

OF MANY THINGS

There is an old chestnut, still circulating among agnostics, secularists and even a few believers, that goes something like this: “I don’t believe in God/organized religion. Look at all the violence religion has caused. Take the Middle East; those people have been killing each other for years.”

The last part is certainly true. As I write this column, the bloody battle between the Israelis and the Palestinians is entering its 15th day (for two very different perspectives on that conflict you might read pages 12 and 29 of this issue side-by-side). As for the first part of that statement, I am reminded of something my philosophy teacher, W. Norris Clarke, S.J., used to say: When something is presented as obvious or indisputable, it is usually either insignificant or wrong. The cocktail party indictment of religion as the cause of violence, while significant, is wrong—certainly if we take it at face value.

First, the statement is a post hoc argument that confuses correlation with causality, a fundamental but not infrequent error of logic. Second, the argument is an example of the fallacy of exclusion, which involves focusing attention on one group’s behavior and assuming that the behavior is unique to that group, when, in fact, the behavior is common to many groups. One contemporary American theologian, William T. Cavanaugh, has examined these statements about religion and violence in detail. He has concluded that they are part and parcel of what he terms the “myth of religious violence”—“the idea that ‘religion’ is a trans-historical and trans-cultural feature of human life, essentially distinct from ‘secular’ features such as politics and economics, which has a peculiarly dangerous inclination to promote violence.”

Let’s be clear: Professor Cavanaugh does not argue “that religion either does or does not promote violence”

but rather that we should question the widespread belief that religion and religious pluralism are inherently prone to violence.

Professor Cavanaugh points out that the semantic evolution of the term *religion* parallels the evolution of the nation-state. As the nation-state evolved, the term *religion* also evolved. A term that in the Middle Ages simply referred to monastic or virtuous living took on a new meaning in the early modern period. *Religion* was then “defined as personal conviction...which can exist separately from one’s loyalty to the state.” In this way the modern meaning of the term reflects a series of historical movements through which the state consigned the church to a sphere of activity defined and policed exclusively by the state, ostensibly justified by the myth of religious violence. In effect, Leviathan broke up Christendom into bite-size pieces and then consumed it, ostensibly for its own good.

As Cavanaugh has shown, while the 17th-century “wars of religion” were complicated phenomena with multiple causes, they were fought primarily for king and country and not, as is often thought, for doctrinal purity. The wars were, in effect, the birth pangs of the nation-state. One eventual casualty was the Society of Jesus. “The most important factor” in the late 18th-century suppression of the Society of Jesus, writes Thomas Worcester, S.J., in this issue, “was the centralizing agendas of the Catholic monarchies.”

The restoration of the Society of Jesus in 1814 was also instigated by the Catholic monarchies, only this time they wanted the Jesuits to rescue them from the forces of liberalism. It was already too late, of course: the Western monarchies were doomed, destined to give way to the great democratic, secular states we know today, who, ironically, possess more sweeping and lethal powers than Louis XVI ever dreamed of.

MATT MALONE, S.J.

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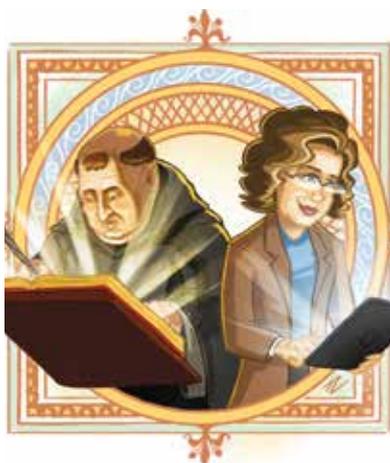
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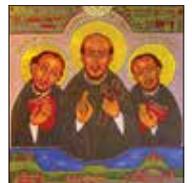
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ON THE WEB

Resources on the suppression and **restoration of the Society of Jesus**. Plus, Dennis P. Halpin talks about the tragedy of Korean **"comfort women"** and the Catholic Book Club discusses a new introduction to **Thomas Aquinas's Summa Theologiae**. All at americamagazine.org.



The Rebirth of Detroit?

It has been over a year since the city of Detroit first filed for bankruptcy on July 18, 2013, and much has been written on the hows and whys of the Motor City's downfall.

The month following the bankruptcy claim, **America's** chief correspondent, Kevin Clarke, travelled to Detroit to document the challenges the city faced, as well as the resiliency of those who call it home. His conversations with residents made clear that two things, money and jobs, were most needed for this once great American city to rise up. He also asked the question many Americans were asking at the time: Can this city be saved?

A recent piece by The New York Times describes various factors contributing to Detroit's possible return, beginning with the real estate purchases made by Dan Gilbert, founder of Quicken Loans. According to the Times, Mr. Gilbert has purchased more than 60 downtown Detroit properties and nine million square feet of prime real estate. Money being invested back into the city from various foundations, like the Kresge Foundation, an organization based in Troy, Mich., is another sign of urban revival. These developments have started contributing to what the Times describes as a "boom of small businesses and the new retail and real estate activity going on outside the city center."

While Detroit's journey is far from over, these factors demonstrate that there is hope for a fallen city. And, a year later, we ask again, can this city be saved? The answer appears to be yes, slowly but surely.

Revamping God's Bank

Ridding the beleaguered Vatican Bank of the occasional scandal is not enough for Cardinal George Pell, the new prefect of the Secretariat for the Economy appointed by Pope Francis to lead the reform efforts. "Our ambition is to become something of a model for financial management," the Australian prelate told a packed press conference held on July 9 to unveil the latest measures in the overhaul of Vatican finances.

The entire governing board of the bank will be replaced as the French business executive Jean-Baptiste de Franssu takes over as the new director. In addition, the Financial Information Authority, the Vatican's financial watchdog, has entered into an agreement with the U.S. Treasury Department's Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, an independent bureau that oversees the regulation and supervision of all domestic and foreign banks operating within the United States. The two bodies will exchange

information about regulatory best practices and protocols as part of the Holy See's ongoing efforts to achieve greater financial accountability and transparency.

In an exclusive interview with **America**, Cardinal Pell said, "The exact relationship between the international expert lay people and the cardinals [overseeing the bank] has yet to be completely worked out.... We will be attempting to devise a system so we cannot fall back into the old ways." The new system must not only provide safeguards against corruption but also build up a culture of effective cooperation—between prelates and lay employees as well as the Vatican and international financial institutions. Only then will the Institute for the Works of Religion, as the bank is formally known, live up to its name.

Rapprochement in Vietnam

It is safe to say that relations between the government of Vietnam and that nation's Catholic Church have been far from cordial in recent years. Even as Vietnamese authorities have explored China-style economic experiments aimed at poverty reduction and improvements in living standards, they have retained many repressive tendencies typical of Communist authoritarian rule, especially in regard to religious liberty. Conflict over reclaiming confiscated church property has also been a regular obstacle to improved relations between the state and the church.

What may prove to be a small sign of better days ahead is the anticipated approval of the construction of Vietnam's first Catholic university. With headway made toward a green light from government officials, church authorities there say the institution could be completed within a year. Paul Bui Van Doc, archbishop of Ho Chi Minh City, told *Vatican Insider* that this agreement indicates his "dialogic approach" with Vietnamese authorities is beginning to bear fruit. The church has been locked out of Vietnam's tightly controlled education system for decades, but this new opening will allow it to construct an institution that can "educate people into becoming responsible individuals, for the good of the entire society," Archbishop Bui Van Doc said. "We are confident. It will mark an important step forward for the common good of the country, a sign of great hope for a brighter future for Vietnam," he added.

With about 7 percent of the population—six million people—Catholics represent a significant minority in Vietnam; their full participation in Vietnamese society could have an important impact on improving social conditions. A new, Catholic institution of higher learning makes a promising start.

Prisoners Dilemma

The evidence is piling up that too many Americans are wasting away in prison. The National Academy of Sciences, for example, recently concluded in a major two-year study that the United States “has gone past the point where the numbers of people in prison can be justified by the social benefits.” Other groups, like Human Rights Watch, the Brennan Center for Corrections, Corrections Today and the University of Chicago Crime Lab, have also raised their voices. Pope Francis, in his address to the International Criminal Law Association on May 30, called for major reforms of criminal justice systems.

Here are some basic statistics. Having quadrupled in the past four decades, the prison population in the United States today is 2.2 million, or about one of every 100 adults. This rate far exceeds that of other Western democracies. Maintenance for each prisoner costs taxpayers \$30,000 a year. Over half of inmates are locked up for nonviolent offenses. According to “Nation Behind Bars,” a recent report by Human Rights Watch, nearly one-third of those serving life sentences do not have the possibility of parole, and more than 40 percent of all federal criminal prosecutions are for immigration offenses. For every 100,000 Americans in each of the following groups, according to the report, there are 478 white males, 3,023 black males, 51 white females and 129 black females in prison.

Too often the system fails to treat prisoners as human beings; each person has a right to fair trial and punishment and equal protection under the law. President Franklin D. Roosevelt spoke for “the forgotten man at the bottom of the economic pyramid.” The forgotten men and women of today are the 2.2 million in prison, committed by a public that too often bases its understanding of prison life on films and television and has been fed tabloid headlines about these “monsters” from the moment of their arrests through their trials. The surge in imprisonment began in the late 1960s with President Richard M. Nixon’s campaign for “law and order.” The accusation of being “soft on crime” replaced the “soft on Communism” of the 1950s and has continued to influence American politics.

Many people have presumed that a correlation between crowded prisons and a reduced crime rate points to a significant cause-and-effect relationship, but recent research paints a more complex picture, according to a report this year from the National Research Council. The report concludes that the “magnitude of the reduction” of crime due to imprisonment is “highly uncertain” and “unlikely to have been large.”

The criminal justice system has changed significantly

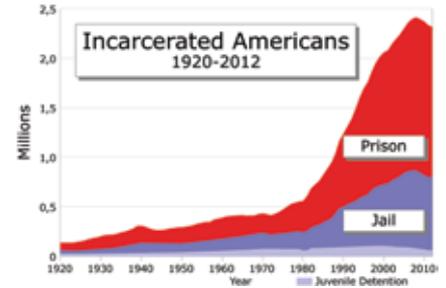
over the past 40 years. People are doing more time than ever before. Sentences have grown longer thanks to legislatures that want to appear tough on crime, most

notably through mandatory minimum sentences and “three strikes” laws. States have also farmed out prison management to private contractors who run the institutions for profit. More convicts mean more money for their investors.

Families bear the consequences of incarceration. In the last two decades of the 20th century, the number of children with incarcerated fathers in the United States shot up from 350,000 to 2.1 million. In addition, former inmates have a hard time finding work or housing, and families can crumble as the behavior of children is influenced by the jail time of their parents. New laws must address the new reality.

Drawing from the Scriptures and the collective experience of the people of God, Pope Francis proposes that prisoners—through reparation, confession and contrition—should be able to return to society. Increased penalties, Francis said to the Criminal Law Association, do not solve social problems or reduce crime rates; in fact, they “may give rise to serious social problems.” Furthermore, he explained, “criminality is rooted in economic and social inequality” and in organized crime that exploits the most vulnerable. “A society that is governed solely by market laws and creates false expectations and superfluous necessities,” he said, “discards those who are not at the top and prevents the slow, the weak or the less gifted from taking an open road in life.”

The reformed prison of the future, aided by public and private high schools and universities, should educate inmates not just with job skills but with the liberal arts, instruments for moral rejuvenation. Sentences must be shorter. There should be alternatives to incarceration for those who suffer from addiction or mental illness. Elderly or ill prisoners who are not likely to re-offend can be released. Prisons must be evaluated on their success or failure in reducing recidivism. Judge Richard A. Posner writes in the *New Republic* (6/9): “The worse the treatment meted out to prisoners, the more recidivism there is, and thus the more crime.” Our country must transform the prison from a trash can where we dump offenders to an instrument for the public good.



REPLY ALL

Time Redeemed

I was reading my brother inmate's issue of *America* and came across "The Home Team," by Kerry Weber (5/26). At first her column saddened me because I do not have similar memories with my own family, especially with my father. Upon a second reading, however, as she recalled her family's repeated viewings of "Field of Dreams," I felt hope and the words of the Prophet Joel rang out in my heart: "And I will repay you for the years which the locust has eaten..." (2:25).

As foolish and sinful as my early years were, God can and will "repay" me by using them to bring glory to His name. I'm not the first prisoner to claim a deep faith in Jesus Christ. I am not the first person to write poetry from prison. But I have heard his voice,

and in answering it he has empowered my talents for his purposes.

My father lives in a trailer park in Florida on his own, and we still strain against the pains of my youth. Small hurts become big ones, and large ones become deep valleys of woe. Despite all of that, I can now pray for my father, and God answers my prayers by chipping away at the ice surrounding my own heart.

Like Ms. Weber's family, I feel my feet dug into the lush Iowa grass, only it is with my own family, restored and renewed in Christ. Old pains become laughter, old wounds heal, old loves grow and our years are brought forth shining and new. Just a short while ago I received a letter from my father; he read some of my poems, and he loves them.

JOHN EDWARD KEOGH
Bridgewater, Mass.

Thank You, Sisters

Re "Vatican Official Offers Fresh Criticism of U.S. Sisters" (Signs of the Times, 5/26): Cardinal Gerhard Müller, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, rebukes in what he himself calls a "blunt way" the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (which represents about 80 percent of the women religious in the United States) for promoting futuristic ideas he described as "opposed to Christian revelation." It is ironic that these wonderful women should be rebuked, when for most of their lives they have lived in the way Pope Francis is recommending for all of us. They have been on the front lines of bringing "good news to the poor," treating everyone with respect, living simply and giving of themselves to help those who need it most; they have run inner city schools, hospitals and residential facilities for the elderly and homeless. Their good works have brought God's love and mercy to literally thousands of people. Most of these women are now middle-aged or older and are still working. To me they are the heroes of the church, and it would be wonderful if this "heavy burden could be lifted from their shoulders," and they could receive the appreciation they deserve.

CAROL COLLINS
Palm Beach, Fla.

Nothing New

I read with interest "The Sacred Heart of Texas," by Christopher T. Haley (5/26), a review of Houston's co-cathedral. Based only on the images provided in the article and online, however, I must admit that I do not share the author's enthusiasm. For me, it is difficult to find creative and contemporary solutions in the liturgical space of the Sacred Heart Co-Cathedral. The use of modern architectural elements and materials are not very much in evidence. The interior suggests the piers effectively used in England's 12th-cen-

TWITTER TALK

Followers respond to the announcement that Mary Ann Walsh, R.S.M., will be joining *America* as U.S. church correspondent.

You know you're a Catholic geek when the biggest "move" you've read about today is @sisterwalsh from @USCCB to @americamag!

RAE
@VitaCatholic

@americamag keeps stockpiling Catholic talent. Next thing you know, they'll add @Pontifex to the staff.

ISAAC GARCIA
@eyegar

Earthquake at Mothership - @USCCB spox @sisterwalsh leaving conference as @americamag's new US church correspondent.

ROCCO PALMO
@roccopalmo

Habemus @sisterwalsh @americamag! Ad multos annos! Thanks for great work @USCCB

THOMAS ROSICA
@FatherRosica

Interesting choice of appts at @americamag this year. Helen Alvaré & Sr. Mary Ann Walsh, both who work/ed for USCCB.

