

# America

THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC WEEKLY

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## Shadowed by Tragedy

RWANDA STRIVES TO RISE ABOVE A HISTORY OF HORROR

KERRY WEBER

JOHN P. McCARTHY REVIEWS  
'THE GRAND BUDAPEST HOTEL'

There is a neatly folded Canadian flag in our supply closet, right next to a box of old metal printing plates whose usefulness has long since expired. Astute and longtime readers of this journal will know why. For several decades **America** was “published by the Jesuits of the United States and Canada.” That was back in the day when America—the place, that is—meant something more than the United States. The Organization of American States in Washington, D.C., for example, has nothing to do with places like Alabama and New Mexico but everything to do with places like Canada, Venezuela and old Mexico.

“The name **America**,” wrote our founding editor, John J. Wynne, S.J., “embraces both North and South America, in fact, all this Western Hemisphere.... True to its name and to its character as a Catholic review, **America** will be cosmopolitan not only in contents but also in spirit.”

I am pleased to say that the catholic, cosmopolitan spirit that Father Wynne instilled in **America** still animates our work. During the past 14 months, for example, **America**’s editors, correspondents and authors have filed stories and commentary from Rome, London, Paris, Haiti, Cuba, Honduras, Turkey and Rwanda, as well as Detroit, Chicago, Los Angeles and San Diego. Like Father Wynne, we believe that as members of a universal church, Catholics are first and foremost citizens of the world. For that reason we have a responsibility to keep abreast of important developments among the members of Christ’s body everywhere. As U.S. citizens, however, that responsibility becomes all the more important. For better or for worse, the United States is the leading player in the current act of our global drama. If the United States is going to lead the rest of the world for the foreseeable future, then it’s important that Americans

know what’s happening there.

Rwanda is a case in point. As Kerry Weber writes in this issue, the 1994 genocide there “resulted in an estimated 500,000 widows and three million refugees; thousands of others were disabled and traumatized by the violence and their personal experiences.” Former President Bill Clinton has admitted that not intervening sooner in Rwanda is his greatest regret as president. Speaking to CNBC last year, President Clinton said, “If we’d gone in sooner, I believe we could have saved at least a third of the lives that were lost.... It had an enduring impact on me.” If Mr. Clinton’s analysis is correct, then an earlier U.S. intervention could have saved roughly 300,000 lives.

In the wake of the disastrous Black Hawk Down episode in Somalia the previous year, however, the U.S. public had no appetite for further humanitarian interventions. But it might have been otherwise if we had been better informed about what was happening in Rwanda or, to put it another way, if we had taken it upon ourselves to learn more about what was happening beyond what we saw in 90-second clips on the evening news. It’s easy to blame the media for our ignorance. In the United States, however, the mainstream news operates in a marketplace. In other words, they deliver every night what consumers want. If they don’t, then they quickly go out of business.

For our part, **America** will continue to provide a cosmopolitan, Catholic perspective for our readers. It is a modest effort when compared with the commercial powerhouses that surround us here in Manhattan; nonetheless, we are pleased and proud to do it. Father Wynne, we dare to hope, would be proud as well. We hope that you will continue to be satisfied with the result. And we even dare to dream that our ongoing efforts may draw a Canadian or two back to our masthead. After all, we’ve got the flag all ready to go.

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*Cover:* Rwandan genocide survivor, Viviane N’Habimana (left), has forgiven and now faces the future with the man who harmed her, Boniface Hakizimana, right. Photo: Kerry Weber.

# CONTENTS



12

## RWANDA

### 12 SHADOWED BY TRAGEDY

*Rwanda strives to rise above a history of horror* Kerry Weber

### 18 VANTAGE POINT:1994

*Witness in Rwanda* The Editors • Media Camouflage James Martin

## ARTICLES

### 21 A CAREFUL READING

*Could federal health care money be used for abortion?*

Richard M. Doerflinger

## COLUMNS & DEPARTMENTS

### 4 Current Comment

### 5 Editorial After Crimea

### 6 State of the Question

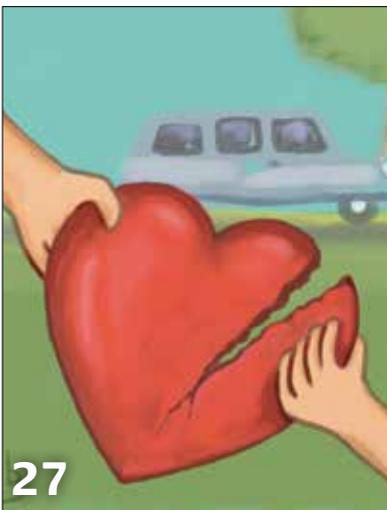
### 8 Signs of the Times

### 11 Washington Front Closed City John Carr

### 27 Faith in Focus Asking for Change Mark Neilsen

### 35 Poem April, Northern England Donna Pucciani

### 39 The Word Humble Is He John W. Martens



27

## BOOKS & CULTURE

### 30 FILM "The Grand Budapest Hotel" OF OTHER THINGS A Fellowship Grows in Brooklyn BOOKS The Cursillo Movement in America; Cheating Lessons; Days of God



30

## ON THE WEB

The Catholic Book Club discusses **J. F. Powers's *Morte D'Urban***. Plus, a slideshow of photographs from Kerry Weber's trip to **Rwanda**. All at [americamagazine.org](http://americamagazine.org).



### Faithful to the Last

He fought the good fight, he finished the race, he kept the faith. Bishop Joseph Fan Zhongliang of Shanghai, like many others of his generation, stood unflinching against the People's Republic of China. Bishop Fan, a prominent leader of China's underground Catholic community, died after a brief illness on March 16. He was 95. Bishop Fan was ordained a Jesuit priest in 1951. He refused to recognize the government-controlled Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association and remained true to the leadership of his church in Rome.

This fealty came at great personal cost to Bishop Fan. From 1958 to 1978, he was imprisoned in a hard labor camp in Qinghai Province. After his release from prison, Bishop Fan was allowed to return to Shanghai. But he was never allowed to assume the episcopal positions to which he had been appointed by the Vatican.

Where will the church again find leaders like Bishop Fan? Perhaps within a new generation of China's tiny Catholic population. When the Beijing- and eventually Vatican-approved Bishop Aloysius Jin Luxian passed away in April 2013, Bishop Thaddeus Ma Daqin was appointed his successor by Beijing. But Bishop Ma dramatically split with China's "official" Catholic Church, renouncing his position within the Catholic Patriotic Association. He was stripped of his title of auxiliary bishop and is believed to be confined since then to a seminary on the outskirts of Shanghai.

The Cardinal Kung Foundation, noting the passing of now both the underground and the "official" bishops of Shanghai, is urging Beijing to release Bishop Ma to his duties in Shanghai. This would be a welcome turn, but the Catholics of Shanghai will not lack for leadership either way. Free or confined against his will, as Bishop Fan has already demonstrated, a bishop still leads them.

### Unfriendly Fire

Which is more deplorable: the National Rifle Association's vicious attacks on Dr. Vivek H. Murthy, 36, whom President Obama has nominated to be surgeon general, or the timidity of the senators who genuflect to the N.R.A. and promise to vote against his nomination?

Born in England to parents from India, who moved with him to Florida when he was three, Dr. Murthy holds a biochemical sciences degree from Harvard University along with a medical degree and an M.B.A. in health care management from Yale. While he is regrettably pro-choice, he has served as a presidential adviser on public health,

started a community health center in India and is a leader in AIDS education. Today he is a doctor at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston and teaches at Harvard Medical School.

What prompted the N.R.A. to send an "alert" to millions of adherents that called for his defeat? First, Dr. Murthy had organized doctors to support the Affordable Care Act. Second, drawing on experience in emergency rooms, he favors restricting the sale of assault weapons and ammunition. But he has told Congress that if confirmed, he would emphasize not gun control but obesity, tobacco-related disease and mental health.

Although the N.R.A. usually has little effect on congressional elections, local candidates rely heavily on its contributions and shake in fear that it will unleash its propaganda against them as it is doing to Dr. Murthy today.

### Saving Graces

According to a recent article in *The New Yorker* ("The Neglected Suicide Epidemic," 3/14), the number of people who contemplate suicide is on the rise. In a French medical study of 15-year-olds, 21 percent of girls and 9 percent of boys attempted suicide last year. In the United States, suicide is the third most common cause of death among young people. This worrying trend among young people deserves more attention.

The Centers for Disease Control, the International Association of Suicide Prevention and other organizations rightly point to the psychological troubles behind suicide. Various churches are working to combat these factors. Acknowledging widespread despair and loneliness among people today, Pope Francis publicly noted shortly after his election that we as a people of faith need to reach out to all who are suffering, particularly the young and the aged.

The *New Yorker* article recounts the stories of two men. One was a 20-year-old who was about to jump into the River Thames until a man stopped to chat with him, offering him coffee and encouragement. This seemingly providential act prevented a likely suicide. It was a happier outcome than what happened on the Golden Gate Bridge in the 1970s. When officials went to examine the apartment of a man who had jumped to his death, they found a note. If someone came and "smiled" at him, the jumper had written, he would not go through with it. We need to heed the command of the Gospel and reach out to those who are in difficult straits. Mercy can do wonders, and "an act of kindness is never lost."

# After Crimea

President Obama planned to finish his second term “leaning in” to the 21st century. The trouble is, too many contemporary geopolitical players seem determined to reach back into the 19th, if not further. While European and U.S. leaders, in machinations over Ukraine, were contemplating short-term strategies intended to get European capitalism over its latest hiccup, President Vladimir V. Putin was eyeballing the Ukraine crisis through an altogether different lens. Contemplating Crimea’s future within a Western-turning Ukraine, Mr. Putin saw Orthodox identity at risk in the land of the “ancient Khersones, where Prince Vladimir was baptized.”

Thus spoke Mr. Putin in a speech welcoming Crimea back into the Russian Federation, ferociously delivered in the ornate St. George Hall of the Grand Kremlin Palace on March 18. No Oval Office or Rose Garden for Mr. Putin. There will probably be few moments in modern diplomacy more disquieting than his swagger through a trumpet-crossed threshold into this grand hall to announce the annexation of Crimea in blank defiance of the West. Putting aside the imperial drama for a moment, though, his speech demands careful scrutiny, and the many concerns it raises about Western encroachments should be thoughtfully considered. How these had not factored more seriously into Western dabbling in Ukraine is hard to fathom.

Any hope that the Russian Federation would prove a reliable partner with the West in developing a post-nationalist Europe needs to confront its own “reset” now, though it would be a mistake to freeze out Russia for too long from European dialogue. At this historic pivot point, there are no easy ways to push back against Russian imperial visions without creating a dangerous confrontation between NATO and the remnant Warsaw Pact.

The United States and Europe are in no position to force the Russians out of Crimea. What Mr. Obama can do, however, is beef up the sanctions issued so far and remain steadfast in their application. He should also make clear to Mr. Putin that while NATO and the West have no intention of being dragged into a hot conflict with Russia over Ukrainian sovereignty, if Russia and Ukraine come to blows, NATO powers will have little recourse but to assist Ukraine with military restocking. That should clarify that any further Russian expansion will not be as cost-free as the holiday in Crimea. A prolonged struggle with Ukraine will take some of the shine off of Mr. Putin’s imperial glow, and those calling out his name in adulation today could

return shouting his name with altogether different intentions in mind.

Many of the claims President Putin made to justify the land grab in Crimea were beyond dubious, but he is not completely wrong about the extremist tendencies of some of the groups promoting Ukraine’s renascent nationalism. President Obama should tread carefully with the new regime in Ukraine until the nature of the players is absolutely clear. The last thing the Obama administration needs is another embarrassing quest for reliable moderates.

Most important, as dire as current conditions appear, Western leaders must hold off from an unhinged rush back to the Cold War. A cynical few are seizing on Putin-induced anxiety and attempting to steer their own agendas through the crisis. The toughness President Obama needs to show now is not just toward Vladimir Putin, who is as likely to be digging his own political grave in Crimea as he is to be laying the foundation of a Russian imperial restoration, but to these various pressure groups at home.

Some are urging the return of Defcon 4 defense budgets (as if the current Pentagon budget were not scandalous enough). Others are demanding that fossil fuel resources generated by the U.S. fracking industry be diverted to Europe, now acutely reliant on natural gas and oil from Russia. That would certainly create profits for a few but would leave U.S. consumers and taxpayers with all the risks engendered by this still controversial extractive industry and none of the purported benefits in domestic energy savings. Others are demanding an end to further efforts toward a nuclear deal and détente with Iran (as if the events in Crimea and progress in Tehran were entwined). Still others call for a vaguely defined global projection of U.S. “toughness.”

American strength and resolve should be directed toward the repair of its own economy, not dissipated on an offspring of the Cold War. The nation needs to learn that it is weakest when it “projects” strength through military muscle alone. The new leaders of the reconstituted Ukraine might follow that lead as well and dedicate themselves to building up a nation that Crimeans may soon wish to rejoin rather than expending their energies arms-racing with the Putinists. In the current crisis, patience, not action, may be best rewarded.



## STATE OF THE QUESTION

# FRANCIS ON HOMOSEXUALITY

*Readers respond to “See the Person,”*

*By John P. Langan, S.J. (3/10)*

### Back to Basics

“See the Person” is relevant and interesting. However, the four elements that “should mark a new stance toward homosexuals and homosexuality” are a bit complicated. Why not just return to the basics of seeing all persons whom God has created? The catechism says it all: “Nothing exists that does not owe its existence to God the Creator” and “Each creature possesses its own particular goodness and perfection.”

From the beginning of our Catholic education, we have learned that we are all made in God’s image and likeness. Even homosexuals! What don’t we understand about that? Does God create second-class creatures? Does God give only part citizenship to some? Is God making mistakes?

Jesus said, “You shall love the Lord, your God, with your whole heart... and your neighbor as yourself.” To me that means there are no exceptions!

JANE DOUGHERTY MARFIZO  
*Harrisburg, Pa.*

### Judge Actions

I quite agree that we should look to the human person rather than the person’s sexual orientation. After all, what does it matter to me, or the church, since sexual orientation may change according to a person’s circumstances? But when it comes to sexual activity—that

is another matter. Not only the moral teaching of the church but also the common sense of most human beings, until only a few years ago, has been directed against sexual activity of all kinds outside a marriage between a man and woman.

In the pope’s off-the-cuff remark—“Who am I to judge?”—he echoes the words of Shakespeare’s Henry VI, “Forbear to judge, for we are sinners all.” What he means is no mystery. We are not to judge the persons but only the actions, including not only murder and adultery but also sexual activity outside marriage. That is surely the long and short of it.

PETER MILWARD, S.J.  
*Tokyo, Japan*

### Skilled Pastors

My friend John Langan, S.J., a splendid moral philosopher, has given some very insightful suggestions. I would suggest, however, that the most significant change implied by Pope Francis’ comment is a change in perspective from the point of view of moral philosophy or moral theology (which characterized the writings of his two immediate predecessors) to a pastoral perspective that Francis seems to be urging on his bishops and priests today.

A pastor is not primarily concerned with moral philosophy or moral theol-

ogy, although he is expected to know these. His primary concern is with the sins and the holiness of those entrusted to his care. The question “What is sinful?” is not the same as “What is morally wrong?” Sin, like holiness, has its place only in the heart and conscience of a particular human being. It is Christ alone who searches hearts and knows what is or is not in accord with conscience, and therefore finally what is or is not a sin. Who is a pope to judge this?

A field hospital is full of sinners who need to have their wounds bound up and their pain relieved. Skilled pastors of souls are needed for this work, it seems to me.

