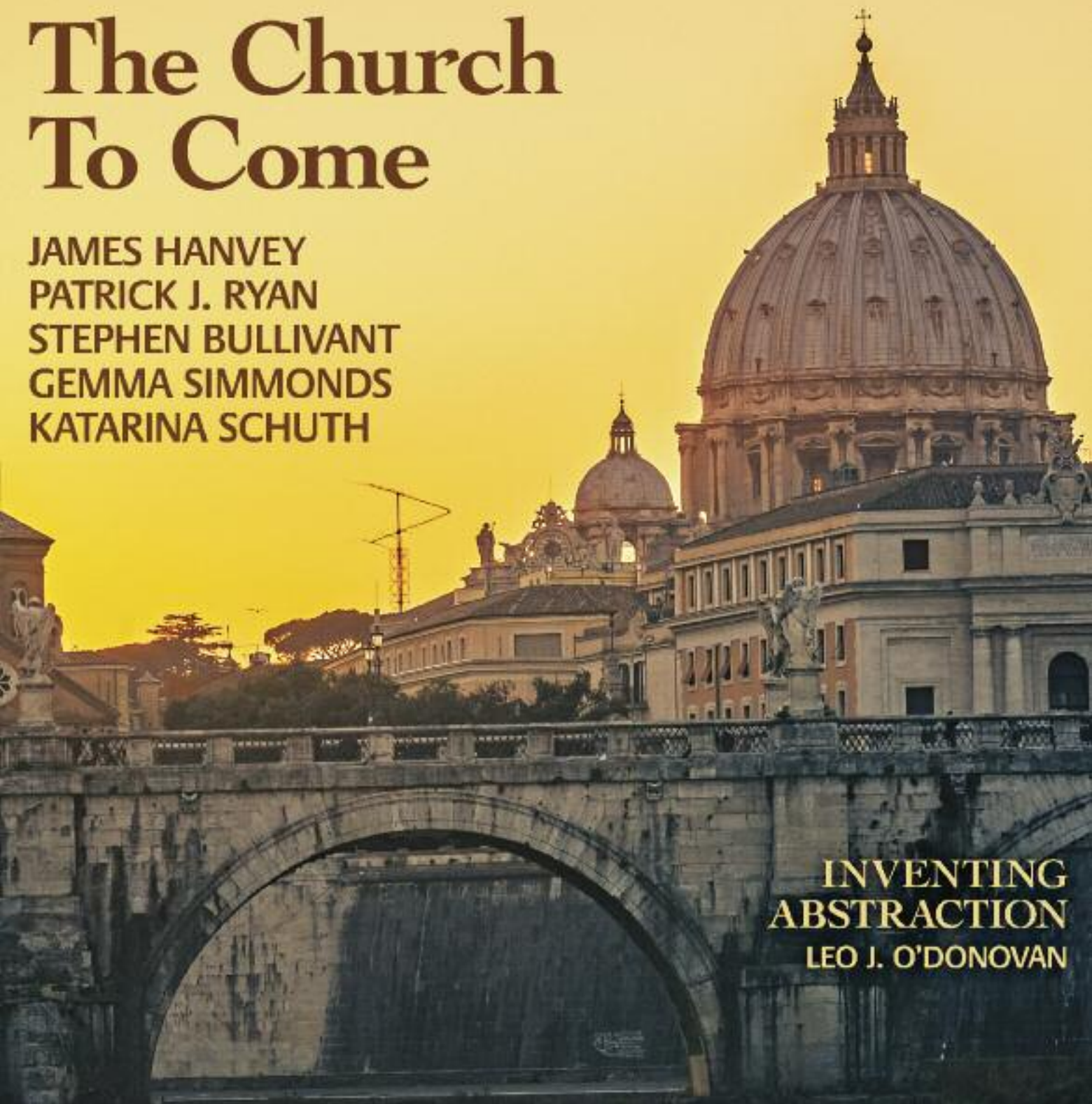
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The Church To Come

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INVENTING
ABSTRACTION
LEO J. O'DONOVAN



OF MANY THINGS

‘Who can tell me the title of the chapter in “Lumen Gentium” that talks about the laity,” asked our theology professor. “That’s an easy one,” we thought. A half dozen hands shot up; we knew the gist of the famous document from the Second Vatican Council. “The People of God,” answered one student. “Wrong,” said the professor. “The chapter about the laity,” said the professor, “is titled ‘The Laity.’” He continued: “The chapter titled ‘The People of God’ includes the laity, but the people of God means all the members of the church, clerical and lay alike.”

That was news to us. We had been told, growing up after the council, that the most important teaching of Vatican II was that the church is the people of God, which meant that the church is the laity, not the hierarchy. Our professor had a point, though: If there is a chapter titled “The People of God” and also a chapter titled “The Laity,” it follows that they are not, strictly speaking, the same thing.

You would not know that, however, from listening to the current ecclesiastical conversation. Not a few of us are saying something like this: “What we need is a new pope who will remember that the church is the people of God and not the priests and the bishops.” Now, not only is that not what the conciliar fathers meant by the phrase “people of God”; it is exactly the opposite.

The council never understood the phrase to mean a this-worldly political class, let alone a lay proletariat engaged in some kind of political struggle with the clerical bourgeoisie. Conceived in those terms, the phrase is just a blunt expression of power politics, nothing more than the latest version of the disciples’ argument about who was the greatest among them. “People of God” in that sense is not essentially different from clericalism, which also makes certain claims about who is the greatest.

Still, the council did do something different. By using the phrase “people of God” to describe the church, the council fathers made it clear that the church is more than the ministerial priesthood; it is a hierarchy of all the baptized.

That is not without political implications, but its spiritual significance is far more important. “The church, which is Jesus Christ spread abroad and communicated,” Henri de Lubac, S.J., wrote, “completes—so far as it can be completed here below—the work of spiritual reunion which was made necessary by sin; that work that was begun at the incarnation and was carried on up to Calvary.”

The “Dogmatic Constitution on the Church” describes this “spiritual reunion” as “a communion of life, charity and truth...used by him as an instrument of redemption for all.” It is precisely this spiritual reunion that constitutes the new people of God, a people “not according to the flesh but in the spirit.”

In order to draw them ever more deeply into his inner life, God has given to the new people of God the gift of priesthood. Though the two forms of priesthood “differ from one another in essence and not only degree” each is “in its own special way...a participation in the one priesthood of Christ” through which “the Catholic Church strives constantly and with due effect to bring all humanity...back to its source in Christ.”

The expression “people of God,” then, is a summons to unity, a symbol of the one body of Christ. It is not the “We the People” of our secular politics. If our vision for the church to come is to avoid fatal distortions, then we need to leave our ideologies behind. The council fathers did not call us to mount the barricades; they called us to holiness. If we are to be the one, holy people of God, then we need to stop claiming that we possess the Truth and start praying that He possesses us.

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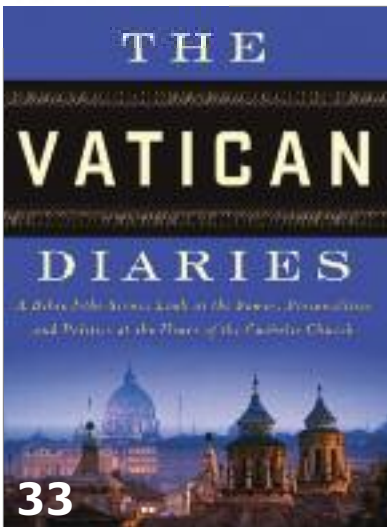
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ON THE WEB

A daily reader's guide to the **papal transition** from blogger James L. Franklin and a podcast conversation with **James Hanvey, S.J.** Plus, from the archives, Ladislav Orsy, S.J., on "The Papacy in an Ecumenical Age."
All at americamagazine.org.



A Listening Church

The Holy Spirit works not only in the cardinal electors as they select a new pope, but in the hopes and desires of all the people of God. The church is called to be attentive to the Spirit alive in both groups: the hierarchy and the laity. It is called to be both *ecclesia docens* (a teaching church) and *ecclesia discens* (a learning church). What groups, then, might the next pope need to listen to most carefully?

The poor. The Catholic Church is one of the great champions of the poor. Taking its inspiration from the call of Jesus to care for the “least of these,” the Vatican hears the “cry of the poor.” Nonetheless, the call to listen to the downtrodden bears repeating because the poor are always in danger of being forgotten, as they do not have access to structures of power. The church always needs to ask: What more can we do for the poor?

Victims of sexual abuse. Pope Benedict XVI’s historic meetings with victims of sexual abuse decisively ended the awful canard that the scandal is some “media creation” that we can choose to ignore. Listening to the harrowing stories of victims of abuse by members of the clergy, painful as it is for leaders, is an essential part of the healing ministry of the next pope.

Women. The church’s teaching is clear: The church has no authority whatsoever to ordain women as priests. This means, however, that women are effectively shut out of decision-making at the highest levels of the church. Might the pope consider appointing women as heads of some congregations and dicasteries, positions that do not necessarily require ordination? If not, can the pope establish mechanisms to facilitate greater access to the insights and advice of Catholic women?

Gays and lesbians. Once again, church teaching on homosexual activity and same-sex marriage is clear: One is forbidden, the other beyond the pale. But the church also calls us to treat our brothers and sisters with “respect, compassion and sensitivity.” One sign of respect is listening. We pray for a pope who begins a conversation with the words, “In listening to the experience of our brothers and sisters who are homosexual....”

Theologians. Since the time of the church fathers, theologians have helped the church do its thinking. The task of theologians is not simply to repeat what is said in the catechism. It is to think creatively about new questions in theology. Can the church listen more carefully, and more openly, to those theologians whose work takes them to the margins? As Jesus said, “Let anyone who has ears to hear, listen!”

For God and Country?

Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta has announced that the pilots of drones, who operate thousands of miles from combat, will be eligible to receive a new military medal, the Distinguished Warfare Medal, which will rank below the Distinguished Flying Cross but above the Bronze Star and Purple Heart. This seems inappropriate.

The idea has emerged just as the use of drones is being subjected to more intense scrutiny in Congress and the press. The Bureau of Investigative Journalism estimates that among the nearly 3,000 people killed during 350 drone strikes in Pakistan since 2004, roughly 430 to 800 were civilians, including nearly 200 children. Only a tiny percent of those killed were enemy leaders. Among Pakistanis aware of the strikes, 97 percent oppose the strikes, and the sight of bloody body parts stokes the fires of revenge.

The medal’s defenders argue that future wars will be fought from a safe distance and that the medals are a way to acknowledge that their recipients, who often experience combat stress, are engaged in deadly conflict. Critics point out that there is a long list of awards that are already available.

Courageous Forgiveness

During a Lenten season that has included media coverage of the sins of prominent Catholics, it is easy to feel discouraged. And yet, as painful as it can be, reflecting on these events during this season of prayer and repentance is especially appropriate. We are right to call our church’s leaders to accountability, transparency and repentance; but individual Catholics must not forget that we too require accountability and forgiveness. We in the pews are also the church; and when we allow grace to change us from within, we participate in the process of healing the church.

We must make our lives examples of mercy not only by offering forgiveness to those who have hurt us but also by seeking forgiveness for ourselves. Pope John Paul II called confession “an act of honesty and courage—an act of entrusting ourselves, beyond sin, to the mercy of a loving and forgiving God.” He said that “the potential for an authentic and vibrant renewal of the whole Catholic Church through the more faithful use of the sacrament of penance is immeasurable.” This Lent, let us all examine our lives; let us ask for forgiveness; let us work together toward a purer and more courageous church.

A Solitary Scandal

‘Solitary confinement precipitates a descent into madness,’ testified Dr. Craig Haney, the nation’s leading expert in penal institution psychology, last June at the first-ever Congressional hearing to confront the alarming increase of prolonged solitary confinement in U.S. prisons. Last month the Federal Bureau of Prisons acknowledged this danger when it announced that the National Institute of Corrections will conduct the first-ever comprehensive and independent assessment of the use of solitary confinement in federal prisons in the United States. This marks an important step toward ending the use of prolonged solitary confinement in all U.S. prisons.

Solitary confinement—also referred to as isolation, “the hole,” permanent lockdown or segregated, restricted or supermax housing—is the practice of holding prisoners in small, windowless cells for 23 or 24 hours a day. There is little or no human contact and minimal access to rehabilitative services and medical and mental health treatment. Contrary to popular belief, the use of solitary confinement is neither the best way nor the only way to control the most violent prisoners. Furthermore, it is increasingly being used as a punishment for violating prison rules, even minor, nonviolent infractions, or as a behavioral control mechanism for the mentally ill. Who goes to the hole, and for how long, is often decided with little or no due process.

In 1989 California became the first state to build a supermax prison (Pelican Bay), a facility built for long-term solitary confinement. Today at least 25,000 prisoners are held in supermax facilities in the United States, and as many as 80,000 others are held in restricted housing units elsewhere—sometimes for months, years or decades. In Pelican Bay the average stay for a person in the Security Housing Unit is seven and a half years. Nearly 100 prisoners at Pelican have been in solitary for more than 20 years.

