

America



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Living Waters

“Then God said: Let there be a dome in the middle of the waters, to separate one body of water from the other. God made the dome, and it separated the water below the dome from the water above the dome. And so it happened.”

The upper expanse became the sky, says the Book of Genesis, while the lower expanse formed the seas and oceans. Both waters flow from the same source, but they have different ends, which determine the different ways in which we experience them. St. Ignatius Loyola had a related insight: Everything in creation is good only insofar as it has within it the power of calling forth from us a deeper response to God and to one another.

The most recent issue of **America** included a feature story by Sonja Livingston about a ministry that uses fan boats to transport the Eucharist in procession through the backwaters of a Southern Louisiana bayou. Led by the Rev. Michael Champagne, the ministry team uses the waterway as an avenue of grace, bringing confession, the Eucharist and, presumably, even the waters of baptism to the people they serve.

That’s one expanse of water. Another is the expanse of water that currently covers Houston, Tex., and large swaths of the Gulf Coast. Those waters brought forth one of the most destructive natural events in U.S. history. Yet the rising floodwaters of Hurricane Harvey also carried ministers of life, first responders, national guardsmen and concerned neighbors, people whose life-saving actions testify to the best in human beings. “When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news,” the Rev. Fred Rogers once said, “my mother would say to me, ‘Look for

the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.’”

Two forms of water; two ways of looking at the same water; yet all have the same source: the one God, living and true, who even now presides over the world he spoke into being, a world marked by as much light as darkness, as much life as death. That’s cause for hope.

This was all on my mind when we received the following report last week from Jeff Johnson, S.J., the president of Strake Jesuit High School in Houston. He wrote this from the eye of Hurricane Harvey. It deserves a wide readership, so I include it here, along with our prayers for him and all his neighbors.

Matt Malone, S.J., editor in chief;
Twitter: @Americaeeditor

•••

Words fail to describe what has been happening here in Houston. The rain brought by Hurricane Harvey has not stopped for four days, but our support and care for one another seem limitless.

I have received many calls and emails of support from Jesuit apostolates all over the country, and we deeply appreciate the prayers and promises of help. Much help will be needed in the weeks and months after this storm moves on. As of now, our Strake Jesuit families have been reaching out to one another and their neighbors as they can. Yesterday, one of our freshmen, Declan Conner, along with some other Strake Jesuit boys, was navigating his fishing boat through the streets of his neighborhood rescuing people trapped in their homes. You can see him in action on Twitter. He is a brave young man and I cannot tell

you how proud of him I am.

No one will be surprised to know that our Jesuit family is responding generously. I have had faculty and staff members offer to leave their own families and help in any way they can. As always, I am amazed by our team—they continually prove to be “for others” at their core.

Several of our families woke this morning to new orders to evacuate their homes, but some of them are trapped. We are offering shelter here at the school, where it is still dry and safe, but getting around the city is a great challenge.

We are in the midst of this mess. It feels too early to reflect on this situation or offer pats on the back, and I am afraid there is more to come. Nonetheless, in my prayers, I am filled with gratitude that people are so generous and concerned for us. It means a lot to hear of the prayers of others from all over the country. Our Jesuit community—composed of Jesuits from Strake Jesuit and Cristo Rey Jesuit—has been praying quite a bit and we have celebrated Mass each day and will continue to do so as a community of prayer. I have found tremendous strength in this.

I was very moved to hear from Jesuit High School in New Orleans. A few years ago, we were able to help them out in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. We are connected by this bond of mutual support, and they are eager to make good on this bond. I am so thankful for their generosity.

Please keep praying for us. It truly helps. It helps us keep our resolve and renew our faith in God who cares so deeply for us.



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I AM A CONSERVATIVE LATINA
Can I find a place in today's Republican Party?

Ashleen Menchaca-Bagnulo

Pakistani commuters travel on a flooded street following a heavy rainfall in Karachi, Pakistan, Aug. 31. Monsoon rains left at least eight people dead. The destruction came on the heels of days-long downpours in neighboring India.

AP Photo/Shakil Aidi

(Cover: composite image, iStockphoto.com/America)



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Should Confederate statues in public spaces be destroyed?

When asked how Confederate statues in public spaces should be treated, 23 percent of reader respondents told **America** that these statues should be destroyed. One reader said, “[Today] these statues are symbols of white supremacy being used to bring together hate groups. They must come down.”

Alternatively, 10 percent argued for more historical context to be added to plaques on statues, and 6 percent said that Confederate statues in public spaces should be left alone. Henry Lance of Clover, S.C., chose the latter option because he doubted that removing the statues would change anything. “Removing the statues will not remove the hate that now abounds in the corners of what seems to be every heart,” said Mr. Lance.

The majority (62 percent) of **America’s** reader sample told us that Confederate statues should be removed from public spaces and moved to new locations, like museums or cemeteries. “While they are odious, destroying the statues outright is like trying to sweep our racist past under the rug. If they go into museums, we can’t pretend they never existed,” said Lyn Belzer of Baltimore, Md. From California, Rachel Pickett also selected this option. “Statues in public places are treated like monuments, a way to remember what we value,” she said. “The Confederacy told us explicitly...that the Civil War was about slavery. Slavery is our national shame, not something we value. Statues of Confederates should be in museums, where we can go to learn about our country’s mistakes.”

HOW SHOULD CONFEDERATE STATUES IN PUBLIC SPACES BE TREATED?

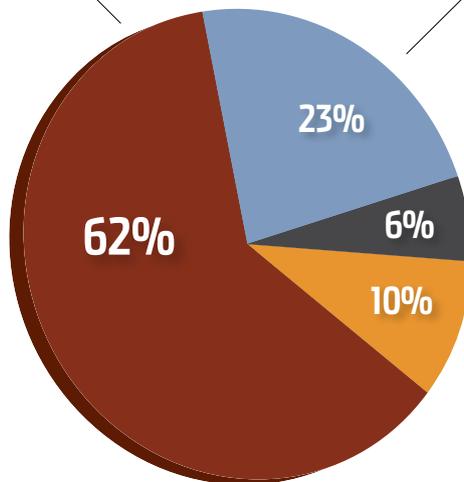
■ THEY SHOULD BE PLACED IN NEW LOCATIONS

“As our country evolves, so should the representation of our history.”
Rachel, Boston, Mass.

“Statues that occupy prominent places in public spaces should be removed. Their presence tells African-Americans and other people of color that they don’t belong. Maybe historical context could be given to the empty pedestals, or the pedestals could be occupied by statues of Americans who fought to lift up all people.”
Sarah, Corvallis, Ore.

“I think destroying them is a waste and can get logistically tricky, but they shouldn’t be in public spaces. Historical context in plaques doesn’t work because most people don’t look at those.”
Ana, San Antonio, Tex.