CAROLYN
@carolynlb

WHAT YOU'RE READING at americamagazine.org

- 1 **To Live Fully**, by Christopher Pramuk (7/7)
- 2 **"Gay and Catholic": An Interview With Author Eve Tushnet**, by Sean Salai, S.J. (In All Things, 7/3)
- 3 **Christopher Hitchens: The Last Good American Atheist**, Sean Salai, S.J. (In All Things, 7/1)
- 4 **Sr. Mary Ann Walsh, R.S.M., Named U.S. Church Correspondent for "America,"** by The Editors (In All Things, 7/11)
- 5 **Revisiting Racism**, by M. Shawn Copeland (7/7)

tury Durham Cathedral. The full, conscious and active participation of the laity in the liturgy as described in the liturgy document from Vatican II is more effectively expressed by a seating arrangement that brings the faithful closer to the celebrant and to the altar. Viewing an enlargement of the crucifix, it appears very much a standard church catalog image. Perhaps a more creative image would have been a Chicano Jesus, considering the cathedral's locale.

JOSEPH BARRISH, S.M.
Dayton, Ohio

Different Cases

I applaud the focus on the students that Professor Daly takes in "The Ethics of Exit" (6/9). But one of the approaches he suggests for making decisions in these cases is casuistry—the comparison of cases. Using this approach, administrators might make very different decisions about two scenarios that seem alike to students who don't know all the details or who don't know how the administrators compared them with other situations. How would one explain those different decisions to students?

ANNE STRAITIFF
Online comment

Protecting the Poor

I respectfully disagree with Bishop McElroy's comment in his article "Political Vocations" (6/9) that "the rejection of the rightful role of government in the protection of the poor has become a virtual litmus test for Republican identity." I identify myself as a Republican and am unaware of any Republican who rejects societal protection of the poor. Instead, Republicans reject a government-first approach to poverty issues. We believe the issue should first be addressed by the individual, then by family and then by charity, and, when none of the above is available, that society, through government action, should always protect the poor. I respectfully reject Bishop

McElroy's conclusion that Democrats have the moral high ground on this issue simply because their first recourse is for more governmental involvement.

PATRICK ROBINSON
Online Comment

An Indiscriminate Crime

In "Soccer's Shadow" (Current Comment, 6/23), the editors discuss the problems of the sex trade and prostitution caused by the FIFA World Cup. The piece only mentions females, however, as victims. Males are victims also, but their rate is underreported because of many factors. I encourage **America** to include both sexes when reporting on this horrendous problem. Part of solving a problem is to describe it accurately and fully.

STEVEN PAYNE
Lake Forest, Calif.

Enough

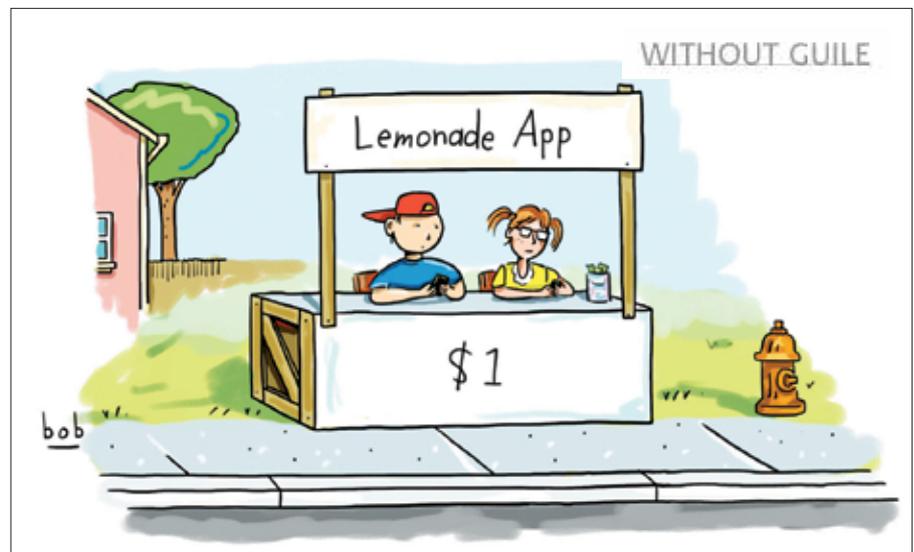
Though very much in agreement with the stand taken by Kevin Clarke on gun violence in "Outrage Again" (6/23), initially I was not sufficiently moved to respond—until just a few days later, when news came of the tragic shooting death of a 19-year-old young man re-

cently back home after completing his first year at college. An emotional memorial took place at the Catholic prep school from which he graduated with honors and where he was a eucharistic minister, a respected leader and athlete. An overflow of mourners flocked to the funeral Mass to hear eulogies from the departed's siblings about losing the loving big brother whose example they had always strived to follow.

Only a few days later, a 17-year-old cheerleader, who had just received her diploma from a nearby high school, was shot and killed while walking home with her boyfriend. She had been looking forward to attending college in the fall to pursue her dream of becoming a registered nurse.

When is enough truly enough? I should probably feel as foolish as Mr. Clarke in suggesting that perhaps the time has come to integrate the themes of peace and nonviolence across the curriculum in our schools so that our young people may be afforded the wherewithal to live long enough to make a change for the better in this world.

ED CASEY
Caldwell, N.J.



CARTOON: BOB ECKSTEIN

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THE MIDDLE EAST

Caritas Issues Appeal for Assistance As Gaza Conflict Intensifies

As an Israeli Defense Forces operation into the Gaza Strip entered its second day on July 18, the head of Caritas Jerusalem said he would launch an international appeal for assistance in Gaza and would not wait until the end of the Israel-Hamas hostilities, as he has done in the past. The Rev. Raed Abusahlia, general director of Caritas Jerusalem, said that more than 80,000 Palestinians had been displaced and 1,250 homes had been completely demolished by Israeli airstrikes and the invasion of Gaza in July. He said 80 percent of the Gaza Strip was without electricity and 90 percent of people did not have drinkable water.

"Families are leaving everything behind and they don't know what they will be coming back to," he said. "It is very difficult. There will be a lot of work to do afterward."

Pope Francis telephoned President Shimon Peres of Israel and Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian president, on July 18, urging all sides to end hostilities. The pope told the leaders that the conflict was creating "numerous victims and was giving way to a state of serious humanitarian emergency," the Vatican said in a written communique released on July 18.

After 10 days of aerial bombardment in response to missile attacks launched by Hamas and other militant groups, Israel launched a ground offensive on July 17.

In an email to Father Abusahlia that night, Amin Sabbagh, coordinator of Gaza Caritas staff, wrote: "We are facing heavy attack from the sea, from the air and from land. There are lots of explosions everywhere, and people are afraid.... The situation is impossible. We pray that the Lord brings his peace upon us."

"This needs to stop on both sides," Father Abusahlia said. "We would have liked Hamas to have accepted the ceasefire," but Hamas, which controls the Gaza Strip, "don't want just a ceasefire," it also wants "the lifting of the blockade and an opening of the crossings from both Israel and Egypt." Referring to the seven-year Israeli-imposed blockade of the Gaza Strip, he added, "1.7 million people in Gaza should not remain in the [world's] biggest prison."

Despite calls by Hamas not to leave their homes, thousands of people in targeted quarters heeded Israeli warnings to evacuate and were being shel-

tered in U.N. school buildings. Some Palestinians remained in their homes, fearing theft in difficult economic times.

Auxiliary Bishop William Shomali of Jerusalem urged Palestinian and Israeli political leaders to accept Pope Francis' call for an immediate ceasefire. "Many innocent people have been killed. The human pride is terrible, and the result is the loss of innocent people," Bishop Shomali said. "We need an immediate ceasefire both in southern Israel and in Gaza. People are afraid, tired; they don't sleep."

In Jerusalem, Matthew McGarry, country representative for Catholic Relief Services, said he was in regular contact with staff in Gaza. They told him that although militants had been launching missiles toward Israel from civilian areas, many people had also been killed by Israeli airstrikes in areas where there were no launch sites.

A young C.R.S. intern and her



family were killed while sitting in their house, he said. "She was just a young woman trying to improve her situation," he said. "It is very frightening, frustrating and disappointing," said McGarry. "Clearly this latest round of hostilities is more intense. The indiscriminate targeting of civilians is unacceptable, whoever is doing it."

SEXUAL ABUSE CRISIS

How Effective Is Annual Audit?

In recent years the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis has been audited annually as part of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Dallas Charter protocol to prevent the sexual abuse of children, as have virtually all other dioceses around the United States. It has, like most other dioceses, been found by professional auditors

COLLATERAL DAMAGE. A Palestinian woman weeps on July 17 in what remains of her Gaza City home. The death toll in Gaza exceeded 510, mostly noncombatants, on July 21.



commissioned by the U.S.C.C.B. to be fully compliant with the articles of the charter pertaining to responding to reports of abuse and efforts to prevent abuse.

But testimony in a recently released affidavit raises concerns about the efficacy of the bishops' auditing procedures, the chairman of the U.S. bishops' National Review Board, Francesco Cesareo, president of Assumption College in Worcester, Mass., acknowledged. "If what is being described in the [affidavit] is accurate and yet we are getting a diocese rated as compliant, then that is cause for concern," he said in an interview with *America*.

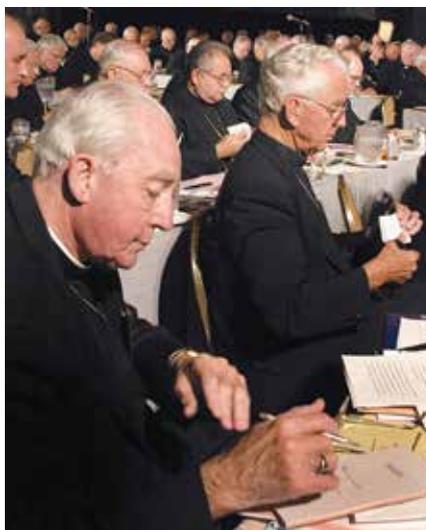
The written testimony Cesareo referred to was filed on July 14 by the archdiocese's former chancellor Jennifer M. Haselberger. In her lengthy testimony, Haselberger accused top church leaders of a "cavalier attitude" toward the safety of children and con-

tradicted aspects of sworn testimony by former top archdiocesan church deputies. Haselberger also alleged that during her tenure in the archdiocese, U.S.C.C.B.-commissioned compliance auditors "were not ever allowed access to our clergy records to determine if the data matched what we reported."

She added, "Had they done so, they would have found out that it did not." She explained that when she resigned in April 2013 the archdiocese still had not secured the charter's "essential three" of a background check, child abuse detection and prevention training, and a signed Code of Conduct from all its diocesan priests.

In the most recent assessments of the St. Paul-Minneapolis archdiocese, "nothing that emerged in the audit indicated that the diocese did not follow protocols," Cesareo said. But he pointed out that the auditing process is essentially under constant review by a standing committee and said he planned a thorough reappraisal of its "efficacy" this year.

If the allegations included in



MAKING THE COMMITMENT. U.S. bishops cast their votes on the "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People" at their 2002 meeting in Dallas.

Haselberger's affidavit prove to have merit, he said, it is possible that other dioceses also might have problems that are not being detected through the current process. The annual audits rely on self-reporting and record-keeping by the dioceses themselves. According to Cesareo, the comprehensiveness and procedures for such record-keeping vary from diocese to diocese.

Cesareo said in the coming months the audit committee will be asking, "Is the audit instrument effective in its current form.... Do we need to change it to make it a more useful tool?"

He added that the audit committee will certainly be asking, "Is there a way for the audit to be improved so that it can get at information it is [currently] not getting at...so that we don't have these situations?"

A spokesperson for the archdiocese declined to respond to questions related to Haselberger's affidavit. In a statement on its website, the archdiocese said Haselberger's "recollections are not always shared by others within the archdiocese" but that her "experience highlights the importance of ongoing constructive dialogue and reform aimed at insuring the safety of children." The statement adds that since Haselberger's resignation, the archdiocese has implemented some of the recommendations of a Safe Environment and Ministerial Standards Task Force "which address some of the concerns she has raised."

That task force's report, issued at the end of March 2014, "revealed serious shortcomings in the Archdiocese's implementation of the Dallas Charter," among them that the archdiocese has no "meaningful" program to "monitor compliance with policies and procedures that are designed to prevent and detect sexual abuse of minors."

KEVIN CLARKE

Francis in South Korea

When Pope Francis visits South Korea on Aug. 14 to 18, he will find a Catholic Church that exemplifies much of what he hopes for the church around the world, including a highly active laity, extensive efforts to help the needy and strong relations with non-Christian communities. [America will provide exclusive coverage of the pope's visit to Korea by its new Vatican correspondent, Gerard O'Connell.] So says a retired American missionary, Bishop William J. McNaughton, 87, who arrived in Korea as a Maryknoll missionary in 1954 and served as the first bishop of Incheon from 1962 until his retirement 2002. "The blood of martyrs is why the church is so strong in Korea," the bishop said, noting the more than 10,000 Korean Catholics were killed for the faith between 1785 and 1886. Pope Francis will beatify 124 of them on Aug. 16. One legacy of that persecution is an extraordinarily prominent role for lay Catholics, who helped the church survive for more than half of its first century in Korea without the ministry of clergy.

Mercy Attained

On July 17 the convicted murderer David Paul Hammer succeeded in an appeal against his death penalty sentence. A federal judge in Pennsylvania agreed to commute his sentence to life without parole. In April 1996 at a penitentiary in Allenwood, Pa., Hammer strangled his cellmate, 27-year-old Andrew Hunt Marti. He was sentenced to death by lethal injection in November 1998 after he pleaded guilty to the murder. A group of Sisters of Mercy testified on his behalf, including the long-time anti-death penalty activist Camille D'Arienzo, R.S.M. After the verdict was announced, she commented: "David has been given the gift

NEWS BRIEFS

The fate of the **1,700-year-old Christian community** of Mosul in Iraq seems to have been sealed as the city's remaining Christians, heeding a warning from the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, fled the city on July 17. + The Knights of Columbus pledged \$1.4 million on July 14 to help cover costs for the **2015 Special Olympics World Games**, scheduled for next summer in Los Angeles. + President Obama issued an executive order on July 21 **banning discrimination** in federal hiring on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity without a broad religious exemption that had been urged by Catholic and other religious and civic leaders. + A federal judge ruled on July 16 that California's "dysfunctional administration" of the state's death penalty results in "inordinate and unpredictable" delays, rendering the system **cruel and unusual punishment**, and as such unconstitutional. + After participants in a Marian procession in July bowed in front of the house of a presumed mafia boss, the bishops of Calabria in southern Italy on July 17, urged Catholics in **mafia-infested areas** to purify local celebrations of anything that suggests a tolerance for organized crime.



Fleeing Mosul

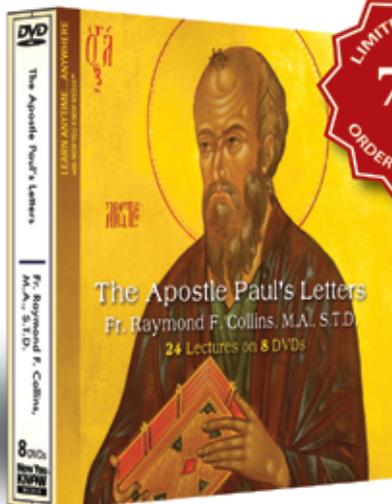
of time to work out his salvation, to continue helping others in prison and outside its walls. And so very many of us are grateful." Sister D'Arienzo could not say if the sisters' testimony influenced the judge's decision, but, she added, "We are sure, however, that it didn't hurt. It wouldn't be the first time Mercy has seasoned Justice."