Human beings are by nature social beings who require human contact for their psychological health and development. Studies have shown that prolonged isolation actually changes how the brain works and can result in impairments and abnormalities akin to a traumatic injury. Psychological effects can include auditory and visual hallucinations, delirium, self-mutilation, insomnia, paranoia, uncontrollable feelings of rage and fear, post-traumatic stress disorder and an increased risk of suicide. Most prison suicides occur in solitary confinement.

The National Religious Campaign Against Torture,

which includes 314 religious organizations as members, has led the way in educating people of faith about the damaging consequences of prolonged solitary confinement, the

urgent moral questions it raises and the need to abolish its use in U.S. prisons. “Prolonged solitary confinement is torture in your backyard,” says the campaign’s Web site, and its use “violates the inherent, God-given dignity and worth of every person.” In 2000 the U.S. Catholic bishops issued a pastoral letter on crime and criminal justice that stated their opposition to “the increasing use of isolation units, especially in the absence of due process.”

The U.N. Convention Against Torture, ratified by the U.S. Congress in 1994, defines torture as “any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person” by a public official in order to obtain information, punish, coerce or discriminate against the person. The use of prolonged solitary confinement meets this standard and should be immediately abolished. It also violates the spirit of the U.S. Constitution’s protection against “cruel and unusual punishments.” Juan E. Méndez, the U.N.’s special rapporteur on torture, has said that “solitary confinement should be used only in very exceptional circumstances, for as short a time as possible.” While some mental damage can result from just a few days of isolation, Mr. Méndez explained, “Indefinite and prolonged solitary confinement, in excess of 15 days, should also be subject to an absolute prohibition.”

In order to confront the problem of prison violence, the focus must shift from punishment to prevention. Great Britain did just this, beginning in the 1980s, with impressive results. Instead of using humiliation and confrontation, which only made things worse, the British reduced the use of solitary confinement and allowed their most dangerous prisoners to have more opportunities for work, education, programming and mental health treatment. As a result, the need for solitary confinement in British prisons became negligible. The National Institute of Corrections, which will conduct the assessment of U.S. federal prisons, has already helped Mississippi reduce its restricted housing population by 75 percent and prison violence by 50 percent. Other federal and state prisons should follow suit. Respect for the human dignity of prisoners demands no less.



SIGNS OF THE TIMES

THE VATICAN

After the Scandals, Cardinals Look to Reform Roman Curia

In the wake of the resignation of Cardinal Keith O'Brien of Scotland, the possibly alarming contents of a report of institutional dysfunction in the Roman Curia, as well as "Vatileaks" and other scandals, church leaders around the world say that a reform of the Curia may be in order for the man who will succeed Pope Benedict XVI.

"There is no doubt that today there needs to be renewal in the church, reform in the church and especially of government," Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, former head of the church in England and Wales, told a news conference in London on Feb. 26. He said that the pope's "own house has to be put in order."

But according to Cardinal Murphy-O'Connor, many bishops and cardinals believe that the entire church should be reformed by Benedict XVI's successor, with the pope taking a much less dominant role in the church. "It is not just the pope who rules the church," he said. "It is the pope with the bishops."

Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, Ind., has several years of firsthand experience of working in and with the Curia. He said Vatican reform "is a reasonable priority to have, not so much to avoid scandals but to provide for a government that will help the Holy Father exercise his Petrine service."

"That's a struggle for a bureaucracy that has been around for the better part of two millennia," he added.

"As one who used to severely criticize the Curia before I worked there, I was told by one historian that you have to remember the Curia saw the church through world wars and depressions and kept it going, even when there wasn't a pope," he said.

Archbishop Tobin served in the Roman Curia as secretary of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life from 2010 until his appointment to Indianapolis last October. Before that, he often worked closely with the Curia when he was superior general of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, known as the Redemptorists, from 1997 to 2009.

"My experience is that there's a lot of goodness in the Roman Curia, a lot of people who are very devout Catholics," he said. But "there are structures and trends that blunt" its effectiveness.

One of those trends, he said, is the tendency to have Italians dominate the staffs of the various Vatican offices. Although the congregation he served has a Brazilian cardinal as its prefect and formerly Archbishop Tobin himself, an American, as the second in charge, he noted that the majority of its approximately 40 staff members were Italian.

"What I was able to do as a non-Italian was to encourage them to think beyond the [Italian] peninsula," he said. "If you don't make an effort to have an international Curia, it's very easy, and with goodwill, to slide into all the issues of the church and the state in Italy."



Archbishop Tobin speculated that Pope Benedict may have chosen to resign now, as his own strength is diminishing, to avoid problems with the Curia that occurred in the final years of the pontificate of Blessed John Paul II, when his deteriorating health made it difficult for him to take decisive action in curial affairs.

IRAQ

Renewed Fears of Sectarian Conflict

Car bombings, sectarian tension and unexpected political setbacks generated a sense of renewed crisis in Iraq during February. A series of bombings struck Baghdad, the capital, and towns to the south on Feb. 28, killing at least 22 people and

A PAPAL VIGIL: Prayer service for Pope Benedict XVI in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, on Feb. 25.



wounding dozens in mainly Shiite areas.

Iraq's President Jalal Talabani, a Kurd who has been seen as a unifying statesman despite the mostly ceremonial authority held by the president, suffered a stroke in December and is being treated in Germany. His absence has created a dangerous power vacuum, and tensions have been escalating between the central government and Kurds in the north, whom Talabani represented.

Iraq's finance minister Rafaie Al-Esawi, a Sunni, told crowds of Sunni protesters on March 1 that he was resigning "from this government in front of you" at a rally in Iraq's western province of Anbar, on the border with Syria. For months Sunnis have been protesting their political and economic marginalization.

"More than 70 days of demonstrations and this government hasn't ful-

filled our people's demands," Esawi later complained to reporters. "It doesn't honor me to be part of a sectarian government. I decided to stay with my people."

As bombings against Shiite targets continue, Sunni families in Baghdad have been receiving warnings from the Army of Mukhtar, a new Shiite militant group. Many are beginning to fear a return to the sectarian violence that bloodied the country in the aftermath of the U.S. invasion. Renewed Sunni and Shiite fighting could easily unravel the fragile progress that Iraq has made as that violence diminished. This time there will be no U.S. troops in Iraq to keep warring parties apart.

Patriarch Louis Raphael I Sako of the Chaldean Church said that Christians are continuing to leave Iraq for many reasons, but key factors have been the lack of security and the nation's growing Islamist fundamentalism. The patriarch, who was elected on Jan. 31 in Rome, said, "Christians have lost their trust in the future."

"The whole situation is bad," he added. "There is tension between the government and the opposition, also between the central government and the Kurdish regional government. Everyone is waiting for an improvement. We hope for a real reconciliation between the partners."

Patriarch Raphael added that "security and freedom" were the most important issues for the survival of the church in Iraq. "When they feel secure, free and equal

with the others, [Christians] will stay; otherwise they will leave."

The Christian population in Iraq has plummeted from 1.4 million, counted in the 1987 census, to perhaps fewer than 250,000 today. Many Christians who fled to northern Iraq are now leaving even this relatively peaceful region, unable to find jobs or housing or because they have been reluctant to settle as the north continues to experience sporadic acts of violence.

Recent attacks in Kirkuk and Tuz Khurmatu left at least 30 people dead and more than 200 wounded. Patriarch Raphael said that Islamist "fundamentalism does not accept Christians.... Extremists think that the reason for their predicament is the West—that is, Christians."

Despite such animosity, Patriarch Raphael said that Christians are important for helping to provide cohesion in an unstable region. He said at his election in Rome, Pope Benedict XVI "appealed to me so that we remain, as in the past, a bridge for all, between Christians and Muslims and between Iraqi citizens."



LINE OF COMMUNICATION: The Rev. Ayser al-Yas, center right, speaks to the Iraqi Shiite cleric Moktada al-Sadr during a visit to Our Lady of Deliverance Syriac Catholic Church in Baghdad, Iraq, on Jan. 4.

Defending the Ati

The Philippine island of Boracay is a tourist paradise; it is also the scene of abuse and violence suffered by its indigenous people, the Ati. The church in the Philippines is by their side to defend their rights and perhaps protect their very existence, said Bishop Sergio Utleg, president of the Philippine's Episcopal Commission on Indigenous Peoples. The bishop spoke on Feb. 22 following the murder of Dexter Condez, an Ati leader. A security guard for a chain of hotels in Boracay has been charged in the slaying. Bishop Utleg said the killing "highlights what is happening in that area. Due to extensive tourism marketing, these tribal people...are threatened, abused, deprived of their rights. Their land is occupied, and the goal is to expel them altogether." Similar incidents have occurred in other parts of the country, he said. The church is on the side of the indigenous, the bishop said, and it asks the government "to protect the dignity and rights of these people."

U.N. Asserts Immunity Against Cholera Claims

The United Nations has taken the rare step of invoking its legal immunity to rebuff claims for compensation from victims of the cholera epidemic in Haiti, the worst outbreak of the disease in modern times. Citing a convention laid down in 1946 that offers immunity from such legal claims, U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, telephoned President Michel Martelly of Haiti on Feb. 21 to tell him that the United Nations was not willing to compensate any of the claimants. The epidemic has killed almost 8,000 people and stricken hundreds of thousands more—about one out of every 16 Haitians. The infection is thought to have been carried into Haiti by

NEWS BRIEFS

Archbishop Philip Tartaglia was named apostolic administrator of the Archdiocese of St. Andrews and Edinburgh on Feb. 28, temporarily **replacing Cardinal Keith O'Brien**, who resigned on Feb. 18 and then dramatically acknowledged on March 3 that he was guilty of sexual misconduct throughout his career. • Archbishop Boniface Lele of Mombasa, Kenya, urged voters to **transcend ethnic affiliation** and "choose peace for our beloved Kenya" as presidential and parliamentary elections approached on March 4. • Greece is facing a serious **shortage of medicines** amid claims that pharmaceutical multinationals have halted shipments to the country because of the nation's economic crisis. • Striking farmers angry over **falling coffee prices** clashed with police in Colombia in late February as commodity prices continued a nearly 40 percent decline over the past year. • The eighth **World Meeting of Families**, an international gathering inaugurated by Blessed John Paul II in 1994, will be held in late September 2015 in Philadelphia. • **Christians in Egypt** are protesting the government's plans to hold national elections during the Coptic Palm Sunday and Easter celebrations.



Philip Tartaglia

U.N. peacekeepers from Nepal sent to help with disaster relief following the earthquake in Haiti in 2010. Ban's spokesperson issued a carefully worded statement that pointedly did not accept or deny liability for the epidemic but made clear that the United Nations would not accept the compensation claims.

Indonesia: Religious Minorities Threatened

The Indonesian government is failing to protect the country's religious minorities from growing intolerance and violence, Human Rights Watch said in a new report. The report documents government failure to confront militant groups, whose harassment and assaults on houses of worship and members of religious minorities have become increasingly aggressive. Those

targeted include Ahmadiyahs, Christians and Shiite Muslims. The Jakarta-based Setara Institute, which monitors religious freedom in Indonesia, reported a rise in violent attacks on religious minorities to 264 in 2012, from 244 in 2011. "The Indonesian government's failure to take decisive action to protect religious minorities from threats and violence is undermining its claims to being a rights-respecting democracy," said Brad Adams, Asia director at Human Rights Watch. "National leadership is essential. [President Susilo Bambang] Yudhoyono needs to insist that national laws be enforced, announce that every violent attack will be prosecuted, and map out a comprehensive strategy to combat rising religious intolerance."

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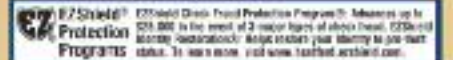


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Habemus Humor?

As you may have already concluded from my lack of the title “Cardinal,” I’m not eligible to vote in the upcoming conclave. Nonetheless, like every sentient Catholic, I have plenty of ideas about who the next pope should be and what he should do.

Not surprisingly, we have received many inquiries here at **America** from the media about those very questions. The morning that Pope Benedict XVI announced his resignation I fielded a call from one journalist who asked me what the top three qualifications might be for the next pope. “Well, first,” I said, “he has to be a holy person. Second, he needs to be able to preach the Gospel effectively. And third, he must have the ability to work within a variety of cultures.” There was an uncomfortable pause on the other end of the line. “Father, I can’t just write that he needs to be holy,” he said. “I was hoping you would talk about something like women’s ordination and birth control.”

So much for holiness.

There are many challenges facing the church that I hope the next pope will take up. (My list is too long for a column.) But as the conclave approaches, I think less about issues and more about the person. Few can predict what will occupy the working days of the next vicar of Christ, and none of the cardinal-electors has the gift of foresight. So besides considering where a candidate stands on the burning topics and sizing up his skills (administrative and otherwise), it is important to look

at the spiritual qualities of the man: his prayerfulness, his freedom, his awareness of his own reliance on God. In a word, his holiness.

Let me add another quality that makes for a holy person: a sense of humor. I can think of no other job that so requires a keen sense of humor as being pope. It is an absolutely essential requirement for sustaining at least a modicum of humility. After all, it must be difficult not to get a swelled head when people kiss your ring and call you “Your Holiness” or “Holy Father.” (Frankly, one of my fantasies about what I would do as pope would be to say, “I’m not crazy about that second title. You have only one father in heaven—as my boss said.”)