“Museums are the best place for Confederate statues because museums are equipped to provide historical perspective. We have to keep the dialogue going.”
Susan, Sacramento, Calif.



■ THEY SHOULD BE DESTROYED

“These statues make a symbolic statement for white supremacy. Destroying them makes a symbolic statement against it. I fear that putting them in museums still invites too much veneration.”
R.J., Berkeley, Calif.

■ THEY SHOULD BE LEFT ALONE

“America has some dark spots in its history—removing a statue doesn’t erase the history... Plaques should be added to give context to the statues and explain the history.”
Stephanie, N.J.

HOW SHOULD DECISIONS BE MADE?

Local referenda (including community meetings/debates beforehand)	41%
Protests and demonstrations	5%
Appointed commissions	21%
Mayors and/or municipal councils	33%

These results are based on reader responses to a poll promoted on Facebook, Twitter and in our email newsletter. Because of rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.

Love, Peace, Justice

Re “Catholics Must Combat Bigotry at Every Turn” (Our Take, 9/4): Thank you, editors, for your words. As an African-American Catholic, I am deeply concerned about the recent events in our country. It is time for our church families to come together to stand for the Gospel values of love, peace and justice. Let us together work to build the kingdom of God.

Boreta Singleton

Online Comment

Common Goal

Re “Out of Many, One,” by Matt Malone, S.J. (Of Many Things, 9/4): I believe that Father Malone needs to recognize that some of us interpreted President Trump’s statements very differently. In my opinion, Mr. Trump was referring to how patriotism (for those in the military, in particular) encourages a unity of purpose toward a common goal, and success is often achieved because there is no room for bigotry, hatred and prejudice.

Michael Barberi

Online Comment

Loving God and Each Other

Re “When a Jew and a Catholic Marry,” by Mark Oppenheimer (9/4): Thirty-seven years ago this month, this Polish-American cradle Catholic from Ohio married a nice Jewish boy from New York. I have been very happy ever since in spite of the initial resistance from my parents and the reactions of other Catholics and Jews. As the article points out, the success of an interfaith marriage depends on the couple and their flavors of faith.

My husband was raised in a very secular household, in which his parents rarely went to a temple or celebrated the holidays. I was educated in Roman Catholic and public schools with lots of Catholics. My husband never had any interest in becoming an observant Jew or converting to Catholicism or any other form of Christianity. He supported the religious instruction of our daughters and attended watershed events at our parish with his parents.

My older daughter, who seriously considered conversion to Judaism and went on a Birthright trip to Israel, came back to the church later. With her husband, a Protestant, she is raising her sons in the church. My youngest daughter, who graduated from a Catholic high school, is receiving religious instruction at a reform temple and will

likely convert to Judaism. Go figure! We are all O.K. with each other because we love each other—differences and all. In the end, that is the most important thing: that we love God and each other.

Bonnie Weissman

Online Comment

Complicated Analysis

Re “Lawyers Lead, Pastoral Workers Lag on Pay Scale in Catholic Church,” by Michael J. O’Loughlin (9/4): I have been the chief financial officer for the Catholic Diocese of Richmond for seven years, and I worked in a similar role for the Diocese of Greensburg, Pa., for 15 years.

Catholic priests receive very good health insurance when they are active, and most dioceses purchase Medicare supplement plans for their retired priests, at no or very little cost to the priests. In addition to having comprehensive health insurance, the priests usually have very low deductibles and out of pocket expenses. While active, priests receive a number of allowances for workshops, retreats, cars and car insurance, in addition to the allowances mentioned in the article.

Two of the other benefits that are often overlooked are pensions and long-term care. Without referring to the report in this article, I imagine that nearly every priest in the United States receives a pension. Many dioceses have some sort of plan for priests who need long-term care. Assisted living and long-term care can range from \$4,000 to \$11,000 per month depending upon the level of care. The cost of long-term care insurance is very expensive.

Converting the cost of these benefits into an “annual compensation” analysis is complicated, but it can be done. In my diocese, we have done this work, and the annual cost for an active priest is in the range of \$94,000.

Michael J. McGee

Richmond, Va.

A Cherished Community

Re “When the K.K.K. came to Charlottesville,” by Nichole M. Flores (9/4): I attended the University of Virginia in Charlottesville and worked at the medical center caring for premature babies. It is a community that is dear to me. Watching the protests there chills me to my bone.

Beth Cioffoletti

Online Comment

Protecting the Confessional Seal

In a scene reminiscent of many Hollywood movies, Archbishop Denis Hart of Melbourne has announced that he would rather go to prison than report an allegation of sexual abuse he heard during a sacramental confession. “It is a sacred trust,” he told a radio station in Melbourne on Aug. 15. Archbishop Hart’s defense of the confessional seal was prompted by a report released the day before by Australia’s Royal Commission Into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse that included a recommendation to criminalize priests’ failures to report sexual abuse revealed in confession. While the commissioners noted the Catholic mandate that the seal never be broken, “we heard evidence of a number of instances where disclosures of child sexual abuse were made in religious confession, by both victims and perpetrators,” the report added.

In 2012 in Ireland, horror at the extent of sexual abuse of minors (as well as a gimlet eye toward a church that had long operated with a heavy hand in Irish civic life) led legislators to propose a similar law. Here in the United States, legislative battles have been waged from Louisiana to Massachusetts to California over “confession carve-outs” in laws that allow for exemptions to mandated reporting for sacramental confessions.

Such stories always draw media attention, in part because of our cultural obsession (not just among Catholics) with the mysteries and terrors of the confessional box. To the secular mind, the confessional seal is madness—a loophole in the law, a violation of state neutrality with regard to religion, a “medieval law” (to quote a member of the Australian Parliament), a tool for

institutional corruption and cover-up. And who, after all, wants to see abusers hide behind the sacraments?

For the Catholic Church, however, the issue is different. “The sacramental seal is inviolable,” says the 1983 Code of Canon Law, and it is “absolutely forbidden for a confessor to betray in any way a penitent in words or in any manner and for any reason.” While a priest can, and in cases where abuse is occurring should, ask a penitent to approach him “outside the sacrament” and report the abuse separately, or encourage (without compelling) an abuser or abuse victim to take his or her story to the police, to violate the sacramental seal not only would bring upon the priest an automatic excommunication, it would also damage the trust of the penitent and of other penitents.

On a sacramental level, it can hardly be otherwise—true repentance and true forgiveness are not possible if the penitent is not free to offer the former and receive the latter; and the whole point of confession is not only to communicate God’s forgiveness, but to free the penitent of the burden of his or her sin.

However well intentioned, on a practical level, it is easy to see how quickly one breach of the seal of the confessional will not only diminish the promise of sacred confidentiality on which every penitent relies, but will likely lead to a collapse of all legal protections for it. The impetus behind proposed exemptions to existing law is the conviction that the sexual abuse of minors is a crime so heinous it should not be protected by the seal. But once priests are mandated to break the seal for this crime, what is to stop various

judges and attorneys from concluding that murder too is a crime so heinous it should not be protected? What about corporate crimes that result in the defrauding of millions? If some crimes should be reported, what is the definition of a crime that should not be reported?