VINCENT M. COOKE, S.J.  
*New York, N.Y.*

### Truth Is Medicine

Thank you, Father Langan, for this very thoughtful article. I am particularly moved by the title, “See the Person,” and the last paragraph about Pope Francis’ metaphor of a field hospital. But a doctor (as I am) who hides the diagnosis from the patient is not a good doctor. It is even worse if he withholds the correct medicine from the patient. Truth is the church’s medicine, along with the sacraments.

Thinking about the issue pastorally, Jesus is always our best guide. In two of his meetings with women who had sins relating to sexual relations, Jesus did not condemn either woman, but loved them more than we could. Yet he did not hold back in either case from verbally recognizing their sin.

The church has a divine obligation to tell the whole truth about the human condition and about sexual immorality. At the same time, when dealing pastorally with individual souls who are truly struggling to know God’s will and to live the whole teaching as well as they can, providing that the truth is not denied, an approach full of love and mercy and forgiveness seven times seven is the divine medicine.

TIM O’LEARY  
*Online comment*

### WHAT YOU’RE READING at [americamagazine.org](http://americamagazine.org)

1 **Pope Francis: Still a Jesuit**, by James Martin, S.J. (Video, 3/12)

2 **Market Reformer**, by Jeffrey D. Sachs (3/24)

3 **Open to All**, by Katarina Schuth, O.S.F. (3/17)

4 **Francis: Far More Than Show (Part I)**, by Drew Christiansen, S.J.  
(In All Things, 3/10)

5 **Francis Effect: Jesuits Report Surge in Vocation Inquiries**, by Kevin Clarke  
(In All Things, 3/11)

## Love and Fidelity

While “See the Person” approaches the topic very nicely from a theological perspective, allow me to add the experience of lay people. My husband and I have been together for over 30 years. We met right after college, built a house together, put each other through graduate school and have maintained a stable, loving relationship that is held up as a role model in our extended families. We know of many other gay couples who have also lived lives of commitment and faithfulness and who, like us, have struggled to stay in the church despite what we perceive as its tone-deaf and abusive teachings (“intrinsically disordered” and so on).

There is a great hunger for God’s love in the L.G.B.T. community, a ripe field for evangelization. If the church could find a way to extricate itself from the anti-gay rut in which it is stuck, it would be amazed at second chances it might be given by gays and lesbians, not to mention their families and friends who are also alienated by the ham-handedness of church teaching on this topic.

HAL WATTS  
*Online comment*

## Take a Firm Stance

The first problem with Father Langan’s

view is that he doesn’t realize that if you have to decipher a pope’s mind or what he is saying, you already have a problem. Pope Pius XI’s encyclical on Christian marriage, “*Casti Connubii*” (1930), explicitly, accurately and unambiguously defines the church’s position. If Pope Francis is unable to do likewise, the least he could do is just keep quiet.

In case nobody’s noticed, the secular media, sitcoms, movies, etc., as well as major corporations, schools and universities, all seem to be pushing the “gay agenda” pretty hard. There couldn’t be a better time for a pope to take a firm stance on the church’s position. However, as Father Langan pointed out, we are left wondering what side the pope is on.

THOMAS CARTER  
*Online comment*

## How God Made Me

Father Langan writes, “The principal change would not be in the teaching of the church on the moral acceptability of homosexual activity, but in affirming and practicing pastoral ministry for persons engaged in irregular or questionable unions.” With all due respect and a recognition that this is a shift from absolute condemnation, I continue to be insulted by the refusal to even consider the possibility that my natural God-given inclination to

love someone of the same gender is somehow irregular. It is the way God made me. As long as the church refuses to accept this reality, it clearly does not accept or want me in its fold.

WILLIAM GORDON  
*Online comment*

## Voluntary Celibacy

Thank you, Father Langan, for this outstanding article.

We need a way to welcome into the Catholic Church those with a same-sex orientation without the negative juridical injunctions against sexual behavior. For those born with a same-sex orientation, the litmus test for being a member of the Catholic Church cannot be a lifetime of sexual abstinence. Celibacy or lifetime sexual abstinence is a gift from God given to the very few. In order for it to work, it must be voluntarily chosen and not forced or imposed on people by authority.

Frequently, people with a same-sex orientation want to enter into a lifelong, loving relationship of fidelity with another person with the same goals as heterosexual couples of educating and rearing children (through adoption or in vitro fertilization for lesbian couples).

This article is a good first step as a guiding principle for a pastoral solution to this most pressing problem.

MICHAEL BARBERI  
*Online comment*

## BLOG TALK

*The following is an excerpt from “Jesuit Scholar Assesses Pope Francis’ Approach to LGBT Issues,” by Francis DeBernardo, at Bondings 2.0, the blog of New Ways Ministry (3/1). The post is in response to “See the Person,” by John P. Langan, S.J. (Am. 3/10).*

Langan provides a very common-sense assessment of what effects Francis’ words can realistically have in the coming months and years.... I, however, may be more optimistic than Langan about the possibility

of doctrinal change. While he suggests that the hierarchy should not change the teaching simply because public opinion on lesbian and gay people has shifted, I think he misses the point that, at least for Catholics who support L.G.B.T. issues, the shift has occurred...because they have applied their faith to this new reality, have prayed and examined their consciences, and they have discerned that L.G.B.T. equality is consonant with how they understand the Gospel....

Langan’s real contribution is that he

has laid out a road map for how we can get to future doctrinal development by providing four “guideposts.” We’ve seen amazingly rapid change in American society and law over the past 15 years, due mainly to the fact that people started talking with L.G.B.T. people about the issues that concern their lives. Dialogue is a powerful force, and now that Pope Francis has initiated such a period of dialogue in the church, explained so well by Langan, who knows where the discussion and reflection will lead?

FRANCIS DEBERNARDO

# SIGNS OF THE TIMES

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

## Bishops Seek Western Help As Crisis Engulfs Millions

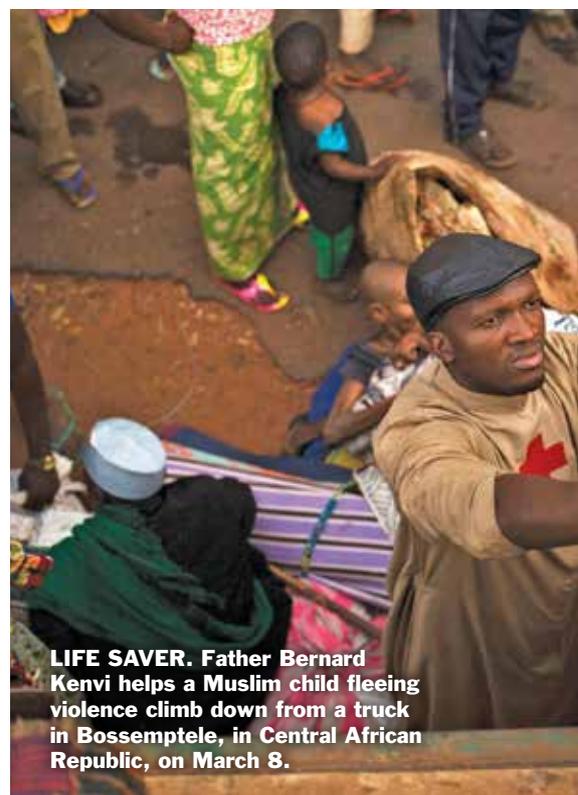
Conditions remain dire in the Central African Republic, and a U.N. official urged the international community to step up humanitarian aid efforts dramatically. Despite the end of the large-scale violence that rocked the nation in December and January, people are still being killed every day. “The inter-communal hatred remains at a terrifying level, as evidenced by the extraordinarily vicious nature of the killings,” said Navi Pillay, U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, in a statement to the press during a visit in the capital, Bangui, on March 20.

“This has become a country where people are not just killed, they are tortured, mutilated, burned and dismembered—sometimes by spontaneous mobs as well as by organized groups of armed fighters. Children have been decapitated, and we know of at least four cases where the killers have eaten the flesh of their victims,” she said.

It is believed that thousands of people have been killed; and 2.2 million, about half the population, are now in need of assistance. More than 650,000 people are still internally displaced, and over 290,000 have fled to neighboring countries to escape the conflict, which has taken on increasingly sectarian overtones as mainly Christian militias, known as anti-Balaka (“anti-machete”), have taken up arms against Muslim communities and individuals they associate with Muslim Seleka rebels. The United Nations reports around 15,000 Muslims are trapped in Bangui and other areas of

the country, protected by international forces but still in an extremely dangerous and untenable situation.

“The anti-Balaka, who originally



**LIFE SAVER.** Father Bernard Kenvi helps a Muslim child fleeing violence climb down from a truck in Bossemptele, in Central African Republic, on March 8.

came into existence as a reaction to the depredations of the Seleka, are now metamorphosing into criminal gangs who, in addition to continuing to hunt

THE VATICAN

## Rome Readies for Canonization; 1 Million Expected at St. Peter's

Just weeks before the canonizations of Blessed John XXIII and John Paul II, hotels in Rome are reporting they are almost fully booked, and the Vatican has confirmed that the Mass will take place in St. Peter's Square. That means hundreds of thousands of people will have to watch the ceremony on large video screens.

Pope Francis announced in late September that he would proclaim the two popes saints in a single ceremony on April 27, the Second Sunday of Easter, also known as Divine Mercy Sunday.

Less than two weeks after the date was announced, the Prefecture of the Papal Household issued an advisory that access to St. Peter's Square would be first-come, first-served and warned pilgrims that unscrupulous tour operators already were trying to sell fake tickets to the Mass.

With perhaps more than a million people expected to try to attend the liturgy, rumors had abounded that the Vatican would move the ceremony to a wide-open space on the outskirts of Rome. But the Vatican confirmed on

Feb. 27 that the Mass would be held in St. Peter's Square, just outside the basilica where the mortal remains of the two rest.

A spokeswoman for the office of Rome's mayor said the city hoped to have by March 24 a working estimate of the number of pilgrims, as well as preliminary plans for transporting them to the Vatican and providing them with water, toilet facilities and first aid stations. Marco Piscitello, a spokesperson for the Rome hotel owners' association, Federalberghi, said that already by early March, owners were reporting that more than 82 percent of hotel rooms in the city had been booked for the canonization weekend.

“There will be a strong presence in



down Muslims, are also starting to prey on Christians and other non-Muslims," Pillay said.

Peacekeeping efforts in the republic

were criticized by the nation's Catholic bishops. In a letter to their counterparts in the United States, the bishops complained that African countries that contributed troops seem to be merely defending their own borders. Chad, a country north of the Central African Republic, for example, is deploying "peacekeeping" troops only along its southern border, adjacent to the large population of Seleka rebels in the north. In January, Chad was accused of backing the rebel movement.

"So Chadian troops are deployed in the northwest, Cameroonians in the West, Congolese from Brazzaville in the southwest, Congolese from [the Democratic Republic of Congo] in the southeast," the bishops said. "Moreover, the proximity of these [troops] with their country of origin can encourage illegal mineral resources trafficking beyond our borders," the bishops wrote in their letter. They encouraged peacekeeping participation from European and American troops and other countries in sub-Saharan Africa that might not have a vested interest in protecting

their own borders.

Since January, Central African bishops have insisted that the ongoing slaughter of civilians by competing militias is not religiously based, despite its characterization in media reports. "The real problem facing the country is that of insecurity," the bishops wrote. The bishops argued the republic needs "a comprehensive process that includes both security and development."

With increasing food insecurity and malnutrition, rape and sexual violence on the rise—especially in refugee camps—and the collapse of the economy, health care, justice and education systems, the state is now facing a gargantuan crisis where impunity reigns, according to the high commissioner.

"The state's top leadership told me there is, in effect, no state: no coherent national army; no police, no justice system; hardly anywhere to detain criminals; and no means of charging, prosecuting or convicting them," the commissioner said. "The so-called 'penal chain' is not only missing links, it is not functioning at all."

Rome for this double canonization," he said.

Blessed John Paul II, known as a globetrotter who made 104 trips outside Italy, served as pope from 1978 to 2005 and was beatified by Pope Benedict XVI on Divine Mercy Sunday, May 1, 2011. Blessed John XXIII, known particularly for convoking the Second Vatican Council, was pope from 1958 to 1963; Pope John Paul beatified him in 2000.

Asked by reporters in July to describe the two late popes, Pope Francis said Blessed John was "a bit of the 'country priest,' a priest who loves each of the faithful and knows how to care for them; he did this as a bishop and as a nuncio" in Bulgaria, Turkey, Greece and

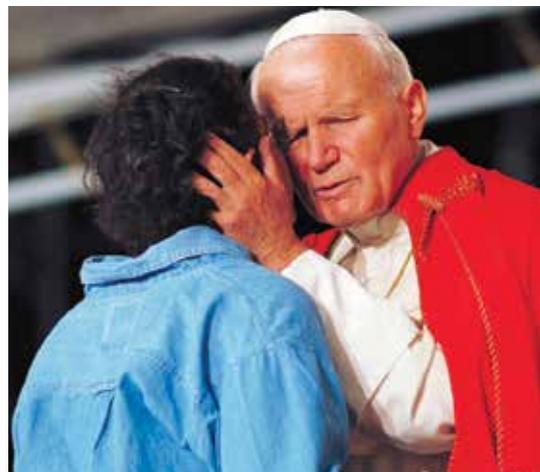
France before becoming a cardinal and patriarch of Venice.

He was holy, patient, had a good sense of humor and, especially by calling the Second Vatican Council, was a man of courage, Pope Francis said. "He was a man who let himself be guided by the Lord."

Meeting in March with priests from the Diocese of Rome, Pope Francis said one of the greatest inspirations of Pope John Paul was his intuition that "this was a time for mercy."

"It is a gift he gave us, but one that came from above," Pope Francis said. "It is up to us as ministers of the church to keep this message alive, especially in our preaching and gestures, in signs and pastoral choices—for example, in decid-

ing to give priority to the sacrament of reconciliation and, at the same time, to works of mercy."



**Blessed John Paul II, during the closing Mass of World Youth Day in 1993.**

## Priests Abducted

In a serious escalation of tension in Crimea, three Ukrainian Greek Catholic priests have been seized and interrogated by pro-Russian forces. The Rev. Mykola Kvych, a pastor and Ukrainian military chaplain, was taken on March 15 after celebrating the liturgy. He was released later that day after hours of questioning. The following day two other Greek Catholic priests were also picked up for questioning before being released. Ukrainian Greek Catholic priests have received oral and written threats, warning them to leave Crimea. Father Kvych told the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church's information department that he was held for eight hours by representatives of the pro-Russian Crimean self-defense force and Russian intelligence officers. According to Father Kvych, they accused him of "provocations" and of supplying the Ukrainian navy with weapons. Father Kvych told his interrogators that he helped organize the delivery of food to a blockaded naval base and that he gave two bulletproof vests to journalists. The day following his release, after several unknown individuals continually rang the doorbell of his apartment and then tried to break in, Father Kvych, with the assistance of his parishioners, was able to leave Crimea.