Besides fostering humility, self-deprecating humor puts others at ease. One model for papal humor is Pope John XXIII, who during his pontificate demonstrated a flair for self-deprecation. Once, after his microphone failed at a public event, he said to the crowd, “Don’t worry about not hearing what I was saying. You didn’t miss anything. I didn’t say anything interesting anyway.” Archbishop Fulton Sheen, for 20 years host of a popular radio broadcast and then on television in the early 1950s and again in the 1960s, related that John XXIII once said to him: “From all eternity, God knew that I was going to be pope. He had 80 years to work on me. Why did he make me so ugly?”

Are there any papal candidates who fulfill the “sense of humor” requirement? I’m not as familiar with the

papabili as John L. Allen Jr., Thomas J. Reese, S.J., or Robert Mickens, so I can’t tell you if Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi is a hoot or Cardinal Angelo Scola knows any good knock-knock jokes. But there is at least one man who fits the bill: Cardinal Timothy J. Dolan of New York. When I was on his radio show last year, Cardinal Dolan related that when he was archbishop of Milwaukee, he met with

I can think of no other job that so requires a keen sense of humor as being pope.

Pope John Paul II and shared some good news with him. “Your Holiness,” said Dolan, “the Archdiocese of Milwaukee is growing!” John Paul looked him over and said, “So is the archbishop!”

If the cardinals don’t believe me, then maybe they should believe their former boss. In an

interview given during his pontificate, Pope Benedict XVI shared this reflection:

I believe [God] has a great sense of humor. Sometimes he gives you something like a nudge and says, ‘Don’t take yourself so seriously!’ Humor is in fact an essential element in the mirth of creation. We can see how, in many matters in our lives, God wants to prod us into taking things a bit more lightly, to see the funny side of it, to get down off our pedestal and not forget our sense of fun.

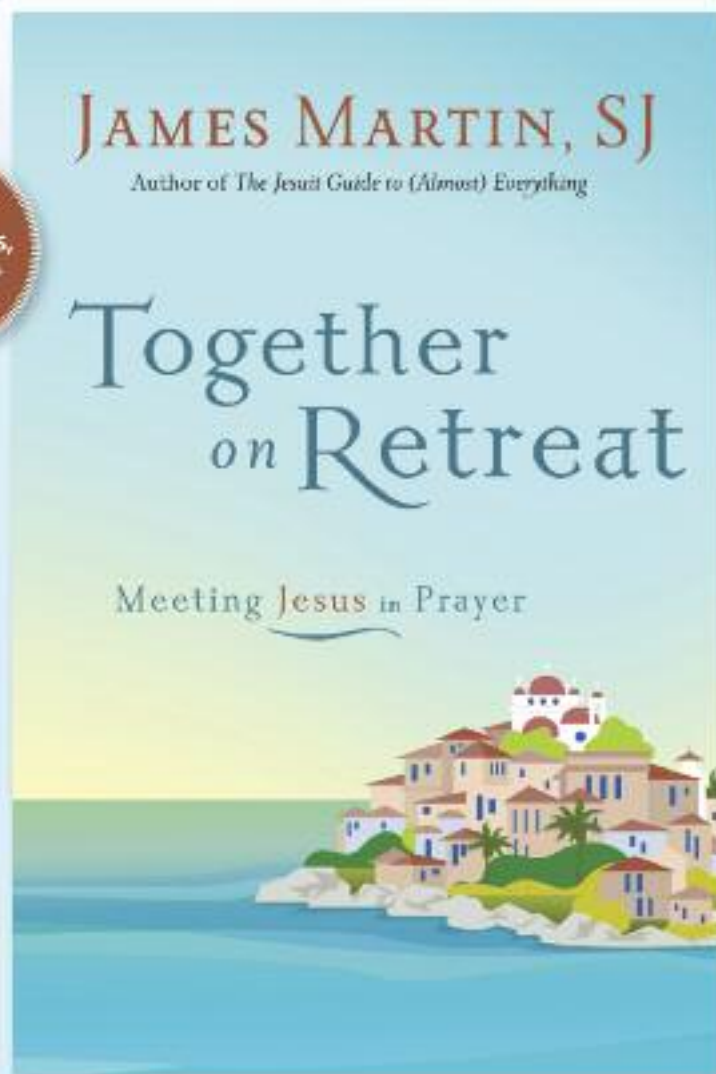
Let’s pray for a pope who takes God and the church seriously—but not himself.

JAMES MARTIN, S.J., editor at large of *America*, is the author of the e-book *Together on Retreat: Meeting Jesus in Prayer* (HarperOne).

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Quo Vadis?

Reflections on the shape of the church to come

BY JAMES HANVEY

Just southeast of Rome stands the small church of St. Mary in Palmis, better known as the Church of Domine Quo Vadis. It takes its name from the legend of St. Peter's meeting with Christ as he flees persecution in Rome. "Lord, where are you going?" Peter asks. "To Rome to be crucified again," the Lord replies. Whatever the actual origin of the name, there is a certain familiarity about this Petrine encounter with Christ: It ends in the reversal of what Peter originally had planned. The rest is history.

As the church prepares for Easter and a new successor to Peter, the ancient question remains powerfully relevant, not only for the papacy but for us all. It is not easy at the moment to get a clear sense of where the church is heading. What we do know is that with his resignation, Pope Benedict has separated the office from the person. Even for a moment, he has created a space of reflection, an opportunity to hear Christ ask us the question, *Quo vadis?* Even more searchingly, in this moment we must ask not only "Where are we going?" but "Where do we desire to go?"

In his act of resignation, Pope Benedict reminded us that the true head of the church is Christ. This is not a pious formula but a profound act of faith. In difficult times it can be tempting for the church to become enthralled to anxiety about its success or survival. When it does this, it shows itself no different from other human institutions. It can forget its own origin and mystery, the daily miracle of its life and sacraments, its reality as "the kingdom of Christ now present in mystery." As the pope withdrew into the prayer, reflection and silence of his Lenten retreat, the whole church might follow his example by taking time to let the Spirit prepare us for the election and reception of his successor. It may also be a time to acknowledge and understand what could be called our "ecclesial desolation."

Attending to Desolation

St. Ignatius Loyola was not the first to identify "desolation" and "consolation," but he teaches us to use them as a school in which God teaches us. One of the great insights of his Spiritual Exercises is not to flee from desolation but to attend to it. God is at work even in a dry, painful and dark time, confronting us with our fears, resistances and un-free-

doms, often deep and subtle. No matter how much we love the church, it would be hard not to feel, at least from a European and North American perspective, that we have been living in a time of desolation. This does not detract from the astonishing goodness, commitment and courageous witness that so many "ordinary Catholics" give—the sure sign of the Spirit's faithfulness. I would identify three desolations that are present in the Western church at the moment: hierarchical leadership, the wound of abuse, and mourning. Of course, they are all related.

Leadership. Although the hemorrhaging of membership may indeed be due to the secularization of culture, it may also be a symptom of desolation within the institutional structures of the church. This is a subtle desolation because Catholics intuitively understand and revere the hierarchical nature of their church. The desolation may have less to do with the structure per se than with its own secularization. Increasingly, bishops and priests find themselves acting like chief executive officers, with a strange confidence in condemning and disciplining, enhancing their retro-liturgical plumage rather than living out of the sacrament they bear.

As the Second Vatican Council and successive popes have taught, the church is not a corporation but a *communio* of the Spirit; its discipline does not come from coercion, fear, threat or persecution, but from love of Christ, his mission, his people and his truth. This love means that leadership is always marked by respect for others, their charisms and their dignity; it always begins by presuming their good faith. Ultimately, only leadership like this can be a source of grace to the community, gathering its gifts for the service of the whole Body of Christ and the struggle against evil.

The wound of abuse. We need to acknowledge deep desolation and the wound in the church's heart caused not only by the crisis of abuse but by the way in which it is addressed. We need to accept that it is not the enemies of the church who have exposed this wound, but the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth. It is the same Spirit who gives us the grace to act with integrity.

Abuse cannot be addressed by safeguarding procedures alone, necessary though they are. A purely juridical process can never be adequate. To attempt to blame others or a lax secular culture is not only a dangerous denial; it is a sin against the victims and against the Spirit who is their advocate. Though intensely personal, abuse is about an institutional failure and the ecclesial culture that supported it. Only through a deep, humble repentance that begins and

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desires a sustained *metanoia* of ecclesial soul and culture can there be healing and *renovatio*.

The church must reclaim itself as the body of Christ, not some international corporation. Here the church needs to believe in itself. It needs to use its own spiritual, sacramental and imaginative resources; it needs a profound conversion. Only when it does this can it truly witness to the world, a world that itself is desperately in need of another way.

Mourning. We live in a church that is mourning. There is a sense that something has been lost. This is not only a loss, as is claimed, in the sense of mystery and transcendence, which we desperately need to recover, but it is also that sacramental intimacy and familiar reverence that marks Catholicism's incarnational "at-home-ness" with heaven and earth. For some it may be mourning the loss of a past security and glory; for others an unfulfilled future glimpsed at the Second Vatican Council and the lost opportunities or seeds that never flowered. With a younger generation it may be for something they were never given but know they miss.

Mourning can generate anger toward those who we feel have taken something away from us. One can detect this in a strange anger that marks the Western Church at the moment. We see it in the internal polemics between different schools claiming to have the answer to our problems, but mainly it is directed against a secular culture, as if it is the secular world that has betrayed and robbed the church of its mission. Anger stops us from seeing the good in others; it stops us from seeing the great good and noble desires of our own culture, hearing its deeper longings, recognizing its fears and deep anxieties and recognizing its own searching. Only anger at the loss and desecration of human life, the exploitation of the poor, the destruction of creation and suffering ignored can serve the Gospel of Christ.

A decisive moment in the conversion of St. Augustine was his recollection of the words of the angel at the empty tomb: "Why seek the living among the dead?" A church that lives from the resurrection does not need to mourn; it needs to follow its risen Lord with joyous, calm and unshakable faith along all the unknown roads of history. It carries within itself the Easter proclamation, "All time belongs to him." No matter how bleak the age, the church cannot go back; it must never lose its Easter eyes—with these it sees the abundance of graced life even in the desert.

A New Sensibility

If we can pause and take time, we will see that the daily funeral rites performed by the secular media (and some internal voices) have more to do with their own pathologies than our church's reality. There is life, and it is coming in ways both familiar and new; a new spiritual and ethical sensibility is already forming. This sensibility is not afraid to draw upon the deep wells of the church's traditional devotional life and to explore fresh forms. Many, church and



CNS PHOTO/PAUL HARING

un-church, young and old, have a deep desire for a sacramental life and vision, a Catholic vision, that heals the deep alienations that run through our postmodern life—a vision that makes sense of who we are, our purpose and our responsibilities to cherish the world that God has given us. They already are at home in the church; they are waiting for it to rediscover its freedom and generativity before a secular world. The secular world, too, is waiting for a church it can believe in, even if it chooses not to enter.

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When we are freed from our Eurocentrism or America-centrism, our fears and desolations, we can begin to see the Spirit already preparing our future. Where can we begin? Once again, the question "Domine quo vadis?" is not a bad place to start—Christ was on his way to Rome.

The see of Peter. The papacy is God's great gift to the church, but it needs to continue to evolve if it is to realize the fullness of its service. It has become too trapped in an ultramontane ecclesiology and a quasi-secular, monarchical exercise of power. While effective and prophetic at its best, it can also be impoverishing for the life of the church. All the popes since the Second Vatican Council have been aware of the need to develop a fuller theology of the papacy, both Pope Paul VI and Pope Benedict have helped us deflate its mystique, and Pope John Paul II, while showing its extraordinary, often prophetic power, was not afraid to initiate theological reflection about it. That needs to continue. With this must go a reform of the Roman Curia—not just in terms of structures, but in terms of ethos. It needs to be less about governing the universal church than about serving it. Subsidiarity is not just an important principle for the relationship between secular structures; it is an ecclesial one as well. As Pius XII observed, without prejudice to the hierarchical nature of the church, the principle applies to its life. Indeed, it is present from the beginning, as we can see from St. Paul. The office of Peter must maintain a serious and sustained theology of collegiality, which translates into effective practice and finds articulation within canon law. The council laid the foundations, but the full building is far from complete.

Collegiality. Collegiality needs to be given effective structures within the life of the local church. Only in that way can the full grace of the church's hierarchical structure and its capacity to offer leadership to national and local cultures be fully realized. Pope John Paul II spoke about the "spirituality of *communio*" and the renewal and conversion of the use of the grace of power for the service it entails. Unless this happens, authority will be more diminished in the church.

With a development of collegiality, attention must be given to the gifts and charisms of those who are appointed bishops. They need to be men who can offer significant and creative leadership and that means using all the gifts of God's people.

They need to be able to hold the community to its principal mission of witness to the Gospel of Christ, rather than allowing it to fall into division and dispute about things that are not essential or whose symbolic value has been exaggerated.