The Australian bishops are right: A violation of the confessional seal anywhere will become the rationale for mandating its violation everywhere.

What Does the Arpaio Pardon Mean for the Future of Civil Rights?

On Aug. 25, President Trump pardoned the former sheriff of Maricopa County, Ariz., Joe Arpaio. Ten years ago, a lawsuit was filed against Mr. Arpaio claiming his office had illegally targeted Latinos in its efforts to identify and apprehend undocumented immigrants. Under “America’s toughest sheriff,” as Mr. Arpaio often called himself, officers detained citizens who had not committed serious crimes but whom they merely suspected of being undocumented. In 2011, a federal judge ordered the sheriff to end the practice. Just last month Mr. Arpaio was found to be in criminal contempt for ignoring the order and faced up to six months in jail.

In a statement released following the president’s pardon, the Trump administration described the former sheriff’s work as “admirable service to our nation,” adding that Mr. Arpaio’s methods focused on “protecting the public from the scourges of crime and illegal immigration.” On Twitter, the president even called

him an “American Patriot.”

The outcry over the president’s pardon has been swift and has come from both sides of the political aisle. Senator John McCain, Republican of Arizona, expressed his disapproval of the pardon, which he said demonstrates the president’s disregard for the rule of law; and Speaker of the House Paul Ryan also said through a spokesperson that he does not agree with Mr. Trump’s actions.

Despite the criticism, the president’s acts are entirely legal. Almost all of Mr. Trump’s predecessors, including Barack Obama and George W. Bush, issued their own pardons while in office. However, unlike past pardons, Mr. Trump has pardoned the former sheriff before a sentence had been declared, and he has undermined the judicial branch by pardoning someone, not primarily to spare him punishment, but to nullify a court judgment that ran counter to the president’s political goals.

Given the nearly unlimited constitutional scope of the president’s power to pardon, there is no immediate, viable remedy to the president’s action. But this should not prevent Americans from naming it for what it is: a cynical, partisan inversion of the “lock her up” chant used by Mr. Trump’s supporters against Hillary Clinton in last year’s campaign. More disturbing, the president’s pardon of Mr. Arpaio undermines the rule of law, which is the bedrock principle on which our constitutional system rests. It sends a powerful signal to Latinos and others that the enforcement of their civil rights is subject to presidential whim.

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Harvey brought new threats, and hope, to the undocumented in Houston

As Hurricane Harvey began pounding Houston last Saturday, another storm had already been battering our city during the past several months. My client Maria has been calling me often to ask whether she will be deported, even though she has work authorization and legal immigration status based on being a victim of human trafficking. Another client, Ana, phoned in tears after her husband was arrested. Someone falsely accused him of a hit-and-run as he was picking up their 14-year-old from a youth group at their parish. Though a judge quickly dismissed the criminal case against him, ICE took custody of Ana's husband and transferred him to a detention center. That was three weeks ago, and Ana and her daughter have not seen him since.

My clients—many of whom have lived and worked in Houston for years, who worship at my church, whose kids play tag with my own at our neighborhood park, who have built lives and families here just as I have—now live in fear. I have worked as an immigration lawyer in Houston for almost a decade, first with Catholic Charities and now at a law school clinic that serves survivors of human trafficking and others fleeing persecution, and I have never seen such palpable terror.

Immigrants face more and more inhumane enforcement actions, prejudice and discrimination, and unimaginable difficulties. They face new xenophobic laws like S.B. 4 in Texas, which takes aim at so-called sanctuary cities and threatens city and county officials and law enforcement with stiff penalties if they refuse to help deport immigrants. Happily, a federal court has

temporarily stopped the law from taking effect after several Texas cities and counties sued the state.

In the midst of this storm of fear, Hurricane Harvey began battering our city, and an already vulnerable population faced new threats. The U.S. Border Patrol initially announced they would keep roadside immigration checkpoints in Texas open even as people fled the storm. (Authorities have suspended immigration enforcement checkpoints in previous hurricanes.) Rumors abounded that the city's emergency shelters would not be safe harbors, as government officials would be present there and intended to check immigration papers. As if the dangers of a Category 4 hurricane were not enough, many immigrants now feared the storm would become an instrument used to deport them.

But as has happened in the face of many storms before, our humanity was finally revealed. Black and white, brown and yellow, people of all nationalities, religions and ethnic backgrounds walked into the storm, against self-interest and in service of compassion, to help one another. Pictures abound of my city's residents—neighbors, friends and strangers—working together to ensure our collective safety and well-being. During this storm, no one's children were someone else's. Houston's mayor, Sylvester Turner, took to the airwaves to plead with immigrants to seek help. "If you're in a stressful situation, I don't care who you are, what your status is, I do not want you to run the risk of losing your life or a family member because you are concerned about S.B. 4," he said, adding

that if anyone were to face deportation after calling for help, "I and others will be the first ones to stand up with you."

First responders, law enforcement and volunteers continue to work tirelessly to rescue people across the Houston area, not concerned about immigration status but only about the welfare of the struggling person before them. Churches, mosques, synagogues, schools, community centers and individuals have opened their doors to house the stranger, feed the hungry and give rest to the weary.

Amid the aftermath of a violent storm, I have begun to find hope. I have been reminded that in times of trial, the reflexive human response is toward unity and generosity, kindness and concern, compassion and empathy. Toward love and not hate.

If S.B. 4 ultimately takes effect, our city's estimated 600,000 undocumented immigrants will face new fears and difficulties even as they try to begin the arduous process of rebuilding their lives after Harvey's destruction. But the storm has shown Houstonians that we are capable of taking a courageous stand together against the forces of destruction. I am hopeful that regardless of what happens with S.B. 4, we will remain standing together in support of our neighbors, coworkers and friends, including those who happen to be without legal status.

Kristin Zipple-Shedd is an immigration attorney and adjunct clinical professor at South Texas College of Law Houston, where she runs the Asylum/Human Trafficking Clinic.