## New Religious Effort To End Human Trafficking

Representatives of the Catholic, Anglican and Muslim worlds gathered for the first time ever in the Vatican press office on March 17 for the launch of Global Freedom Network, an unprecedented interreligious effort to eradicate human trafficking by the end of the decade. The religious bodies will be assisted by the Walk Free Foundation. The new network will

## NEWS BRIEFS

Meeting on March 20 with steelworkers in Terni, Italy, **Pope Francis said solidarity** is too often treated as "a dirty word," yet the only way out of the global financial crisis is to put people first. • The new **Muslim mayor of Nazareth**, Ali Sallam, said on March 17 that it was his "greatest desire" that the feast of the Annunciation be proclaimed an official civic holiday "for all Nazareth." • Police in Sri Lanka have on March 18 **released two outspoken Catholic human rights activists** whose arrests raised international alarms, Ruki Fernando and the Oblate priest Praveen Mahesan. • **Helen O'Brien**, chief executive of England's Caritas Social Action Network, criticized the chancellor's new budget, complaining "once again we've heard promises to help struggling families through tax and childcare measures, [while a] significant reduction in support for the poorest people continues." • Cardinal Robert Sarah, president of the Pontifical Council Cor Unum, visited Guatemala in March to inaugurate a complex of houses and a chapel for 19 families who were **left homeless** after a devastating hurricane struck the nation in 2011.



**Man of Steelworkers**

press governments to endorse the establishment of the Global Fund to End Slavery and will ask multinational businesses to eradicate slavery from their industrial supply chains. By mobilizing the world's major faith communities, Global Freedom hopes to bring an end by 2020 to what Pope Francis has called a crime against humanity. Some 30 million men, women and children are currently caught in the clutches of human traffickers, a figure that many believe underreports the true depth of the problem.

## John Paul's 'Traditions'

The first anniversary of Pope Francis' election provoked stories highlighting the unique style Francis has brought to the papacy. People appear to have forgotten how much of what passes today for papal "traditions" were actually innovations of Pope John Paul II.

Frequent parish visits? Check. Joking with and leading a big crowd in a chant? Check. The church calendar is filled with annual appointments established by Pope John Paul II, who is scheduled to become St. John Paul on April 27. The day of the canonization is the Second Sunday of Easter, also known as Divine Mercy Sunday—an observance Pope John Paul decided in 2000 to add on the Sunday after Easter. Pope John Paul also instituted the annual Feb. 2 World Day of Consecrated Life, the Feb. 11 World Day of the Sick and a World Meeting of Families every three years. By welcoming hundreds of thousands of young people to the Vatican for a special Palm Sunday celebration in 1984, Pope John Paul launched what has become the biggest international gathering on the church's calendar: World Youth Day.

From CNS and other sources.



# Closed City

If you watch television, Washington is not only dysfunctional, but also depraved and dumb. In “House of Cards,” on Netflix, power is pursued for its own sake; if you get in the way, you end up dead or destroyed. In HBO’s “Veep,” the vice president is completely self-absorbed and empty-headed. ABC’s “Scandal” is full of double lives and brutal violence. We’re a long way from President Bartlet of “The West Wing” and not even close to “Mr. Smith Goes to Washington.”

I don’t see Washington in these ugly terms, though like other political junkies, I have watched all 13 episodes of the first season of “House of Cards.” Impeachment over an intern and spying on Congress by the Central Intelligence Agency could be television scripts, but Washington is also full of good people trying to do what’s right in a deeply dysfunctional political culture.

True, there are shallow leaders who are addicted to the partisan “gotcha” games that pass for strategy in D.C. But there are many others caught in behaviors and attitudes not of their choosing that erode public confidence and integrity, not in dramatic TV plots, but in the everyday compromises that contribute to cynicism and disillusionment.

Washington is not corrupted by secret gifts, but by the legal purchase of access and influence that come with endless fundraising and politics as usual. It is a populist senator who protects tax breaks for wealthy hedge

funds and a budget hawk who fights for subsidies for affluent rice farmers. It is a Democrat who in his heart supports abortion restrictions, but won’t do it openly because that would jeopardize future support or prospects. It is a Republican who knows a real budget deal has to include taxes, but won’t say so because she fears the Club for Growth. This ethical no man’s land is less about what is done, but more about what is not, about issues avoided and comments not made. No one is pushed in front of a Metro train (spoiler alert for “House of Cards”), but those without resources and influence are pushed aside for more powerful interests.

The fundamental Washington danger is isolation. There are exceptions, but many leaders are personally isolated from everyday challenges of life that generate compassion, doubt, empathy, openness, compromise and frustration. Their lives are full of sacrifices, but they are different from those of most Americans, who lack status, staff and perks. Congress used to be full of veterans or people with family members in military service. Now when Congress authorizes the use of force, it is sending other people’s children to fight, not their own.

Official Washington is economically isolated. Massive and growing fundraising means spending endless time and energy with affluent contributors. A recent House race cost \$13 million. Increasingly, Congress is made up of rich people who get con-

tributions from other rich people to get elected to represent the rest of us. The surrounding influence industry and contracting businesses are turning parts of the region into wealthy, recession-proof islands. In “Washington: A World Apart”, The Washington Post reported that more than a third of the zip codes in the D.C. metro area rank in the top 5 percent in income. They make up an increasingly affluent city of

Washington and six of the wealthiest counties in the nation. The cliché is true: many people come to Washington to do good and end up doing well...very well.

Much of Washington is politically and ideologically isolated, constantly campaigning, measuring everything by partisan polls. They spend their time, get

their information and find their friends only among those who share their party and positions. People who cross partisan lines are suspect.

In the past, you could go to the White House or the speaker and say, “We are with you on this, will work with you on that and will have to fight you on that other thing.” Now you are expected to be a cheerleader and part of the team—or you are an adversary and untrustworthy.

Today’s Washington is less a “House of Cards” and more a place of far too many walls. Washington on television is a disturbing place, but it is not the real story of the destructive isolation that harms our capital and country.

Today’s  
Washington  
is a  
place of  
far too  
many  
walls.

JOHN CARR

JOHN CARR is director of the Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.

# Shadowed by Tragedy

Rwanda strives to rise above a history of horror

BY KERRY WEBER

One of the most notable characteristics of the Kigali Memorial Centre is its simplicity: a small fountain; a stone courtyard; some gardens with water fixtures flowing through them. Most striking, perhaps, are the plain, long, brown slabs of brick marking the graves of 250,000 of the men, women and children who died in Kigali in the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. Beginning in April of that year, and continuing for 100 days, Hutus, the nation's ethnic majority, killed an estimated one million Tutsis, the minority, as well as many moderate Hutus. The memorial center here is one of six national memorials throughout the country, each marking a past that is as crucial to remember as it is difficult to discuss.

The mass grave here remains open, in part, and through a wide plate of glass visitors can view a gray cloth with three white crosses stitched onto it. Nearby, there is an arrangement of yellow roses bundled with a piece of tulle and adorned with a ribbon on which someone has written in blue marker: "Never Again."

Rwanda is a country that longs to be known for something other than the genocide, and over the past 20 years, the nation's government has worked hard to replace that reputation with a more positive one. In many ways, it has succeeded. Rwanda has made dramatic advances and now ranks among the cleanest, safest and least corrupt countries in Africa. Yet its deepest wound is one that cannot be healed by superficial changes.

The challenges to peace building after the genocide were numerous: the killings resulted in an estimated 500,000 widows and three million refugees; thousands of others were disabled and traumatized by the violence and their personal experiences. The population was deeply divided and suspicious of one another; the country's judicial system was destroyed, as was the economy and much of the infrastructure. The inflation rate was 65 percent, and the country lacked necessary administrative capabilities. It quickly became clear that rebuilding the country would take more than bricks and mortar.

In 1999 the Rwandan government established the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission. Now, 14

years later, in a dimly lit conference room in a government office building, Deogratias Nzabonimpa, the director of administration and finance, says that the commission aims to "unite Rwandans without regard for differences" and to allow equal rights at all levels of society. These days it is common to hear someone say, "We are one Rwanda." Rwandans no longer present themselves as Hutu or Tutsi, and it is impolite at best to inquire about such matters. So much remains unspoken.

The commission hopes to achieve this national sense of "Rwandanness" through "memory, truth, justice, confessions and forgiveness" by 2020. To help achieve this goal in the not too distant future, the commission has drawn on Rwanda's rich past. Many of the government peace-building initiatives build upon traditional, precolonial practices. "We are coming back to our homegrown approaches to restore social cohesion in our daily life," Nzabonimpa says. "Before [the genocide] we were united; we were seeing each other as one people of one father and one mother."

The programs are varied in style and scope. The Ingando, or solidarity camps, are part of a civic education program that helps to reintegrate returning Tutsis, members of the former national army and released prisoners into their communities. The Itorero Ry'Igihugu is an informal education system based on traditional Rwandan schools that promote integrity, hard work and conflict management. Umaganda is a program of mandatory community service that brings neighbors together once a month often for cleaning, construction or collaboration. Individuals known as *abunzi* serve as conflict resolution facilitators for local communities. They assist citizens in resolving their disputes, thus reducing the number of cases that go to court.

The *gacaca* courts, established in 2001, are perhaps the most famous of the traditional practices. The proceedings often were conducted at a simple wooden table in a village field, with community members sitting on the ground. In *gacaca*, local individuals held public trials for alleged genocide perpetrators, a process that, given the enormous numbers of accused, would have taken an estimated 100 years to complete if done through the country's traditional court system. The judges were elected based on their integrity by the people of their villages. Some perpetrators, if found guilty, agreed to a form of service that benefits all, such as building roads; others were given prison terms. The courts also

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KERRY WEBER, managing editor of *America* and the author of *Mercy in the City* (Loyola Press), visited Rwanda as a Catholic Relief Services Egan Fellowship recipient in October 2013.

**FIRST STEPS.** Members of the Community Healing and Reconciliation Program in the Rugango Parish.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF AUTHOR

served as a way to document the genocide.

Nzabonimpa says that the churches also have played a valuable role in the reconciliation process. The large majority of Rwanda's 11.6 million people are Christian, and approximately 57 percent are Catholic. "The reconciliation process must be inclusive," he says.

## A Service Church

Oswald Samvura sits in a bright yellow office beside a large window at the Episcopal Justice and Peace Commission, a division of the Episcopal Conference of Rwanda, the country's equivalent of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. As program director, he has worked closely with Catholic Relief Services, as well as other partner agencies, to implement programs that foster reconciliation among survivors and perpetrators of the genocide.

Between 1998 and 2012 the commission worked with Catholic Relief Services on various peace-building projects in an effort to help both survivors and perpetrators see that each had something to learn from the other. And in many instances, these conversations have been fruitful. "The challenges of reconciliation are tied up with perception of ethnicity," Mr. Samvura says. "It is difficult to bring these conflicting parties together, but it is possible. You might even find someone who survived the genocide who finds that the wife of a perpetrator is suffering more than he is."

Catholic Relief Services has been present in Rwanda

since 1960, and its work prior to the genocide was largely focused on development. Much of this work was wiped out in the chaos. The genocide prompted a rethinking of the organization's mission. At the time, the national C.R.S. staff consisted of 30 people, half of whom were Tutsis. Nine of the staff members were killed along with their families. Across the country, expats fled, many led out in a convoy by the U.S. ambassador.

C.R.S. staff began wondering how they could have misunderstood the severity of the events that led up to the genocide. "It was a time of pain, great disillusionment and anger," says Chris Tucker, the C.R.S. senior advisor, at the organization's world headquarters in Baltimore. "We knew about the tensions, but when we looked at that we said, 'That's not part of our mission and development.' Afterwards we asked ourselves, 'If we don't pay attention, then who?'"

C.R.S. and the church began working deliberately to address the larger issues underlying the immediate needs. Instead of focusing solely on relief, C.R.S. began to ask more nuanced questions. "We had to think, 'What if people had a fish and knew how to fish, but society says they don't have access to the river?'" Tucker said. This prompted C.R.S. peace-building staff and relief staff members to work together more closely to better understand the importance of the others' work.

Today the goals of peace building have been largely integrated into the priority projects, such as nutrition and eco-

conomic independence, on which C.R.S. focuses. Tucker says that Rwanda helped to form C.R.S. and continues to push the organization to reconsider its role. "What does it mean to walk with the church?" Tucker says. "How do we bring God's love into the world in changing, often messy times?"

## A Healing Church

During the genocide, the reactions among church hierarchy, leaders and lay Catholics varied. Some bishops, clergy and religious were killed. One bishop was later convicted of war crimes. Some members of the clergy simply did nothing. Others worked to save people. Feelings about the church's role remain similarly mixed today. Many feel it was complicit in the tensions that led up to the genocide, as some Catholic schools taught Hamitic ideology, which favored the Tutsis over the Hutus, and early Christian missionaries affirmed the supposed superiority of the Tutsis. Many missionaries had arrived with the German and Belgian colonists, who created the artificial class divisions in Rwandan society. When the Belgians instituted ethnic identity cards in 1932, the determination of whether a Rwandan was a Hutu or a Tutsi was based on property rather than people. If a person owned more than 10 cows, he was a Tutsi; fewer than 10 made a person a Hutu.

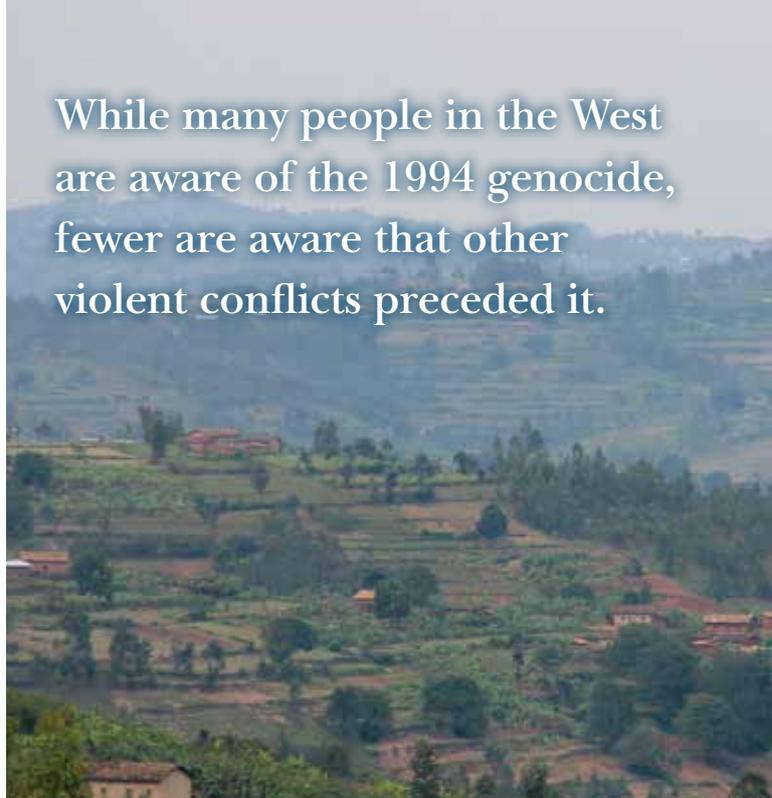
In more recent years, the episcopal conference's commitment to unity and reconciliation has been clear. Working with C.R.S., the diocese helped to establish the peace-building programs; while the results of such programs are nearly impossible to quantify, the testimonies of the participants carry great weight.

The parish building in the Rugango parish in the Diocese of Butare has thick brick walls and a metal roof. Clusters of children run around it peering their heads into the windows. A colorful, 3-D portrait of Jesus hangs above a circle of villagers, who together create a rainbow of colorful, bold-patterned clothing.

The parish is situated, as most places in Rwanda are, in the midst of many hills. The parish also remains greatly affected, as is every place in Rwanda, by the genocide. Twenty years later, individuals and families still struggle with how to live with the effects of this tragedy, a process made more challenging by the fact that many people now live side by side with individuals who murdered their family members or looted their homes. Catholic Relief Services worked with the people of the Rugango Parish and the diocese to create a Community Healing and Reconciliation Program, which fostered discussion and forgiveness among people of the community.