California Bishops On Border Crisis

Two weeks after protesters in Murrieta, Calif., made national news by attempting to prevent busloads of mostly unaccompanied children from reaching an emergency detention facility, the bishops of California have issued a statement calling on Catholics to support these refugees. "These children and families have journeyed to

our country, fleeing violence and destitution in Central America. Sadly, their experience in California has thus far been marked by hostility and near chaos.... In this critical moment, Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan reminds us of what we are called to do." Writing in the Los Angeles diocesan newspaper The Tidings, Archbishop José Gómez asked Catholics to try to appreciate the situation of the children crossing the border. "No matter how they got here, no matter how frustrated we are with our government, we can't forget that these are children of God who are also just kids.... [They are] innocent children who are lonely and frightened and far from home, caught up in circumstances they did not create and they cannot control."

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Gaza Again

Israel is at it again. Given political orthodoxy in the United States, I should probably say Israel and the Palestinians are at it again, or, more precisely, Israel and Hamas are at it again, yet the disproportion between the two sides is such that there is no equivalence. One side is offering ineffectual resistance with rockets that are striking chiefly for their inaccuracy; the other is using the most sophisticated weapons of war to terrorize a population under occupation.

As I write, Israel is bombing Gaza. Operation Protective Edge is an escalation in the rampage of violence that has been going on ever since three Israeli teenagers were kidnapped on June 12. According to the daily newspaper *The Forward* and other sources, the government knew almost immediately that the teenagers were killed but did not disclose that even to the teenagers' parents. Instead, without offering evidence, it blamed Hamas for the kidnappings, detained 282 Hamas members, ransacked almost 2,000 homes, killed at least five Palestinians, including two children, and arrested hundreds of Palestinians, some of them prisoners Israel had recently freed in a prisoner-exchange with Hamas. This though Hamas denied involvement and Israel knew early on that the kidnappings were not ordered by Hamas leadership but committed by a rogue cell in Hebron, possibly in retaliation for the murder of two Palestinian youths in Beitunia by an Israeli soldier.

The murders of the three Israeli teenagers were a terrible crime for which the culprits should be brought

to justice. But the violence that has been inflicted on innocent Palestinians who had nothing to do with it is monstrously out of proportion. Since the three teenagers were found, a Palestinian teenager has been burned to death by Jewish youths and Israel has launched its attack on Gaza, which as of this writing has killed over 200 Palestinians, 30 of them children, and injured 1,280. What kind of justice is that? Not for the first time, Israel seems a state out of control, led by leaders out of their minds.

Or are they? Some Israeli officials talk about "mowing the grass," by which they refer to periodic campaigns in Gaza to destroy militant infrastructure. Jeff Halper, director of the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions, writes that the attack on Gaza was planned long before the kidnappings, which provided the pretext that the Israeli government wanted for its attack. Others describe Operation Protective Edge as Israel's effort to foil the new unity government between Fatah and Hamas, which, with the collapse of the U.S. peace initiative, had greater latitude from the Americans to seek international recourse.

Whichever scenario you opt for, it's a picture of Israel on the warpath. It is not a fair fight. Israel's defenders will say that it is just protecting its citizens from Hamas rocket fire, which began July 8 after Israel launched its Operation Brother's Keeper against Hamas. But when the number of dead is 222 on one side and zero on the other, as it was the day before the Israeli

ground invasion began on July 17, it's a massacre. Richard Falk, a Princeton University emeritus professor of international law and until recently the much-maligned U.N. special rapporteur for human rights in Palestine, has previously argued that when one country wages war on another country or population helpless to defend itself, it replicates the conditions of torture and should be considered such under international law.

The
Palestinians
are too weak
to induce
Israel to
make
peace.

Indeed, the abiding difficulty in reaching a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians is not that the Palestinians are too strong; it's that they are too weak to induce Israel to make peace. Instead, Israel has been using the peace process as a fig leaf while it further colonizes

Palestinian land.

And, really, why should Israel negotiate when it has the United States sending it billions of dollars every year to buy weapons and build settlements and blocking efforts in the United Nations to hold Israel accountable for its actions?

The pro-Israel lobby has Congress just where it wants it. Note that a bipartisan resolution has been introduced in the Senate that affirms Israel's right to defend itself and calls for Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas to dissolve the unity government with Hamas. I suspect Congress will approve the resolution 100 percent. It cannot act on behalf of Americans here at home, but it can always support Israel.

MARGOT PATTERSON is a writer who lives in Kansas City, Mo.

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Jesuits establish *reductions* in **Latin America** for previously migratory indigenous peoples, with the blessing of the Spanish crown. These expand over the next 150 years, as Spain and Portugal vie over the frontiers of their colonies.



1750

The **Treaty of Madrid** redraws the Spanish/Portuguese territories and Portugal blames the Jesuits for the subsequent War of the Seven Reductions (1756).

1750s

Since the formation of the order 200 years earlier, the Jesuits number more than 22,000 worldwide. They operate nearly 700 colleges and 200 seminaries, with powerful friends and wealthy benefactors – but also equally powerful and influential enemies.

1814

Pope Pius VII issues the bull *Sollicitudo omnium Ecclesiarum*, thereby restoring the Society of Jesus. The English Jesuit College, the antecedent of today's Heythrop College, celebrates its bicentenary.



1758

Assassination attempt on **King Joseph I of Portugal** for which the Jesuits are blamed. Portugal expels the Jesuits from all its territories and suppresses the Order the following year.



1803

The Jesuits of **England and Wales** affiliate themselves to the Jesuits in Russia.

1794

Stonyhurst established as the base for the Jesuits in England and Wales.

The 140 Jesuits working in **England and Wales** submit, at times with protests, to the vicars apostolic. King Frederick the Great of Prussia and Empress Catherine the Great of Russia refuse to implement the brief and allow the Society to continue its work.

1766/67

Jesuits blamed for anti-tax riots in **Spain** and all 5,000 of them are expelled.

1767/68

For personal and political reasons, the influential dynasties of Naples and Parma expel the Jesuits.

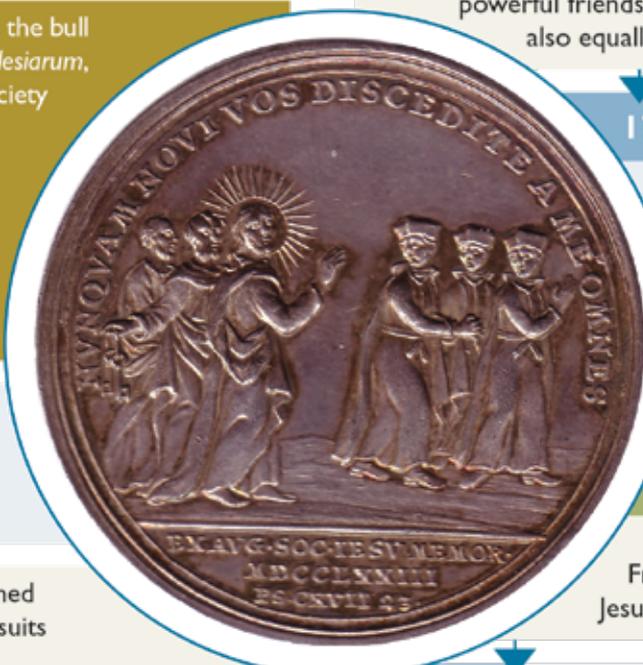
1773

Under pressure from the dynastic houses of Western Europe and in order to secure peace in the Church, **Pope Clement XIV** issues *Dominus ac Redemptor*, the papal brief suppressing the Society of Jesus.



1770

Empress Maria Theresa of Austria rescinds her protection of the Society to secure the marriage of her daughter Marie Antoinette to France's future king, Louis XVI.



The central image is of a silver gilt medal issued in 1773 and attributed to Theodore van Berckel. It shows Christ, accompanied by SS Peter and Paul, dismissing three Jesuits.

Remembering turbulent times for the Jesuits

BY THOMAS WORCESTER

Jesuits and their colleagues, collaborators and friends—and all persons formed by the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius—owe a debt of gratitude to Pope Pius VII. Without Pius VII, it is fair to say, there would be no Society of Jesus today, no Jesuit schools, colleges or universities, no Jesuit retreat houses and no Jesuit periodicals. For it was Pius VII who, on Aug. 7, 1814, restored the Society of Jesus, some four decades after its suppression by Pope Clement XIV. This year marks the 200th anniversary of that restoration. And, in fact, this anniversary takes place amid many other anniversaries worth acknowledging, as they provide useful context for the surrounding events. Anniversaries also offer exceptional occasions for influencing which aspects of a historical event are remembered and which are not—and how they are remembered. Let us take a look back.

In 1814, after some 15 years of dominating Europe, the French emperor, Napoleon Bonaparte, had been outflanked by the Quadruple Alliance of Britain, Austria, Prussia and Russia, an alliance aided by the moral support of the papacy. For a good part of the previous two decades, France had been at war with the rest of Europe—extending the benefits of the French Revolution, some claimed; violently subjugating various states and their peoples, according to others. The violence had taken place within France as well: the Reign of Terror sent many to the guillotine for even the slightest suspicion of hostility to the revolution.

From 1814, war gave way to relative peace in Europe for the next century. After Napoleon's final defeat in 1815, there would not be another general European war until World War I. Napoleon's victims had been many, including hundreds of thousands of his own soldiers, many lost in the frozen expanses of Russia. Popes also were among Napoleon's victims. Pius VI had died in France in 1799, a prisoner of the emperor. Cardinals elected Pope Pius VII the next year in Venice, which proved a fortuitous decision. Without the fortitude and perseverance of Pius VII, who reigned from 1800 to 1823, the papacy could have disappeared altogether in the wake of Napoleon. In 1801 pope and emperor agreed on a concordat that restored the episcopate and diocesan structures in France but left no place for religious orders of men or women. Soon Napoleon wanted more from Pius, including the dissolution of the Papal States. The French army seized Pius VII and eventually took him to France as a prisoner for several years.

Seen as a kind of living martyr by much of Europe, Pius was a highly honored survivor of Napoleon's warfare and bullying. Almost as soon as Pius returned in triumph to Rome in the spring of 1814, he acted to restore the Jesuits throughout the world. Thus the anniversaries of Napoleon's defeat (or the liberation of Europe from Napoleonic domination) and of the restoration of the Jesuits are very closely related. In recent years, study of Jesuit history from the founding of the order in 1540 to the suppression of 1773 has become a hot topic, with

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THOMAS WORCESTER, S.J., is professor of history at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Mass., and a specialist in religious and cultural history. He is co-editor, with James Corkery, of *The Papacy Since 1500: From Italian Prince to Universal Pastor* (2010) and general editor of the forthcoming *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the Jesuits* (Cambridge University Press).

large numbers of conferences, dissertations, articles and books on the subject. Study of the restoration and of the restored Society has remained, at least until now, a somewhat lesser concern. A few notable Jesuits of the 19th and 20th centuries, like Pierre Teilhard de Chardin or Gerard Manley Hopkins, attract a good deal of attention, but they are exceptions.

The Society in Context

Of course, Jesuit history did not unfold in isolation from the rest of the world. In 1214 the future King Louis IX of France was born, a king who would lead crusades to the Holy Land, a king also destined to be a canonized saint. He was the ancestor of many French monarchs, some of whom were great supporters of the Society of Jesus and some of whom certainly were not. And 2014 is also an anniversary year in Great Britain. In 1714 the Elector of Hanover succeeded Queen Anne as George I, monarch of England and Scotland, and with him came the guarantee of a Protestant succession that continues today.

That the Society of Jesus survived at all after its suppression by Pope Clement XIV was due in large part to Catherine the Great, who, like George I, was a German Protestant who became a monarch outside German lands. As Tsarina of the Russian Empire, Catherine refused to allow the papal document of suppression to be published in her territories, and she made it possible for Jesuits to continue their work running schools and recruiting new members for the Society. Under the House of Hanover, Jesuits in Britain and its empire eventually came to prosper in ways that went beyond what they had been able to do under the Tudors or Stuarts. One of the lessons of Jesuit history is that friends and supporters, or at least people willing to tolerate Jesuits, may be found in surprising places, and that figures one might expect to be strong supporters of the Society of Jesus are not always so.

Many of the various anniversaries marked this year are related to war, European or other. In the United States, we are marking the sesquicentennial of the Civil War; this year, the 1864 founding of Arlington National Cemetery has garnered special attention. We also remember the 50th anniversary of the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Such anniversaries can help to discourage idealization of the past, including the Jesuit past, as if it had been a purely golden age. For the Jesuit past includes the holding of slaves and

other acts of acquiescence in what we now see as appalling human rights abuses.

Yet another anniversary of war is upon us, the centennial of the start of what would become World War I. How is it to be remembered? A current exhibition in London's National Portrait Gallery presents a selection of photographs from the Great War that show both self-assured and even triumphant faces of military leaders, but also tired and demoralized faces of the injured and horrifically scarred. In Paris, in contrast, there is an exhibition of photographs published in the journal *Excelsior* between 1914 and 1918 that show little other than courage and determination, with very little

to suggest that victory ever was really in doubt. War may be remembered in very different ways.

The history of the Jesuits is, among other things, the history of a potential antidote to national antagonisms and the warfare they spawn. From their beginnings, Jesuits were international, for the first Jesuits were all foreign students in Paris. Once approved by Pope Paul III in 1540, the Society of Jesus soon became still more international, as Francis Xavier headed to Asia and other Jesuits spread out across the globe. The Jesuits

crossed (or transgressed) all kinds of boundaries: geographic, political, cultural, linguistic, religious. Many of the most famous Jesuits to work in Portuguese Asia were Italians, while not a few German Jesuits worked in Latin America.

By the mid-1700s Portuguese, Spanish and French monarchs had had enough of the Jesuits, for with their international way of proceeding, including a close relationship with the papacy, Jesuits did not fit into the model of church in which heads of state controlled the church in their territories. Eighteenth-century Catholic monarchs also wanted control of education within their states, and the Jesuits were perceived as a major obstacle to this goal. Though some historians argue that Jesuit arrogance played a significant role in the suppression of the Society of Jesus—and it may have played some role—the most important factor was the centralizing agendas of the Catholic monarchies, agendas that sought to make the church subordinate to the state. The monarchs' intense pressure on Pope Clement XIV was the immediate cause of the suppression in 1773.

The Global Society

In 2014 the Catholic Church continues to mark the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65), an

Though some historians argue that Jesuit arrogance played a significant role in the suppression of the Society of Jesus, the most important factor was the centralizing agendas of the Catholic monarchies.

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ecumenical council that still matters greatly in many ways, including as a demonstration of and an impetus to a genuinely global Catholicism in the service of world peace. A global church, not tied to any particular nation or language or culture or political structure, is something that Jesuits promoted as far back as the 16th century. But the ease of travel today and access to the Internet have made this much more achievable than ever before. In 1964 Pope Paul VI inaugurated the model of an itinerant pope by traveling to the Holy Land. Pope Francis recently marked that journey's 50th anniversary with a trip to many of the same places and by speaking out and praying for peace and reconciliation in the Middle East, despite seemingly long odds against this hope.