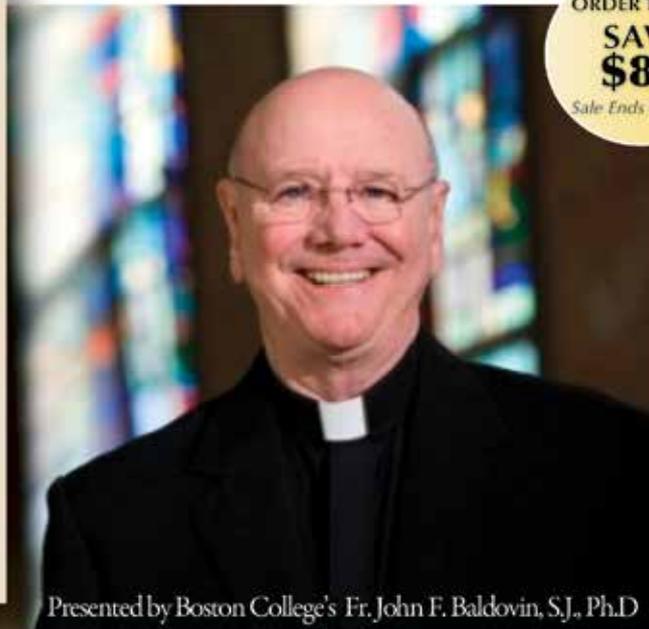


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AFTER HARVEY'S RAGE ACROSS TEXAS, CATHOLIC CHARITIES RAMPS UP ITS RESPONSE

By Kevin Clarke

There is essentially no precedent for the work looming ahead for Catholic Charities USA after Hurricane Harvey completed its drenching march through Texas and Louisiana on Aug. 31.

Other storms may have claimed more lives—Hurricane Katrina took more than 1,830—but by Sept. 5 Harvey's known toll had risen to 63. And though other hurricanes in recent years have been larger or fiercer, none have produced Harvey's relentless downpour.

By Sept. 2, Harvey had dumped 33 trillion gallons of rain on Texas and Louisiana. The National Weather Service reported that 49.2 inches of rain fell on the Houston area between Aug. 25 and the morning of Aug. 29—a record for the continental United States. A year's worth of rain fell across Texas in a matter of days. By comparison, Katrina produced 17 inches of rain and Superstorm Sandy less than 7 inches.

"I cannot compare it to anything," Donna Markham, O.P., president of Catholic Charities USA, said of the storm. "The expanse of it.... It is bigger than Katrina. The

loss of life has not been as great as Katrina, but the damage is just monumental." She reported that the entire network of Catholic Charities offices across the country was assisting in the response.

"What we're trying to do right now," Sister Markham said, "is get emergency supplies and money into the area as quickly as we can."

Catholic Charities staff were in the field even before the storm had subsided. Some of them were themselves Harvey victims, dealing with their own personal trauma even as they tried to serve their traumatized clients in the Houston and Corpus Christi areas.

Other church-related services in Texas are likewise soldiering on as the storm runs its course.

Carol Keehan, D.C., president and chief executive officer of the Catholic Health Association, reported by email that a few C.H.A.-member institutions had to close because of Harvey's wrath and that "all are coping now with the immediate issues; sorting out will start in a couple of days."



Floodwaters from Hurricane Harvey surround homes in Port Arthur, Tex., on Aug. 31.



A Coast Guard rescue team evacuates Houston residents on Aug. 28

She added, “There will be lots of issues to get facilities back in service, etc., also lots of issues with staff who have lost so much and whose lives are also turned upside down.”

Sister Markham planned to deliver a \$2 million check on Labor Day to local Catholic Charities officials scheduled to meet in San Antonio. “Any money that comes to us, we are getting it out there as quickly as is feasible,” she said. She expects the donations will be put to use quickly to buy survival materials—food, clean water, diapers, clothing and blankets—that will help the hurricane’s refugees get through the next few weeks.

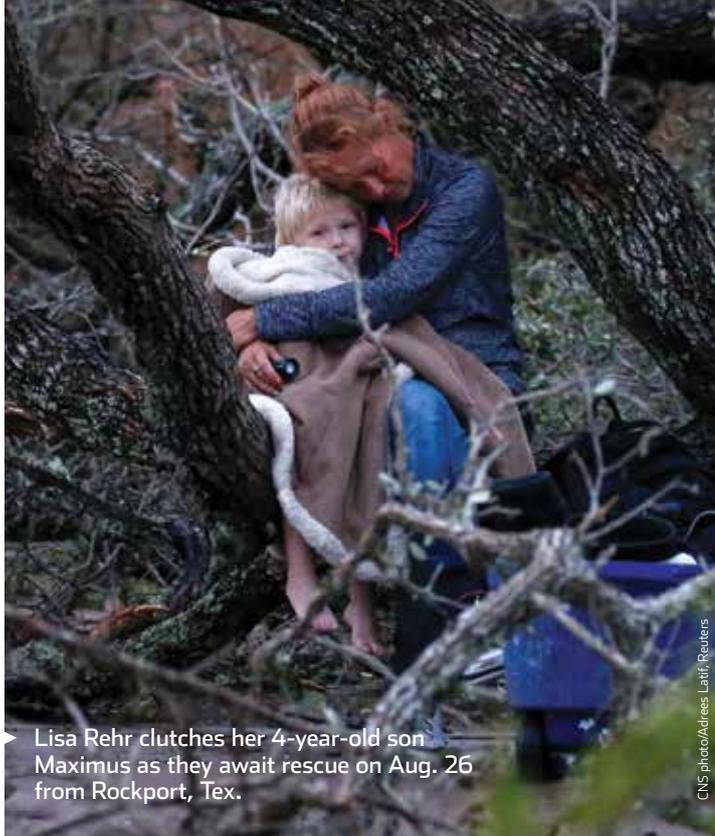
The next stage of Catholic Charities USA’s efforts in the region, according to Sister Markham, will focus on assistance with cleanup and assessment of the damage to the homes of the Catholic Charities clients in communities hard hit by Harvey. “The Red Cross goes in at the very beginning,” she explained. “We come in with some emergency aid at the beginning too, but then our job really is after the Red Cross moves out, we move in to work with the re-

settling and assisting people—from helping them clear the muck out of their houses to all kinds of other services.

“And of course the people Catholic Charities is serving are some of the most vulnerable people in these situations because poor people are effectively the most drastically affected in these events.”

Relief and restoration materials from Catholic Charities offices around the country are on their way to San Antonio, which will be used as a staging site for moving relief supplies into the Houston and Corpus Christi areas. Following those physical resources will be some human capital—people from Catholic Charities agencies around the country who will be making South Texas a temporary home as they pitch in for relief and restoration efforts.

“I don’t know how many will be sent down at this time,” Sister Markham said. It will no doubt be hard duty under difficult circumstances, but staff people trained in emergency response “are used to calling on each other for help and being shifted around as needs dictate.”



▶ Lisa Rehr clutches her 4-year-old son Maximus as they await rescue on Aug. 26 from Rockport, Tex.