Internationally, nationally and locally the church increasingly needs to understand how to strengthen and nourish its own internal life while meeting the demands of the secular

culture. This certainly means greater transparency and accountability enshrined in the church's ethos and law. Above all, the bishop must be less an executive administrator than a demonstratively caring spiritual and pastoral leader. The gifts of administration already exist within the community, especially among the laity, and the bishop should not hesitate to use these gifts fully as part of his own ministry. He must have a deep, compassionate understanding for his priests and his people, the struggles and the circumstances of their lives, nourishing them with the light of Christ and the ever creative consolation of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, he must show this love for all within his diocese, prepared not only to call them to the truth of Christ, but to defend them before all those forces that diminish or oppress them. Above all, especially in our present cultures, he must be a man who can speak in a familiar way about God and the things of God.

Theology. Surely it is time for us to leave behind the rather false and arid polemics about the Second Vatican Council and the hermeneutics of continuity or discontinuity. We are now at the moment of a new appropriation of the council, whose riches we have barely begun to unfold. Part of the problem over both interpretation and practice has been that the theology after Vatican II has not kept pace with the council's insights. Often the council glimpsed a truth but lacked the theology to develop it or to explore its consequences. Since the council, arguably the theological vitality and creativity of the church has been reduced. This needs to be restored, as does the ecclesial role of theology.

Too often, in its migration to the university, theology has lost its sense of service, not just to the academy but to the church and its mission. It needs to claim its own freedom and legitimacy within the campus, without sacrificing its subject to the gods of secular reason. Theology must not allow itself to forget that only in service of the mystery of Christ and his church is it preserved from vacuity.

We need to discover or recover a new relationship between the ecclesial charism of theology and that of the magisterium—local as well as Roman. Above all there is need for a clearer and effective theology of the *sensus fidelium*, which is not just a passive assent to Christian truth but an active wisdom manifest in the faithful praxis of Christian life and witness. Without this the church will never have a mature theology of the laity or realize the full effectiveness of its magisterium. Unless the church trusts theology, its mission and its risk, it will fail in its evangelical task. It will cease to have a conceptual command of the cultures in which it lives; it will be inarticulate and incomprehensible before them, lacking sufficient means to address the complex issues of the time with insight, reason, humanity, understanding and truth.

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Here the Euro-American centrism of the church must give way to the church emerging in the developing world, which will constitute the majority of its membership by the end of the next papacy. It must give voice to their concerns, which are often far from those of the secular West. It must raise its voice against exploitation in defense of economic and social rights, especially the basic rights of human life and the rights of women and children. Now is the time for the

church to discover its prophetic voice on behalf of the developing world, especially its vision of ecological justice and the care of natural resources that all members of the human family can enjoy and cherish now and in the future as the gift of God's good creation. This church is not afraid of the world; nor is it afraid to be poor before it, because it knows that it does not need worldly power to achieve its goals. It is prepared to spend itself in service—recognized and unrecognized; it is not preoccupied with itself or its own survival but has the needs and the future of humanity as its task.

ON THE WEB

A conversation with
James Hanvey, S.J.
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It is a church that follows the incarnate and risen Christ into all the depths of history and the empty places of the human heart, and always with love. Living from the truth of Christ, it understands and cherishes the supreme gift of

life in all men and women, whatever their race, religion, state or status. It rejoices in those structures, human as well as divine, which allow life—all life—to flourish. When the church lives this, then it lives most deeply its own sacramental life, offered without charge or contract to a secular world whose soul is slowly starving. Such a church can teach the evangelical counsels and the precepts with authority: how to share the resources of creation, live materially simpler but spiritually richer lives in solidarity with all women and men, reverencing our own bodies and those of others, rejecting all the ways of instrumentalizing and brutalizing creation and one another.

The council understood how only a church that lives out of a *kenosis* of love and joyous self-sacrificing gift can realize this vision. For such a church, secularization is not a threat but a call. It is not a utopian church or a church that has some dreamy, humanitarian ethic. Following the crucified Christ, it can never underestimate the reality of our wounded state, but it is not afraid to suffer for and with the world, living with all the tortured realities of our sin but understanding the quieter victory of hope, love and grace, "laboring and working" in the vineyard of the Lord until he comes. Above all, the church that the council glimpsed was one that knew that even when the secular world formally denies God, and informally ignores him, he is always present.

It will take a humble, free, mystical church to see this, to go even into the darknesses where God has been hidden or discarded. When it takes this next step, even on the Holy Saturdays of the secular world, it will find him where he is not expected to be; it will discover that there are many who bear his name and hear his voice. They have been waiting so long for the church to find them.

Maybe, as the church inaugurates a new papacy, we will not be afraid to love this church, as it is, as it desires to be, as God wills it to be. Maybe we will glimpse again the greatness of the church's heart and mission. **A**

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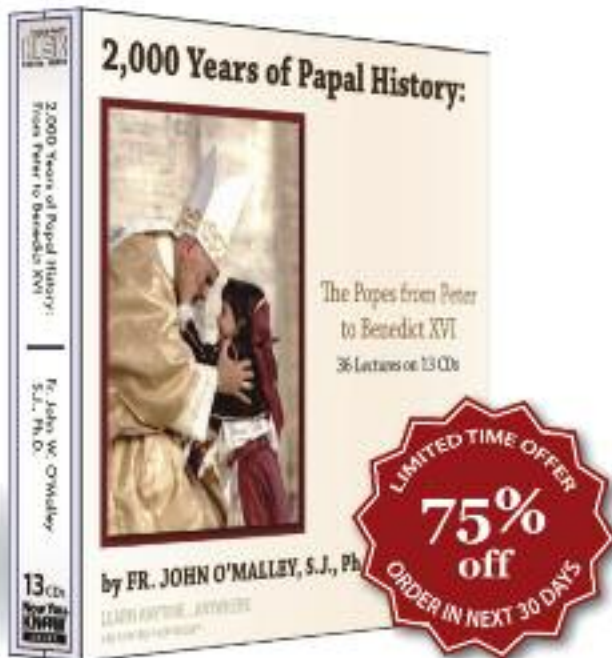
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A Punch List

Priorities for the next pope

Dedication to Dialogue

BY PATRICK J. RYAN

An eminent professor of history at Princeton University, Anthony Grafton, remarked in a short article in *The New York Review of Books* in 2010 that Pope Benedict XVI was probably “the greatest scholar to rule the church since Innocent III,” a pope whose reign covered the last years of the 12th century and the first years of the 13th century. Grafton meant those words in a laudatory sense, but they were double-edged. It is true that Innocent III made his reputation as a great canonist and church reformer in Europe, but he also claimed more than ecclesiastical authority over the princes in Europe.

Innocent also called for crusades against the Albigenians in the south of France as well as against the Muslims in both Spain and the Holy Land, even if he sometimes deplored the violence with which those campaigns were carried out. In 1187, 11 years before Innocent ascended the papal throne, most of the Holy Land had been wrested from the Crusaders by Saladin after 88 years of Crusader rule. Innocent saw that Crusader defeat as the result of the Crusaders’ sins. The Fourth Crusade, launched by Innocent III, was aimed at retrieving the Holy Land, especially Jerusalem, from Muslim rule but somehow led instead to the pillaging of Eastern Christian Constantinople in the year 1204. The Greek Orthodox have neither forgotten nor forgiven this.

Great as he is, Pope Benedict has sometimes, like Innocent III, found himself in situations he never intended to create. His academic lecture in 2006 at the University of Regensburg aimed at underlining the importance of reason in a university setting and especially at raising “the question of God through the use of reason.” He began with a brief description of a dialogue supposedly held in 1391 between an anonymous Muslim scholar and the third-to-last Byzantine emperor, Manuel II Palaiologos. During the dialogue the emperor claimed that Muslims, unlike Christians, had no respect for human reason: “Show me just what Muhammad brought that was new, and there you will find things only evil and inhuman, such as the command to spread by the sword that faith he preached.” Somehow, Pope Benedict and his advisers did not recognize ahead of time that this academic bijou could not but enrage Muslims.

Most people had never heard of Manuel II Palaiologos before the address at Regensburg; furthermore, the emperor’s understanding of Islam did not, in my opinion, cry out to be included in a discussion of the relationship between faith and reason. It also ignored the long tradition of Muslim philosophical theology (*kalam*).

Pope Benedict’s intellectual humility manifested itself in the aftermath of the Regensburg imbroglio, and during his subsequent visits to Turkey, the Holy Land and Lebanon in recent years, he has tried more than once to overcome his bias. Pope Benedict’s successor will have to recognize that Hilaire Belloc’s famous dictum—“Europe is the faith, and the faith is Europe”—makes no sense today, even if it is still bandied about. The Catholics of Latin America, Asia and Africa account for two-thirds of the world’s Catholics today. That does not mean that the next pope should come from these areas. I know some Asian, Middle Eastern and African Catholics with even more negative attitudes toward Islam than those still trumpeted in Europe, North America and Oceania.

But any future pope needs to understand basic truths about Islam; even better, he should get to know some Muslims. Personal acquaintance can break down many barriers.

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Mending Our Nets

BY STEPHEN BULLIVANT

The rapid secularization of Western societies, and their need to be evangelized anew, has been a major papal theme since Pope Paul VI. While a pope from Manila or São Paulo might not feel these issues quite so keenly as one from Milan or New York, they are unlikely to disappear from the church’s agenda anytime soon. In fact, there will almost certainly be an early, major magisterial statement on the subject: an exhortation on “The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith,” responding to last October’s Synod of Bishops, will be high on our new Holy Father’s to-do list.

Given the scale and complexity of the task, the new evangelization can and must encompass a great many things,

everything from Twitter to the theology of the body, from the Divine Mercy to the works of mercy. Our recent popes, of course, have guided the faithful—as teachers and witnesses—on each one of these (deliberately disparate) examples. Important as such undertakings are, however, there remains one fundamental issue that urgently needs to be addressed. If it is not, then—to put it bluntly—the new evangelization is doomed to abject failure.

Here is something that any incoming pope needs to know: While we are pretty good at attracting new people, we are terrible at keeping those we already have. Consider this: One in 40 American adults is a Catholic convert, but one in 10 Americans is a Catholic “deconvert”—that is, was brought up Catholic but now no longer self-identifies as such, according to the 2008 Pew Forum Religious Landscape Survey. To put those figures in some kind of perspective, American Catholic parishes, schools, colleges, mission groups, television stations and families have together reeled in almost six million new Catholic converts, an impressive catch by any fisher of men’s standards. And yet, at exactly the same time, those who got away number over 23 million.

All in all, according to a 2008 report from the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, American Catholicism’s dropout rate is somewhere around 30 percent. A similar, or worse, rate can be found in many other Western countries (in my own, Britain, it is 40 percent). This is a genuine crisis of transmission and retention, and

no realistic amount of bringing in the newly evangelized—and I say this as one myself—can even hope to offset it.

As the first apostles well knew, broken nets lose more fish than they bring in. Though he is the successor of Peter, the new pope might point here to the example of James and John: mending their nets first, before heeding Christ’s call to become fishers of men (Mt 4:21-22). Unfortunately, that is more easily said than done. Our decades-long breakdown of transmission needs first to be fully diagnosed before we can hope to start putting it right. Encouraging Catholic social scientists to explore the subject in greater detail would thus be an excellent first step. What little research there has been already hints that religious practice in the home (or the lack of it) might well be one key influence on retaining our cradle Catholics. If so, then our new pope might fruitfully lay greater stress on the family—“the domestic church”—as both the object, and agent, of the new evangelization.

Ultimately, however, responsibility for the church’s mission rests not with the bishop of Rome, but collectively with us all. The most a pope can really do, through teaching and example, is guide and inspire. Let us pray then—and where applicable, all together as a family (see above)—that our next pope does both as effectively as his predecessor.

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CREDO: “I believe in the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church. With the pope...always!”

Pope Benedict XVI's surprise resignation has opened the floodgates of speculation about the future. While some commentators seek to create a papacy and a church according to their particular agenda or favorite ecclesiastical personality, others ask fundamental questions about the future of the church itself that are well worth considering. Pope Benedict's courageous and charismatic gesture has lifted the veil on a number of unresolved issues of governance that urgently need looking at. This is particularly true when it comes to the question of authority and its exercise among the people of God.

The Second Vatican Council's "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church" made clear that the lines of authority continue to lie where they always have. The church places its trust in the Holy Spirit, speaking through the successors of Peter and the apostles at global, national and local levels. But the Holy Spirit also speaks through the faithful, invested through the sacrament of baptism with a universal call to holiness. Blessed John Henry Newman's controversial article "On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine" was largely vindicated by the Second Vatican Council. In his critique of the "extreme centralization" of the church of his time he challenged the notion of the Holy See as the regulator of every doctrinal question, instead seeing it as "the court of ultimate appeal." While the council documents imply a mandate for a more localized and consultative model of governance based on lived, local realities, the inevitable ambiguities of constitutions formulated by committee have prevented the effective realization of this mandate. Instead we have a model that has become more hierarchical, clericalized and too removed from the life and concerns of many of the governed.