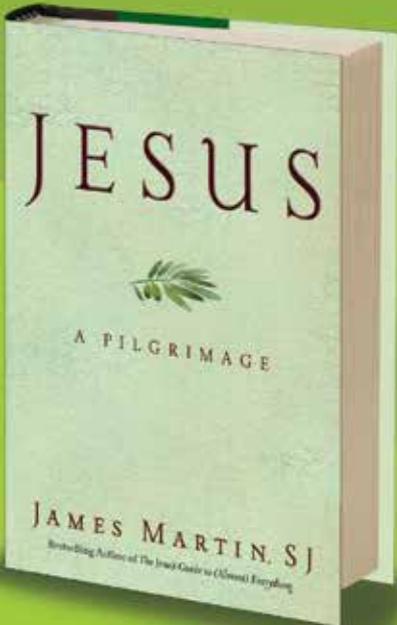
Because he comes from Argentina, Pope Francis also draws attention to Latin America. The year 2014 marks another anniversary significant for Jesuits, the 25th anniversary of the martyrdom in 1989 in El Salvador of six Jesuits along with their housekeeper and her daughter. Especially since Vatican II, Jesuits have clearly articulated a vision of humanity in which human dignity and human rights transcend social and economic class, racial and ethnic identities, and national and political boundaries. It is a vision that has cost many Jesuits their lives. If the situation in El Salvador has improved in recent years, the cost of being companions

of Jesus, as Jesuits call themselves, remains. Jesuits are not meant to live in a protective bubble, somewhere apart from the rough and tumble and violence of world events, however attractive such a bubble may at times seem. In the world, and engaged in struggles for a more just world, Jesuits have been vulnerable to attacks of many kinds and remain so.

In the late 1700s, few would have expected or predicted the universal restoration of the Society of Jesus. And yet it did happen. At the College of the Holy Cross I teach a course on the papacy in the modern world, starting around 1500. I used to tell my students that we would never see a Jesuit pope. I was wrong, and I have, happily, done some rethinking and some reimagining of the papacy and of the Jesuits. I tell myself to be open to still more surprises. In this complex anniversary year, perhaps Pope Francis, by his example, words and actions, can help Jesuits, their colleagues, collaborators, friends and indeed all persons to move forward in reimagining and rethinking who they are and who they wish to be in the 21st century and beyond. In turning to St. Francis of Assisi for his name as bishop of Rome, Jorge Bergoglio, S.J., already has shown us how we may draw on a figure from the past in order to recreate and reinvigorate who we are and has offered many examples of how we may make central to our lives the service of the poor and the promotion of peace. **A**

ON THE WEB

Highlights from an exhibit on the Jesuit restoration. americamagazine.org/art



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Healing an Old Wound

Pope Francis, Korea and the comfort women

BY DENNIS P. HALPIN



KOREAN OUTRAGE. Participants carry the portraits of Korean women who were used as sex slaves by the Japanese military during World War II, in central Seoul on Aug. 14, 2013.

PHOTO: REUTERS/KIM HONG-JI

The Vatican announced in March that South Korea will be the first Asian nation to be visited by Pope Francis. His visit will take place from Aug. 14 to 18, which includes a date of critical significance not only for Korean and world history but also for Catholicism.

Aug. 15 is Independence Day for Koreans, the date when in 1945 the harsh Japanese colonial rule came to an end. It is also a major liturgical day for the Catholic Church, the feast of the Assumption of Mary into heaven, a date of symbolic ascendancy for all women. And it is the date when in 1945 the guns fell silent and church bells rang throughout the world as the Second World War finally came to an end.

DENNIS P. HALPIN served as an Asian affairs advisor on the U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee and currently is a visiting scholar at the U.S.-Korea Institute at the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University.

The specter of that war still casts a long shadow over Asia. Nowhere is this more true than in Korea, where the central issue stemming from the war's legacy is sexual violence against women during conflict. Comfort women is the euphemistic term for the tens of thousands of girls and young women who were cajoled, coerced, kidnapped, sold or captured into sexual slavery by the Imperial Japanese Armed Forces. While the victims came from throughout the Indo-Pacific region, and even included some Europeans, the great majority were Korean. This further embittered the already strained historic relations between Korea and her Japanese colonizer. These women endured a half century of humiliation, trauma and enforced silence until a few had the courage to come forward.

Like Mary Magdalene, a possible patron saint for these women, the comfort women were scorned for their backgrounds and for being identified with foreigners. Mary Magdalene was traditionally identified as the woman from

whom Jesus had “cast out seven demons,” and she came from a Gentile town, although she was a Jew. After the war, Korean society was no more welcoming to these victims than was the Magdalene’s society to her.

Forty years ago, as a Peace Corps volunteer in Seoul, I was told by members of the local community to stay away from a run-down little grocery store operated by “that woman who had been a Japanese whore.” Abandoned and usually without family, the returned comfort women struggled under harsh, unwelcoming conditions. It was only after a few of them had the courage to speak out in the 1990s that the attitude of Korean society turned from hostility to sympathy.

Pope Francis has refocused attention on the church’s historic mission of providing for the poor, the abandoned and the oppressed. He also has drawn international attention to the issue of human trafficking. He invited clergymen, police officers and victims to a conference on trafficking at the Vatican’s Academy of Sciences in April. After the conference, the pope referred to trafficking as “a crime against humanity” and “a scourge” of the 21st century. The abduction of more than 200 schoolgirls in Nigeria by Boko Haram terrorists for purposes of trafficking occurred immediately after the Vatican conference. The international headlines generated by this heinous crime only served to underscore the pope’s expressed concerns.

A Demeaning Debate

Human trafficking and sexual violence in armed conflict, however, are as old as the Bible and were major human rights concerns in the last century. The comfort women system, involving from 50,000 to 200,000 victims, certainly represented one of the most egregious examples of state-sponsored sexual slavery in the 20th century.

Even more demeaning for the now elderly victims than the debate over the exact number of victims is the assertion among some right-wing extremists in Japan that the comfort women were nothing more than professional prostitutes who willingly provided their services for profit. Recent attempts to silence the comfort women have been numerous. They have included advertisements placed in U.S. newspapers by a Japanese right-wing organization comparing brothels in U.S.-occupied Japan to the comfort women system and a statement in May 2013 by Toru Hashimoto, the Mayor of Osaka, Japan’s third-largest city, that the comfort women provided necessary sexual release for war-strained Japanese soldiers.

There were also visits in 2012 by Japanese government delegations to the little town of Palisades Park, N.J., seeking to have the mayor take down a memorial monument to the comfort women. And there is a lawsuit pending against a similar comfort women statue in Glendale, Calif., filed by a

right-wing Japanese organization and a number of Japanese-American plaintiffs. This suit contends that the sight of such a memorial in a public park is disturbing to Japanese people.

Those who would silence the comfort women, however, have failed. Among the voices speaking for the comfort women is a Catholic one, a voice of fidelity to Catholic values at a time of unbearable suffering, a voice that prayed the rosary daily during a three-month period of sexual violence. It is the story of a Catholic girl who had studied to be a nun before the Imperial Japanese military forcibly took her away to a brothel. It is the testimony of a Dutch girl who was sexually trafficked and traumatized like the contemporary victims who met with Pope Francis at the Vatican.

Savagery and Silence

Jan Ruff-O’Herne, born in 1923 in what was then known as the Dutch East Indies (present-day Indonesia), was raised in a family “where my parents, especially my father, implanted in me a great and strong faith and a love of prayer and Holy Scripture.” When Indonesia fell to the invading Imperial Japanese Army forces in March 1942, Jan, then 19 years old, her mother and two younger sisters were interned as enemy noncombatants in a prisoner-of-war camp.

In February 1944 Ms. Ruff-O’Herne’s life changed forever when Japanese army trucks noisily entered the camp. All single girls 17 to 21 years old were told to line up for inspection. Ms. Ruff-O’Herne describes in her memoir, *Fifty Years of Silence*, what happened next: “The Japanese officers paced up and down, up and down the line, inspecting each girl. Now they were standing directly in front of me. One of them lifted my chin with a stick to see my face. They stood there grinning, looking at my legs, at my face, at my body.... Oh, my God, I prayed; don’t let them take me away.” Despite the intercession of a nun in the camp to the Japanese commander, 10 of the women who were considered by the officers to be the prettiest were taken away in an army truck. Ms. Ruff-O’Herne was one of them.

Ms. Ruff-O’Herne’s eyewitness account makes ludicrous the recent claims that the Imperial Japanese Army was not involved in the comfort women system. The young women were taken to a Dutch colonial house converted into a military brothel. Ms. Ruff-O’Herne led the frightened girls in a reading of Psalm 27 before the Japanese military officers came to rape them: “The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom should I fear?”

She describes what happened next: “He stood right over me now, pointing the sword at my body. I pleaded with him through my gestures to allow me to say some prayers before I died. With his sword touching my flesh, I fell on my knees to pray.... The Japanese officer was getting impatient now. He threw me on the bed and tore at my clothes, ripping them off.

ON THE WEB

Gerard O’Connell reports from Korea on Pope Francis’ trip. americamagazine.org/things

I lay there naked on the bed as he ran his sword slowly up and down over my body.... I can find no words to describe this most inhumane and brutal rape.”

For the next three months Ms. Ruff-O’Herne and the other Dutch women were brutally raped multiple times. Then, following a number of visits from high-ranking military officials and long discussions “accompanied by much shouting,” they were told to pack their bags. They were returned to their families in the internment camps with the admonition that if they ever told anyone what had happened to them, they and their families would be killed. Ms. Ruff-O’Herne records that “the silence began then and there, the silence that was forced upon us.”

Jan Ruff-O’Herne told her secret to her mother, who was devastated by the news, and to a Catholic priest. When Ms. Ruff-O’Herne told the priest that she still wanted to be a nun, “there was a deadly silence.” Finally he responded: “My dear child, under the circumstances and because of what has happened to you, I think it is better that you do not become a nun.” Jan recorded, “I was shattered and sadly disappointed by what I was told. It gave me a terrible inferiority complex.”

During the following half century, she told her secret to her British Army husband, but not to her two daughters. “Fifty years of nightmares, of sleepless nights. Fifty years of pain that could never go away.” Then in 1992 Ms. Ruff-O’Herne saw on television some elderly Korean women, who had decided to speak out at last about their trauma as comfort women. “I’ve got to be with those women,” she wrote. “I’ve got to back them up.” Violence against women in the conflict then raging in Bosnia also motivated her, as it showed “that the world had not changed.”

Ms. Ruff-O’Herne finally told her daughters her secret and then attended an international public hearing in Tokyo, where an Australian televised news report revealed her story to her neighbors. Becoming an advocate for the comfort women and women’s rights, she traveled to Washington, D.C., in 2007 to testify with two Korean comfort women at a U.S. Congressional hearing.

Speaking Out

In April of this year, the elderly Ms. Ruff-O’Herne, who resides in Adelaide, South Australia, sent her daughter Carol and a granddaughter to testify at a hearing in metropolitan Sydney on a proposal to construct a comfort woman statue in Australia. In response, Japan’s conservative daily newspaper Sankei Shimbun published an article criticizing the 91-year-old advocate “who was reportedly a comfort woman on the island of Java” for allegedly allowing her daughter and granddaughter to be used in an “anti-Japan campaign.” A family friend reported that Ms. Ruff-O’Herne was devastated by these latest press attacks.

Medieval Catholic tradition included the ideal of chivalry—that the knight was to raise his sword for the protection

of women and children, the elderly, the sick and the defenseless. In ancient Catholic ritual, a squire kept an all-night prayer vigil in a chapel before being dubbed a knight by his liege lord. While perhaps more true in its breach than in its practice, the code of conduct of chivalry is linked to the protection of women. The comfort women system as it evolved in the imperial Japanese military during the Second World War is the very antithesis of this traditional Catholic virtue.

Pope Francis’ upcoming visit to Korea, the ancestral home of the majority of comfort women, provides an opportunity to reimagine and reignite this lost Catholic chivalry by opening a space for him to stand in solidarity and to keep vigil with these women as they call for justice. The visit also could serve to underscore Pope Francis’ expressed concerns for the rights and dignity of women, for the abandoned and the oppressed and for bringing an end to the scourge of human trafficking.

Pope Francis can help to raise up the comfort women survivors with his embrace. His compassionate presence makes him well suited to the task of meeting the comfort women and giving them God’s message of love, hope and acceptance that was denied to too many. And what better place and date than in Seoul on the anniversary of the conclusion of the war and the end of the forced sexual slavery of the comfort women? I imagine that Jan Ruff-O’Herne would not be the only person to watch such a papal embrace on her television set while smiling through tears.



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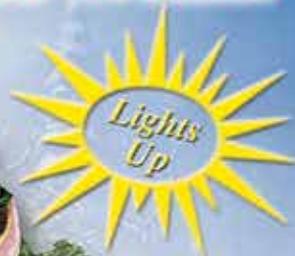


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Something Extraordinary

Denise Levertov's perennial appeal

BY EDWIN BLOCK JR.

In his elegy "In Memory of W. B. Yeats," the British poet W. H. Auden says of the Irish poet, "He became his admirers." That is the case with every writer when he or she dies. It is almost 17 years since the British-born American poet and Catholic convert Denise Levertov died. Now she has become her admirers. And they are us. Elsewhere in the poem on Yeats, Auden says, more bluntly: "The words of a dead man/ Are modified in the guts of the living." This, too, is a way of referring to a poet's reputation. Ms. Levertov's words are transformed by our understanding of them. To change the metaphor, her words—her poems, her reputation—are like a child of 16; young and still vulnerable.

It is now for us to ask: What is her enduring worth? With two biographies now off the press (one by Dana Greene, the other by Donna K. Hollenberg) and the *Collected Poems* (edited by Paul Lacey and Anne Dewey, published by New Directions) now available, such an assessment has yet to be made. And on us depends the future, the fortune of her words, her reputation. We can put the question another way: Why would a poet who began publishing poems in the late 1940s—but who continued to publish until her death in 1997—be worth reading today? To answer briefly: She is worth rereading and remembering now because of her continued relevance to the 21st century.

Born in Ilford, in northeast London, in 1923, she began writing early, sending poems to T. S. Eliot, who sent a letter in return praising them. As a young woman she was also a would-be artist and dancer, a daughter, a sister,

a nurse and an early activist (she and her older sister Olga sold the Communist newspaper, *The Daily Worker*, on the streets of London during World War II).

After the war, she married a G.I. and moved to the United States, where the poet Kenneth Rexroth introduced her to American readers in 1949. Through her correspondence with William Carlos Williams and her association with Black Mountain poets like Robert Creeley and Robert Duncan, she quickly became American in idiom, if not in sensibility. Her decades-long correspondence with Duncan

Denise Levertov



PHOTO: CHRISTOPHER FELVER/CORBIS

EDWIN BLOCK JR., *professor emeritus of English at Marquette University in Milwaukee, has published widely on Denise Levertov's work in Logos, New Blackfriars and Renascence. His review of two biographies of Denise Levertov will appear in Religion & Literature.*

(published in 2004) recorded their friendship and their evolving—and finally diverging—aesthetic and political views.

An early volume, *With Eyes at the Back of Our Heads* shocked William Carlos Williams with its insights into women's experiences. The title poem of the 1964 volume, *O Taste and See*, seemed religious, even for the agnostic she claimed to be. During the 60s and early 70s, she became an outspoken critic of the Vietnam War and traveled to Hanoi with a fellow activist-poet, Muriel Rukeyser. In the later 1960s she described her life as a pilgrimage and wrote poems with titles suggesting religion or belief: "Psalm," "Tenebrae," "Chant" and "Gathered at the River."