CNS photo/Adrees Jatti/Reuters

HOW YOU CAN HELP

To donate wherever help is most needed throughout southeastern Texas and western Louisiana, visit: www.catholiccharitiesusa.org

For specific relief efforts:

- ▶ Corpus Christi: www.catholiccharities-cc.org
- ▶ San Antonio: www.ccaosa.org
- ▶ Galveston-Houston: www.catholiccharities.org
- ▶ The Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops has a list of charities at www.txcatholic.org/harvey

Other agencies:

- ▶ National Council of the Society St. Vincent de Paul Disaster Services: www.svdpdisaster.org
- ▶ American Red Cross: www.redcross.org/donate/hurricane-harvey
- ▶ Hurricane Harvey Relief Fund of Houston's mayor, Sylvester Turner: ghcf.org/hurricane-relief
- ▶ Houston Food Bank: www.houstonfoodbank.org
- ▶ Food Bank of Corpus Christi: www.foodbankcc.com
- ▶ Also, the Federal Trade Commission suggests how to avoid charity scams, which often arise in the wake of natural disasters: www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0074-giving-charity

“They know tomorrow it could be their area of the country,” Sister Markham said. “We all need each other and we all need to help.”

Catholic Charities’ outreach and restoration effort may include volunteers in the future—local agencies are already coordinating volunteer help—but for now Sister Markham warns people to stay out of the area. However inspired they may feel to act, this is not the time for individuals to volunteer themselves into the emergency zone.

Some may also be tempted to collect materials and ship them to the area, but truckloads of supplies are already piling up outside the disaster area because of flooded roads and other hazards. Sister Markham suggests that the best option at this early stage in the national response is cash donations, which local agencies can put to immediate use without worrying over logistics.

Thousands of people who survived Harvey’s deluge have lost their homes to the floods that accompanied and followed it; thousands more have experienced significant damage to their homes. Fortunately, that is an area of expertise for Catholic Charities.

In the months and years ahead, as South Texas begins a complex and costly restoration, “housing is going to be big issue on this,” Sister Markham said, from the quick construction of emergency and temporary shelters to the long-term challenge of rebuilding affordable housing in devastated communities.

Kevin Clarke, *chief correspondent*. Twitter: @ClarkeatAmerica.



As Nafta II begins, Mexico shows cautious optimism

Workers load rolls of sheet metal bound for Mexico at LMS International, in Laredo, Tex., in 2016.

A stroll along Paseo de la Reforma, the main boulevard in Mexico City's center, is a great opportunity for window shopping, with specialty stores sporting expensive clothing, shoes and gadgets. Indeed, 21st-century consumerism in the more affluent neighborhoods of this nation's capital is on par with its counterparts anywhere.

Few Mexicans 30 and younger will remember that barely two generations ago this material extravagance for the middle and upper classes was virtually unknown. Before 1994, the year Mexico, the United States and Canada signed the North American Free Trade Agreement, everyone but the wealthiest Mexicans was deprived of such luxury.

Nafta has been the world's most valuable trade deal, and its impact has been deeply felt in Mexico. Not only did Mexico's urban middle class gain access to new products and retailers, the country's low-wage labor force and proximity to the U.S. and Canadian markets transformed its economy into an export-oriented, manufacturing powerhouse.

Small wonder, then, that Mexican officials tensely awaited the start on Aug. 16 of talks to renegotiate Nafta. The U.S. president has repeatedly threatened to pull out of the agreement—most recently on Aug. 27, when he tweeted that it was the “worst trade deal ever made” and threatened to “terminate” it because both Mexico and Canada are “being very difficult” in the renegotiating process.

Such language unnerved the government of President Enrique Peña Nieto back in January, but much has changed since then. Encouraged by the perceived weakness of a White House plagued by scandals, infighting and with no major legislative success to speak of, Mexican officials went into the trade talks with an air of cautious optimism. Instead of fearing what it might lose, Mexican negotiators are now looking for what they stand to gain from an updated Nafta.

“I certainly believe there are opportunities for us to renegotiate Nafta in such a way that it will be beneficial to our

country,” one federal official with knowledge of the trade talks said. “We have excellent negotiators, and there are elements of the treaty that are outdated and could be improved.”

The stakes are high for Mexico. According to the U.S. trade representative's office, bilateral trade between the United States and Mexico was worth a whopping \$525 billion last year, with Mexico importing \$231 billion in U.S. goods while exporting \$294 billion in Mexican goods northward.

Failed Nafta talks could be catastrophic for Mexico, but there are also areas in which it stands to gain if its trading relationship with the United States sours. “Mexico is part of a fully integrated global economy at this point, not just with the U.S., but also with Japan, while it's also getting closer to China,” said Vice President Eric Farnsworth of the Council of the Americas, a Washington-based think tank.

And key players in Mexican agriculture say the renegotiations are a chance to modernize a sector that is generally seen as one of the losers of the original treaty. Unable to compete with its technologically superior and highly subsidized northern counterparts, Mexican agriculture lost up to two million jobs after Nafta. In southern Mexico, the countryside emptied out as millions migrated to the cities or the United States looking for work.

The talks also offer a chance to press reforms on its government-administered energy sector. And before the first round of negotiations even started, some observers believed Mexico had already earned a big win: Despite clamoring from the U.S. president, renegotiations will not include any talk of tariffs.

Jan-Albert Hootsen, Mexico City correspondent.
Twitter: @Jahootsen.

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A lesson from Pope Francis for Miami's gridlocked streets

Greater Miami may be known for its beaches, but it is also notorious for corrupt and inept government, a low-wage/high-rent economy that has created a chasm of inequality and, not incidentally, transit gridlock.

Miami's sprawl has produced snarled traffic, made worse because local transportation officials do not seem to understand basics like stop-light synchronization.

This year Miami moved to No. 5 on a list of the United States' worst traffic areas, and in another study it joined the world's 10 worst cities for traffic, a remarkable feat for a metropolis with a population less than half that of Los Angeles. Miami also registers the country's worst rates of road rage incidents, and more of them are turning violent, according to local police.

Scaling up Miami's scant public transit is the best solution—especially for the poor, for whom limited access to urban mobility is a serious obstacle to economic mobility. When he was archbishop of Buenos Aires, Pope Francis raised that point by taking the bus to work instead of a chauffeured car.

South Florida's limestone bedrock prohibits an underground subway, and business lobbies like car dealerships have often helped defeat ballot initiatives to expand Miami-Dade County's meager elevated train system, Metro-rail. Even when voters approve such efforts, as they did 15 years ago, the plans eventually get derailed.

Last year Miami-Dade decided to get them back on track with an approach called SMART—Strategic Miami Area Rapid Transit—that would create new light rail lines along six high-traffic corridors. But now Mayor

Carlos Giménez of Miami-Dade says the county cannot afford the more than \$3 billion price tag of the Metrorail expansion. Besides, he argues, trains are a “19th-century technology.”

The technology Mr. Giménez supports now is buses, but buses that he insists are “virtual trains.”

Mr. Giménez and Miami-Dade are embracing a 21st-century bus called Autonomous Rapid Transit, or ART, which was unveiled this summer in Zhuzhou, China. It is expected to begin hauling passengers there next year.