Among St. Augustine's three categories of inflamed passion are the rage for controlling, *libido dominandi*, and for knowing, *libido sciendi*. A structure of governance that seeks rigidly to control the processes by which the church comes to develop its understanding of the truth is not one where the Spirit can flourish. St. Augustine sees that in "the desire to control" we lose the capacity to value the gift of ourselves and of others, which are part of the gift of God's own self to us. Within the church as the body of Christ, we give ourselves to God and to one another in our journey of faith, both the leaders and the led, as loved

and forgiven sinners. This is what lies at the heart of a eucharistic model of the church.

The council also taught us to open up a dialogue with the world. We rightly critique those aspects of the secular world that are unjust, idolatrous and unreflective of ultimate meaning. But the world also has much to teach us in terms of the value of transparency and accountability in governance. Even to many within the church, the structures of governance often appear opaque and unaccountable. Such structures serve only to foster a climate of secrets: secret deliberations, condemnations without meaningful power of

appeal, attempts to cover up without due process scandals that harm God's people. When honest critique and faithful exploration of the boundaries of doctrine and pastoral practice are treated as straightforward dissent, to be outlawed or pun-

ished, while at the same time the sexual abuse of minors and of women religious by priests and others and practices such as clerical concubinage in some parts of the world appear to continue without effective challenge, then the church is grievously wounded. When communication is largely one way, so that too little lay participation informs the voice of governance or doctrinal development, then we have domination rather than leadership. The increasing rate of attrition among disillusioned Catholics cannot go on being ignored.

We have had much excellent teaching from the last two popes that has enriched both the church and the world. But there is a crisis of credibility both inside and outside the church that cries out for our attention. We have it within us to be a major voice of wisdom in world affairs. But for us to be heard, we must first put our own house in order.

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Of Safety and Assessment

BY KATARINA SCHUTH

It is appropriate, as we reflect on the role of the papacy in the church, to do so during the Lenten season, which leans heavily toward repentance. This theme coincides with what I believe should be a major focus of the new pope: the scandal surrounding the sexual abuse of children by clergy. How appropriate the passage from the Book of Joel: "Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your

heart, with fasting, with weeping, with mourning; rend your hearts and not your garments” (Jl 2:12).

Among the urgent duties that the new pope will face, perhaps none will be more vexing than dealing with the abuse scandal. Following regular expressions of sorrow for the sexual abuse of children by clergy, he should take direct action by intensifying effective ongoing programs and proposing new initiatives. While, in a certain sense, this tragic matter will never be brought to final resolution, striving to lessen the suffering of those who were abused must be one of the outcomes sought after under the new papacy. Toward that end, I offer three suggestions.

Time and again church leaders have expressed repentance, addressing those who were sexually abused and those affected by abuse, voicing regret over what has happened. This message cannot be repeated often enough and should remain a high priority for the new pope. True repentance requires admission of wrongdoing, acts of penance, a change of heart and sincere efforts to reform. Frequently, the Rev. Raniero Cantalamessa, the personal priest to Pope Benedict XVI, and the pope himself, have called for a day of fasting and penance to express the church’s solidarity with the victims of clerical abuse. During Lent, this advice seems particularly timely.

Second, the importance of enhancing effective programs that help reduce sexual abuse is self-evident. The new pope should insist that the policies of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and other bishops’ conferences be diligently observed. What has the church in the United States done to stem the problem? Although critics would say “too little, too late,” the fact is that many constructive actions have created a vastly different climate in the church.

For example, in 1992 the bishops’ conference adopted a formal policy, “Five Principles,” to guide the response of bishops to sexual abuse. In short, they require prompt response to allegations, relieving offenders from ministry, complying with obligations of civil law, reaching out to victims and families and dealing as openly as possible with members of the communities affected.

From 2002 onward, an eruption of activity ensued: the “Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People,” national studies on the “Nature and Scope” and “Causes and Context” of sexual abuse, the establishment of an Office of Child and Youth Protection and review boards at national and diocesan levels.

In addition, the new pope should monitor all bishops’ conferences in the world to judge how well Pope Benedict XVI’s mandate to them to develop similar culturally appropriate policies is being followed. Each diocese should be required to prepare a public, annual report describing com-

pliance with existing policies. Oversight and evaluation of these policies must be intense and violations handled promptly.

Finally, going forward, new initiatives are essential; in particular the new pope should create an independent Vatican office charged with monitoring every diocese as to their compliance with the strictest guidelines to prevent sexual abuse. Ample resources should be available to that office so that they can judge the effectiveness of each diocesan program; then they must create norms for the removal of noncomplying authorities and for remedies to the problems. The devil will be in the details as to what will constitute adequate policies, but the goal must be the protection of children and young people from abuse. The pope should see to it that the church gets at the root of the problem, creating mechanisms that deal with church leaders who display insensitivity to or denial of clerical sexual abuse. A climate of assessment must prevail.

Following the teaching and witness of Jesus, the new pope should above all set an example by insisting on respect for the dignity of each person.

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A Pope for a Global Church

The contemporary world requires a successor of Peter who can teach and direct the entire people of God.

BY AVERY DULLES

Conscious of his pastoral responsibility for the whole flock of Christ, Pope John Paul II in his 1995 encyclical letter “Ut Unum Sint” (No. 96) invited leaders and theologians of other churches to suggest ways in which the papal office, without prejudice to its essential features, could be exercised in ways more conducive to Christian unity. Some of the early responses seemed to say that the very existence of the primacy as it had been defined at Vatican I and Vatican II was ecumenically unacceptable.... A number of Catholic theologians have taken the pope’s invitation as an occasion for expressing their own views on how the papal office might advantageously be restructured. Not surprisingly, the proposals have come principally from authors who are dissatisfied with current procedures. Essentially, their complaint is that the papacy has become too active and powerful. Before assessing the

proposals, it will be helpful to reflect on recent trends.

Globalization of the Papacy

During the past two centuries the popes have become increasingly aware

Missionary bishops of Asia and Africa, anxious to insert the Catholic faith more deeply into the lives of their people, welcomed the program. Without reversing the teaching of Vatican I on papal primacy, Vatican II



of their planetary responsibilities and have transformed the papacy into a more potent symbol of Catholic unity.

...

At the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) bishops from Western Europe (France, Belgium, Holland and Germany), together with their theological advisers, spearheaded a program of reform that sought to restore the dignity and rights of individual bishops and give real though limited autonomy to regional churches.

promoted inculturation; it rehabilitated local and regional churches; it upgraded the episcopate by redefining the bishop as a priest who enjoys the fullness of the sacrament of order. It formulated the doctrine of collegiality, teaching that all bishops in communion with Rome are fellow members of the supreme directorate of the universal church.

To implement these principles Vatican II initiated several structural changes. It called for the international-

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ization of the Roman Curia, which up to then had been almost exclusively Italian. It erected a system of episcopal conferences, one for each major nation or territory in the world. In concert with Paul VI, the council also set up a totally new institution: the Synod of Bishops, which meets periodically in Rome to deal with matters of concern to the universal church.

Pope Paul VI, faithfully implementing the council's program, made the papacy a truly global institution. He internationalized the Roman Curia and supervised the establishment of the episcopal conferences and the Synod of Bishops. ...As did Paul VI, John Paul II works collegially with the bishops of the world. He has held regular sessions of the Synod of Bishops approximately every three years. In 1985 he called an extraordinary meeting of the synod to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the conclusion of Vatican II. He has convoked special sessions of the synod for national and regional groups of bishops, including the four great assemblies for Africa, America, Asia and Europe, leading up to the Great Jubilee of 2000. ...All of these mechanisms help the pope to govern the church in a collegial way, taking account of the wisdom and sensitivities of bishops throughout the world.

...

Proposed Principles of Reform

Many of the recent reform proposals may be seen as reactions against the global papacy of the post-Vatican II era. Seeking greater autonomy for individual bishops and local churches, Catholic reformers frequently invoke the principle of subsidiarity.

...

Besides invoking subsidiarity, the present-day reformers often argue from tradition. In the ancient church, they

point out, the bishops of the apostolic sees of Jerusalem, Antioch and Alexandria were considered to have special authority in the Eastern portion of the church, as Rome did in the West. But before resurrecting the patriarchal model, one should recall the difficulties to which it led. ...The resurgence of Roman authority in the 19th century was a signal benefit. It enabled Catholics of different nations to maintain a lively sense of solidarity even through the two world wars of

What happens in Peoria can raise questions in New Delhi and Warsaw. Rome cannot wait silently while doctrinal issues are debated.

the 20th century.

In our electronic age, when information travels with the speed of light, global authority is more important than ever. What happens today in Peoria can raise questions in New Delhi and Warsaw tomorrow. Rome cannot wait silently while doctrinal issues are debated on the local level, as it might have done when communications were slow and transportation was difficult. Today Rome is drawn in as soon as a controversy arises.

...

There should be no question of choosing between centralization and decentralization. Decentralization could be disruptive and centralization oppressive unless the centrifugal and centripetal tendencies were held in balance. The process of growth at the extremities places more burdens than ever on the Roman center. In the words of Vatican II, the chair of Peter "presides over the whole assembly of charity and protects legitimate differences, while at the same time it sees that such differences do not hinder unity but rather contribute to it" ("Dogmatic Constitution on the Church," No. 13).

Specific Proposals For Structural Reform

In the light of the principles already stated, we may turn our attention to some specific proposals for reform frequently found in recent theological literature. Five recurrent suggestions seem to merit special mention.

First of all, there is the issue of the nomination of bishops.... Many reform-minded theologians would like a more open and "democratic" process in which names are submitted by the local church, filtered through the national or regional conference of bishops, and eventually proposed to Rome for approval or disapproval.... [T]he proposals I have seen are not free from weaknesses. By

erecting representative committees they would unleash factionalism and political power struggles within local churches. By considering only names surfaced within the diocese, they would also create a risk of excessive inbreeding. A church with an eccentric tradition would perpetuate its own eccentricity rather than correct it.

Confidentiality, moreover, could hardly be maintained if names had to be filtered through a succession of committees. In the end, Rome would be under pressure to choose the names proposed or to explain why it was not doing so. But to divulge the reasons against an appointment might be injurious to the candidate's reputation. And finally, it may be said, the current process allows consideration of a larger pool of possibilities than would be familiar to any diocesan committee. Although mistakes are occasionally made, the existing procedure, in my opinion, has given us a generally excellent body of bishops who can be trusted to serve as faithful pastors of their flocks. They compare favorably with the elected bishops of other churches.

Power of the Synod of Bishops

A second issue has to do with the powers of the Synod of Bishops.

...

There are voices in the church that would like to see the synod transformed into a body that could enact laws and issue binding doctrinal pronouncements. Given the ad hoc make-up of the assemblies and the relatively brief time of the meetings, I am inclined to disagree. I doubt that the Catholic faithful would wish to be bound by the decrees of such an assembly. The pope can, of course, give the synod power to decide some issue by majority vote, but he has thus far preferred to seek recommendations from the synod and let the Roman congregations follow up with the necessary action.

...

A third issue under discussion is the role of the episcopal conferences, such as, in the United States, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. As constituted by Vatican II, they are primarily consultative in nature. They permit the bishops of a nation or region to benefit from one another's wisdom and coordinate their policies as they govern their own dioceses. The conferences do not normally make binding legislation, but they can do so on occasion either by unanimous vote or by a two-thirds majority together with a formal approval (*recognitio*) from Rome.

In the summer of 1998, the pope published a letter in which he clarified the nature and doctrinal authority of episcopal conferences, as the Synod of Bishops of 1985 had requested. He ruled that the conferences could not teach obligatory doctrine without a two-thirds majority followed by Roman recognition. Some critics contend that this ruling showed excessive distrust of the conferences. But Vatican II did not establish the conferences as doctrinal organs. How could the

Catholic people in the United States be bound by a vote of their bishops to profess some belief that was not taught throughout the church? Do the diocesan bishops and the Catholic people really want to be bound in matters of doctrine by the majority vote of their bishops' conference—especially if it be a small conference that might have less than a dozen members?

A fourth point under discussion is the power of the Roman Curia.... Diocesan bishops often complain that Rome is interfering too much in the affairs of the local churches. But Rome rarely intervenes on its own initiative. It is usually responding to complaints from the local church against some questionable proceeding.

...

In doctrinal matters, Rome's policy has generally been to encourage the diocesan bishops and the bishops' conferences to take greater responsibility for overseeing the orthodoxy of what is preached and taught in their respective areas. But the bishops usually rely upon Rome to assure them that they are teaching in communion with the universal church, since doctrines are by their very nature universal. The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith cannot avoid being drawn into discussions where questions of orthodoxy are raised.

A fifth and final question has to do with papal teaching authority. The present pope, like Paul

VI, has thus far refrained from issuing ex cathedra dogmatic definitions, but he has several times made conclusive doctrinal determinations without any formal vote by the college of bishops. In these cases he has used his own authority as universal primate to "confirm the brethren" (Lk. 22:32), authoritatively gathering up the general consensus of bishops, past and present. Some theologians apparently hold that the pope ought to conduct a poll or call for a vote

before issuing such pronouncements. But it may be answered that even if a few bishops disagree, the voice of the pope together with a solid majority of bishops over a long period of time obviates the need for a head count. Such cumbersome processes could easily prevent a timely and effective response to critical situations.