Esperance M'Mugemana sits directly beside Fidele Mparikubwimana, who killed several members of her fam-

While many people in the West are aware of the 1994 genocide, fewer are aware that other violent conflicts preceded it.



ily during the genocide. She speaks calmly, and with quiet strength. "When they said I could meet the person who killed my husband and family, I didn't want to meet him," she says. "But he came to ask me forgiveness. I told him, if you ask from deep within your heart, I forgive you."

Mparikubwimana spent 11 years in jail for his crimes. "After the participating in [this program through the diocese's] justice and peace commission, I realized that I did wrong," he said. "I came to ask forgiveness. She forgave me." As Mparikubwimana speaks, M'Mugemana's eyes become glossy with tears. The anger seems to have subsided, but the pain of loss is evident. When he finishes speaking, the two embrace. It is not a bear hug, but it is not merely a polite gesture; it contains true warmth and seems to recognize what a strange, intimate tragedy they share.

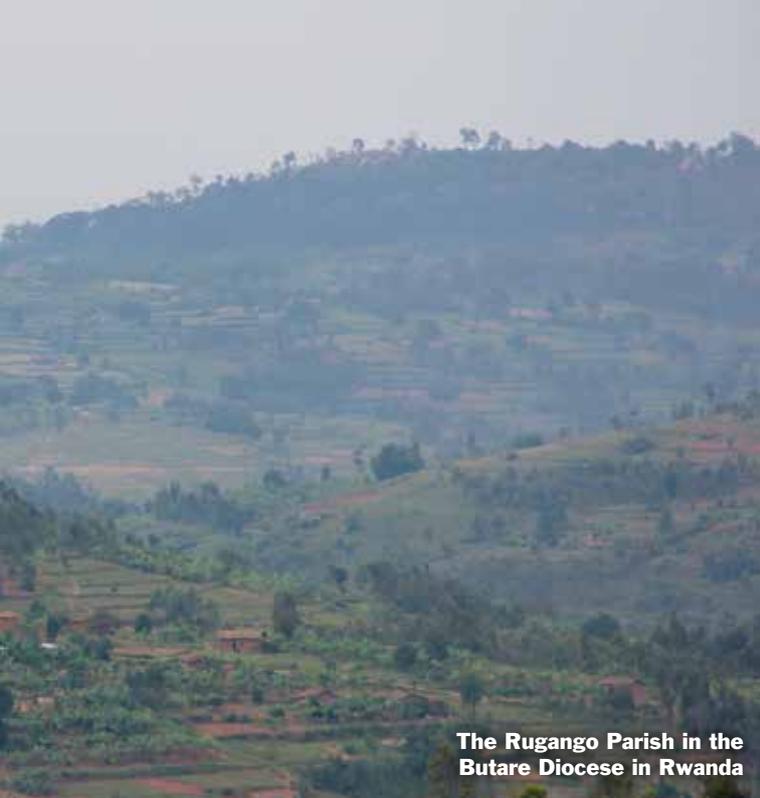
"I am a genocide survivor," says Viviane N'Habimana. "It was difficult to forgive." And yet she managed not only to forgive

but to help Boniface Hakizimana, the man who had harmed her, as well.

"I killed people. I was in prison 10 years," said Boniface Hakizimana, who is dressed in a black and white gingham jacket over a black shirt with jeans rolled at the ankles, revealing his bare feet. "Because of the crime I did, my conscience urged me to confess and ask forgiveness." During the genocide, he destroyed N'Habimana's house, but when he was released from prison, he learned that she was living in peace and harmony with his wife. "She helped my wife to



**Esperance M'Mugemana and Fidele Mparikubwimana**



The Rugango Parish in the Butare Diocese in Rwanda

genocide, fewer are aware that other violent conflicts preceded it, forcing many thousands of people, mainly Tutsis, out of the country in the 1959, 1963, 1967 and 1973. The Institute of Research and Dialogue for Peace is a nongovernmental organization founded in 2001 to work toward rebuilding both Rwanda and its people and to help prevent a future conflict. Pierre Rwanyindo, director of I.R.D.P., believes a new Rwanda must be built on good governance, democracy, the well-being of its citizens and economic development. A large part of the institute's research brings to the table villagers and members of the Rwandan diaspora, soliciting their opinions and documenting their stories. The institute also has worked to establish schools of debate in four universities and 40 secondary schools to help foster dialogue among youth in the schools. "We want to encourage people to tolerate diversity of opinion," says Rwanyindo. The youth can discuss controversial ideas with the help of a facilitator in a neutral setting.

"Unity is possible, provided people know and accept what is the cause of our division," he said. "The key problems are power and economic conditions." Both survivors and perpetrators of the genocide often place blame for the tragedy on poor governance. "In all genocide cases there is a role of the government; the leaders play a crucial role. However, you can't reject or dispute or deny the individual responsibility. We are encouraging a change that starts for the individual. People tend to blame others—just like in a car crash."

Some individuals neither take nor place blame, however, preferring to deny or refuse to acknowledge the genocide at all. The National Commission to Fight Against Genocide, known as well by its French acronym, C.N.L.G., fights against this ignorance. The commission was launched in 2008 to help promote the commemoration of the genocide and to advocate for children and survivors affected by it. This commission is in charge of the six national memorials, but it also oversees the national research and documentation center, which was launched in 2012. The commission conducts research on genocide denial, prevention, consequences and history. It seeks to make those findings public through the publication of papers in academic journals and through collaboration with universities.

When the *gacaca* courts closed on June 18, 2012, documents from each village were put into sacks, loaded onto trucks and delivered to a huge building created solely for such files. C.N.L.G. staff are devoted to classifying these files. In his large, windowed office overlooking the hills surrounding Kigali, Jean Damascene Gasanabo, director gen-

feed me in the prison," he said. The two demonstrate their unity by embracing. "Today we are united and together we focus on the future. I can't express how I feel in my heart after being forgiven," he says. "It was a kind of rest. I had it heavy on my heart."

One survivor acknowledges with candor the difficulty of that forgiveness. "After the genocide, I hated everyone in the community," she says. "People [from the Community Healing and Reconciliation Program] came to teach us forgiveness, and it took a long time. It was a process. It was difficult to listen to them. But then we had the capacity to listen to the one who came to ask forgiveness." She said she saw over four dozen people loot her home. Three returned to ask for forgiveness. She says also she forgives those who did not come.

The group has helped the participants to restore their faith not only in one another, but in God and themselves. "When the *gacaca* courts started, I was not a human being because I was traumatized," says a woman in a dress printed with large images of lemons and oranges. "But because of prayers and sensitization, I started to again become a human being." Another woman in a yellow and brown dress says: "It took a long period even to pray. The international community left us, even those living with us, and it seemed like God left us. It took a long time to come back to the church."

While many people in the West are aware of the 1994



Viviane N'Habimana and Boniface Hakizimana

eral of C.N.L.G., speaks about his work, while a large and ubiquitous portrait of Paul Kagame peers down from the wall. "When you see those documents, you understand the magnitude of the genocide," he said.

Gasabo holds up a sheet of paper in front of him. Each box of records holds 2,500 sheets, he says. There are almost 20,000 boxes. This means there are close to 40 million pages to be sorted. The commission is working on a feasibility study to determine the time, funding and technological requirements necessary to preserve and digitize the files for the sake of history, memory, education and research, he tells us.

## Grappling With History

Twenty years is a remarkably short time in terms of history and healing. And yet it is long enough that there are many young Rwandans who did not directly experience the horror of those three months in 1994 but have nevertheless been affected by them their whole lives. Preventing another genocide means, in part, first addressing issues like poverty, gender roles and nutrition, which fuel unrest. It also means that Rwandans must warn the next generation. But first, many adults must grapple with their own role in the atrocities.

"It is a history that children have to know, but when you

approach the topic, it is very difficult to explain," says Zacharie Ndayishimiye, a member of the Episcopal Peace and Justice Commission in Rwanda. "A child can ask an adult, 'Were you killing people?' and parents have a hard time giving an answer that doesn't traumatize kids." Places like the Kigali Memorial Centre can play a role in those discussions. It is a place that works to preserve the memory of those who died, but it also

serves as a research and teaching center working to prevent such tragedy in the future. Its exhibits might very well serve as a jumping off point for conversations, not only between parents and children, but for all who value peace and justice.

The center's unassuming exterior gives way to exhibits documenting a nation's complicated past. Visitors will learn about the systematic rape and murder of Tutsi women, and of Hutu women who had married Tutsi men. You will read about the 300,000 orphans that were left when the killing ended. You will see photos of the faces of hundreds of those who were killed—a man against a brick wall wearing a black and red sweater, a father in a white shirt holding his child in his arms. You will walk by skulls and bones and tattered clothing hanging like ghosts in darkened rooms. You will pass by rosaries and pens and children's shoes, all found beside their dead owners. You will pass by heartbreaking photos of children, which are mounted above their names and accompanied by short lists.

You will not be able to pass by without tears the display for Francine Murengezi Ingabire, a girl with a wide smile and closely cropped hair, which reads:

Age: 12

Favourite sport: swimming

Favourite food: eggs and chips

Favourite drink: milk and Fanta

Tropical

Best Friend: her elder sister Claudette

Cause of death: hacked by machete

You will walk through exhibits remembering other genocides—in Armenia, Namibia, Cambodia, the Balkans and the Holocaust—and recall that after each one, someone pledged: Never Again. And yet. You will wonder why it happened and know that there is no good answer. You will search for one anyway. Because in the end you know the only possible reaction, the only possible way to heal, is love. And you will think: If only it were that simple. **A**

### ON THE WEB

Photographs from Kerry Weber's trip to Rwanda.  
[americamagazine.org/slideshow](http://americamagazine.org/slideshow)

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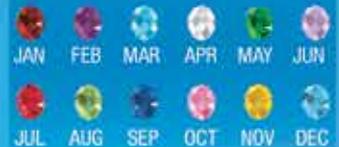
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### Birthstone Chart



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# Witness in Rwanda

BY THE EDITORS

**B**y the second Sunday of Easter, April 10, as the African Synod opened in Rome—the official title for this meeting is “The Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops”—details had just reached the outside world of the slaughter in Rwanda. Among those killed in the wave of “ethnic cleansing” were 19 Africans gathered at the Jesuits’ Christus Centre in the Rwandan capital, Kigali: nine young Rwandan sisters of the congregation “Vita et Pax”; the Rwandan cook; a Rwandan social worker who had apparently sought refuge there; five Rwandan diocesan priests meeting at the center, and three Rwandan Jesuit priests.

At Jesuit headquarters in Rome, African bishops who had arrived for the synod joined the Jesuits’ superior general and young African Jesuits studying in Rome to pray for all the victims of ethnic violence in central Africa and for the restoration of justice and peace. The Jesuits who died were remembered precisely for their work at the Christus Centre, which was dedicated to ethnic reconciliation and the protection of the vulnerable.

The term “ethnic cleansing,” as we know all too well from former Yugoslavia, is a European coinage. There is nothing specially African about either the euphemism or the reali-

ty. As in the Balkans, so in Rwanda, efforts to understand what is happening fall back on terms like “ancient hatreds” and “historic grievances,” but there is nothing predestined or inevitable about it. As in the Balkans, so too in Rwanda, unscrupulous and weak-minded politicians—in this case, not hardline Serbs but hardline Hutus—have seized upon an unsettled moment to grab more power for themselves and their party by killing off political opponents, mostly Tutsis, but also Hutus working for political reconciliation. Waving the ethnic banner, as in the Balkans, the hard-liners have unleashed ignorant men to massacre the “others,” and by horrid irony this dirty work is called “cleansing.”

Two weeks ago, *America’s* 85th-anniversary issue featured the African Synod in two articles, one of them an interview with African theologian Lamin Sanneh, who asks Western Christians to feel for Christians worldwide a kinship transcending idols of national ideology and culture. It is such a kinship that *America* professes here by publishing in miniature the life stories of three of our brother Jesuits murdered in Rwanda. It is too easy, amid all the blood and death—by April 10 it was thought some 20,000 had perished in and around Kigali—to see just the heaped up bodies and not the faces of those who shared their love of Christ with us. Nor do we mean, by publishing these, to overlook the personal stories of the others, the women religious for

*A version of this editorial appeared in the April 23, 1994, issue of America.*

Site of mass graves in Butare, Rwanda

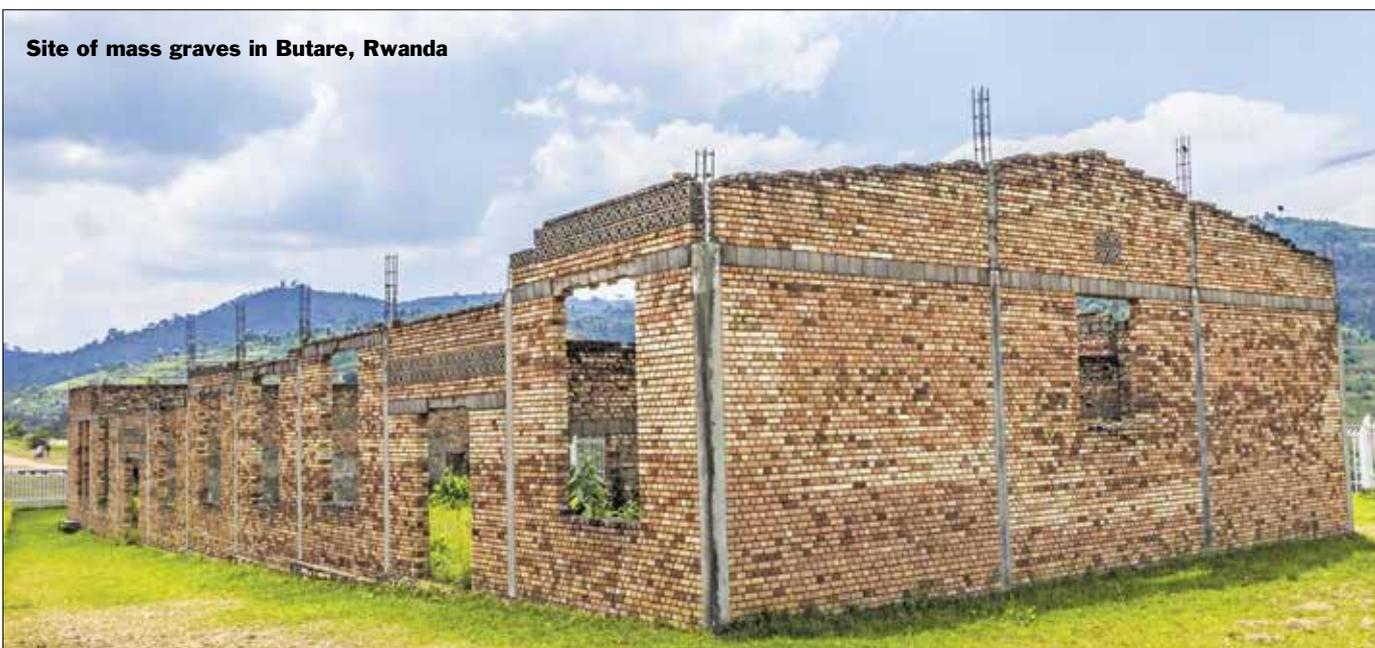


PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM, JORG HACKEMANN

instance, who also died at the Christus Centre, but we could quickly get detailed information on the Jesuits:

Chrysologus Mahame, 67, a Tutsi and the first Rwandan Jesuit, had served as regional superior, taught in the seminary and, at the time of his death, was superior of the Jesuit house of studies in Butare. By character and education, he appealed to both Hutus and Tutsis, though his efforts to reconcile the two groups and to serve as an ecumenical and ethnic bridge—by conducting retreats, workshops and continuing-formation sessions at the Christus Centre—earned him enemies. Like Jesuits killed in Latin America, he was unloved by those who had sold out to one or the other political side though, ironically, he was reaching out to both sides.