ART buses do look a lot like the sleek, high-speed trains you see humming through many European and Asian countries. “It operates just like a train,” Mr. Giménez told Miami National Public Radio affiliate WLRN. “For all intents and purposes, the passenger does not know it is not a train.”

They are almost 100 feet long, featuring cars with sliding, subway-style doors, and can carry about 300 passengers each. But they run on virtual rails, meaning rubber tires that are guided by special sensors that read the particular dimensions and features of the streets and roads they are traveling on. In Miami-Dade, they would run in specially designated, car-free lanes and get automatic green lights.

As a result, the backers of virtual trains insist they are more agile than conventional buses and less restricted than trains that run on conventional rails.

And they are cheaper. Mr. Giménez estimates Miami-Dade could put ART buses to work on two of the six SMART transit corridors for just half a billion dollars. And because it would not require massive rail infrastructure construction, he believes

the virtual trains could be running in those corridors by 2020.

Could this be the future of rapid transit—a quicker and more economical answer to the country's urban congestion? Not everyone is convinced, especially since buses, even high-tech ones, carry their own anachronistic stigma in the minds of many commuters.

“If we want people to get out of their cars, they are not going to [for buses],” Commissioner Barbara Jordan of Miami-Dade said at a commission meeting this summer. “But they will...for a rail system.”

Maybe Miami should bring in public transit riders like Pope Francis as consultants.

Tim Padgett, *Miami correspondent.*
Twitter: @TimPadgett2.





Pope Francis says Vatican II liturgical reform is 'irreversible'

In a major address for National Liturgical Week in Italy, Pope Francis said that “the reform of the liturgy is irreversible,” in an apparent reference to attempts to roll back changes introduced by the Second Vatican Council. A source close to the pontiff said the remarks were intended not only for the Italian liturgists present on Aug. 24 but for the church worldwide.

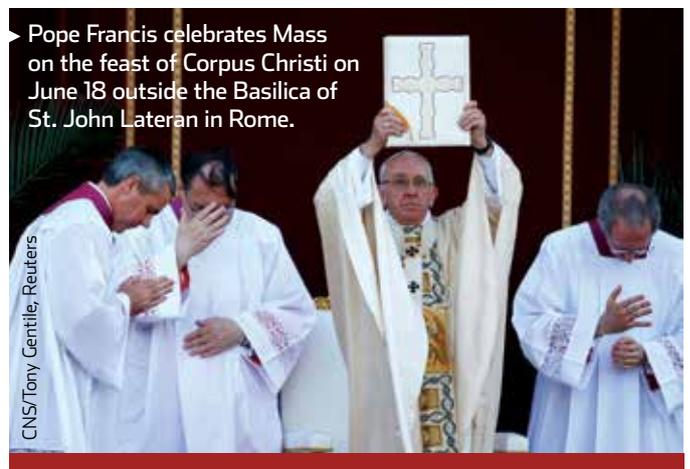
Pope Francis reminded his audience that Vatican II and the reform of the liturgy are “two events directly linked,” adding that “they did not flower in an unexpected way but were prepared over a long time.”

He recalled that this preparation came through the liturgical movement that began many decades before the council and in the responses of the different popes in the first half of the 20th century. The Second Vatican Council (1962-65) brought all these efforts to maturity when it approved the “Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy.” The council’s reforms “responded to real needs and to the concrete hope of renewal: it wanted a living liturgy for a church made alive by the mysteries it celebrated,” Pope Francis said.

Vatican II, he said, quoting the council documents, sought to ensure “that Christ’s faithful...should not be there as strangers or silent spectators; on the contrary, through a good understanding of the rites and prayers they should take part in the sacred action conscious of what they are doing, with devotion and full collaboration.”

He added that “the practical application” of this reform, “guided by the bishops’ conferences in the respective countries, is still in progress, as it is not sufficient to reform liturgical books to renew the mentality.”

Gerard O’Connell, *Vatican correspondent*. *Twitter: @gerryrome*.



HOW COMMUNISTS AND CATHOLICS BUILT A COMMONWEALTH

Can a tradition of shared ownership in Italy provide a model for co-ops today?

By Nathan Schneider

Boulder, Colo., is a town full of characters, and Richard Warner was one of them. Dr. Warner—a psychiatrist, anthropologist and transplanted Englishman, with ruddy cheeks and wavy hair—held a particularly zealous conviction that any patient with mental illness could recover and, further, that the best medicine is living as normal a life as possible. He could not tolerate any clinical ambition he perceived to be short of that. He wanted to care for people in a way that did not seem to add up, business-wise—at least until he borrowed an idea from Italy.

Photo: iStockphoto.com/face33



The Cavim wine plant is part of an agricultural cooperative in Emilia-Romagna, Italy.

Dr. Warner died in 2015. His chief legacy is a company, Colorado Recovery, that provides services in the Boulder community to adults with serious mental illness. It is housed mainly in an office on a residential street, its Ionic columns and white fences tucked behind a pair of trees along the sidewalk. Some of the 150-or-so clients it serves in a given year live in a group home a short walk away. Other companies have wanted to buy Colorado Recovery over the years; some still call and make offers. But by the time of his death, Dr. Warner transferred ownership and control of Colorado Recovery to its employees, along with some families of its clients, who hold non-voting investor shares. The clients have a budget to design their own services. Dr. Warner knew that no buyer—whether an aggressive holding company or a well-intentioned nonprofit—would run it the way he had, so he turned it into a cooperative.

“It’s a very unusual for-profit model,” says Ruth Arnold, Colorado Recovery’s chief executive officer. “It’s not really profit-driven. We’re charging as much as we need to survive.”

Dr. Warner’s widow, Lucy Warner, summarizes the model this way: “It’s sort of where *radical* and *duh* come together.”

Colorado Recovery’s structure is an anomaly in the U.S. health care industry, but it was an outgrowth of something larger and older. Since the 1970s, Dr. Warner had been watching a kind of business model that was spreading across Europe, beginning in a part of Italy better known for its antiquities than its innovations, a place where this kind of shared ownership had become a common practice. Warner was trying to build more than a company in Colorado. He was after a commonwealth.

SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

The Social Cooperative of Young Binders appears to be an ordinary print shop, housed in an office park in Imola, a town halfway between Bologna and Ravenna. Founded in 1983, it now does about \$1.7 million in business a year, with services ranging from making copies to housing and cataloguing the archives of local manufacturing companies. Increasingly the company is getting into waste management as demand for printing on paper declines. More than two dozen workers depend on Young Binders for their livelihood; about half have disabilities that would make it nearly impossible to find work elsewhere. Many of those workers are also co-owners of the company. If you were to visit and ask who the disabled workers were, you would be shown the door.