A Papacy in Dialogue

Since Vatican II the principal drama within the Catholic Church has been the dialectical tension between centralizing and decentralizing tendencies. The decentralizers tend to see themselves as progressives and to depict their adversaries as restorationists, but the opposite case can equally well be made. Those who want to reinstate the conditions of patristic Christianity tend to be nostalgic and anachronistic.

In the end, the question should not be posed as an either/or. Precisely because of the increased activity of particular churches and conferences, Rome is required to exercise greater vigilance than ever, lest the unity of the church be jeopardized. The global character of the Catholic Church today, together with the rapidity of modern communications, makes ineluctable new demands on the papal office. It will be for members of other churches to judge whether a strong and energetic papacy is ecumenically acceptable. More than a few, I suspect, are looking toward Rome to provide effective leadership for the entire *oikoumene* (the whole inhabited world). The contemporary world situation, as I understand it, demands a successor of Peter who, with the divine assistance, can teach and direct the entire people of God. The Petrine office, as it has developed since Vatican II, has a unique capacity to hold all local and regional churches in dialogue while reaching out in loving service to all. Paul VI and John Paul II are to be praised for having discharged this mission with loyalty, strength and openness to the Spirit of God. **A**

ON THE WEB

The full text of this article plus a response from Ladislav Orsy, S.J.
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BOOKS & CULTURE

ART | LEO J. O'DONOVAN PURE PAINTING

The birth of abstraction

Pablo Picasso spent the summer of 1910 in Cadaqués, Spain. Among the paintings he did there were several that took his cubism to an almost entirely abstract extreme. In “Woman With a Mandolin,” for example, both the figure and the instrument are scarcely legible. His dealer found the work “unfinished,” and Picasso never again flirted so daringly with abstraction. “There is no abstract art,” he later said. “You always have to begin with something. Afterwards you can remove all appearances of reality, but there is no danger then, anyway, because the idea of the object will have left an indelible mark.”

Early in January of the next year, Vasily Kandinsky and his new friend Franz Marc attended a concert of Arnold Schoenberg’s radically atonal music. Both

were exhilarated by the daring of the performance, though most of the audience was entirely baffled. “Can you imagine a music,” Marc wrote to a fellow artist, “in which tonality (the adherence to any key) is completely suspended?” In it he heard deep resonances with Kandinsky’s work and thought. Kandinsky had hesitated to embrace the elimination of the object,



“Impression III (Concert),” by Vasily Kandinsky (1911)

but after hearing Schoenberg he painted his feeling for the evening in “Impression III (Concert),” an exuberant riot of color with only faint suggestions of gathered figures.

By the end of the year he had exhibited the entirely abstract “Composition V,” a major visual statement of his view that “the most advanced art offers emotions that we cannot put into words.” “Since that time,” he wrote, “I know what undreamed-of possibilities...color conceals within itself.”

The following summer (1912) the French painter Francis Picabia took a long road trip with the musician Claude Debussy and the poet Guillaume Apollinaire. While returning to Paris, the three friends fell to discussing the possibilities of nonfigurative art. Taking up the challenge, Picabia pressed the point: “Are blue and red unintelligible? Are not the circle and the triangle, volumes and colors, as intelligible as this table?” Back in his studio he set to work on a large canvas of arching russet, brown and black forms springing up

TOP: DIGITAL IMAGE © 2013 MOMA, N.Y./JONATHAN MUZIKAR; LEFT © 2012 ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK / ADAGP, PARIS; PHOTO COURTESY OF: THE STÄDTISCHE GALERIE IM LENBACHHAUS, MÜNCHEN

wildly from a barely suggested planar ground. The colors recalled Picasso's Rose Period, but the rough handling of the paint and the pure abstraction were Picabia's alone. He exhibited "La Source" ("The Spring") that October in the Salon d'Automne, in which František Kupka and Fernand Léger also showed canvases that were purely abstract. It was the public *début* of abstraction in Paris. Early on, Kandinsky, Apollinaire and others spoke of it as "pure painting."

The story of this startling shift as it spread through Europe and the United States as well is being presented in the exhibition **Inventing Abstraction, 1910-1925**, which runs through April 15 at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Well over 350 works by 84 artists are gathered. At the entrance a large diagram indicates how the artists interacted with one another, with 13 of them having over 24 "connections" within the network. "Network thinking," in fact, is the hermeneutic key to appreciating how so radical a shift of consciousness was possible. What was once unthinkable and then became universal, argues Leah Dickerman, the show's curator, arose from social interaction, "a distinctly modern interconnectedness." She draws on sociology to propose that "many investigators converging on the same finding [is] a common pattern of scientific discovery." The art, moreover, is by painters and poets, sculptors and musicians, photographers, choreographers and filmmakers. Abstraction, we learn, was "a cross-media imperative."

After key works by Picasso, Kandinsky, Kupka, Picabia and Léger, the exhibition proceeds chiefly according to local associations. A wall of adventurous Americans is placed diagonally across from their compatriot Morgan Russell's immense "Synchromy in Orange: To Form" (1913-14). Nearby, the Italian Futurists, including Giacomo Balla

and Gino Severini, refuse to believe that paint on canvas and words on paper cannot move. Gathered around Wyndham Lewis in Britain, the Vorticists claimed their own mantle of leadership.

The revelatory heart of the show is a space bounded by two walls, one showing nine paintings by the Russian Kazimir Malevich, the other with three by the American Marsden Hartley. The Malevich canvases, severe geometric forms on white grounds and all from 1915, were shown that year in Petrograd (now St. Petersburg). There Malevich announced his theory of Suprematism—his "new painterly realism" that claimed supremacy over the forms of nature. Exquisitely balanced, the relatively small paintings convey an aspirational spirituality. They seem ready to rise from the wall into some boundless sky—and risk being icy. The Hartleys, on the other hand, one a glowing tribute (c. 1914) to the influence of both Delaunay and Kandinsky, the other two (about the same year) from a series painted as covert declarations of love for a young German officer, are dense, detailed and, in the case of the officer paintings, all but feverish. Between the two walls rises Constantin Brancusi's "Endless Column, Version I" from 1918. The space throbs with the extreme possibilities of abstraction.

A visitor to "Inventing Abstraction" may wonder at this point: "Where is Mondrian?" And then he suddenly and brilliantly appears, in a beautiful, white-walled bay with 11 paintings. These works range from the still (barely) representational "Trees" of 1912 to several canvases in which figure and ground merge into an all-over pattern of interlacing shimmers (from 1913 to 1916) and on to the fully achieved Neo-Plasticism of 1920, with its

reduced palette of primary colors plus black and white deployed in endlessly inventive, grid-like patterns that defined the artist's practice for the rest of his life.

As the show draws to a close, with mesmerizing films of the choreographers Mary Wigman and Rudolf von Laban and then a choice collection of Dada reliefs by Hans Arp and equally strong pieces by his wife, Sophie



"Berlin Abstraction," by Marsden Hartley (1914-15)

Taeuber-Arp, I noted how unusually well represented women are here on the sixth floor of the museum. It was the reality of the time. In Paris, New York, Munich, Milan, Moscow, London and Zurich, the radically new way of making art was a shared one.

My one reservation about the show is not about the splendid selection of art Ms. Dickerman has made for us. What I find less persuasive is the exhibition's accompanying narrative. With Marcel Duchamp as her most explicit critical supporter, Ms. Dickerman understands abstraction as heralding the demise of painting in its tradition-

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al form. Duchamp seemed to intuit, she writes in the catalogue, that “the emergence of abstraction spelled the demise of painting as a craft and its rebirth as an idea,” a new “understanding of art not as illusion but as idea.” The “pure” painters and musicians and poets all needed explanations of what they were about, to assure that their work still had meaning. Manifestos multiplied and advocacy ascended. (One thinks of the art critic Clement Greenberg, later, canonizing Jackson Pollock.) And so “image-making and writing emerge as simultaneous and interrelated practices with a displaced relationship to one another.” But the abstract is the ideal.

Despite all the exhilarating work offered in this show, I am still not inclined to think that Picasso and Matisse can be seen as representatives of a bygone era, nor even that contemporary painters like Gerhard Richter and Anselm Kiefer are “timely” only when they dispense with objects. It is an unfortunate disjunction to oppose abstraction and representation, not to mention an oversimplified epistemology to think that painting ever existed simply objectively for itself, without appreciative viewers. Who has ever looked for any length of time at Cézanne’s “Bather” and not realized that you are not confronting some boy from Provence but rather the very idea of a bathing boy?

And then there’s the question whether “the death of god,” briefly noted in the catalogue as one of the factors preparing the ground for “pure painting,” made representation of a created world any less compelling. Couldn’t the new art’s “constructive” celebration of color, form and space be another way of celebrating a created order’s infinite variety and value? But those are questions for another time—after you have delighted in the revelations of “Inventing Abstraction.”

LEO J. O'DONOVAN, S.J., is president emeritus of Georgetown University.

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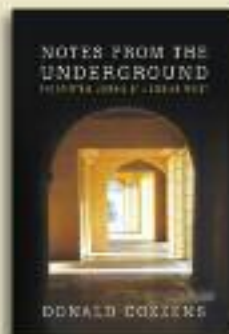
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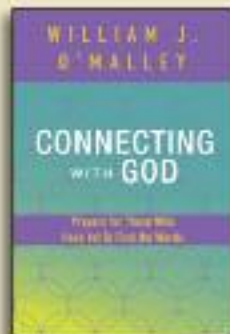
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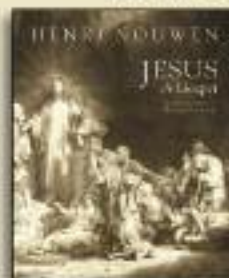
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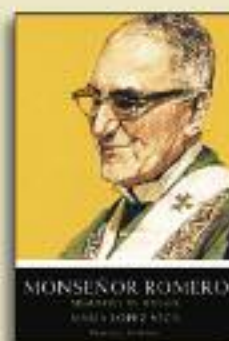
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Saints in the City

Recently, on a chilly February afternoon two days after the celebration of America's favorite secular saint, Valentine, I had occasion to encounter saints of another sort. I went to the theater.

Jonathan Bank, artistic director at the Mint, a small off-Broadway theater in Manhattan, had invited me to offer a brief post-show talk about "Katie Roche," a play by the Irish-Catholic playwright Teresa Deevy. Having read the reviews of Deevy's plays the Mint has revived over the past three years, I arrived with great expectations.

Happily, they were more than matched. Deevy's characters stepped off the page and onto the stage, the players breathing life into her crisp and clever dialogue, as the powerful story of an Irish girl's coming-of-age possessed the audience entirely. The play worked its magic, inviting us into a timeless world where saints and fools alike passed before our eyes, and we lost ourselves in their triumphs and their sorrows.

At the end of the three-hour show, as we applauded, remembering who and where we were, I was struck afresh by the generous art of the playwright, who imagines a world for us, of the director, who translates the writer's vision into reality, and of the actors, who body forth the spirit of the play—all in the service of bringing the word to life. We knew ourselves to be the recipients of a great gift that gray February day.

Teresa Deevy is a writer few theatergoers had heard of before the Mint's

revival. Born in Waterford, Ireland, in 1894 as one of 13 children, convent-educated and a lifelong daily communicant, Deevy lived during an era that did not offer many opportunities to bright young women. Her talent as a writer manifested itself unexpectedly.

Forced to leave her studies at University College Dublin on account of deafness (a result of Meniere's Disease), Deevy went to London to study lip-reading and fell in love with the theater. After a brief apprenticeship as a writer, she saw six of her plays produced by Dublin's Abbey Theater from 1930 to 1936.

Her career, however, ended as abruptly as it began, and her work fell into obscurity—until now. The Mint's project has performed a small miracle in resurrecting an enormously gifted writer's works that had been lost to us. This revival is of special value to readers and theatergoers interested in the Catholic imagination.

Teresa Deevy's art is deeply Catholic. The characters in "Katie Roche" live in an enchanted world wherein time is (still) measured by the calendar of saint's days and the bells of the village church knelling the canonical hours. Yet they are also inhabitants of the real world, trying to reconcile the difficult demands made by their faith with the ordinary joys of human life—love, sexuality, the pleasures of music and dance, all balms to our mortality.

The pre-Vatican II church of Deevy's time taught that these two modes of life existed in opposition to one another, and the choice of the here-and-now would inevitably lead to

loss of the sweet hereafter. Young Katie Roche chafes against these restraints, sensing the goodness at the heart of creation, including her own vibrant sexuality.

She wants to be a saint, "to save my soul—and to more than save it," and sets about trying to blaze a new path to sainthood, one that involves saying yes to the beauty of life. Misguided as she is at times, her vision of "God in all

Saints are sent to prick and goad the church into becoming what it was meant to be.

things" is reminiscent of that held by saints and mystics before her, including Ignatius of Loyola and Teresa of Ávila. Katie looks to the future for wisdom as well as to the past, adumbrating the agiornamento of the church-to-come even as she critiques the limitations of the church of

her own time.