Patrick Gahizi, 48, was a Tutsi whose family had been exiled from Rwanda into Burundi, where he grew up. He graduated from the University of Bujumbura and entered the Society of Jesus in Burundi. He studied philosophy in Kinshasha, Zaire, and theology at the Gregorian University in Rome. He had served as principal of the high school

at Gisenyi, Rwanda, and, at the time of his death, was regional superior of Rwanda—a role that fitted him because his background made him acceptable to Hutus and Tutsis, in both Rwanda and Burundi. Destined for higher office, he was not, as a friend clarifies, “political” in any negative sense.

Innocent Rutagambwa, 46, was of mixed Tutsi-Hutu parentage. He had just finished a term as assistant to the Jesuit provincial superior in Zaire. Unlike Chrysologus and Patrick, he was not obviously a leader, being much more low-key by temperament. He had taught in high school, but not too happily, as he was not notably successful in coping with the antics of high schoolers. His preferred métier was spiritual direction, and in that he was skilled and discreet. His baptismal name suited him....

American Jesuits are proud to call them brothers. They died as they lived, trying to overcome the sort of division that took their lives, affording protection to the vulnerable even when it cost them their lives.

# Media Camouflage

BY JAMES MARTIN

In late May, a few weeks after the monstrous tragedy in Rwanda began, the Styles section of The New York Times included its regular column “Dressing Room.” Under the heading “Fashion Statements” appeared a picture of a Hutu guerilla fighter and the following text: “Camouflage has been creeping into fashion in the last two years....

[A] teen-age Rwandan gunman appeared on the scene recently wearing faded, obviously castoff camouflage, a long camouflage scarf he must have made around his neck, and a beige monklike pointy hood on his head.... It was a horribly stylish and most chillingly effective outfit.”

That The New York Times would carry, of all things, a fashion piece about a place where thousands of people were daily being slaughtered is only one example of the West’s difficulty in confronting the tragedy in Rwanda.

I have recently returned from Kenya, where I spent two years working with refugees, many of them Rwandese. Even

in Africa I noticed the ambivalent attitude of the West—particularly the Western media—toward the situation in Rwanda. On April 18, the week after President Juvénal Habyarimana’s plane was shot down and 10,000 people were killed in one day, Newsweek devoted three pages to

Kurt Cobain’s suicide and one to Rwanda. Certainly any suicide is a tragedy, but the relative size of the two stories was difficult to understand. By May 9, three weeks later, with thousands more being slaughtered and despite quoting a U.N. worker on the “largest and fastest exodus ever seen,” Time buried the story in a 125-word blurb in its “Chronicles” section.

As the tragedy continued to unfold in its apocalyptic dimensions, it revealed the Western media at a loss over what to report. Early coverage, even on CNN International, focused primarily on the exodus of Americans and Europeans from Rwanda. Certainly part of the limitation in coverage resulted from the inability to send reporters into Rwanda. Nevertheless, the media’s coverage of the escape of the Brave White People was disturbing. In a



JAMES MARTIN, S.J., is editor at large of *America*. This article originally appeared in *America* on Aug. 27, 1994.

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## Summer Retreats 2014

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#### Always Gifts

Presenters: Gaynell Cronin and Jack Rath-  
schmidt, OFM Cap.  
Sunday, June 8 – Friday, June 13  
Fee: \$400-\$425 (As You Are Able)

#### Re-envisioning the Second Half of Life

Presenters: Maria and Michael Morwood  
Sunday, June 15 – Saturday, June 21  
Fee: \$550-\$575 (As You Are Able)

#### Encountering the Gospel Again for the First Time

Presenter: Mary Schneiders, OP  
Sunday, June 22 – Thursday, June 26  
Fee: \$325-\$350 (As You Are Able)

#### Dance of Divine Intimacy: Mutual Knowing and Loving

Presenter: Don Bisson, FMS  
Thursday, June 26 – Sunday, June 29  
Fee: \$350-\$375; Commuter: \$250-\$275 (As  
You Are Able)

#### Directed Retreat

Directors: Aedan McKeon, OP,  
Nancy Erts, OP, and Judy Schiavo  
Sunday, June 29 – Saturday, July 5  
Fee: \$475-\$500 (As You Are Able)

#### New Window of Opportunity

Presenter: Beverly Musgrave  
Sunday, June 29, 6:00 pm –  
Friday, July 4, 11:00 am  
Fee: \$400-\$425 (As You Are Able)

### JULY

#### Heart Themes in Matthew's Gospels

Presenter: Michael H. Crosby, OFM Cap  
Saturday, July 5 – Wed, July 9  
Fee: \$450-\$475 (As You Are Able)

#### Crafters' and Quilters' Retreat: Postcards Tell Our Stories

Prayer Facilitator: Nancy Erts, OP  
Craft Instructor: Patricia Werner  
Wednesday, July 9 – Sunday, July 13  
Fee: \$350-\$375; Commuter: \$250-\$275  
(As You Are Able)

#### Women's Retreat: Wise Women of the Word; Healing the World

Presenter: Nancy Erts, OP  
Sunday, July 13 – Saturday, July 19  
Fee: \$400-\$425 (As You Are Able);  
Commuter: \$40 per day;  
\$65 includes overnight

#### Men's Retreat: Real Men Pray

Presenter: Patrick Cleary-Burns  
Sunday, July 13 – Saturday, July 19  
Fee: \$400-\$425

#### Directed Retreat

Directors: Francis Gargani, CSsR  
and team members  
Sunday, July 27 – Sunday, August 3  
Fee: \$525-\$550 (As You Are Able)

### AUGUST

#### Finding a Living Faith; Revisiting the Creed

Presenter: Mary Schneiders, OP  
Sunday, August 3 – Friday, August 8  
Fee: \$400-\$425 (As You Are Able)

#### The Heart Cave: Deepening the Journey Within

Presenter: Michael Laratonda, FMS  
Sunday, August 10 – Friday, August 15  
Fee: \$425-\$450 (As You Are Able)

#### Christians Evolving Faithfully as the Universe

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memorable scene featured on CNN and in wire service photos, a British woman led her little white dog from the military plane that had carried her to Jomo Kenyatta Airport in Nairobi. And in a strange twist, many of the African papers, which rely on Reuters and other international news services, led with similar stories. The front page of the Nairobi Daily Nation, Kenya's largest newspaper, for a number of days included pictures of this exodus, showing the Brave White People being met with hugs from the appropriate (American, British or Canadian) ambassador.

After months of watching an entire country on the move, and what even Warren Christopher called "genocide," the United States, after endless political dithering, finally began sending aid. And, sadly, also began their spin-doctoring. J. Brian Atwood, administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development, boasted hollowly to USA Today: "Our nation has nothing to be defensive about. We are way ahead of the rest of the world."

Now, with American troops there, Rwanda is much in the spotlight: extensive CNN coverage of the horrendous Rwandese refugee situation in Zaire, intelligent reporting about the complex roots of the conflict, as well as the inevitable pictures of American soldiers distributing food to Rwandese children. These are all positive changes that one hopes accompany a real commitment to help. But there is also the danger of Rwanda's becoming simply the flavor of the month. Only a few months before Rwanda exploded, the American media rightly documented the parallel tragedy in Sudan, where thousands of southern Sudanese are dying as a result of a devastating civil war. Horrifying pictures were printed in lavish color spreads in many American magazines. Sudan, however, has quickly dropped from sight. It remains to be seen whether the story of the hundreds of thousands of Rwandese refugees and the bleak future of their ravaged nation will also, eventually, fall out of fashion. ■

# A Careful Reading

## Could federal health care money be used for abortion?

BY RICHARD M. DOERFLINGER

Since the Affordable Care Act became law in March 2010, the two chambers of Congress have held diametrically opposed views. The House, under Republican control since 2011, has voted many times to repeal the entire act; the Democratic-controlled Senate has resisted changes.

The Catholic bishops' conference has not joined in either agenda. Supporters of national efforts to achieve universal health coverage for almost a century, the bishops have urged specific reforms in accord with the moral principles they articulated during consideration of the A.C.A. The bishops support basic, life-affirming health coverage for everyone, including immigrants; compliance with longstanding federal policies on abortion funding; and respect for rights of conscience.

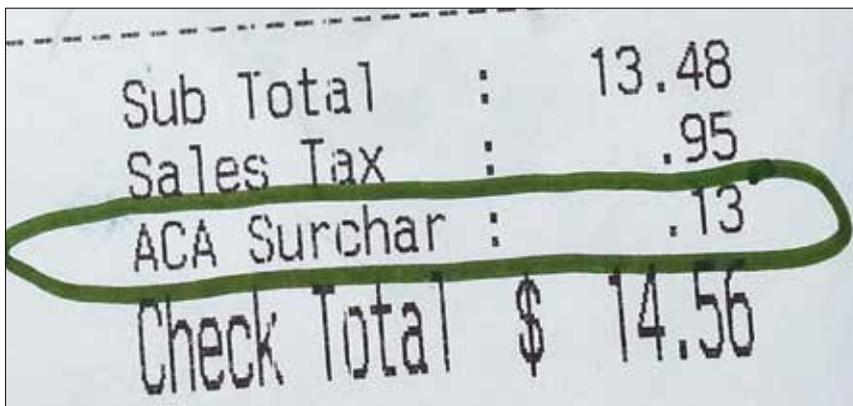
The A.C.A. remains deficient in these areas. The bishops have urged Congress to pursue comprehensive immigration reform, including reform of the way our health laws treat immigrant families. On abortion issues—both federal funding and conscience rights—the implementation of the A.C.A. over four years has brought its defects into sharper focus.

One barrier to progress on the act's problems regarding abortion is that many, including some Catholics, are confused about those problems or deny that they exist. Here, then, are the abortion-related problems the bishops' conference finds in the A.C.A.

1) *Under existing federal jurisprudence, federal funds appropriated by the A.C.A. are available for elective abortions.* For decades, federal funding of abortion has been prevented by a patchwork of appropriations riders that must be renewed each year, as well as a few more permanent provisions governing particular programs like the Children's Health Insurance Program. Each provision governs only the bill it amends. The first and most important appropriations rider, the Hyde Amendment, amends the Labor, Health and Human Services and Education appropriations bill and prevents only

use of the funds appropriated by that act from supporting abortion (except in the rare cases of danger to the mother's life and pregnancy due to rape or incest).

The A.C.A. is unusual because it both authorizes and appropriates billions of dollars for its numerous programs. The usual process is for Congress to authorize a program, either



**COUNTING PENNIES.** A surcharge for the Affordable Care Act, popularly known as Obamacare, is seen highlighted on the dining bill of a Reuters correspondent in Clermont, Fla. Diners at a Florida restaurant chain are being asked to pay a health insurance surcharge on their meal tabs.

permanently or for several years, and then appropriate that program's level of funding for a given year through separate annual appropriations bills. The A.C.A. bypasses the appropriations process, thus bypassing the Hyde Amendment and similar riders, and for many programs it supplies nothing in their place.

It is useful to review the history of the Hyde Amendment to understand the importance of this absence of language prohibiting the use of federal money for abortion. Congress first approved Hyde in 1976, after discovering that the Medicaid program (funded by the Labor/Health and Human Services appropriations bill) was paying for an estimated 300,000 abortions a year. The Medicaid statute, enacted in 1965 when abortion was generally a crime, nowhere mentions abortion as health care. But federal courts concluded that once legalized by the Supreme Court, abortion could be construed as part of Medicaid's broad mandate for family planning, physicians' services and other items a physician deems "medically necessary." In the context of abortion, moreover, phrases like "medically necessary" were to be read in light of the Supreme

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PHOTO REUTERS/BARBARA LISTON

Court's 1973 decisions, which defined a "health" reason for abortion to include anything a physician thinks will serve a woman's social, emotional or familial "well-being"—hence the 300,000 tax-funded abortions a year. If Congress wanted to stop this, it had to enact a provision clearly saying so. That is why it approved the Hyde Amendment.

The Hyde Amendment was modified in 1993 so it no longer prohibited funding abortions in cases of rape or incest, and the Clinton administration said funding these abortions was now mandated by the underlying Medicaid law. No state could refuse to provide matching funds for these abortions, even if its state constitution prohibited funding abortion except in cases of danger to the mother's life. The federal courts consistently sided with the administration and invalidated "life only" state laws. Under these precedents, if a new health law is not governed by Hyde or similar existing provisions and that law fails to supply Hyde-like language of its own, its funding is available to pay for abortions.

One area of concern is the Community Health Centers program. For decades these centers have offered free or low-cost medical care to Americans who may not otherwise find a provider. To qualify as such a center, a provider must offer "family planning," "obstetrics" and "gynecology" services. Since 1976 the Hyde Amendment has prevented funding of elective abortions under such categories. The A.C.A. directly appropriates \$11 billion to expand the C.H.C. program, however, bypassing Hyde while supplying no abortion limitation of its own.

President Obama's executive order notes that an existing regulation forbids use of H.H.S. funds for abortion; but that regulation only implements the annual Hyde Amendment and relies on that amendment for its validity. The order also says that "under the [Affordable Care] Act" this policy has been extended to cover A.C.A.'s funds; but no provision of the A.C.A. does this, and the order does not create new law on the issue.

Are elective abortions being subsidized with these A.C.A. funds now? We do not know. If not, that result would seem to be only one lawsuit away.

Another A.C.A. program has a more visible record. The act appropriated \$5 billion to pay for medical claims in a temporary "high risk" insurance pool for people who could not obtain health coverage due to pre-existing conditions. The program is administered by states, with H.H.S. approving the state benefits packages and providing all the public subsidies for coverage.

In July 2010, pro-life groups discovered that at least three states had included elective abortions in high-risk plans that had been approved by H.H.S. The resulting protests inside and outside Congress ultimately led H.H.S. to announce that it would exclude elective abortions—a decision criticized by pro-abortion groups, who said there was nothing in the A.C.A. requiring this result. The Congressional Research Service confirmed that these groups were right: There was nothing in the A.C.A., or in President Obama's executive order issued at the time of the act's approval, to exclude abortion. H.H.S. Secretary Sebelius had the discretion to refuse to fund abortions only because this particular provision of the A.C.A. explicitly authorized her to set (unspecified) additional restrictions not found in the statute. Such authority, allowing an executive decision not to fund abortions, is absent from other A.C.A. provisions, and the secretary can reverse her

decision on this program at any time.

2) *The act violates the policy of all other federal health programs by using federal funds for health plans covering elective abortions.* Again, we need a little history. In 1997 Congress found that the Hyde Amendment was being circumvented. Some states were using their federal Medicaid funds to enroll low-income patients in H.M.O.'s, where one annual fee qualifies a patient for all medical care provided by the plan's network. There are no bills for individual services. Many H.M.O.'s covered elective abortions and were paid by the federal government to provide them to these Medicaid patients. So Congress modified the Hyde Amendment to prevent this by barring use of Labor/H.H.S. appropriations funds to help purchase a health plan that includes such abortions. This same policy prevails in every other program where federal funds combine with other funds to buy a health plan, most notably the Children's Health Insurance Program and the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program. For 16 years, this has been part of what it means to ban federal abortion funding.

The A.C.A. discards this longstanding policy. Federal subsidies, in the form of advanceable, refundable tax credits, will be used to help purchase health plans that cover elective abortions. The A.C.A. calls these credits "federal funds," and the Congressional Budget Office estimates that 73 percent of the funds will be paid as checks drawn on the Treasury (because the credits often exceed enrollees' tax liability). Each such plan must require each and every enrollee to pay a special premium solely for elective abortions, to be placed in a separate account from the federally subsidized premiums for the overall plan.