In the early 1980s she began attending religious services at different churches, preferring those with good liturgy and music. The volume *Candles in Babylon* is notable for the long "Mass for the Day of St. Thomas Didymus," usually considered the beginning of the spiritual quest that would bring her to Catholicism in 1990. *Oblique Prayers* includes, besides the title poem, "St. Peter and the Angel" on a story from the Acts of the Apostles. Then, from *Breathing the Water* on, every volume she published—including the posthumous *This Great Unknowing*—contains a number of poems expressing her growing faith. A poet, ecologist, spiritual pilgrim, friend and unconventional feminist, she ended her life as a Catholic and the author of many enduring religious poems. She died of lymphoma in December 1997.

The World Around Her

Denise Levertov read and acknowledged the influence on her of the world's great poets: John Keats, Gerard Manley Hopkins, S.J., Rainer Maria Rilke, William Carlos Williams, Pablo Neruda and Paul Célán. Where does she stand among them? Perhaps it is still too soon to tell. Like that 16-year-old in my original metaphor, her reputation has yet to "grow up."

She is no Yeats, no Wallace Stevens, no William Carlos Williams, no T. S. Eliot—at least not yet. But neither is she insignificant. She published 19 volumes of poems, primarily in the form of the short, open-form lyric (she called it "organic form"). That is the form that had its rise in the English Renaissance, with Sir Thomas Wyatt, Walter Raleigh and William Shakespeare. That tradition continued in Robert Southwell, S.J., George Herbert and Thomas Vaughan. She knew, loved and loosely imitated many of their poems.

What particular insights or revelations does her work of-

fer that perhaps no other poet's work affords? Attuned to almost every imaginable aspect of the natural world—trees, flowers, animals and birds—she wrote poems about them all. Alert to the environment and topography (she loved the mountains), she re-created those experiences in her poems. Alive to friends, acquaintances and strangers, she wrote compellingly about those relationships. Attentive to the present moment, even as she revered the past and looked with apprehension to the future, she was fascinated like a child, for instance, by the vertiginous experience of falling yet being suspended. Describing how she would jump off a swing when she was a child, she says, "I let go and flew! / At large in the unsustaining air...and fell, Icarian, dazed" ("Animal Spirits," *This Great Unknowing*). It was the same feeling she transformed into a powerful religious experience in the late poem "In Whom We Live and Move and Have Our Being" (*Sands of the Well*).

She was a somewhat unconventional feminist in the early 1960s, writing poems about women's bodies and women's fraught relationships with men. The first, "Our Bodies" (*Poems 1960-1967*), contemplates her own body and how its "nipples, navel, and pubic hair / make anyway a / sort of face." In the second she ponders "Those groans men use / passing a woman on the street / ...to tell her she is a female / and their flesh knows it..." ("The Mutes," *Poems 1960-1967*).

A special mark of her significance is this: Unlike Eliot, Yeats or Pound (who were accused of totalitarian politics), she stood from the start, like Neruda, Pasternak and Mandelstam, with the poor and oppressed. She even wrote the text for an oratorio commemorating Óscar Romero, the slain Salvadoran archbishop. Almost to the end of her life, she wrote poems exposing the evil of war. And in a poem called "The Certainty," written in the early 1990s during the First Gulf War, she seems to describe smart bombs or even cyber weapons: "Immaterial weapons / no one could ever hold in their hands / streak across darkness...to arrive / at targets that are concepts" (*Evening Train*). And "The Youth Program" is prescient about how technology has transformed war, describing how children's video games "are already / putting them ahead" and how they have "attained / new speeds of reflex" (*Evening Train*), anticipating the pilots who would one day guide drone strikes in Pakistan from airbases in California.

A poem titled "Misnomer" challenges the expression "the art of war" by reflecting on Leonardo da Vinci's sketches for "machines of destruction." The poem scorns the idea that those

Denise Levertov maintained the ability to vilify evil without losing the self-possession and innocence that make her poetry forever 'young.'

designs are the work of genius. Instead, she says Leonardo “was not/ acting in the service of art, he was suspending the life of art/ over an abyss, as if one were to hold/ a living child out of an airplane window/ at thirty thousand feet” (*Evening Train*).

In the same late collection, *Evening Train*, which is one of her best, she includes a poem about AIDS (“Mid-American Tragedy”) that uses pop culture to satirize parents’ denial of their son’s disease. She puts herself in the parents’ perspective, “he’s our kid,/ Mom and Dad are going to give him/ what all kids long for, a trip to Disney World.” The rest of the poem evokes a picture of the son, “his wheelchair strung with bottles and tubes, glass and metal glittering in winter sun....” Next to this poem is “The Batterers,” which shocks by comparing spousal abuse with the destruction of the earth. But even in her satiric and protest poems, she was more like the Nobel laureate Czeslaw Milosz, who anthologized her work in his *A Book of Luminous Things*. Denise Levertov maintained the ability to vilify evil without losing the self-possession and innocence that make her poetry forever “young.”

Some of her most enduring poems will be those, like “The Batterers,” that call our attention to the plight of our planet. “Tragic Error” rewrites Genesis, saying “subdue was the false, the misplaced word in the story.” Instead, she says, “Surely we were to have been/ earth’s mind, mirror, reflective source.” Our task was “to love the earth,/ to dress and keep it like Eden’s garden” (*Evening Train*).

Like many a creative person, Ms. Levertov could be prickly, opinionated and intense. Her literary executor, Paul Lacey, noted that because she was largely self-educated, that opinionatedness could take curious forms. But in her art, the extinguishing of ego, the focus of attention on the specific situation or experience that called forth her poetic gift—in this, the poet overcame the person. And in the po-

ems that resulted she gave us great gifts of insight, wisdom, joy and love. Whether she was watching a dog, an armadillo, her newborn son or a demonstration at a nuclear power plant, we are there, with the speaker, reliving the experience.

Also of enduring importance is her relation, through poetry, to language. From early on she said that poetry is a means “to a saner state in the midst of our being.” We get there through language carefully, thoughtfully and respectfully used. She said, paraphrasing the philosopher Martin Heidegger, that “to be human is to be a conversation,” and that “any use of language is an action toward others.” Little wonder that her words still speak so directly to us.

Denise Levertov was fond of quoting the English Romantic poet William Wordsworth: “Language is not the dress but the incarnation of thought.” Whether it is a “found” poem—made of news clips from the First Gulf War (“News Report: September, 1991,” *Evening Train*)—a close look at a flower or an enigmatic meditation on the moon (“Mass of the Moon Eclipse,” *This Great Unknowing*), her poems are always rich linguistic explorations, full of mystery. Mystery and spirit are everywhere in her poems, and even if the reader does not share the specific beliefs that many of her po-

ems imply, he or she can attest to the presence of something numinous, something almost uncannily “other” that makes them fascinating.

Levertov’s Many Faces

Labels like feminist, ecologist, activist and spiritual seeker touch only a part of who she was and what she has bequeathed. Like the many individuals—friends, mentors and models—she celebrated, and like the persons we are, Denise Levertov resists classifications. The reality of the person is always greater, other, more complex and intimate than the

PRIMARY WONDER

Days pass when I forget the mystery.
Problems insoluble and problems offering
their own ignored solutions
jostle for my attention, they crowd its antechamber
along with a host of diversions, my courtiers, wearing
their colored clothes; cap and bells.
And then
once more the quiet mystery
Is present to me, the throng’s clamor
recedes: the mystery
that there is anything, anything at all,
let alone cosmos, joy, memory, everything,
rather than void: and that, O Lord,
Creator, Hallowed One, You still,
hour by hour sustain it.

From *The Collected Poems of Denise Levertov*, edited and annotated by Paul Lacey and Anne Dewey, with an Introduction by Eavan Boland. New York: New Directions, 2013. Used with Permission of Paul Lacey.

words in which we try to express the reality, that identity which today is under siege. As the Canadian Catholic philosopher Charles Taylor says, “our identity is deeper and more many-sided than any of our possible articulations of it” (*Sources of the Self*). So with her poems, and their delicacy, the mystery of what inheres beyond, beneath or between the words—that is what we shall value for years to come.

On Ms. Levertov’s relation to nature, the novelist Wallace Stegner (founder of the Stanford writing program, where she taught for many years) once observed that we, his fellow Americans, cannot look at anything (he meant primarily the land and wilderness) without wanting to use it, own it and reshape it to our needs, desires or fantasies. Denise Levertov, on the other hand, in sympathy with Stegner, could—in the immortal words of the Beatles—“Let it be.” In one of her greatest poems, “Open Secret,” written in Seattle about Mount Rainier, she says, “I have visited other mountain heights./ This one is not, I think, to be known/ by close scrutiny...” (*Evening Train*). This reverent restraint is part of what we learn from her.

Whether it is Hopkinsian inscape or Keatsian negative capability, her best poems embody an experience in which seer and seen, object and subject, become one in the articulation, in the enactment of the poem. She makes present the encounter: with a friend, with her sister, with Mount Snowdon in Wales, which she experienced in the company of her mother and then memorialized in “An Instant”

(*Collected Earlier Poems*).

What we know of Denise Levertov’s indebtedness to Rilke tells us that another of the qualities that she appreciated, and that she offers to us today as a gift, is a greater appreciation for silence and solitude and a consequent suspicion of the culture, the technology and the politics (in its broadest meaning) that seek to tear us from ourselves in ways that are not “selfless” in the way I described earlier. In “Those Who Want Out,” she criticizes today’s technocrats who dream of escaping the earth. The poem reaches its supremely ironic climax as the poet enters the technocrats’ minds: “Imagine it, they think,/ way out there, outside of ‘nature,’ unhampered,/ a place contrived by man, supreme/ triumph of reason” (*A Door in the Hive*). The poem ends with the speaker’s monitory statement, which also expresses the poet’s own ecological consciousness: “They do not love the earth.” It is probably no wonder that Ms. Levertov had little use for “virtual reality,” which she criticized in an interview with the magazine *Image*.

In *The Sovereignty of Good*, the late philosopher-novelist Iris Murdoch describes attentiveness. Attentiveness, she says, “entails the transformation of everyday consciousness into an unpossessive, almost aesthetic mode of contemplation...and [we] begin to free ourselves from the selfishness of everyday consciousness.” Denise Levertov, like the spiritual writer Kathleen Norris, implies that attentiveness is akin to prayer, if it is not prayer itself. In the end, perhaps the poet’s greatest quality, her greatest gift, is to teach us about such attentiveness. At its root, the word means to listen. We all know people who are good listeners. We also know how often people today—in private as well as in public life—fail to listen.

As we continue to read Denise Levertov’s poems almost 17 years after her death, perhaps we can learn that quality of attentiveness to which she points in her poem “Once Only.” She reminds us that experiences we would like to revisit or re-experience were probably valuable precisely because they were “What it was that once.” In the end she counsels: “Try/ to acknowledge the next/ song in its body-halo of flames, as utterly/ present, as now or never” (*This Great Unknowing*).

In “Translucence,” one of the best poems in her posthumous collection (from which Paul Lacey chose the volume’s title), the speaker celebrates “the new life” she sees in those whom she calls holy: “This great unknowing/ is part of their holiness.” These are individuals through whose “translucence,” she says, “resurrection” reveals itself. “They are always trying/ to share out joy as if it were cake or water,/ something ordinary, not rare at all.” Such is a measure of the vision Denise Levertov offers to our overwrought and overstimulated world. ▲

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Excerpts from the poetry of Denise Levertov.
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'Summa' 2.0

A new generation reads Aquinas

BY HOLLY TAYLOR COOLMAN

Late have I loved him—or later, at least, than a lot of people. I was 27 years old when I first sat down to read the work of St. Thomas Aquinas seriously. At that point, having grown up in the Bible-soaked world of evangelicalism, and having gone off to earn degrees in philosophy and literature, I felt that I understood the Bible and the Western intellectual tradition, at least in broadest outline, as undergrads learn them. And I already had spent some time struggling to understand how these things could work together, as I tried to organize what the philosophers called “a good life.” All this, as it turns out, was the perfect set-up for my introduction to Aquinas. I recall racing through pages of the *Summa Theologiae*, feeling a kind of electric hum. Once or twice, I found myself whispering out loud, “He’s a genius.” And so, 700 years or so after Aquinas wrote the words I was reading, I had the remarkable sense that I had discovered him for the first time.

As I became a regular reader of Aquinas, I began to see the kind of overall coherence that is present in his work and in the work of only a few of the greatest synthesizing minds. Particularly in the *Summa*, a work composed at the end of his life (he died in 1274), the connections seem endless: so many sections of the text easily could be inserted as an extended footnote at any number of other points.

I marveled as he made specific connections I felt I should have seen, but had not. Since I was a child, I had known well the words of Jesus in John’s Gospel: “I no longer call you servants. I have called you friends.” A signal text, it laid the ground for real and intimate connection to God. As I made my way through Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*, though, it simply never occurred to me, as it had to Aquinas, that the detailed account of friendship outlined there made possible an even richer interpretation of the Evangelist’s account. To

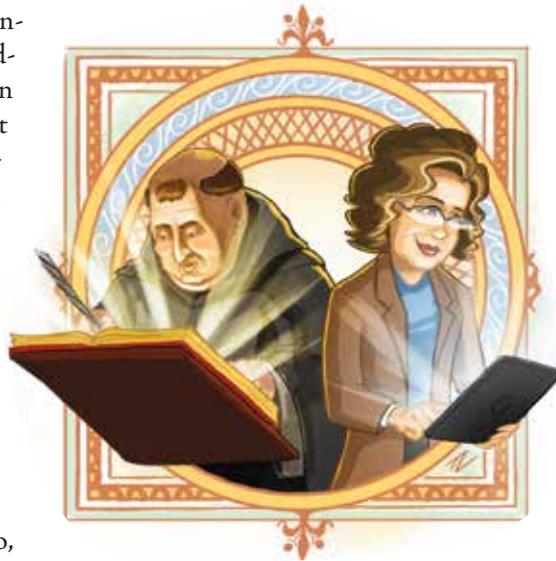
me, this sort of interrelatedness did not look like cold, mathematical logic. It looked like profound intellectual care and commitment to connection. It looked to me like someone else who was trying, as I was, to pull things together and aim for the good.

At the same time, I could see how lightly Aquinas carried his genius—a feeling sometimes at odds with my own experience in academia. As much as I loved ideas, self-importance and bickering among academics already had begun to push me away. Perhaps I was oversensitive, as so many in my generation seemed to be. Growing up just behind the revolutions of the 1960s and 1970s, and watching them become the excesses of the 1980s, I was suspicious of both systems and agendas and of those whose egos seemed closely connected to either one.

In Aquinas, though, I could see that even as he constructed a certain “system,” he was not focused on the system itself. He encourages us to aim higher while at the same time recognizing what we cannot do. The way he makes use of a principle of analogy to describe speech about God sets a parameter early on in his *Summa*: all of his complex intellectual claims may be true, more or less, but they can never be truth itself. This is more than just general modesty about intellectual pursuit. This is, for Aquinas, intimately connected to the notion of *admiratio*, an underappreciated theme in his work.

A friend well-versed in Aquinas and in medieval Latin recently suggested to me that the best translation of *admiratio* may be “gobsmacked wonder.” In a sense, this is the response that Aquinas wants most of all to make room for. Desire for God permeates the whole endeavor. Yet this focus does not leave earthly things behind. It leads one to deal not with God in isolation, but with “all things in light of God.”