It has been said that saints are sent to prick and goad the church into becoming what it was meant to be. The same might be said of Catholic writers. As "Katie Roche" unfolded, I recognized the main character as a version of her creator. Teresa Deevy's art opposes those elements of her contemporary culture and the institutional church that would suffocate the human spirit. Her vision is a gift to her church and to fellow Catholics, as surely as her plays are a gift to all who seek to live a fuller, richer, more deeply human life.

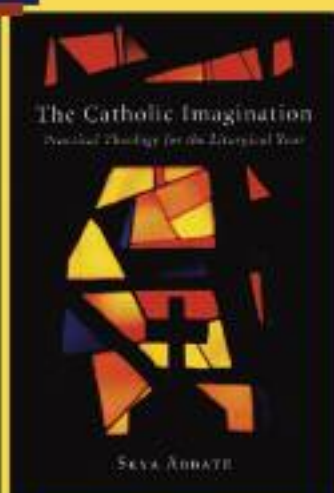
Deevy's would-be saints, who walked across the Abbey stage and now the Mint's, inevitably win the hearts of her audience, claim our allegiance and remind us of ourselves. No wonder we applaud.

ANGELA ALAIMO O'DONNELL is a poet, professor of English and associate director of the Curran Center for American Catholic Studies at Fordham University in New York City.

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A LEGACY BROUGHT TO LIFE

TRENT

What Happened at the Council

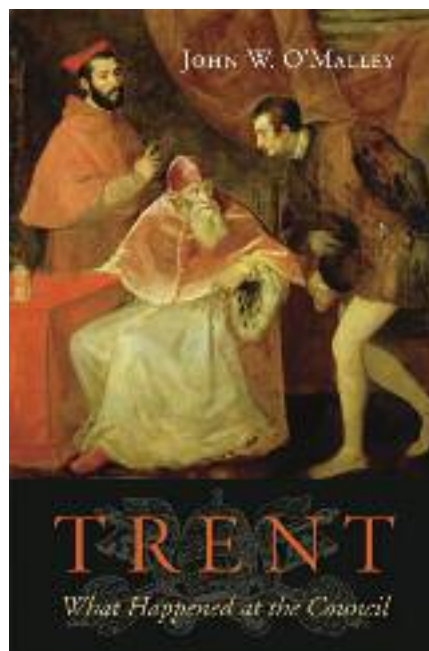
By John W. O'Malley
Belknap Press of Harvard University
Press. 352p \$27.95

Every historian of early modern Christianity that I know would agree: in 1993 John O'Malley, S.J., put us all in his debt with the publication of *The First Jesuits*. This year he moves us deeper into the red with his new book *Trent: What Happened at the Council*. Let me try to explain why.

Who could deny that the Council of Trent (1545-63) was influential? Many of the most prominent features on the landscape of early modern Catholicism (1563-1962) can be traced to that council. O'Malley enumerates some of these: Trent gave rise to (a) a church that was more strongly sacramental than ever; (b) a church in which there was more and better preaching than ever before; (c) a more highly educated clergy; (d) a new, much tighter control over the sacrament of matrimony; (e) more bishops residing in their own dioceses than there had been in many centuries; (f) a Catholic devotional style that minimized the Bible; (g) five centuries of intellectual life overshadowed by the *Index of Forbidden Books*; (h) five centuries of Catholic historiography that focused on "unbroken continuity," and so forth. These developments can scarcely be understood without studying the Council of Trent. Some of us read the decrees and canons of the council and leave it at that. Others dig deeper, and a very few become experts.

This last step entails an arduous rite of passage: a close encounter with the infamous *acta*—the "proceedings" of the council. There are three scholars who I am morally certain have read

through all 13 volumes: Hubert Jedin, then Jaroslav Pelikan and now John O'Malley. For those who have never even turned a page of this turgid leviathan, a word of advice: Don't take it with you to the beach! It could be compared to the Congressional Record from a term with a newly elected pres-



ident and a lame duck Congress: much hot air, with weighty decisions being made elsewhere. So, on this score alone, my hat is off to O'Malley.

A recurring theme in *Trent* that piqued my curiosity was the issue of participation in the council. It was, as is commonly known, miserable. Out of some 700 bishops who were invited, 29 showed up for the beginning of the council. The second period opened with 15 bishops in attendance. And in the third period, after much papal arm-twisting, numbers soared to around 200. Why this reluctance, this weak episcopal enthusiasm? On this question, and others like it, Father O'Malley is superb. He details the somewhat limited physical attractions

of 16th-century Trento. He identifies the scarcity of suitable lodging as a factor. Periodic outbreaks of the plague in Trent no doubt put a damper on things. And some bishops certainly were deterred by costs. The one, for instance, who arrived with an entourage of 160 could not possibly stay for the entire seven month debate on justification! Others, even with a more modest support staff, refused to come at all unless the pope was paying. Any initial sense of urgency among the bishops would surely have been quickly deflated by such considerations.

But was there not more to it than this? Would it be too much to suggest that the bishops simply did not think that anything of great importance was going on here? Father O'Malley does not say this, but he does drop hints pointing in this direction. A significant number of bishops arrived and then left after a few days. It seemed clear to many that the three successive popes (Paul III, Julius III and Pius IV), though they never showed up in Trent, completely dominated the agenda and discussions through their legates. A small joke circulating at the time had it that the Holy Spirit, instead of descending on the bishops, arrived every day in the mailbag from Rome. True, in Father O'Malley's account, he occasionally uses terms like "crisis," and even "drama." His summation, however, sounds more monotonous: it was, he says, "a seemingly endless 18 years." And in his telling, the word "tedium" crops up more than once.

I fasten on this, I confess, because of personal experience. For more than three decades I have taught university courses on Christianity in the early modern period. Students, undergraduate and graduate, can get excited about Luther, or agitated about Calvin, or bemused by the Marburg Colloquy, or angry about Henry VIII. They find Erasmus interesting and Ignatius Loyola even more so. But when we come to Trent, eyes glaze over in the

first five minutes, and soon thereafter comes the collective yawn. Perhaps the fault is mine. But I do try the usual tricks: I digress into Pope Julius III's private life, for instance, or I describe how the debate on justification devolved into episcopal shouting and beard-pulling. The tedium lifts, but only briefly.

And now, as though coming to my rescue, John O'Malley's book appears on the scene. It is quite simply the most engaging book on the council that I

have read. Written by a scholar who is undoubtedly an expert on this subject, it is accessible to students at the graduate and advanced undergraduate level. They may slumber through my lectures, but for Father O'Malley's *Trent*, they'll be wide awake.

DENIS R. JANZ is the provost distinguished professor in the department of religious studies at Loyola University in New Orleans. His latest book is *The Westminster Handbook to Martin Luther* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2010).

WILLIAM BOLE

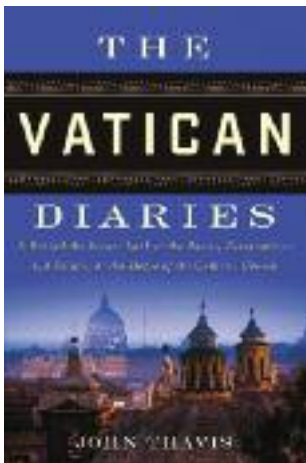
FAILURE TO COMMUNICATE

THE VATICAN DIARIES

By John Thavis
 Viking. 336p \$27.95

After turning the last pages of *The Vatican Diaries*, I noticed an Associated Press item that began, "The Vatican praised President Barack Obama's proposals for curbing gun violence." The report was based on a radio commentary by the Vatican press secretary, Frederico Lombardi, S.J., on Jan. 19. Those who read John Thavis's vivid recollections in *The Vatican Diaries* will have cause to be at least initially skeptical whenever they hear that "the Vatican" said this or that definitively about anything.

Recently retired as the longtime Rome bureau chief of Catholic News Service, Thavis argues that the popular image of the Vatican as a monolith, eternally on message, is a myth. On the contrary, it "remains predominantly a world of individuals, most of whom have a surprising amount of freedom to operate—and, therefore, to make mistakes," he writes.



Re-enter Father Lombardi.

The author tells of an incident when Lombardi, during Pope Benedict XVI's visit to Jerusalem in 2009, lashed out at "lies" circulating about the young Joseph Ratzinger in Nazi Germany. "The pope was never in the Hitler Youth, never, never, never!" the Vatican spokesman declared to an incredulous press. The problem was that Ratzinger's Hitler Youth involvement

was a matter of historical record. As Thavis explains, Lombardi (whom he describes otherwise as "a gentle soul with a sharp mind") had overheard the papal secretary remark offhandedly at breakfast that Ratzinger was never an "active" Hitler Youth member. By lunch, the misconstrued comment had become the Holy

See's "latest media fiasco."

Thavis points to the "fragmented chain of command in what is arguably the world's most hierarchical organization," and he relishes the irony. For him, the fumbling and fallibility humanize the institution. But not even the bureau chief was charmed by another episode

he recounts that revealed both bungling and deception.

Thavis unfolds the story in a riveting chapter titled "Cat and Mouse," about negotiations between Rome and the ultra-traditional Society of St. Pius X. Some at the Vatican sympathized with the breakaway order and saw no need to inform top officials that one of four traditionalist bishops whose excommunications were being lifted as part of a reconciliation effort, Richard Williamson, was a Holocaust denier. But most of those who could have averted this particular fiasco—the Williamson affair became one of the biggest religion stories of 2009—were not scheming. They were just snoozing. In the end, the pope admitted publicly that anyone with an Internet connection could have known of the bishop's bizarre anti-Semitism.

In recent years I haven't followed Catholic News Service closely, so I'm not sure how much of the book would have been politically incorrect and therefore not publishable in that official news outlet. But I'm guessing Thavis did not often portray Benedict unflatteringly alongside his immediate predecessor, as he does in this memoir.

Here is how the author, with help from Bob Dylan, teases out one contrast at the start of his last chapter, "The Real Benedict":

The first thing I noticed was the twitching leg. It was dark backstage, but I could make out the slight figure standing at the edge of the platform. He wore a black suit with a white stripe running down the side, and his right leg was jerking up and down involuntarily. It had to be Dylan. And he must be nervous, I thought. Singing for the pope was not an everyday thing.

The performance took place at a eucharistic congress in Bologna in 1997. Pope John Paul II followed with

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some reflective riffs on “Blowin’ in the Wind,” evoking the Holy Spirit in motion. Meanwhile, back at the Roman Curia, Cardinal Ratzinger was exuding disapproval, openly disparaging Dylan and other pop icons as “false prophets.” As Thavis writes in another chapter, John Paul traveled to remote lands to be with “tribal dancers in feathered headdresses.” Benedict prefers sitting “in a concert hall filled with dignitaries like himself, listening to Mozart.” John Paul projected a spirit of openness to the wide world. Benedict? Not so much.

Thavis also looks probingly at how the AIDS pandemic has provoked genuine debate within the Vatican about the use of condoms to prevent transmission of the disease. That aside, I was surprised to find little in the book that throws light on global justice issues.

ON THE WEB

The Catholic Book Club discusses
The Patriarch, by David Nasaw.
americamagazine.org/cbc

During Thavis's 29 years in Rome, Communism imploded in Eastern Europe, Jesuits and others were massacred in El Salvador, and two popes issued encyclical letters refreshing Catholic social teaching—to mention a few developments. But hardly any of that is recalled in these pages.

Then again, income stratification does not make the most scintillating subject matter for a book subtitled *A Behind-the-Scenes Look at the Power, Personalities, and Politics at the Heart of the Catholic Church*. And I'm glad Thavis has offered this rare, perceptive and highly readable glimpse into a power structure that is less in control than many would have us believe.

WILLIAM BOLE is a journalist who writes weekly on theology and politics at TheoPol.com.

THOMAS D. STEGMAN

THE LIVING PRESENCE OF GOD

JESUS OF NAZARETH

What He Wanted, Who He Was

By Gerhard Lohfink
(trans. Linda M. Maloney)
Liturgical Press. 391p \$39.95

“There are innumerable books about Jesus.” So begins the preface of Gerhard Lohfink's volume, *Jesus of Nazareth*, translated from the German original. So why another Jesus book? In the first place, Lohfink contends that every generation must encounter Jesus anew. Even more pressing, Jesus' proclamation and practice of the reign of God represent “the only hope for the wounds and sicknesses of our planet.” The author thus presents his portrait of Jesus, the distillation of a lengthy and distinguished career of

research and writing.

Lohfink makes clear from the outset that his approach is historical. He also acknowledges that the quest for the “historical Jesus” has produced both good results and bad results. Lohfink's volume can be added to the list of good ones because he avoids two pitfalls.

First, he does not fall into the trap that insists that the quester check his or her faith at the door. To the contrary, Lohfink argues that “the real ‘historical Jesus’ cannot be grasped independently of faith in him.” He therefore takes seriously, as a historian, what the original witnesses believed about Jesus, as set forth in the canonical gospels. Faith is not inimical to knowledge; rather, it produces another kind of knowledge, the knowledge gained by

personal encounter. In this connection, the author's own faith, while not explicitly invoked, is at play throughout, making his portrait all the more compelling.