This has been called a "compromise." But it is a compromise

**Are elective abortions  
being subsidized with  
A.C.A. funds now?  
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between the policy that every president and Congress agreed to for 16 years and a more pro-abortion agenda. It violates half the Hyde Amendment.

Supporters of the A.C.A. have said it takes power away from insurance companies and gives it back to the consumer. This provision does the opposite. The insurer alone chooses whether to cover elective abortions—and most for-profit insurers want to do so because abortion is cheaper than childbirth (and much cheaper than covering new children in a family health plan). The government then provides the same federal subsidy as for other health plans and requires the plan to collect a direct subsidy specifically for abortions from all enrollees—including those who have a strong moral objection. This is the first and only time since *Roe v. Wade* that the federal government has forbidden private organizations to allow an exemption for those with moral objections to abortion.

Can pro-life Americans choose a health plan in the marketplace without elective abortions? Yes, but it is easier said than done. The A.C.A. forbids insurers to inform consumers about their abortion coverage except as part of the long list of benefits provided to those already enrolling. It also forbids them to reveal how much of the enrollee's premium will go into the separate account for abortions. Thus a common impression that enrollees will write a "separate check" for abortion, which pro-life dissenters might try refusing to sign, is apparently false—the funds are separated at the insurer's end. Some states have said that every health plan on their exchange will cover elective abortions.

This is troubling in light of polling commissioned by the bishops' conference during consideration of the A.C.A. Most survey respondents opposed measures that require Americans to support abortion with their tax dollars or their premiums;

68 percent said that if the choice were theirs they would not want abortion in their health coverage. On each question, women gave stronger pro-life responses than men. The majority of American women who oppose abortion coverage will now often face a sad dilemma: Either pay for abortions anyway or have greatly reduced options when looking for a health plan to meet their families' needs.

An example is health coverage for members and key staff of Congress. Before passage of the A.C.A., all federal employees received their coverage under the widely envied Federal Employees Health Benefits Program mentioned earlier. Each employee could choose among dozens of health plans and receive an employer subsidy from the federal government paying up to 75 percent of their premium. No plan could include elective abortion. Federal employees in Washington, D.C., could choose among over 100 federally subsidized health plans without subsidizing such abortions. Under the A.C.A., members and key staff of Congress are transferred to their local health exchanges—where they will still receive the employer subsidy, except that this subsidy will now pay for pro-abortion health plans. Congressional employees in Washington, D.C., who do not want to subsidize elective abortions can now choose from among only nine health plans out of 121 on the district's exchange.

Some say the elaborate "segregation of funds" exercise within health plans keeps "taxpayer funds" from paying for elective abortions on these exchanges. That statement is misleading in two ways. First, the federal tax subsidies for plans covering abortion still violate the abortion policy that prevails in every other federal program. Second, the money that Americans will have to pay for other people's abortions, as a condition for getting the individual health coverage that meets their needs, is still

mandated by the federal government—insurers that cover abortion are forbidden to let anyone opt out. And that money is earmarked more directly and specifically for abortion than any tax Americans have ever paid before. The fact that it is a mandatory premium rather than a "tax" scarcely seems relevant to the moral issue involved.

3) *The A.C.A. lacks important conscience protections.* This is clear from the dozens of lawsuits on their way to the U.S. Supreme Court over the mandate for covering contraception and female sterilization as "preventive services." Even that contraceptive mandate abandons a long bipartisan tradition in Congress and the White House of exempting those with a moral or religious objection.

The "preventive services" mandate raises potential conscience problems on



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abortion in three ways. First, some mandated drugs and devices can prevent the survival of a new human embryo before implantation (e.g., the copper IUD) or even afterward (ella, a close analogue to RU-486). That would be an abortion in Catholic teaching and in the eyes of many others, including the Christian business owners now before the Supreme Court. Second, if the Food and Drug Administration follows the lead of the World Health Organization and accepts RU-486 (mifepristone) as an “emergency contraceptive,” the drug known worldwide as the “abortion pill” would automatically become part of the mandate. Third, arguably no language in the A.C.A. stops this or a future administration from mandating even surgical abortion as a “preventive service” (preventing unwanted births instead of unintended pregnancies). The A.C.A. says the government cannot mandate abortion as an “essential health benefit,” but that provision does not mention the distinct mandate for “preventive services.”

More broadly, the final version of the A.C.A. deleted an important conscience provision from the original House-passed bill, which incorporated the Hyde/Weldon Amendment that has been part of Labor/H.H.S. appropriations bills since 2004. That law withholds Labor/H.H.S. funds from a federal agency or program or a state or local government that discriminates against health care entities that refuse to provide, refer for, pay for or provide coverage of abortion. Like the Hyde Amendment on funding, the Hyde/Weldon policy on conscience does not govern funds appropriated by the A.C.A.

4) Finally, it has been said that federal judges in Virginia and Ohio have ruled there is no abortion funding in the A.C.A. That is not quite true.

In a Virginia case (*Liberty University v. Lew*), the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals said Liberty University had failed to prove it is forced by the A.C.A. to provide or pay for abortion coverage. In this regard the Fourth Circuit was correct. The university could purchase or sponsor student and employee coverage without elective abortions. In fact, Virginia is one of 24 states that have rejected the A.C.A.’s approach and banned most abortion coverage on their own state exchange. This case does not contradict what is said above about the A.C.A.’s own abortion policy.

In Ohio (*Susan B. Anthony List v. Driehaus*), a congressman claimed that a pro-life group had defamed him by saying during his re-election campaign that he voted for federal abortion funding by supporting the A.C.A. The trial judge rejected a motion to dismiss the case, stating that the pro-life group had not identified “any provision in [the A.C.A.] that appropriates taxpayer funds to pay for abortions.” The court did not reach a decision on the merits because the congressman’s suit was later dismissed on other grounds. But the judge’s initial comment was correct: No provision in the A.C.A. expressly appropriates money for abortions themselves. As explained above, it is the absence of an express exclusion that, under

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existing jurisprudence, creates the problem. And the A.C.A. does appropriate funds for health plans that cover abortions.

A proposal that would settle many such issues is the “No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act” (H.R. 7, S. 946). As approved by the House in January, H.R. 7 would codify the policy of the Hyde Amendment and similar provisions, so they would no longer be subject to annual attack during the appropriations process. This policy, made consistent across the federal government, would also govern the A.C.A. and future legislation.

Health plans on the state exchanges would make this change in the next plan year, 2015; until then, these plans would at least have to disclose their abortion coverage and its cost to potential enrollees. Beginning in 2015, those wanting elective abortion coverage could purchase an overall plan that includes it, without federal subsidy; or they could purchase a plan without such abortions, receive the subsidy and choose to purchase separate abortion coverage with non-federal funds. The minority who want abortion coverage could purchase it; the majority who do not want it would not have it forced on them, either absolutely or as a condition for obtaining the health plan best for their families.

The reaction to H.R. 7 from legal experts who support abortion has been interesting. One expert, Sara Rosenbaum, has testified against the bill in Congress and had opposed the original Stupak Amendment, which H.R. 7 closely resembles

in its effect on the A.C.A. The Stupak amendment was supported in 2009 by the bishops’ conference and by 64 House Democrats and approved by the then Democratic-controlled House; but it was rejected by the Senate and is absent from the final A.C.A.

Unlike some in Congress, Rosenbaum does not make the false claim that H.R. 7 bans privately purchased abortion coverage. Instead she notes that over the decades, Medicaid and other federal programs have excluded abortion from the category of health care that the government expects Americans to obtain and support. If the A.C.A. further increases the role of the federal government in health coverage and applies this same policy to federal subsidies for a broader class of Americans, this may produce a “tipping point” at which health care without elective abortion becomes the norm. Abortion and abortion coverage will still be legal and available, but rare.

To this I would add: Yes, and what is wrong with that? Pro-choice presidents have said they want abortion to be legal but rare. The great majority of American men and women do not want to support abortion with their taxes or health premiums. A recent poll of obstetrician-gynecologists showed that only 14 percent perform abortions, and the latest abortion statistics show abortion rates and the number of abortion providers at their lowest since 1973. To all but the most committed enthusiasts for abortion, that tipping point cannot arrive too soon. A



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# Asking for Change

The challenge of giving without grudges

BY MARK NEILSEN

Donna appears at the front door every so often, not exactly a friend but more than an acquaintance. A teacher of sorts, I suppose. Like the time she asked me to loan her \$20 for an emergency, and I came to learn that it really was not a loan at all, but more like a gift, minus the generosity.

Overweight, with weakened hips and knees, she sways back and forth as she makes her way down the street and struggles up the steps to pound on our door. Typically breathless and perspiring, she comes to make a pitch—for bus fare or a ride home, for money to pay for a prescription she waves in her hand or occasionally offering to sell small bags of coffee or some other commodity she has come upon. Donna is resourceful.

Known among the neighbors for her panhandling as well as her stories—her seven children who have not eaten for days, her grandmother who died out of state and without money for a funeral, the surgery she is about to have—Donna has worn out several welcomes, even at some church pantries. She is probably addicted to drugs, and no doubt a liar, but she is clearly in great need. After hearing the words of the Hebrew prophets and the story of the Last Judgment in Matthew 25 over

many years, I find it hard to turn her away with nothing. Not impossible, but hard.

Truth be told, I am afraid of Donna,



not that she would do me any bodily harm. But her life is so precarious and my sympathy so very thin. She knocks on the door, and her need opens up like a gaping abyss from which I need to stand back and carefully dole out any little favor at arm's length.

I had been thinking how grudgingly I give Donna anything at all from my storehouse of time and treasure when Pope Francis touched that same nerve, in his Pentecost address in Saint Peter's Square. He told of hearing confessions in his old diocese and asking penitents if they ever gave alms. But more: Did they look in the eyes of the beggars and touch their hands? In this way, he explained, we are "touching the flesh of Christ, taking upon ourselves

this suffering for the poor." He went on to say that Christ became poor in the Incarnation in order "to walk along the road with us," to share our life. "If we reach out to the flesh of Christ [in the poor], we begin to understand...what this poverty, the Lord's poverty, actually is; and this is far from easy."

So by the time Donna came around the other day looking for a ride home, I was geared up to treat her with dignity and look her in the eye. I spoke gently and I gave her my arm as we made our way down the stairs to the car. I helped her in, waiting patiently while she wrestled herself into the seatbelt.

No sooner had we pulled away from the curb than the ride home morphed, as often happens, into an additional request. Last time it was for money to buy herself a birthday cake—"Tomorrow's my birthday, and I got nothing." I had nothing either, except for the coins I squirrel away in the center console for parking meters and tolls, the cash leftovers of weeks of lunchtime purchases. It is ready money that gives me an inordinate sense of well-being, as though I will never be caught short. I prefer to break a bill rather than dip into those coins, even, it must be said, at a toll booth. But faced with Donna's request for a possibly fictitious birthday cake, I parted with a couple of handfuls of quarters and dimes.

This time Donna asked if I would get her some chicken—"A family pack, all thighs," she said, matter-of-factly.

MARK NEILSEN is editor of *Living Faith: Daily Catholic Devotions*.

ART: BOB ECKSTEIN



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"How much is that going to cost," I asked. Why? I guess I just wanted her to be aware that I had my limits. "Not much," she said, and I laughed, increasing the space between us and making me a little ashamed. Did she need to suffer scorn just to get a few pieces of fried chicken?

As it turned out, the restaurant had no drive-thru, and rather than watch Donna heave herself out of the car and into the store, I volunteered to go in. But I carefully pulled the car around to the store window, hoping proximity would deter her from rifling through the glove box. As I said, Donna is resourceful.

I brought the chicken out, and we drove the few blocks to Donna's apartment where I let her out. But before pulling away, I thought to check the coin stash, and sure enough, she had grabbed a few fistfuls of coins while I was inside the restaurant getting her dinner.

I caught up to her before she made it inside and asked her why she had taken the money—which now strikes me as a foolish question under the circumstances.

"What money?" she said. "I didn't take no money out of your car. I swear before God, I didn't take no money."

Angry, saddened and frustrated by the whole interchange, I just turned, walked back to the car and drove off. Hadn't I tried to do the decent thing? Hadn't I gone the extra mile to buy her some food? Did she have to steal and then lie about it? What exactly is the lesson there?

*This is far from easy*, said the pope.

Next time I see her—and there will be a next time, for Donna cannot afford to let shame or fear keep her away—what will I do? I might point out to her that she is a thief and a liar and send her packing. We might have a quiet conversation about what happened when last we met. Or I might look her in the eye as I take her hand, smile and place a few coins in it. **A**

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FILM | JOHN P. McCARTHY

## THE ART OF HOSPITALITY

Wes Anderson's *'The Grand Budapest Hotel'*



AT YOUR SERVICE. Ralph Fiennes as Gustave.

**T**he rap on Wes Anderson is that his movies are fun to look at but lack substance. In designing vivid, self-contained worlds, he fetishizes material things—clothes, contraptions and structures—while paying scant attention to plot, character development and ideas.

Although Anderson's meticulous craftsmanship and eccentric stylings can feel precious and twee, ugly things do happen. His movies are not escapist in the sense that characters dodge suffering and strife—not even in "Fantastic Mr. Fox," based on Roald Dahl's children's book. (The teen runaways of "Moonrise Kingdom" and the characters inside the submarine at the end of "The Life Aquatic With Steve Zissou" come closest to finding irony-free tranquility.) In other words, aesthetic plea-

sure is not a panacea for Anderson, yet it is plausible to infer that he values form, artistic creativity and the appreciation of beauty above all else.

Less fussy and insular, his latest movie tests this proposition as it contemplates the power and limits of storytelling and the artistic impulse. Inspired by the writings of Stefan Zweig (1881–1942), **The Grand Budapest Hotel** imagines what happens when an aesthetes' precisely constructed existence is upended by political and cultural turmoil in addition to interpersonal conflict. Set in the fictional Eastern European Republic of Zubrowka, the picture revolves around the epicurean Monsieur Gustave H (Ralph Fiennes), concierge at the titular alpine resort. Over a meal in the hotel's dining room in 1968, the mysterious Zero Moustafa (F. Murray

Abraham) recounts Gustave's story to a writer (Jude Law).

Flash back to 1932, when, on his first day as a lobby boy, the orphan and war refugee Zero (Tony Revolori) becomes Gustave's protégé. A font of aphorisms concerning the hospitality trade ("Rudeness is merely an expression of fear") and the art of fine living, Gustave caters to guests' needs with a mix of steely efficiency and *joie de vivre*. He derives the most satisfaction from servicing very rich, very elderly matrons. Part gigolo, part majordomo, part liveried bon vivant, he is the embodiment of late belle époque splendor, erudition and decadence.

When his favorite patroness, 84-year-old Madame D (an unrecognizable Tilda Swinton) dies, she bequeaths him a priceless painting. This sets in motion a continental caper. Her son (Adrien Brody) unleashes his henchman (Willem Dafoe) on anyone impeding his access to her fortune. There's a jailbreak and a ski-and-sleigh chase; a lawyer loses four fingers; and one unfortunate soul loses her head, literally.

Gustave tries to maintain his sense of decorum whilst doggedly pursuing a financial windfall from his wrinkly amour. At a crucial juncture, he enlists the support of his brethren in the Society of Crossed Keys. And in the course of aiding his mentor, young Zero falls in love with Agatha (Saoirse Ronan), a baker's apprentice. Eventually, war breaks out and a Nazi-esque army occupies the hotel. An era of privilege and excess gives way to barbarity and dislocation, followed by the deprivations of Communism.