Seen in this light, it is not just God, but all those we encounter and, in the end, all of creation that demand our *admiratio*. They exceed us even as we are a part of them. Although many of us have the inclination and the leisure to do a lot of thinking about this, our intellectual efforts,



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when done rightly, are done not in a sterile way but in wonder and delight. Appropriately enough, reading Aquinas is itself a type of formation in this process. His deployment of his powerful intellectual gifts, his simultaneous recognition of their limitations, his pointing toward the mystery beyond his own gifts—all this delivers his message and at the same time constitutes his own embodiment of it.

A Community of Beginners

It is perhaps important to note that I am not alone in this experience of reading Aquinas. My generation never memorized Thomism as a set of propositions; nor did any of us learn to breathe in a Thomistic atmosphere. We found him along the way. A new moment in the long story of Thomism is emerging, as more and more younger scholars are reading his works, seeing both old and new possibilities. Aquinas is drawing us in, in a way both like and unlike the way he has drawn people in since he was teaching in Paris.

In some cases, Aquinas also draws us toward one another. Perhaps this is not surprising. As noted above, Aquinas gives us some of the most rarefied concepts in the everyday language of friendship. The *Summa* is not written in simple, declarative paragraphs. It relies on, and actually incorporates, the form of debate and discussion with others. At the same time, it relativizes agreement in an interesting way. “We must love them both, those whose opinions we

share and those whose opinions we reject,” Aquinas says in a commentary on Aristotle. “For both have labored in the search for truth and both have helped us in the finding of it.”

Perhaps it is no accident, then, that one of my most fruitful experiences reading Aquinas developed from a small annual gathering of scholar-friends. Looking for another way to come at our practice of study, we began with certain aspects of a medieval *studium generale*, but above all, we have centered ourselves on close study of Aquinas in the context of our friendships with one another and of prayer. Our days together involve slow, careful reading of Thomistic texts, with generous doses of exploration, disagreement and questions about their relation to contemporary theological conversation, as well as regular prayer. Our evenings are set aside for unhurried meals, with a little more disagreement and a good bit more laughter. We frequently are joined by students as well, and looking for ways to befriend and mentor them has become a natural extension of our work together.

We may not be what you think of when someone speaks of “Thomists.” We ourselves are unsure whether that is what we are, and we differ among ourselves on that question. We do know that we are great fans of Aquinas and consider ourselves to be his students. At this point, 20 years after my first reading of the *Summa*, I feel as if I am still a beginner. Happily, I am in good company. ▲



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Wilhelm Lamprecht, *Père Marquette and the Indians*, 1869, Collection of the Haggerty Museum of Art, Marquette University, 00.1



For Israel

It must be said. Several months ago I received an email marked urgent from one of the professional organizations to which I belong. Addressed to “Concerned Faculty Member,” the missive urged me to sign a statement promising that I would not teach, lecture or offer any other assistance to any school located in Israel. It instructed me to participate in the campaign to boycott, divest in and sanction Israel (B.D.S.) on the grounds that Israel was an apartheid state engaged in war crimes and human rights violations against Palestinians. The message implored me to encourage the board of trustees of my institution to divest from any businesses operating in Israel or in the adjacent occupied territories. An attached photo with a hand emerging from a pile of gray rubble was captioned, “Your American tax dollars at work.” Perhaps I would like to hang the photo on the door of my office.

My reaction was simple. Why was Israel being singled out for such condemnation? Was its treatment of religious minorities less tolerant than that practiced by its neighbor Saudi Arabia? Did it fail to match the high human rights standards set by the chemical-weapons-using regime of neighboring Syria? Was the occupation of the West Bank more brutal than the longstanding illegal annexation of Tibet by the People’s Republic of China? Why weren’t Concerned Philosophers flooding our business

meetings with motions to boycott Saudi Arabia or Syria or China? Why was Israel—and Israel alone these days—singled out for such bitter ex-
coriation?

I informed my interlocutor that as a result of his plea I was applying for a Fulbright Fellowship to work in Israel, preferably at Hebrew University. I attached a photo of the stainless steel menorah I had just placed beneath the crucifix in my office.

Several weeks ago an old Presbyterian friend informed me that the B.D.S. movement had recently triumphed in the precincts of her own denomination, the Presbyterian Church-U.S.A. By a vote of 310 to 303, the church’s General Assembly had voted to disinvest in three corporations that B.D.S. activists claimed were enabling the Israeli occupation of the West Bank.

The assembly’s moderator, Heath Rada, insisted that “in no way is this [resolution] a reflection of our lack of love for our Jewish brothers and sisters,” but a boycott is an odd way to show affection. An important sign of the times, the divestment vote indicates how deeply the stigmatization of Israel has penetrated mainstream Protestantism—and there are few sectors more intellectually and economically elite within that mainstream than American Presbyterianism.

In recent days I have received three communications from Catholic organizations condemning the Israeli attack on territories within the Gaza

Strip. What is striking in all three email alerts is the omissions. Not a single missive mentions, let alone condemns, the missile attacks by Hamas, the terrorist organization currently ruling Gaza, against civilian targets in Israel. None of them mentions the bias-related murder of three Jewish teenagers in the West Bank in June.

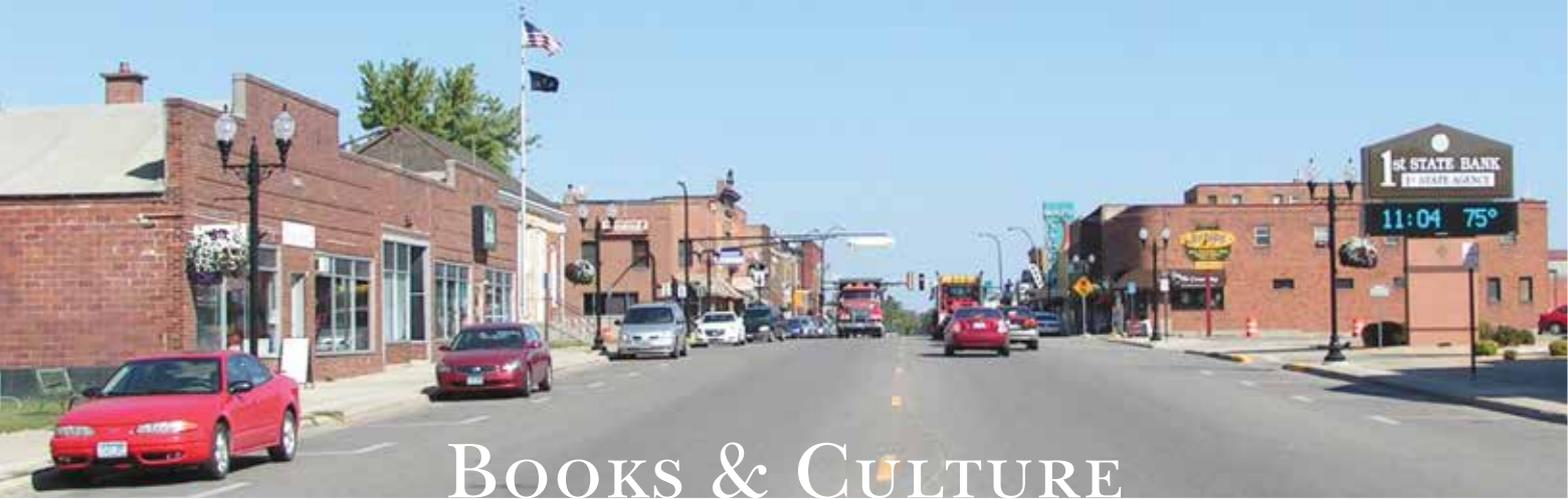
In passionate rhetoric, the statements of concern focus uniquely on the military actions of Israel, as if a series of effects had suddenly appeared without any explanatory cause. Two of these organizations encouraged a boycott of Israeli products to protest the war. I could not help but note that in its bullet-point list of action items for justice, one organization also urged its members to work to end the United States boycott of Cuba, not exactly a world leader in promoting human rights.

As imperfect as any other government, the State of Israel should not be immune from criticism. Many unilateral claims and histories will require correction through patient diplomacy if any simulacrum of peace is to be achieved in this tormented region. Every effort should be undertaken to de-escalate the current outbreak of violence and to reignite negotiations toward an equitable reconciliation. Nonetheless, our growing moral obsession with the mote in Israel’s eye is disturbing. This scapegoating suggests that an ancient, lethal prejudice has yet to die.

Why was Israel being singled out for such condemnation?

JOHN J. CONLEY

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BOOKS & CULTURE

IDEAS | ROBERT LACY

A VISIT TO MAIN STREET

At home with Sinclair Lewis

My wife and I recently drove out to Sauk Centre for an overnight stay. It's the kind of short trip we enjoy taking. The town, about 75 miles due west of the Twin Cities on Interstate 94, is the birthplace of Harry Sinclair Lewis and was immortalized by him as Gopher Prairie in his hugely successful fourth novel, *Main Street*. The book sold two million copies in its first few years, added a new term to the language and was eventually instrumental, along with *Babbitt*, *Arrowsmith* and *Elmer Gantry*, in securing for its author the Nobel Prize for Literature, the first American so honored.

When *Main Street* came out in 1920, the population of Sauk Centre was just over 3,000, which is what it is today. Main Street is still the main thoroughfare, and some of the buildings on it still look pretty much as they must have looked when young Harry Lewis walked its snowy sidewalks as a boy. Closer examination reveals, however, that many of these downtown buildings are unoccupied and "for lease" these days, most of the town's commercial activity having migrated to up near the interstate exits. The Sinclair Lewis Museum shares space with the local Chamber

of Commerce office in a small building just off the interstate. The museum occupies a couple of small rooms and consists primarily of wall displays centered around each of the major Lewis novels, with quotations from the works excerpted and highlighted along with drawings and photographs depicting characters and events from the books. There are also some period furniture pieces, including what may or may not have been a Lewis writing desk. Overall the presentation, while interesting enough, suffers from a lack of upkeep.

On the other hand, the Sinclair Lewis Boyhood Home, which sits just off Main Street and is also open to visitors most days of the week, is well maintained and boasts, in the person of a part-time volunteer named Judy, a tour guide who is knowledgeable and eager to be of help. Lewis's father was a doctor and often treated patients in a front room of the small, two-story frame house. Harry, as the youngest of three Lewis brothers, slept on a small cot in the upstairs bedroom he shared with the two older boys. The doctor had reservations about the capabilities of his youngest son. According to the Lewis biographer Richard Lingeman, he once told the older brothers, Fred

and Claude, "You boys will always be able to make a living. But poor Harry, there's nothing he can do."

Except write, apparently. By the time he was 30, Harry Sinclair Lewis was earning \$10,000 a year (\$150,000 in today's dollars) churning out short stories for *George Horace Lorimer's Saturday Evening Post* and writing novels on the side. At the height of his magazine career he was being paid \$4,000 a story by Lorimer, roughly the same amount his fellow Minnesotan F. Scott Fitzgerald was getting per story from that legendary editor. Then came *Main Street*. Lewis was 35 when the book appeared, and it made him a rich man almost overnight. According to Lingeman, "In the year 1921, if you visited the parlor of almost any boarding house, you would see a copy of *Main Street* standing between the Bible and *Ben-Hur*." Publishers Weekly would judge it to be "the bestselling novel—based on bookseller's reports—for the period 1900 through 1925," says Lingeman, "making it the book of the century, or at least the first quarter of it."

Why was *Main Street* so successful? One reason was that it had the good fortune to appear at a propitious moment in the nation's history. In retrospect, the feverish, roller-coaster period between the 20th century's two great wars seems to have been a golden era of the small town in America. The telephone, the automobile and, probably most of all, the movies had

expanded the consciousness of what had formerly been isolated rural villagers. A three-day horse and wagon trip to the nearest city had shrunk to a three-hour ride by car. Jones's Dry Goods was selling frocks just like the one worn by Joan Crawford in "Rain." Small-town residents began seeing themselves as part of a greater whole. Suddenly they were just as important to the Big Picture, or so they might let themselves imagine, as people who lived in places like Boston and Chicago, Philadelphia and New York.

Main Street anatomized this small-town life. The book was billed as satire. In it Lewis has mocking fun with the struggles of prairieland farmers and merchants caught up in such fast-moving times. Carol Kennicott, the book's central character, is a dreamy doctor's wife newly transplanted to Gopher Prairie who longs to change it into something it will never be: a cultural mecca, a shining example of modernity and advanced thinking. In her efforts to make a silk purse of this sow's ear, she is repeatedly rebuffed and frustrated. But she presses on, undeterred. At one point Lewis says of Carol, "Her eyes mothered the world." Eventually she takes up with fringe elements of the town, its hired hands and ribbon clerks, in her effort to find visionaries like herself. But these too disappoint her. "No one big enough or pitiful enough to sacrifice for," she laments to herself at night in bed. "Tragedy in neat blouses; the eternal flame all nice and safe in a kerosene stove. Neither heroic faith nor heroic guilt. Peeping at love from behind lace curtains—on Main Street!" In the end she decamps to Washington, D.C., of all places, and finds work in the federal bureaucracy. It is left to her husband, solid, stolid Will Kennicott, the doctor, to rescue her from herself and haul her back to Gopher Prairie. The novel ends with the two of them back home at last, but not before Lewis lets Carol deliver a final defiant prophecy: "If you Tories

were wise," she says to Will, speaking of him and the town's other Respectables, "you wouldn't arrest anarchists; you'd arrest all these children while they're asleep in their cribs. Think what that baby will see and meddle with before she dies in the year 2000! She may see an industrial union of the whole world, she may see aeroplanes going to Mars."

Main Street is a big, loose novel. It lumbers along for more than 500 pages, with not much story, not much plot. But it is filled with canny observations about the nature of small-town life on the Minnesota prairie at that point in history, with the future pushing up hard against the past, causing the present to reverberate. It had to have been this dawning realization on the part of Americans everywhere that "the times they are a-changing" that caused the book to find such overwhelming popular favor. The novel's opening sentences set the stage and make the point: "On a hill by the Mississippi where Chippewas camped two generations ago, a girl stood in relief against the cornflower blue of the Northern sky. She saw no Indians now; she saw flour-mills and the blinking windows of skyscrapers in Minneapolis and St. Paul." The girl is Carol Kennicott, and soon she will be a new bride out in Gopher Prairie, trying to bring, if not skyscrapers, at least some semblance of this bold spirit to her new home.

It was a fine fall day in late October when my wife and I drove out to Sauk Centre for our brief visit. Fall is maybe Minnesota's best season. The air was crisp and clear, with no hint yet of what

might be in store come December. The fields around the town were green, the crops were in, the silos filled. Inside the Sinclair Lewis Museum two women were on duty, one, the older, out front at the building's reception desk, and the other, much younger, back in the small Chamber of Commerce office. As we were leaving I asked the older

woman what preparations were being made for the coming centennial anniversary of the publication of *Main Street*. "It's only six years off, you know," I said, "and the whole world's likely to be showing up out here for the occasion." The woman said she wasn't sure but she thought the Sinclair Lewis Society, which is headquartered at a college

in Illinois, had something planned. Our talk brought the younger woman out of her office in back, and it was clear from the look on her face that the coming centennial was news to her. She was in her 20s, about the age Carol Kennicott would have been when she first arrived in Gopher Prairie, and she seemed a little alarmed by what she had overheard. It was apparent that

centennial preparation hadn't been big on her radar, and her look communicated that she suddenly feared that it may

now have to be. As we said our good-byes to the two of them, she stood a bit apart from her colleague, figuratively wringing her hands.