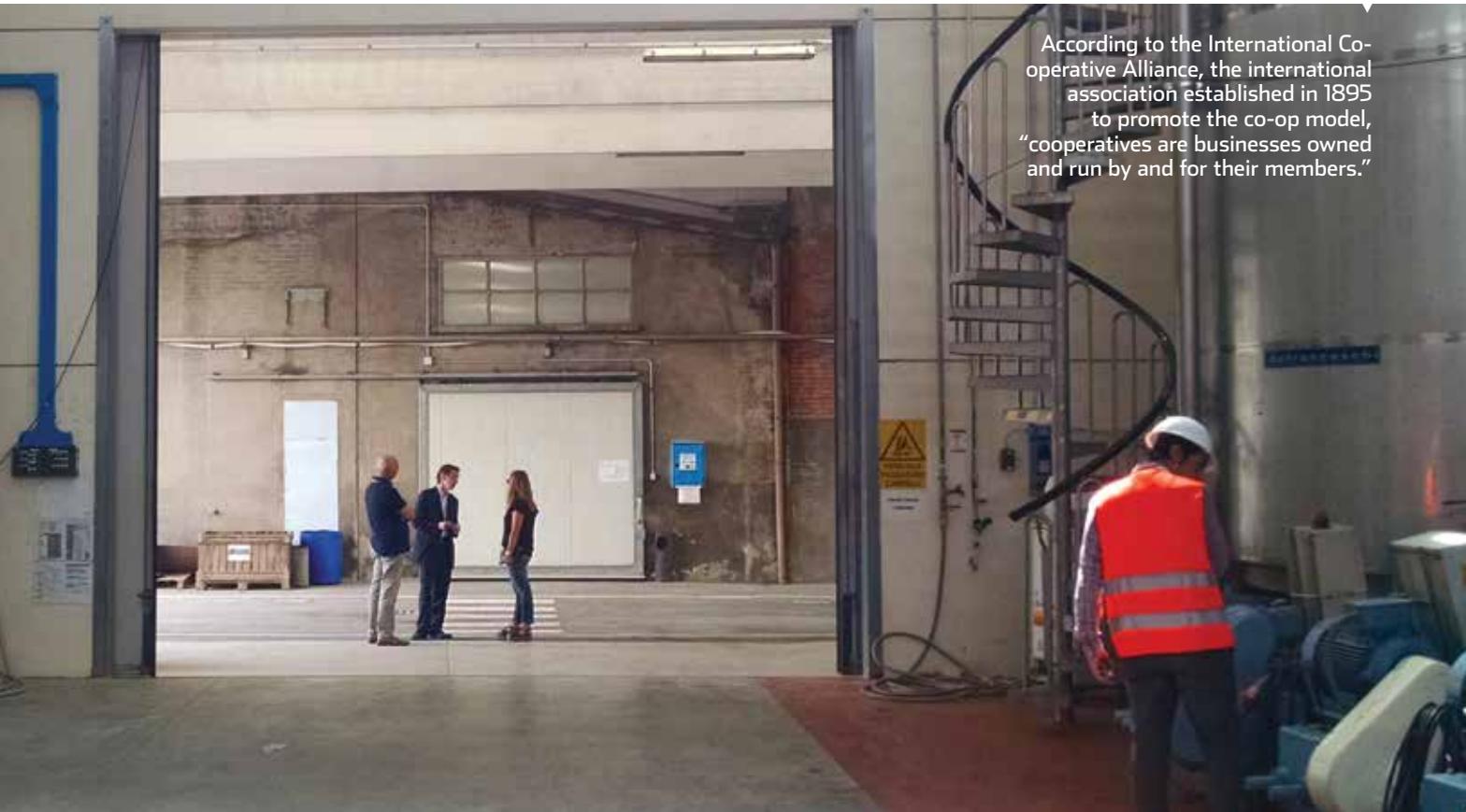


In 1991 Italy passed a law to enable a corporate container for a kind of business that had been happening already for decades: cooperatives specifically designed to provide social services.

These “social cooperatives,” according to the law, could come in two forms. The first consists of co-ops that provide public services, usually as a contractor for government welfare programs—like in-home care for seniors or childcare. These replaced profiteering private ownership and top-down state control by sharing control over these services between providers and recipients. The second form includes enterprises that employ and train people with a range of “disadvantages”—people like those with physical or mental disabilities, for example, or the incarcerated. These can look like Young Binders, or a trattoria in the Trastevere neighborhood of Rome run by the lay Catholic community of Sant’Egidio, or a monastery-turned-guesthouse along a canal in Venice. When the painter Mark Bradford created his installation for the U.S. pavilion at this year’s Venice Biennale art exhibition, he carried out what artists lately call “social practice” with a social cooperative through which local inmates grow produce and make crafts.

Both types of social co-ops need to be solvent busi-

Photo courtesy of the author



According to the International Co-operative Alliance, the international association established in 1895 to promote the co-op model, “cooperatives are businesses owned and run by and for their members.”

nesses. They are not charities. But rather than maximizing profit, their purpose is to harmonize the interests of the stakeholders they serve. They can include in their ownership structures a blend of workers, patients, volunteers, investors and donors. The model has proliferated exponentially. Social co-ops have a dedicated statute in Italy, but they are not an isolated experiment. This is a country where the two largest grocery-store chains are cooperatives—one owned by its consumers, the other by local retailers. Co-ops also own Unipol, one of the largest insurers, whose modern skyscraper towers over Bologna’s terracotta rooftops. In northern territories like Tuscany, Trentino and above all Emilia-Romagna, with Bologna as its capital, cooperatives organize the shape and tempo of the whole economy.

Co-ops there carry out activities as varied as construction, garbage collection and production of a best-selling brand of boxed wine. You can visit a showroom of sophisticated dental chairs at a worker-owned factory or buy bonds from a dairy co-op backed by wheels of its Parmesan cheese. Cooperative networks enable small- and medium-sized enterprises to remain dominant in a region that exports world-renowned food and automobiles. In part because of its culture of cooperatives, Emilia-Romag-

na has the highest median family income in Italy, with the lowest unemployment rate and the highest participation of women in the workforce. The early industrial radicals’ dream of a fully democratic economy, a “cooperative commonwealth,” is unusually alive and well there. And this came about because of two otherwise opposing factions: the Communists and the Catholics.

NORTHERN ITALY: LAND OF CO-OPS

Most visitors encounter Emilia-Romagna as a place of narrow medieval streets, Baroque churches and Bolognese sauce. The trains run more or less on time, and the hospitals treat foreigners without fuss. One tends not to notice the politics at work behind it all. But the politics are interesting. It’s a region that has been, since the late 19th century, a leftist stronghold.