Anderson approaches the material through interlocking narrative frames and with his trademark visual élan. The art direction, costuming and cam-

erawork are impressive, as is Alexandre Desplat's authentic music. Anderson and company make deft use of color and the scenery in and around the German town of Görlitz, while also employing low-tech devices like scale models and painted backdrops to generate purposefully artificial effects. His enthusiasm for unusual conveyances is evident in a gondola sequence and cutaways to the hotel's funicular.

Surprisingly, the hotel does not become a "character" in the way one expects. The "enchanted old ruin" is always rendered with exactitude, but Anderson doesn't fixate on the design or architectural minutiae of the physical space. He seems just as intent on rendering the idea of the Grand Budapest Hotel as he is on showcasing its material form. By not trying to determine its meaning and allure with excessive tinkering, he invites the viewer to do more interpretive work. This is underscored in the two scenes that bookend the movie and take place in a park in the present day. At the outset, a girl visits a statue honoring the writer who turned Zero's story into a novel. In the final scene, she sits on a nearby bench reading the famous volume, naturally entitled *The Grand Budapest Hotel*. The edifice was demolished long ago, but the hotel lives on in a work of literature, gripping the imaginations of people who never passed through its doors.

What the Grand Budapest represents—the content of the idea being apprehended—ultimately depends on the (fictional) book's readers and the film's viewers. Regarding what the hotel symbolized for Gustave, Zero remarks that he "sustained the illusion with marvelous grace." From a purely aesthetic perspective, the "grace" with which Gustave maintained his ideal of the Grand Budapest, and hence his life's work, is paramount. As it happens,

Gustave has his harsh, crude side. No doubt his suave, confident lust for life is partly a mask, and Fiennes skillfully lets the melancholy and desperation show through. However, like Johnny Depp's Willy Wonka, he can come off as more creepy than whimsical or profound.

Ultimately, it is instructive to see Gustave as a hybrid figure—a cross between an impresario and the last of the Romantic artists. Deep down he knows his ability to orchestrate events outside

Foolishly or bravely, he will not abide attempts to stop him from authoring his destiny, from creating beauty and meaning where he chooses. The consequences for Gustave are dire and echo Stefan Zweig's reaction to the political and cultural upheaval in Europe. After decades diagnosing his angst-ridden age in reams of fiction and nonfiction—and befriending countless fellow artistic and intellectual luminaries of the early 20th century—Zweig was condemned by the Nazis. He fled his native Austria, where he had been born into a wealthy Jewish family, and made his way to Brazil, where, sadly, the consolations of making and championing art ceased to sustain him. He committed suicide in 1942.

Another, healthier response to suffering is discernible in the character of Zero, whose own story is inextricably linked to the fate of Gustave and the Grand Budapest. Despite enduring horrendous personal loss, he soldiers on without cynicism or bitterness. He enjoys the finer things in life (having been taught by a master) and his storytelling

gifts show he values the efficacy of art and the creative life. But he is not driven by contingent, corporeal pleasures or by the pursuit of beauty for its own sake. Zero is instead animated by his love for Agatha, and it imbues him with genuine grace. Watching Wes Anderson quietly and unsentimentally make Zero the hero of "The Grand Budapest Hotel"

should win over some of the director's detractors. After all, who can take exception to the idea that love is the highest common denominator between living a fruitful life and creating great art?

**JOHN P. MCCARTHY** writes about theater and film for *The Journal News* and *Catholic News Service*.



Ralph Fiennes, Saoirse Ronan and Tony Revolori

the hotel, beyond the confines of his rarefied milieu, is limited. Snapping his fingers and issuing orders like an autocrat with exquisite taste is futile in the perilous, fractured landscape of Europe in the 1930s—unless he has a gun or tank to back up his aesthetic fiat. The time of the artistic concierge is ending. Soon he will be supplanted by the ruthless Nazi soldier, who will make way for the officious apparatchik.

Of course, artists risk being pilloried or squelched (or, worst of all, ignored) in any political system. The natural response is to carry on creating. In essence, that is what Gustave does. He continues to facilitate, charm, bully and persuade in order to enact his vision.

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## A FELLOWSHIP GROWS IN BROOKLYN

As a faith-sharing group, I'm not sure it would pass muster. In fact, the members of our ad hoc assembly—all three of us—don't even share the same faith. And yet every month our trio—a rabbi, a Jewish painter and a Catholic musician—gathers for breakfast in Brooklyn and talks about God.

It sounds like the start of a bad joke—admittedly, we look out of place at Le Pain Quotidien in Park Slope surrounded by mothers and baby carriages—but our get-togethers are among the most profound fellowship experiences I've had. I don't understand exactly why that is, but I think it involves the fact that each of us is uniquely uncomfortable in our chosen vocations precisely because we feel compelled to talk about God in the first place. We are bound together by stubborn persistence and willful irrelevance.

Rabbi Dan Ain, 37, is the director of tradition and innovation at New York's 92nd Street Y, a 140-year-old Jewish cultural institution. We met years ago when he asked me to speak at a Shabbat on Tap series about "The G-d I Believe In." It was a great evening of conversation in a bar with a very smart group in Lower Manhattan. After a while it was pretty clear, though, that Dan and I were the only people present who actually believed in "G-d." We were chock-full of Jewish psychologists, psychoanalysts and people in the arts, but the clearest statement of faith I heard was from one participant who identified as a "non-theist" instead of an atheist.

This confounded me until Dan told

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**BILL MCGARVEY** is a musician and writer. He is the author of *The Freshman Survival Guide*, owner of *CathNewsUSA.com* and was the longtime editor in chief of *BustedHalo.com*.

me a story about a respected rabbi he studied with at Jewish Theological Seminary who had escaped from Poland but lost his family in the Holocaust. Dan asked him how he could endure so much and yet continue, at an advanced age, to show up at the seminary every day to study Scripture and commentary alone in the basement. "There are three pillars in Judaism: God, Torah and Israel" the rabbi explained. "I love Torah. I've spent my whole life studying and debating Scripture. I love the Jewish people (Israel). I love our history, our traditions. God? Well, two out of three ain't bad."

For Christians, the notion of religion without God simply doesn't compute, but it is a reality that Dan deals with every day. Creating that missing conversation about God—especially among the legions of younger, unaffiliated Jews—is what motivated Dan, a Boston College Law graduate, to leave his legal career after Sept. 11 and become a rabbi.

I met Archie Rand in 2008 when I went to see "The 613," his enormous work (100 ft. by 22 ft.), made up of 613 separate paintings, that hung in a Brooklyn warehouse. Each painting illustrates one of the 613 commandments of traditional Judaism done in the bold colors and style of EC comics from the 1950s. As I stood there, overwhelmed at the site, Archie confessed astonishment that anyone actually cared about this sort of work.

Born in Brooklyn, Archie was an

art prodigy who had his first solo New York show in the mid 1960s at age 16. He was around for Warhol's Factory and the legendary Max's Kansas City. Reviewed everywhere, his works are in over 400 public collections, like the Met, MoMA and the Whitney. But when Archie—a nonobservant Jew—began creating non-ironic, explicitly Jewish-themed paintings in the early 70s, the silence was deafening. "The only people

who care are Catholics" he said. "Jews—secular and religious—don't know what to make of it. As far as the contemporary art world, forget it."

Though he's in an artistic wilderness of his own choosing, Archie believes an artist's work needs to serve something greater than the self. "After 50 years of irony and cynicism," he has said about contemporary art, "it would be good to tackle gratitude."

This is how he conceives of God—as a place to direct our thankfulness. "Our gratitude needs an address" he tells Dan and me. Then he laughs self-deprecatingly and says, "You realize this is an incredibly uncool conversation that no one outside of the three of us even cares about?"

I'm not so sure he's right, but I am certain that, as we look for a location to direct our gratitude this Passover and Easter, part of mine will be addressed to that place in Brooklyn with the French name for "daily bread" where my unorthodox faith-sharing group offers its own form of communion.

Every month  
our trio  
gathers for  
breakfast  
and talks  
about God.



# SPANISH IMPORT

## THE CURSILLO MOVEMENT IN AMERICA

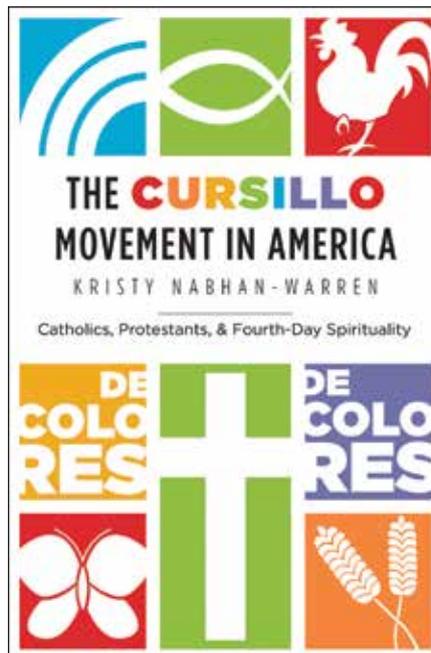
### Catholics, Protestants, And Fourth-Day Spirituality

By Kristy Nabhan-Warren  
The University of North Carolina Press.  
368p \$29.95

The Cursillo de Cristiandad is a nearly 60-year-old, lay-led Catholic renewal movement with origins on the island of Mallorca, Spain, whose signature event is a 72-hour short course in Christianity. The Cursillo movement was inaugurated in 1944 by Eduardo Bonnín Aguiló, a Mallorcan Catholic layman who, sadly, had been overlooked until recently as the founder of the movement. The internal dynamics and history of the movement in Spain and in the United States are documented by Kristy Nabhan-Warren in her new book, *The Cursillo Movement in America: Catholics, Protestants, & Fourth-Day Spirituality*. Nabhan-Warren is a Congregationalist (United Church of Christ) scholar of religion and a professor of Catholic studies at the University of Iowa. Her previous research has focused on Marian apparitions in Mexican-American Catholicism.

The current work on the movement is a seven-year-long, historically-contextualized ethnographic study of the 1944 origins of the Cursillo that describes how it came to the United States in 1957 through Mexican immigrant communities in Texas and eventually came to be known to English-speaking Catholics throughout the United States. Thanks to the ecumenism of the early postconciliar era, the movement spread among Protestant communities and has undergone various adaptations to make it more appealing to different Protestant

denominations, as well as parishes and the incarcerated. The author conducted over 250 ethnographic interviews of Catholic and Protestant *cursillistas*, did archival research in movement and private archives, and became a participant-observer in two Cursillo weekends, one a Catholic women's Cursillo movement of the Diocese of Peoria,



Ill., and the other an interdenominational event in an Indiana women's prison.

Another fascinating aspect of Nabhan-Warren's study of the movement is the impact it has had on Protestant communities. Concerned with documenting what she calls the internationalization of Christianity in the United States, as well as redressing a lack of attention to Christianity in the Midwest, the author traces the history of the Cursillo in the United States from an exclusively Catholic phenomenon with Latino roots to a pan-Christian one. In the apogee of ecumenism that followed immediately after the Second Vatican Council

in many places in the United States, Protestants asked and were invited to participate in many Catholic Cursillos. Their participation blossomed into different variations of Protestant Cursillos closely affiliated with different denominations, yet generally interdenominational in approach. These variants, like Tres Días, Vía de Cristo, Walk to Emmaus and Great Banquet, remained faithful to the structure and purpose of Bonnín's movement and are referred to as being "in covenant" with it.

Nabhan-Warren's history of the Cursillo movement is a groundbreaking work and fills a void in American religious history, for which scholars of both Protestantism and Catholicism will be grateful. The ethnographic focus of this book captures the religious experience of the Cursillistas and takes us beyond a history of the movement to a thick account of the difference it has made in the lives of many and how those men and women understand the religious and personal impact of this renewal movement. Nabhan-Warren has also documented how mid-century Latino Catholicism influenced Anglo Catholicism and Protestantism through the movement in the United States, which had not been sufficiently appreciated before. She documents the origins of a phenomenon that is only likely to increase as Latinos become even more prominent in the United States.

As groundbreaking and important as Nabhan-Warren's work is, it is not the definitive treatment of the Cursillo. Despite her desire to document the internationalization of Christianity in the United States through this work and historically contextualize her ethnographic research, I found certain disturbing lacunae. These could have been overcome by more theologically sophisticated, quantitative and historically nuanced perspectives. First, there is little by way of situating the Cursillo in Spain and the United States with-

in the larger phenomena of what is known in Catholicism as the new ecclesial movements, or lay-led groups that seek to revitalize the faith of their members through retreat experiences and regular small-group, follow-up meetings. While the lay movements flourished after Vatican II and during the pontificate of Blessed John Paul II, some of them, like the Cursillo and Opus Dei, predate the council. This larger global Catholic phenomenon is not referred to in this work, nor how the Cursillo features in it.

A more quantitative approach to the study of the movement would have been helpful in understanding the longevity of its effects. It be helpful to know, for example, how many people who become involved in the movement continue in it, and for how long?

But the most problematic aspect of this book for me was its theological assessment of why the U.S. National Catholic secretariat of the movement decided in the 1980s to curtail the practice of interdenominational Cursillos. Nabhan-Warren describes this position as anti-ecumenical, showing little appreciation for the historical trends in global Catholicism at the time and the theological subtleties that would have informed this policy. Historically, the decision of the secretariat coincides with the beginning of the pontificate of Blessed John Paul II, with its emphasis on an interpretation of Vatican II that highlighted continuity with the past, strict adherence to the letter of the decrees of the council and a clear Catholic identity in the wake of a tumultuous and often confusing postconciliar period. It is not surprising that the national Cursillo leadership would see the sacramental economy of Catholicism, with its rich doctrinal underpinnings, as essential for Catholic Cursillistas seeking a deeper and renewed relationship with Christ.

And so it does not strike me as

anti-ecumenical that the national secretariat would have been concerned with underplaying this rich sacramental heritage for the sake of increasing interdenominational participation or with compromising the movement's dynamic that places a premium on creating a sense of community. This requires full participation in the activities of the weekend and fostering

deep friendships. Finally, the book is plagued with a number of Spanish spelling errors, some comical. For example, the *via dolorosa* ("the way of sorrow") is rendered as the *Via de la Rosa* ("the way of the rose").

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**CLAUDIO M. BURGALETA, S.J.**, is an associate professor in the Graduate School of Religion and Religious Education at Fordham University in New York.

THOMAS J. SCIRGHI

## EVERYBODY DOES IT?

### CHEATING LESSONS Learning From Academic Dishonesty

By James M. Lang  
Harvard University Press. 252p \$26.95

In *Cheating Lessons*, James Lang presents the good and bad news about cheating in higher education. The good news is that the rate of cheating has not changed much since 1963, when a doctoral candidate at Columbia University, James Bowers, conducted a survey of more than 5,000 college students. The bad news is that three-fourths of college students claim they have cheated at least once in their academic careers. This book explains what faculty and administrators may learn from the phenomenon of cheating. Lang is associate professor of English and the director of the center for teaching and learning at Assumption College in Worcester, Mass., as well as a columnist for the Chronicle of Higher Education.