"So long," my wife said brightly. "Maybe we'll see you again in six years."

Possibly it was my imagination, but the younger woman appeared to gulp.



Sinclair Lewis.
Opposite page: Sauk Centre

ON THE WEB

John Anderson reviews the film "Boyhood." americamagazine.org/film

ROBERT LACY is the author of *The Natural Father*, a book of short stories.

TRADITIONS OF CONSCIENCE

THE AMERICAN CONSTITUTION AND RELIGION

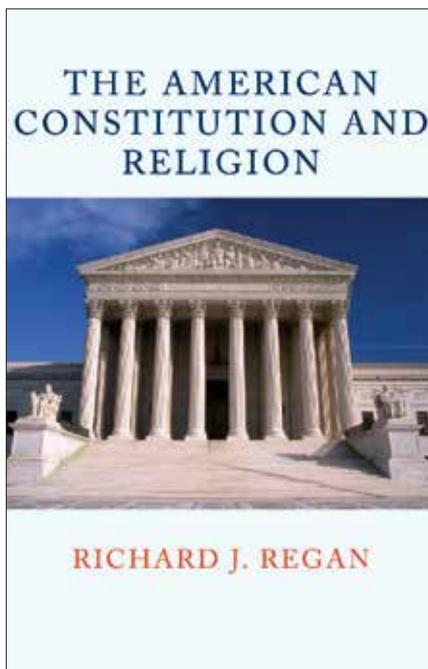
By Richard J. Regan
The Catholic University of America Press.
304p \$24.95

I admire the gumption of Richard J. Regan, S.J., who attempts and pretty well succeeds at making sense of the U.S. Supreme Court's jurisprudence on the First Amendment's free exercise and establishment clauses. Those few words, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof" have generated more judicial ink than any other part of our Constitution.

Unfortunately, for an entity whose appointed task is to make sense of all these judicial opinions, the U.S. Supreme Court itself has recognized that its First Amendment decisions are far from consistent. As Justice Clarence Thomas said in his concurrence in the Elk Grove School District (pledge of allegiance) case, "Our jurisprudential confusion has led to results that can only be described as silly. In County of Allegheny...for example, the Court distinguished between a crèche on the one hand and an 18-foot Chanukah menorah placed near a 45-foot Christmas tree on the other. The Court held that the first display violated the Establishment Clause but that the second did not."

Silly it may be, but it is still the law, as decreed by the highest court in the land. Regan wades into this swamp of self-declared judicial silliness in *The American Constitution and Religion*, which is his compelling attempt to make sense of things. It is a credit to Regan's encompassing scholarship and analytical ability that he by and

large succeeds at this task. Regan establishes in his first chapter how the American constitutional regime works, explaining that it has been a judicial function ever since Chief Justice Marshall established the principle in *Marbury v. Madison* (1803) to say



what the Constitution is. Well and good, but who prevents the justices of our Supreme Court from rewriting the Constitution in the guise of interpreting it, or, as Regan asks, "Who will watch over the guardians?"

Great question, but as Regan implies, without saying, the answer is no one. True, Congress can write new laws when the Supreme Court renders a terrible decision, and Regan explains that Congress did precisely that with the Religious Freedom Restoration Act after Justice Antonin Scalia's opinion in

Employment Division v. Smith eviscerated the constitutional protection that churches and religious people had always enjoyed under the compelling interest test. (Regan is too kind to say it was a terrible decision.) But when it is a matter of constitutional interpretation, the court will always have the last word. They are, as the justices themselves have said, not final because they are infallible, but infallible because they are final.

Certainly, as Regan explains in his jaunt through the history of the state aid to religious school cases in Chapter Four, there was for too long a complete lack of consistency in the court's jurisprudence on this, as on many other First Amendment issues. Regan writes, "On the one hand...the Court, by distinguishing the secular and religious functions of church-affiliated colleges and universities, has upheld direct aid to the colleges and universities for the construction of buildings exclusively devoted to secular uses. On the other hand, the Court, by failing to separate the secular and religious functions of church-related elementary and secondary schools, has disallowed direct aid to the schools for teaching secular subjects. On the one hand, the Court has upheld lending secular textbooks to students attending parochial schools. On the other hand, the Court...disallowed lending other secular instructional material [maps and globes] to such students."

It was in the context of aid to religious schools that the court came up with the well named Lemon test (Regan consistently calls it the Schempp-Lemon test) that prevented most aid to religiously affiliated schools. They did this on the constitutional theory that the steps required to make sure that neutral aid did not go for sectarian purposes would involve the government

ON THE WEB

The Catholic Book Club discusses a new book on Thomas Aquinas.
americamagazine.org/cbc

in an impermissible entanglement with religion that would prevent the aid in the first place, a classic judicial Catch-22.

Justice Scalia wrote, "As to the Court's evocation of the Lemon test: Like some ghoul in a late-night horror movie that repeatedly sits up in its grave and shuffles abroad, after repeatedly being killed and buried, Lemon stalks our Establishment clause jurisprudence once again, frightening the little child and school attorneys...."

Regan, correctly I think, believes, as does Scalia, that Schempp-Lemon is a dud and that there is no real constitutional barrier to aid to religious schools for purely secular functions. The implication of Regan's analysis of the school aid cases, then, is that there was more than just judicial analysis going on in these inconsistent decisions by which state aid was consistently denied to Catholic parochial

schools. This raises the question that Regan asked earlier, "Who will watch over the guardians?"

The American Constitution and Religion provides a rather complete tour of the U.S. Supreme Court's First Amendment jurisprudence from the crèche and aid cases mentioned above to church property and employment cases to flag salute and conscientious objection cases. In some places, Regan's approach is more summative than analytical, but then it is tough to analyze inconsistency. The book ends with a fine chapter on Western traditions of conscience which, strictly speaking, is off the book's central topic, but I was happy to have Regan's erudite and engaging thoughts on this matter. Like the rest of his book, it was a highly informative and enjoyable exercise.

NICHOLAS P. CAFARDI is a professor of law at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pa.

historian and professor, who gratefully begins a second life when his first wife leaves him for a woman, throwing him into a vortex of self-doubt. Assorted neighbors, acquaintances, forbears and pets drift through these stories to form a composite portrait of this artist, Nina, as she negotiates pancreatic cancer and makes the transition from this world to the next.

If some of these incidents carry a whiff of soap opera, Cherry brings to them a poetic sensibility, a sincerity of purpose and a distinctiveness of vision that strive to transcend the trite and the mawkish. She begins with a prologue, "On Familiar Terms," that in brief and vivid vignettes introduces the many characters that become familiar and more fully developed in the subsequent stories. The prologue may be more accessible, less elusive to those who have read Cherry's earlier volumes, but for those who have not, a judicious strategy might be to reread it after finishing the collection in order to bring Cherry's literary landscape into clearer, sharper focus.

The eight tales and the epilogue that follow vary in style, content and length. (The shortest runs three pages; the longest, 26.) One of the most compelling is "The Only News That Matters," in

which Conrad, a character who turns out to be tangential to Nina's experience—he's a neighbor and a colleague of Palmer's—obsessively reads *The New York Times*, watches CNN and MSNBC and keeps a journal, Harper's Magazine "Findings"-style, month by month, on the most noteworthy (usually cataclysmic) events. This fixation on the present is

his way of suppressing a tragic event in his past, of repressing his grief and

DENNIS VELLUCCI

MEETING ONE'S SELF

A KIND OF DREAM Stories

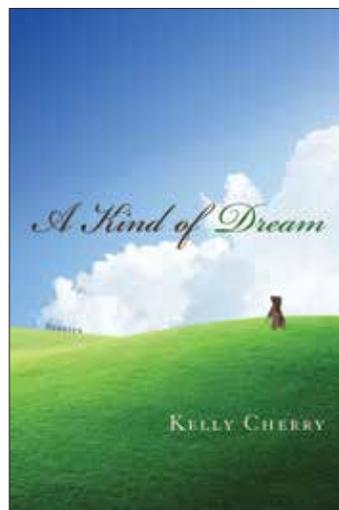
By Kelly Cherry

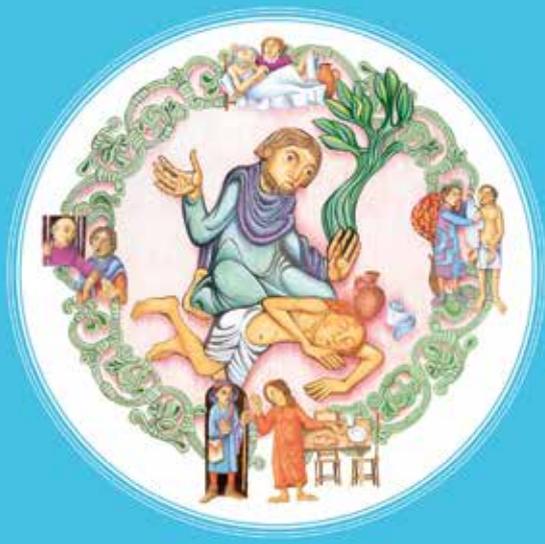
University of Wisconsin Press. 176p
\$26.95

In this collection of interrelated, multi-generational stories, *A Kind of Dream*, Kelly Cherry explores themes of family, creativity and mortality. Though it is the third of a trilogy, preceded by *My Life and Dr. Joyce Brothers* and *The Society of Friends: Stories*, *A Kind of Dream* is intended to stand alone and self-contained, as its separate narratives and varied points of view eventually resolve themselves into the consciousness of one character, Nina, a writer of some repute who is facing the end of her life.

What a life it has been! Nina has adopted and raised her 14-year-old

niece's daughter, Octavia, who, as a child, suffers trauma when she witnesses a beloved librarian gunned down by a madman but goes on to become a passionate artist and single mother to the precocious, spirited and biracial Callie. The niece, BB, having fled from Wisconsin to California, becomes a celebrated film star married to an equally successful director, but suffers personal tragedy as a desperately longed-for child dies shortly after birth, causing her to seek a reunion with the daughter (Octavia) she had abandoned 26 years earlier. In middle age, Nina marries Palmer, a





— 2014-2015 —

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AUGUST 3, 2014
Matthew 14:13-21
Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

AUGUST 17, 2014
Matthew 15:21-28
Cure of the Canaanite Woman

NOVEMBER 1, 2014
(ALL SAINTS DAY)
Matthew 5:1-12
The Beatitudes

NOVEMBER 23, 2014
Matthew 25:31-46
The Last Judgment

FEBRUARY 8, 2015
Mark 1:29-39
Cure of Peter's Mother-in-Law
(Sunday before World Day of the Sick)

FEBRUARY 15, 2015
Mark 1:40-45
Cure of the Leper



For more information

Contact Brian Smith, CHA senior director, mission integration and leadership formation, at bsmith@chausa.org or (314) 253-3503.

taking an odd sort of comfort in news, however awful, of more universal significance. "So many current events, so little comprehension of the self," the narrator comments. Only by confronting his past and giving full expression to sadness and loss can Conrad be fully present to those he loves now.

It is this kind of insight into human nature, Cherry's understanding of how our formative experiences, our connections to others and our knowledge of ourselves play out over time, that gives her book wisdom and pathos. The character BB, for instance, is particularly well rendered; she is drawn with precision and individuality and defies any preconceptions one may have of either teen mothers or Hollywood stars. Far from being sorry for herself or spoiled or entitled, she acknowledges that any success she has had is due to good fortune, and any suffering due to her own bad choices. Her patience, grace and resilience in "The Autobiography of My Mother(s)," in which she returns to Nina and Octavia without apology or self-pity or self-flagellation, lift the story safely out of the pit of melodrama into which the subject matter might have caused it to topple and infuse it instead with admirable, clear-eyed, matter-of-fact authenticity.

Alas, not all the stories manage quite so successfully to avoid sentimentality and contrivance. A vision of being guided into heaven in lively and philosophical conversation with the dogs one has raised in one's lifetime, or a character's definition of love as "two people trying to walk side by side on a busy sidewalk," may put off readers who bristle at any trace of the maudlin. But these touches emerge naturally from the characters' experiences and worldviews. Cherry is true to the people who inhabit her fiction. She treats her characters without condescension, and honors in them even what outsiders might see as limitations.

This is especially true of Nina,

who after all is a writer of fiction and who invites the question of fiction as autobiography in "Faith, Hope and Clarity," which examines the process and craft of writing. If the other stories are meant to represent Nina's life work, then questionable stylistic choices like the occasional cliché ("stopped in her tracks," "a dime a dozen"), or the labored metaphor ("Lightning slashed the sky the way Tony Perkins had slashed Janet Leigh in 'Psycho'") or the infelicitous stereotype (a Japanese businessman actually says things like, "Velly interesting" and "Ahsō") are functions of the character (Nina), not the writer (Cherry).

Indeed, when read as a collection of narratives that the character, Nina, has conjured, *A Kind of Dream* becomes a richer and more complex work than when read otherwise, but because

Cherry does not explicitly invoke Nina's point of view until the eighth of the 10 pieces, her intent is unclear. Yet in "Faith, Hope and Clarity," Nina uses her own name as the name of a character, and quotes a writer named Phillip Routh (not Roth, we are cautioned): "The main purpose of one's double was to show you yourself or what you're about to become." Whether or not Nina is Cherry's doppelgänger or avatar, what is clear is the kinship Cherry feels with her, even as Nina contemplates death. "The dead are not all dead," Nina writes. "They are alive and well and having a riotous time in your own mind." So, it seems, are the imaginary figures that populate *A Kind of Dream*.

DENNIS VELLUCCI is an administrator at Archbishop Molloy High School in New York City.

MARK J. DAVIS

WHAT WENT WRONG

THE STRUGGLE FOR IRAQ'S FUTURE

How Corruption, Incompetence and Sectarianism Have Undermined Democracy

By Zaid Al-Ali
Yale University Press. 304p \$35

When the United States invaded Iraq in 2003, many exiled Iraqis expressed the cautious hope that the U.S. occupation would wind down in a few years and that the country would become a viable democracy. For Zaid Al-Ali, whose family had left Iraq before he was born, this meant leaving a lucrative commercial litigation and arbitration legal practice in Paris in 2005 to work for the United Nations in Iraq drafting a legal framework for the Iraqi parliament, judiciary and executive agencies. After five years, however, the political situation became so hopeless that Zaid decided he had no choice but to leave Iraq. He emigrated

to Cairo. *The Struggle for Iraq's Future* explains from an Iraqi's perspective what went wrong and offers modest technical proposals to reform the country's legal framework and reduce sectarian tension.

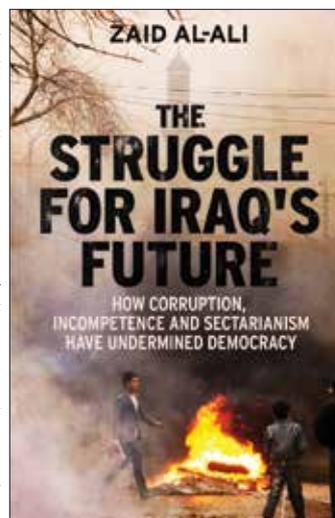
American readers are by now familiar with the history of the second Bush administration's invasion of Iraq in March 2003 with the stated goal of eliminating weapons of mass destruction. Not only were the weapons never found; the Coalition Provisional Authority—the governing authority of the U.S.-led occupation—made several colossal errors that increased sectarian violence and delayed the transition to Iraqi rule. The C.P.A. had no plan to control the looting of government

ministries and museums, and backed Iraqi exiles—notably Ahmed Chalabi, a banker who fled Jordan in the wake of shadowy financial transactions—who lacked visible support by the Iraqi population. L. Paul Bremer, the C.P.A. head, later conceded in his memoirs that the Iraqi exiles "couldn't organize a parade, let alone run the country."