The second pitfall Lohfink avoids is falling prey to the tyranny of the "criterion of dissimilarity." Using this criterion, some scholars attempt to discover Jesus' uniqueness by focusing on words and actions of his that cannot be derived from the Judaism of his time or from the early church. To the contrary, Lohfink is completely sanguine about Jesus' Jewishness. He portrays Jesus as an astute reader of Scripture, as one who with great sensitivity "discerned and drew out the scarlet thread of God's will." Particularly influential on Jesus' thinking and doing was Isaiah

52:7–9, which speaks of a messenger who brings good news (gospel!) and announces to Israel, "Your God reigns!"

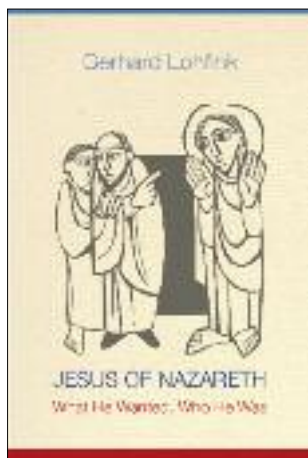
Regarding Torah, Jesus drew out its center—"the commandment about the uniqueness and sole rule of God"—and insisted that its *telos* was to form a social order marked by solidarity, love, respect and mutual support. This social order was to reflect the love and holiness of God and thereby to draw the nations to God.

Just as Lohfink claims Jesus' close connection with Israel, so he asserts his intimate relationship with the early church. Indeed, at several points the author catches himself talking about the early Christian community. Here we arrive at a crucially important element of this book. While explicitly about Jesus, lying just beneath the sur-

face is a vision of what the church is called and empowered to be (a point to which I will return).

Taking up the first question raised in the book's subtitle, what did Jesus want? Lohfink insists that everything Jesus said and did was to announce and make present the eschatological reign of God. Jesus' parables announced and his healings enacted God's salvation, making them present "today." The banquet imagery in his teaching and in his provision of food for the crowds proclaimed God's desire to share abundance of life—and to do so in the present.

In proclaiming and enacting God's eschatological reign, Jesus performed a number of symbolic actions. Not the least of these, according to Lohfink, was his creation and institution of the Twelve. Jesus called the Twelve from a larger group of disciples in order to symbolize and enact his desire to gather all of Israel. The "gathering of Israel" had become a fixed concept that represented God's eschatological salvation.



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It is thus no accident that Jesus' ministry focused on Israel.

More specifically, it centered on the formation of a "new family," a society that responded favorably to God's plan as set forth in Torah. Such a society—in which members regarded one another

as family, exercised loving service, provided hospitality, supported those in need and practiced mutual forgiveness (even 77 times a day) and non-violence—gave concrete expression to the reality and power of God's reign.

This tangible manifestation of

God's reign, of living in the saving presence of God, was also enacted in the communities of the early church, according to Lohfink. While he is careful not to identify the church with the reign of God, he maintains that the church is a "visible sign" of that reign—or least it should be. As such, it is to be a light to all peoples, drawing them into the sphere of God's rule. Here we find the prophetic edge of Lohfink's presentation of Jesus. In this connection, it is worth pointing out that since 1986 the author has lived in and served as a theologian for the Katholische Integrierte Gemeinde (Catholic Integrated Community), an intentional community that strives to make the Gospel present in all aspects of life.

And what about the second question in the subtitle, who was Jesus? He is, for Lohfink, the one through whom God has come eschatologically for salvation. Although it was often only implicit in his ministry, Jesus spoke and acted as in God's stead and was experienced as such by those who received him. He manifested God's rule by coming to serve, not to be served. His atoning death, which revealed God's reign in a climactic manner, was "not a substitute action but the cause and enabling of a process of liberation" that continues through the eschatological people of God, a forgiven people who are empowered to forgive and liberate others in turn. Jesus' resurrection and exaltation are then the definitive revelation of who he is and always has been, the messianic Son of God and Son of Man.

Lohfink's portrait of Jesus is very much worth reading. Because he looks to the Gospels with a sympathetic yet critical eye, he gives a faithful interpretation of Jesus. And because he is faithful, Lohfink offers a portrait that is challenging—especially for the church today.

THOMAS D. STEGMAN, S.J., is associate professor of New Testament at the Boston College School of Theology and Ministry.

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LETTERS

Remember Maryknoll

In "Statements in Stone" (2/18), James T. Keane writes about church-related buildings built pre-1965, and then the less ornate built after the Second Vatican Council. We always thought that one of the outcomes of Vatican II was that the church hierarchy was required to build less expensive and less fancy structures. In my opinion, the post-1965 buildings may have been cost saving, but many were also cheaper in appearance—plain, to the point of awful.

I'm surprised the author does not mention his own building, built before 1965, the Maryknoll-Orbis Books Center in Ossining, N.Y. I happen to be in awe of that early-20th-century building with its Chinese-style curved roofs with traces of bright red trim and the brown-tan field stone structure. It

is a statement in stone to the first American foreign mission society known as Maryknoll.

Even today, the beauty of that building takes your breath away when you first drive up to it. It is a monument to God, regardless of who worships there.

JOSEPH P. NOLAN
Trumbull, Conn.

Change Is Good

I just finished reading, from cover to cover, the Feb. 11 issue of *America*, and I celebrate the changes! My husband and I have been faithful subscribers for years and, honestly, I was starting to stockpile the issues instead of reading them.

In his column, Of Many Things, Matt Malone, S.J., articulated the new vision and gave us a sense of things to come. How wonderful that you will have such diversity of voices writing for you. Many of the names are famil-

iar to me from other contexts. The three major articles in this issue were on topics that I have followed closely in other Catholic newspapers or periodicals. And I have already started reading *Jesus of Nazareth*, by Gerhard Lohfink, as recommended by James Martin, S.J. It is my Lenten reading and a powerful drink for a thirsty soul!

So thank you for a wonderful issue, and I look forward to the issues ahead.

EILEEN MARIANI
Montague, Mass.

Reliable Republicans?

For those of us who disagree with the political strategies of the church in its attempts to eliminate abortions, "Forty Years Hence" (Current Comment, 2/11) was a sober reminder of the extraordinary dimensions of the reality of abortion in the United States. It is worth restating your words: "Approximately one million abortions are now performed

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Retreat

Bethany Retreat House, East Chicago, Ind., offers private and individually directed silent retreats, including dreamwork and Ignatian 30-day retreats, year-round in a prayerful home setting. Contact Joyce Diltz, P.H.J.C.: (219) 398-5047; bethanyrh@sbcglobal.net; bethanyretreathouse.org.

Seminar

CARMELITE SUMMER SEMINAR at the Center for Spirituality, Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame, IN 46556, will take place June 9-15, 2013, with the theme "Carmel at Prayer: A Surge of the

Heart...A Glance toward Heaven." Speakers at this annual seminar will be: Kevin Culligan, Keith J. Egan, Constance FitzGerald, Mary Fleig, Mary Frohlich, Leopold Glueckert, Fran Horner, Kieran Kavanaugh, Steven Payne and John Welch. For information and registration contact Ms. Kathy Guthrie at (574) 284 4636 or kguthrie@saint-marys.edu. Laity, religious and clergy of all faiths are welcome. Week includes daily Eucharist, meditation, lectures and workshops.

Wills

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annually in the United States, a fact that should deeply pain the conscience of the nation."

In describing the "mixed bag" realities of the endeavor to eliminate abortion in the United States, you note that the Republican Party has been reliably anti-abortion. I strongly differ with your assessment. The Republican Party has used anti-abortion rhetoric for years, but I have yet to see a translation of their rhetoric into a single significant instance of legislation. I think the bishops and pro-life activists have been snookered into continued support of the Republican Party without ever having been delivered positive results.

Worse, given the many political realities you describes the sometimes

venomous and ignorant rhetoric used by Republican candidates has further diminished what should be the appropriate political approach. We should be aiming to reduce as much as possible the number of abortions in this nation by figuring out meaningful ways to convince women in crisis and the electorate of the wisdom of our beliefs. Forty years of hard-edged and immoderate rhetoric and strategies to eliminate abortions have only fortified those who disagree. A million annual abortions prove the point.

VINCENT GAGLIONE
Yonkers, N.Y.

Elephant in the Room

As I read the various letters pertaining to the new evangelization effort within

the Catholic Church (2/4), one nagging question kept recurring in my head: "Can we trust you?"

Having taught religion classes in a Catholic high school for nearly 33 years, I know that before you can teach students any Scripture or theology, you must first establish a trusting relationship with them. Students want to know whether or not you are a true believer. Are you a good and loving person who practices what he preaches? Are you just someone espousing the company line or do you really believe and practice what you teach?

It has been 10 years since the pedophilia scandal broke in the United States and worldwide. While many diocesan programs like Protecting God's Children have been instituted, one of the most critical aspects of the crisis has gone unaddressed: the accountability of bishops within their dioceses. The bishops have not developed any system for holding one another accountable. As a result, the moral credibility of our bishops has been severely weakened.

The elephant in the room then, as regards the church's new plans to evangelize others, is the simple question, "Can we trust you?"

THOMAS SEVERIN
Connellsville, Pa.

Too Many Guys

I just picked up the Feb. 4 issue of *America* from my mailbox and cannot get beyond the cover, "Thinking With the Church," with four authors, all men and all clerics! I have reason to be grateful to each of these men for his insight, but surely you could have found one woman to feature on such a topic.

AMY HOEY, R.S.M.
Silver Spring, Md.

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Palm Reading

PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF OUR LORD (C), MARCH 24, 2013

Readings: Lk 19:28-40; Is 50:4-7; Ps 22:8-24; Phil 2:6-11; Lk 22:14-23:56

"Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord" (Lk 19:38)

The palm branches of Palm Sunday are mentioned specifically in Jn 12:13, and both Mark and Matthew describe people placing branches and cloaks on the ground as Jesus rode into Jerusalem, celebrating his entry with rejoicing and hailing him as king. Luke, on the other hand, describes the same procession but says only that cloaks were placed before Jesus. There is no need to doubt the presence of palm branches as Jesus rode into Jerusalem, but it is worthwhile to consider the purpose and symbolism of the branches in order to understand why Luke omits them from his account.

In the Old Testament, palm branches symbolize joy. In Lv 23:40 and Neh 8:13-18, palm branches are associated with Succoth, the week-long harvest festival of booths celebrated as a joyous pilgrimage while the Temple was still standing. The palm branch could also be a symbol of victory. When the Maccabees took control of the citadel at the Jerusalem Temple, "they entered it with praise and palm branches" (1 Mc 13:51). The palm branch was used in similar ways by Babylonians, Egyptians, Greeks and Romans; and it was often a part of triumphant processions.

The themes of celebration and triumph are present when Jesus acts out the prophecy of Zec 9:9, in which the king rides into Jerusalem, humble and

victorious, on a colt.

In the context of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, Luke stresses that Jesus knew and was in control of his destiny. Jesus also knew that his entrance into the city, feted by the crowds, was not the straightforward triumph that others might hope for. Still, the crowds celebrated Jesus, with people "spreading their cloaks on the road," praising "God aloud with joy" and proclaiming, "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord." All these are actions that evoke not just Zec 9:9, but the processions of Solomon and Jehu in 1 Kgs 1:32-40 and 2 Kgs 9:1-13. The crowds welcome the Messiah into Jerusalem with unabashed joy.

Luke is the only Gospel in which opposition is shouted to Jesus as he enters the city. Luke has certain Pharisees call out to Jesus: "Teacher, rebuke your disciples." They reject the acclamations praising Jesus and welcoming him as the messianic king. They feel bold enough to say this to Jesus as he rides into the city, perhaps thinking he will calm his followers down. Jesus responds, "I tell you, if they keep silent, the stones will cry out!" Jesus' words recall those of John the Baptist, who told the crowds coming to him for baptism not to presume upon the honor of birth, but to "bear fruits worthy of repentance," for "God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham." "These stones" represent

not just the power of God over creation but the fact that even if some people will not grasp the reality of Jesus' kingship and celebrate it now, all creation will someday acknowledge Jesus as Lord. This recognition, Paul says, will be universal, "so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth."

Those who waved the palm branches as Jesus entered Jerusalem welcomed in a king, though most could not have known the manner in which he would ascend to his throne. But why does Luke not mention the branches of victory and triumph? Perhaps Luke omits mention of the palm branches because the association of them with common expectations of victory and festivity



PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

- How do I celebrate the kingship of Jesus?
- How are my ideas about victory and triumph shaped by Jesus' life?
- Am I prepared to follow Jesus in every circumstance?

ART: TAD DUNNE

ity seems out of place in the context of how Jesus will fulfill these hopes. Though all the Gospel authors have Jesus ride into the city in fulfillment of Zec 9:9, Luke might associate the palm branches with the true celebration of Christ's victory. Zechariah 14 envisions all the nations in Jerusalem worshipping the king and celebrating Succoth, which includes the waving of palm branches. This image places Palm Sunday in religious and eschatological perspective: the entry into Jerusalem is a sign of Jesus' kingship for those who will see, but not its final fulfillment.

JOHN W. MARTENS

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