Lang emphasizes the promotion of learning more than the prevention of cheating. When he first delved into the

subject of cheating he found that much of the research addressed the disposition of the college students: what kind of students cheated, how often and why. Coincidentally he became interested in cognitive theory and its implications for higher education. His book explores the problem of cheating through

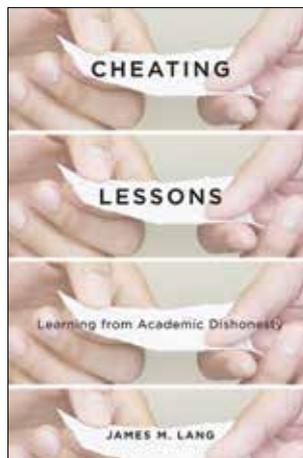
the lens of cognitive theory. He hopes to empower the faculty to modify the learning environment and in this way to deter cheating. His audience is faculty and administrators of higher education institutions.

The book is timely, following last year's scandal at Harvard University, where 60 students were suspended for cheating in a course in

government. It also comes on the heels of a recent study by four professors of business, published in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* (2013), entitled "The

Cheater's High: The Unexpected Affective Benefits of Unethical Behavior."

Their study concludes that people who cheat in situations where they believe no one gets hurt, including computer piracy, tax



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evasion, insurance fraud and scholarship, experience positive feelings in ways that honest people do not.

Given this attitude toward cheating that permeates our culture, how can it be controlled on the college campus? Lang recommends a fundamental shift in the planning of the course syllabus. A professor should ask whether the outcome of the class is to be measured in terms of either “performance,” as on a test, or “mastery” of the material. To give an example: a performance-oriented course relies on “extrinsic motivation.” It emphasizes one or two devices, like the mid-term and final exams, as the way to measure how much students have learned. Now, imagine that this course is required by the university. Perhaps it is a large class of 1,000 students, so there is little if any personal contact with the professor. Also, many of the students may fail to see the relevance of the course material for their own field of interest. They may simply need a grade to pass or to maintain their average. Lang argues that this kind of performance-driven course provides an incentive to cheat.

To counter this, Lang encourages students to “master” the material. Here the professor employs “intrinsic motivation” connecting the course material to questions and interests that the students bring to class. They are encouraged to respond to the material with their own unique and grounded assessments.

Lang presents a wide array of studies on cheating and profiles professors who mod-

el his method. These professors are distinguished academics who draw thousands of students to their classes. Some faculty members reading this may feel envious of their resources, namely, their personal charisma and the availability of a cadre of tutors to share the workload.

His approach towards ethics and cheating raises a question. Lang contends that ethics should be handled by the ethics professor while the rest of the faculty should resist any attempt to “harangue” students into behaving in ethical ways. Of course, any sort of haranguing will dull one’s sensibility towards morality. Nevertheless, from my experience, the faculty and administration need to present the moral responsibility of academic honesty, lest this method become all too pragmatic. Cheating entails stealing (by not properly attributing authorship)

and lying (deliberately deceiving an instructor) with the probable result of earning a higher ranking than deserved and ruining an opportunity for an honest student. Eventually all college students will have to face the lure of the “cheater’s high.”

This objection notwithstanding, this book should make excellent reading for faculty discussion groups. And while it is aimed at the university level, high school faculties and staff will find it helpful as well. Lang points to the future of teaching. As he explains, we now work in the midst of an explosion of information about how humans learn. If we can translate these findings into classroom practices, we will worry less about cheating.

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THOMAS J. SCIRGHI, S.J., is an associate professor of sacramental theology at Fordham University in New York.

## April, Northern England

Snowflakes surprise us,  
small and aimless as we ourselves,  
so light they sift upwards  
in random puppetry.

Yesterday we arrived in England  
on the edge of April.  
Workers in orange suits  
had de-iced the plane in Chicago.

As we’d changed planes  
in Dublin, yellow hoses uncoiled  
on juddering machines  
to do likewise.

An hour later we land in Manchester.  
The Derbyshire hills are cloaked in wool

white as the new lambs  
perishing in the meadows.

Farmers dig them out, weeping.  
A carnival springs up in Daisy Nook,  
ready for holiday children  
who won’t be Ferris-wheeling

in the icy wind, or clinging  
to the carousel horses with frozen fingers,  
if their mothers have anything to say.  
The Snake Pass is closed.

A magpie lights in a chestnut tree,  
and along the road, through patches  
of snow, purple crocuses  
burst like broken hearts.

DONNA PUCCIANI

DONNA PUCCIANI is a Chicago-based poet whose work has been translated into Chinese, Japanese and Italian. Her fifth collection of poems, *Hanging Like Hope on the Equinox*, was released in 2013.

ANTHONY F. LANG JR.

## TURNING POINT IN TEHRAN

### DAYS OF GOD

#### The Revolution in Iran and its Consequences

By James Buchan

Simon and Schuster. 432p \$27.99

In 1979, I was an 11-year-old boy living in a suburb of Cleveland, Ohio. I attended the local Catholic school, where my father was involved at the parish and diocesan levels and my aunt was an Ursuline nun. Priests, nuns and even a bishop made their way to our dinner table. The religious life and those who lived it deserved our respect, and their authority was rarely questioned.

When the Iranian revolution broke out and its leader, the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, appeared on American television, I remember asking my father about him. He told me he was like a priest, a cleric in the Islamic tradition. I vaguely understood the respect Khomeini seemed to be getting, as he spoke with authority gained from living an austere and upright life. As events unfolded in Iran, especially the taking of American hostages, though, I was puzzled. How could someone who was like

a priest become an enemy of the United States? Why would such a person say that the United States was the “Great Satan”?

Those questions were among the factors that propelled me to study international affairs and the politics of the Middle East. Understanding one’s context matters a great deal when writing about the Middle East, for it is a region that shapes so much of our political, cultural and religious imaginations.

James Buchan’s new book, *Days of God: the Revolution in Iran and its Consequences*, has its own context, one that begins with him going to Iran in 1974 after studying Persian at Oxford. As the promotional blurbs surrounding the book also indicate, he has been a journalist for the Financial Times and has written non-fiction works on money, Edinburgh and Adam Smith. He is also an accomplished novelist, including one about a man who came to Iran in the 1970s, stayed because he married an Iranian woman, but then went on to suffer under the excesses of the revolution.

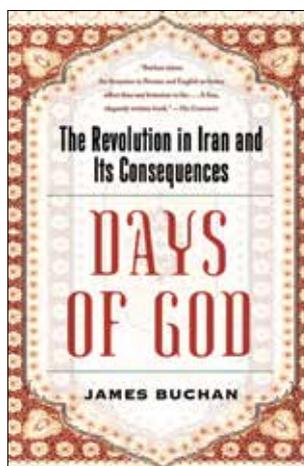
This background makes for a good read, one filled with anecdotes and interesting asides about Iranian history, politics and personalities. As a journalist and novelist, he has an eye for detail and has some basis in history (though is selective in his use of it). The book begins with some pre-20th

century background, then moves on to more detail about the reign of the Pahlavis, Reza Shah and Muhammad Reza Shah. The author’s focus on individual personalities gives color and background to the rulers who sought to “modernize” Iran, though they did it through coercive and brutal tactics.

When it comes to the revolution itself, Buchan is at his best. Describing how the regime of the Shah tried to undermine Khomeini by printing a newspaper article saying he spent time in India and was influenced by the British, Buchan reinforces Aristotle’s point (as

a good Oxford graduate, Buchan makes the reference to Aristotle) that trivial episodes can lead to revolutionary outcomes. Trying to undermine Khomeini’s authority as a source of Islamic learning and a national symbol of resistance, the article backfired, leading to protests and the collapse of the government.

The book nicely conveys the complicated politics of a revolution. On Aug. 19, 1978, the Rex Cinema in Abadan caught on fire, and in the resulting blaze over 400 people died. The fire crippled the Shah’s government; and the Shah fled into exile, underwent surgery in the U.S. and eventually found asylum in Egypt. This led to Khomeini’s triumphant return in February 1979. Khomeini and other opposition figures blamed the regime for the fire, but it eventually came out that the culprits were revolutionaries inspired by Khomeini, who had long argued that cinemas were an affront to Islamic decency and Iranian nationalism (though there is no evidence that Khomeini knew anything about this episode). At his trial in post-revolutionary Iran, the main arsonist, Hosain Takbalizadeh, confessed to his crime even as the judge tried to blame it on the “Pahlavis and their Israeli and



American overlords." He was executed by the revolutionary government, a reminder that "revolutions devour their young," the famous adage about the French Revolution, which this trial and others that followed most certainly demonstrate.

Buchan fails to deliver on the book's subtitle, though, as there is less about the consequences of the revolution. It describes the horrors and politics of the Iran-Iraq war, which shook the new political system to its very core. Its narrative ends with Khomeini's death, followed by some brief reflections on the politics that followed. There is little about the current supreme leader, Ali Khamani, who has been the sole figure to follow Khomeini in this central position within Iran's political order. The book also says little about the politics of the different presidents who have taken Iran through its turbulent recent years, or the surrounding politics of its parliament. Indeed, these institutional heritages of the revolution deserve more treatment in a study of the consequences of the revolution, especially because so much Western scholarship on Iran often papers over the complex-

ities of its internal political dynamics.

Buchan also cannot escape his own context as a British, Oxford-educated observer of the "Orient." In the preface, he notes that he quit his job at the Iranian military college because he was asked to give a bribe to the clerk who paid his salary. Admittedly, he was a 19 year old student at the time, but the episode echoes a British colonial attitude, where abiding by bureaucratic rules is more important than appreciating the wider social and economic context in which bribery may be better understood as part of daily economic transactions. As anyone who has spent time in the Middle East knows, many of our basic cultural assumptions about daily life do not translate very well. When I lived in Cairo, I had to give a bribe to the Egyptian clerk for my son's birth certificate.

Other asides are just as problematic. Buchan writes, for instance, "As in Russia and Southern Italy, the Iranian criminal class is devoted to religion." Not only is this an unsubstantiated statement, it also creates a subtle link in the reader's mind between the clerical regime and criminality, to say nothing

of its assumptions about Catholicism in Italy or Orthodoxy in Russia. We can certainly be critical of Iran's political system for its violations of human rights and its disruptive policies in the wider Middle East, but simplistic and unfounded statements like these are not the way to do this. Writers like the historian Ali Ansari and the political scientist Said Arjomand provide much more nuanced and informed critical perspectives without falling into stereotypical descriptions of Iran.

Zhou Enlai, the Chinese communist leader, famously said in the 1970s that it was "too early to tell" if the French Revolution has had an impact on the world. Iran's political system will continue to evolve, and its revolutionary heritage will be part of that evolution. Buchan gives us some help in understanding the revolutionary moment, but less help in understanding its consequences. This book is a start, but it is certainly not the last (or best) on the subject.

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# Humble Is He

PALM SUNDAY OF THE LORD'S PASSION (A), APRIL 13, 2014

Readings: Mt 21:1–11; Is 50:4–7; Ps 22:8–24; Phil 2:6–11; Mt 26:14–27, 66

*“He humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross” (Phil 2:8)*

The Gospel of Matthew presents Palm Sunday in the context of one of the Gospel's many prophetic fulfillment citations, which demonstrate that Jesus was the promised one who would establish the kingdom of God. Matthew presents a free rendering of the prophecy from Zec 9:9 to explain Jesus' entry into Jerusalem: “Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” Matthew produces neither the exact form of the Hebrew text nor of the Greek Septuagint, but he maintains two essential characteristics at the heart of the prophecy: the king is humble and the king rides into the royal city on an unassuming beast of burden.

It is a jarring prophecy because humility is not in the nature of kings. Kings ride into cities on war horses with pomp and displays of power. It is not only Jesus' humility that is on display, however, but his intentions for Jerusalem and, more broadly, for humanity. A war horse signals the promise of battle; a donkey suggests the work of peace. Yet Zechariah promises a king: “Triumphant and victorious is he.”

Triumph and victory seemed to be on the lips of the crowd as Jesus rode into Jerusalem. The people lauded him, crying out: “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in

the highest heaven!” Jesus knew the crowd's acclaim was not the source of triumph and victory. Given Jesus' true understanding of who he was and how his mission would be fulfilled, he realized in his ride into Jerusalem that fulfilling Zechariah's prophecy would require a humility that would turn away from power, vengeance and war to allow God's plan to come to fruition in his own suffering. The ride into the city, with cheering crowds lining the road, must have been bittersweet. He knew what was coming; he knew how the rest of the story would go.

The question is sometimes asked, does Jesus' fulfillment of prophecy indicate true humility and willingness, if he has no choice in how the kingdom of God would be built? Does his foreknowledge of these events lessen the gift of his sacrifice? As Paul says in Philippians, though, Jesus “humbled himself” by taking on human nature, that is, he “emptied himself” and so chose to become human. Even more, as a human being, he “became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.” In riding into Jerusalem, in giving himself up to death, Jesus displayed his humility and obedience, freely chosen.

It is possible, of course, to interpret Jesus' passion as dependent upon the turn of the crowd. The fickle crowd turned from the rapturous welcome of the one they hoped was king to the rejection of the one whom they sought

to disown. Yet Jesus himself knew this would happen and was able to grasp what had to take place for this crowd, and for his Roman executioners, to be saved. It is one thing to humble oneself; it is another thing to be humble on behalf of those who mock and reject you.

It is important, though, to recognize that not everyone turned on Jesus. Even though many could not understand why he would give himself over to death and what it could mean, some remained by



## PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Imagine yourself in the crowd at Palm Sunday, waving palm fronds. What are your expectations from the Messiah as he rides into the city of David?

his side until the end, even as others betrayed and denied him. His humility and obedience were gifts to all, even to those who could not accept it, then or now.

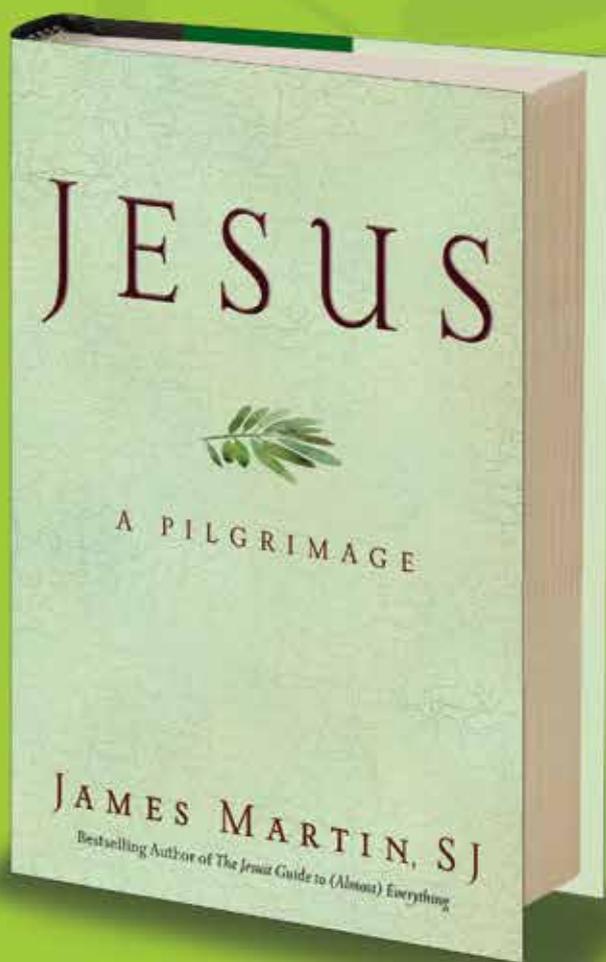
It remains the most stunning insight into the nature of God that God's kingdom should be built on the broken body of the son, given freely for a humanity that turned away from this very son. God comes to us with humility, without force, to teach us that selfless love is the true nature of God. Jesus' triumph and victory was not a display of power but of humility. Humility might not be the path Jesus desired to walk as he prayed in Gethsemane, but he chose to carry his cross obediently to the place we needed him to go.

**JOHN W. MARTENS**

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