Overruling a U.S. State Department plan to restructure and retain the Iraqi military, the C.P.A., under the direction of the Pentagon, dissolved the army, thereby creating a pool of unemployed soldiers available to join the insurgency, and banned the Baath party from government work. As implemented by Chalabi, the de-Baathification order added to the ranks of the unemployed and left state agencies without skilled workers to provide basic services. This litany of mistakes was, according to Zaid, "a lot to swallow," for any Iraqi considering working with the C.P.A. in the nation's reconstruction. Many Iraqis stayed away or joined the insurgency.

The C.P.A.'s misguided focus on divisions in Iraq between the majority Shiites and the minority Sunnis became manifest when it insisted on a strict sectarian formula for determining the membership of the committee that drafted the 2005 constitution. Although, according to Zaid, Iraq lacked a history of sectarian violence, the C.P.A. made such violence a self-fulfilling prophecy by creating an unrepresentative and secretive committee.

Apart from the C.P.A.'s numerous miscalculations, Zaid primarily focuses on the Iraqis' corruption and environmental mismanagement, which



he terms the second and third insurgencies. Zaid believes that by 2008 most Iraqis were rejecting the ethnic politics of the extreme religious parties and occupying the moderate center. However, Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki rejected calls for national unity and returned to sectarian-style politics following his Dawa Party's poor showing in the parliamentary elections of March 2010. Zaid explains how Maliki stirred religious animosities as an excuse to seize control of the army and internal security apparatus and to systematically purge the government of Sunni opponents. When the last U.S. combat forces left the country on Dec. 18, 2011, Maliki's first act was to call for the arrest of Vice President Tariq al-Hashemi, the highest-ranking Sunni official. Not surprisingly, the country has experienced an upsurge in sabotage and killings since U.S. forces have left and can no longer influence Maliki's moves against his opponents.

This is a complicated story to tell and Zaid's dense narrative is sometimes difficult to follow. His writing style is less than graceful and occasionally suffers from jargon. He sometimes presents a blizzard of details

and at other times does not provide sources for his assertions, as when he reports what former exiles felt when they returned. On the other hand, the reader can trust Zaid's eyewitness accounts of his meetings and conversations with Iraqi tribal heads, religious leaders and ordinary citizens.

The general reader will have difficulty understanding the background of Iraq's political parties and their relationship to broader regional politics. In particular, Zaid does not explain Iran's influence over the Dawa party and Maliki's associations with Iranian agents, many of whom have participated in murders of U.S. diplomats and soldiers in the region. In fact, Zaid scarcely mentions Iran at all, except to explain the need for regional cooperation in preventing dust storms and preserving wetlands.

Zaid also ignores the role of the U.S. embassy in engineering Maliki's election as prime minister in 2006, a story Dexter Filkins recently told in *The New Yorker*. Filkins explains that the United States was eager to replace Ibrahim al-Jafaari, whom the Bush administration regarded as indecisive and unable to stem sectarian violence, with another Shiite. The C.I.A. vetted

Maliki as "clean." Ironically, Maliki has spent a clandestine career supporting Iran and opposing U.S. interests in the cause of fighting the entrenched Iraqi Sunni minority, a record that contradicts Zaid's downplaying of sectarian divisions. Perhaps it is Zaid's readiness to assign primary responsibility for the mess to Iraqis rather than the United States that explains his failure to hold the United States fully accountable for its manipulation of Maliki's election and his ensuing attack on fragile Iraqi institutions.

Given the gravity of the problems Zaid describes, the remedies he proposes seem very small and unlikely to restore calm and permit the country to function. He proposes, for example, that political parties refrain from hate speech, a sound idea, but one unlikely to curb Maliki's eagerness to destroy his Sunni opponents. Zaid also suggests that a more representative body of Iraqis redraft the 2005 constitution, a proposal that raises the question of how democratic institutions can function when regime opponents are being methodically eliminated.

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Holy Ghost Story

NINETEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (A), AUG. 10, 2014

Readings: 1 Kgs 19:9–13; Ps 85:9–14; Rom 9:1–5; Mt 14:22–33

“Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid” (Mt 14:27)

If you examine older English translations of the Bible, like the Douay-Rheims or the King James Version, a quick search offers you more than 100 instances of the word *ghost* in each version. Most often these Bibles are translating the Greek phrase *hagios pneuma* as “Holy Ghost,” while current translations always render it as “Holy Spirit.” The word *ghost* in modern versions generally translates the Greek word *phantasma*, found in the Gospel passages relating to Jesus walking on the water, as in Mt 14:26. When you look at this verse in the Douay-Rheims and the King James versions, neither of them has “ghost,” but “apparition” and “spirit,” respectively.

Much of this has to do with how the meaning of words changes from generation to generation. Raised as much of my generation was on a steady diet of cartoon ghosts, ghost stories and Halloween costumes made out of bed sheets, the phrase “Holy Ghost” no longer carried a connotation of holiness or the spiritual. But neither did the specter of fear necessarily attach itself to the word ghost. However one translates *phantasma*, whether as ghost, apparition or spirit, it is clear that this word did not point to a normal bodily entity for the apostles, and the thought of this *phantasma* walking toward them on the water created terror among them. For, “when the disciples saw him walking on the sea they

were terrified. ‘It is a ghost,’ they said, and they cried out in fear.”

The presence of the unknown or the strange truly does create fear, with which the apostles struggled as do most of us, but in this encounter Jesus intended to reveal something of his divinity to his disciples. It is not primarily Jesus’ miraculous walking on the water that is revelatory, though it does reveal God’s authority over nature. The deeper revelation is in Jesus’ words to the fearful apostles: “Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid.” The Greek phrase translated “It is I” is *egô eimi*, “I am,” which was an expression of self-identification for God in the Old Testament, as in Ex 3:14, where God said to Moses, “I am who I am.” Jesus attempts to calm their fear by identifying God’s presence in the midst of the storm and, even more acutely, God’s presence in Jesus’ own being. God is with them in the flesh.

Peter appears to accept Jesus’ command at face value and trusts that it is not a *phantasma* but Jesus who has called out to them. Peter began to walk on the water, but fear arose once again when the windstorm became stronger and Peter’s resolve wavered. Yet even as Peter began to sink in the waves, a consequence, says Jesus, of “little faith” or doubt, Peter retained in his little faith the wherewithal to call out to Jesus:

“Lord, save me!” It is an interesting mix of doubt, which leads him to sink, and residual faith, which allows him to seek salvation in the midst of his sinking. Not just Peter, but all those who were in the boat and witnessed these events “did him homage,” a word evoking worship, and they called Jesus “the Son of God.” Jesus has revealed power over nature and the forces of cha-

os; but even more important, he has revealed his divine nature and the ability to save when all seems lost.

Most of us have not experienced God’s divine presence as profoundly as the apostles, and they were overcome by doubt and fear. They



PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

When have you experienced God’s presence in the storm or in the calm?

feared that their senses were deceiving them and that what they were witnessing was just a terrifying ghost. And yet this is where the ghost story becomes most interesting. God does not always come to us in the flesh, or in the storm, or in chaos. God is revealed in numerous ways. Elijah came to a cave on Mount Horeb, the mountain of God, to encounter God, but God was not present in the windstorm, or the earthquake, or the fire, but in “a tiny whispering sound.” After Elijah heard this sound, he “went and stood at the entrance of the cave” to be attentive to God’s presence. It was in the calm after the storm that God was revealed in the quietness. The spirit of God came to Elijah in a spiritual, one might even say a ghostly manner.

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Everyone Belongs

TWENTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (A), AUG. 17, 2014

Readings: Is 56:1–7; Ps 67:2–8; Rom 11:13–32; Mt 15:21–28

“Send her away, for she keeps calling out after us” (Mt 15:23)

Some people just do not belong. They might be annoying, they might not “fit,” or they might not be the “right” sort of person. I think you know who I am talking about. That’s right. You and me. The vast majority of people in the church today would not have met the criteria set by the apostles for the Canaanite woman who came to find healing for her daughter, who was “tormented by a demon.” The disciples ask Jesus to “send her away, for she keeps calling out after us,” and while Jesus does not send the Canaanite woman away, he does say to her, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

Why did she not belong? Let’s start with three reasons: she’s a woman, she’s a Canaanite, or Gentile, and she’s annoying because “she keeps calling out after us.” While only half of us are women, most of us are Gentiles and, if we are honest, most of us are annoying at least some of the time. Jesus says that he was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel, excluding Gentiles, and he compares the Canaanite woman to a dog, which seems derogatory even if the term denotes a small house pet. It is clear that this woman does not belong, but why would Gentiles not be welcome to Jesus’ ministry and healing?

Jesus had gone “to the district of Tyre and Sidon,” a Gentile region, so one might expect to encounter Gentiles there. It makes Jesus’ claim that he “was sent only to the lost sheep of the house

of Israel” puzzling, though it is a claim made elsewhere (Mt 10:6). These statements, however, must be balanced with the Great Commission of Mt 28:19, in which the church is instructed to “go therefore and make disciples of all nations.” It points to two realities in salvation history: that the descendants of Abraham, the Israelites, were chosen to enter into a special covenant relationship with God; and that sometime in the future this covenant was to expand to include all the nations.

The prophet Isaiah reflects this latter tradition when he prophesies about Gentiles “who keep the Sabbath free from profanation and hold to my covenant, then I will bring to my holy mountain and make joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be acceptable on my altar, for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.”

Isaiah and many other prophets spoke of a time when all the nations would be welcomed into the covenant, but when and how this would take place would be realized in the course of salvation history. In the ministry of Jesus and the church we see the prophecy of Isaiah coming to fruition.

Jesus might indeed be inciting the Canaanite woman, and his disciples, to a recognition of this new moment in salvation history by evoking her faith in the God of the Jews. At first Jesus does not answer the woman; then he tells her he has come only for the lost

sheep of the house of Israel; and finally he says, “It is not right to take the food of the children and throw it to the dogs.” But her faith that Jesus can and will act on behalf of her daughter remains intact.

Some have suggested that perhaps Jesus’ realization of his ministry to the Gentiles is unfolding in this encounter, in which she hears words of rejection but nevertheless stands her ground as a woman, a Canaanite and a mother.

Jesus lauds her great faith when she tells him that “even the dogs eat the scraps that fall from the table of their masters.” But it would not be too long a period before the church became a predominantly Gentile institution and the sense of wonder that even the Gentiles could be saved would be lost on the church. At an early point the Apostle Paul had to warn his fellow Christians that “this welcoming of the Gentiles

PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Reflect on the disciples’ encounter with the Canaanite woman. Whom do we attempt to exclude from God’s presence today?

does not indicate a rejection of the Israelites” but that “the gifts and the call of God” to the Israelites “are irrevocable.” God’s plan in welcoming the Gentiles was not to exclude Israel, just as God’s election of Israel was intended ultimately to welcome all humanity into the family of God. It is difficult for us, because we so often desire to divide the world into us and them, to remember that our salvation is dependent not upon the sort of people we are but upon the mercy of God, which is for all people.

JOHN W. MARTENS

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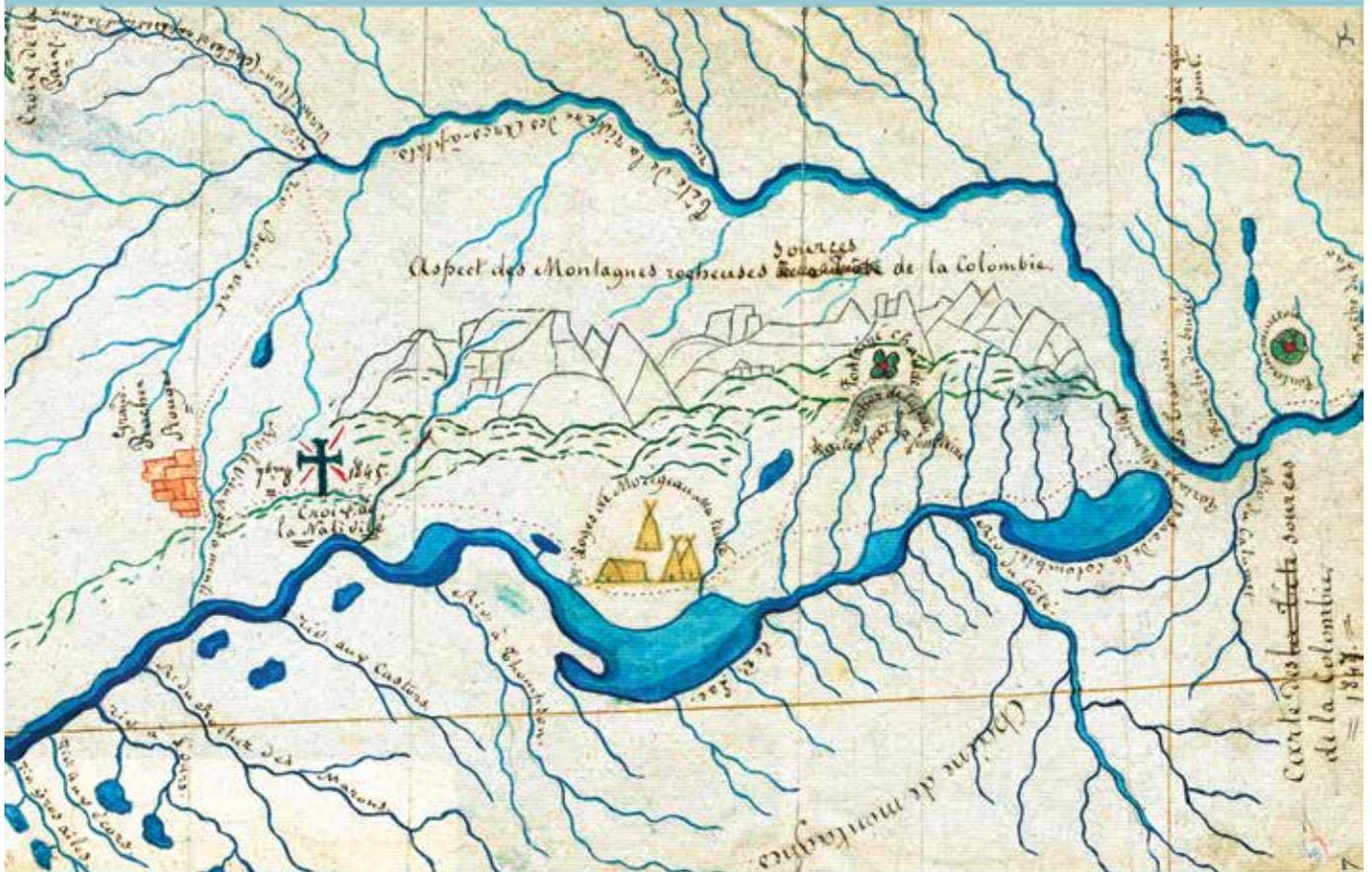
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