Communists and socialists dominated the first national cooperative association, Legacoop, founded in 1886 in Milan, only 15 years after the unification of the nation of Italy itself. Catholics, searching for their own responses to the era’s conflict between capital and labor, formed another association, Confcooperative, in 1919. Confcooperative later led the development of the social co-op model, while Legacoop feared that social co-ops would be a vehicle for

privatizing state-run services. Today, however, the two organizations have come to regard their ideological differences as negligible. They have initiated a merger.

“The Berlin Wall doesn’t exist anymore, but we in Italy realized it only recently,” remarks Gianluca Laurini, a Legacoop official in Bologna. “Ideology aside, a co-op is a co-op.”

At a time when the Catholic Church preferred monarchies over democracies, and when Communists were vying for their own absolutist schemes, in northern Italy both opted to back bottom-up businesses. There was no single blueprint. Some co-ops were banks owned by their depositors, some were stores owned by their customers, some were workshops owned by their workers. Communists did it for the liberation of the working class (especially through worker and consumer co-ops), and Catholics did it to affirm the dignity of all people (especially through credit unions and social services), but together they pushed a cooperative commonwealth further into everyday life.

The 1991 social co-op law is just one among several policy devices that Italian co-ops have designed for themselves. The national constitution itself has a provision, Article 45, that enshrines free, cooperative enterprise as a right—much-needed in the wake of Benito Mussolini, who regarded co-ops, rightly, as a threat to his Fascist regime. He dissolved both Legacoop and Confcooperative, and tried to replace them with a federation of his own, but after his demise they promptly reorganized and gained the political might to write their own rules. Cooperators from around the world now come to Italy to study these legal arrangements.

A law passed in the early 1970s, for instance, allows co-ops to hold tax-free “indivisible reserves,” making it easier to raise capital from members. During the following decade, co-ops gained the ability to own and manage non-cooperative subsidiary firms. A 1992 law required co-ops to contribute 3 percent of their surpluses—profits, in capitalist-speak—to their associations, for the sake of financing new co-ops and the growth of existing ones. The result has been an ever-more self-perpetuating system, a network of companies that aid each other’s flourishing. While Colorado Recovery has had to struggle for survival mostly on its own, Italy’s co-ops have one another.

The eminent scholarly exponents of the Italian co-op sector are Vera and Stefano Zamagni—a historian and an economist, wife and husband. Vera once served as the equivalent of lieutenant governor of Emilia-Romagna; Stefano was an architect of Pope Benedict XVI’s economic doctrines, which more quietly prefigured Pope Francis’

concerns for the environment and critiques of capitalism. Both teach at the University of Bologna, Europe’s oldest university, founded in 1088 as a kind of cooperative among students who hired professors to teach them. When the Zamagnis talk about the origins of what modern Italian cooperation has accomplished, they start not with the 1948 constitution nor with the earliest Italian co-ops a century before that. They start with the Middle Ages.

Since then, says Vera Zamagni, “Italy has tried to substitute economies of scale with economies of network.” The northern Italian districts where cooperation now flourishes tended to be, in an age of emperors and princes, republican city-states. From these came some basic features of the modern market economy—double-entry accounting, insurance, municipal regulation, professional guilds. The Zamagnis distinguish this “civil economy” from the capitalism that would emerge elsewhere in Europe to fund colonial expansion and exploitation.

The system of interlinked, human-scaled co-ops in northern Italy is a remnant of habits that date back to the vibrant, participatory city-state republics that governed the region in the Middle Ages. The comparative lack of co-ops in the southern part of the country, in turn, seems to reflect the monarchic rule that long prevailed there. When the political scientist Robert Putnam studied variations among Italian regional governments starting in the 1970s, he also noticed this correlation. “Mirroring almost precisely that area where the communal republics had longest endured five centuries earlier,” he wrote, “the medieval traditions of collaboration persisted, even among poor peasants.”

According to the International Co-operative Alliance, the international association established in 1895 to promote the co-op model, “cooperatives are businesses owned and run by and for their members.” This is part of the basic definition, recognized around the world, including in Italy. But in Italy one hears executives and boards also insist that their co-ops are not for their members—they are for future generations. They are for the community. One hears this from both the big-time manufacturing bosses and young back-to-the-land farmers. The members are stewards, like a family with an apartment in what was once a regal palazzo, like the people who sweep the tourists’ trash at a Roman ruin. This sense of history has helped make Italy’s co-ops among the world’s strongest, but history also tolerates their contradictions, their tendencies to drift into oligarchic control or capitalist conformity.

“I rebuke them every day,” Stefano Zamagni says.

Photo courtesy of the author



Co-ops in Emilia-Romagna carry out activities as varied as construction, garbage collection and production of a best-selling brand of boxed wine.

“When a cooperative loses its mission, it has no reason to exist.” But he is patient. With time, even partial manifestations of the cooperative commonwealth help the ideals spread.

The canon of international guidelines and principles for co-ops can be deceptive; it seems to claim that there is a formula. Shared principles really just string together the cooperative habits that diverse peoples have carried with them and that they bring to the common challenges of 21st-century survival. Economy is a form of culture. This is why a Kenyan woman I know who works at the Vancity credit union in Canada could start a lending circle with fellow Kenyans, while the idea baffles her native-born Canadian friends—even those at the credit union where she works. They did not grow up watching their mothers go to lending-circle meetings, as the Kenyans did.

CONTRADICTIONS

If members from small, radical and allegedly pure grocery co-ops in the United States were to go on a field trip to visit an Ipercoop in Italy, they would find a dilemma. Ipercoop is the largest kind of store in the Coop Italia system, a national chain resulting from decades of mergers among local consumer cooperatives throughout the country. It is not pure. Picture, on one end of a sprawling strip mall, a gigantic superstore with globalization’s full variety of cheap, imported household goods beneath overhead banks of fluorescent suns. Employees, many of them part-time, are not especially well-paid or empowered in their workplace. Only 20,000 of nearly nine million consumer-members take part in meetings. But the in-house brands avoid controversial ingredients like G.M.O.s and palm oil, and suppliers—many of which are themselves Italian co-ops—must conform to certain codes of ethics in their labor practices. Things could be worse. But this is unapologetic consumerism, for a competitive price.

Would the visiting cooperators want this for their co-ops? Most probably would not. If it’s our company, we’d like it to be pure. But purity means accepting the fact that in addition to shopping at our co-op we are probably also stopping by Target or Walmart for bulk necessities, or condescending toward our neighbors who do so. Ipercoop stands for the impure claim that if people are going to do gross consumerism anyway, they can at least not funnel the profits to investor-owners somewhere else; its consumer-owners can add the leftovers to their savings. They can manage their own compromises.

Fluorescent superstores are only the start of the con-



traditions in Italy’s cooperative commonwealth. At the headquarters of Sacmi, an international manufacturing conglomerate near Bologna, one finds a prosperous machinery factory behind a pristine office building with its own museum. Sacmi is a worker co-op in which only about a third of the more than 1,000 eligible Italian workers are actually members. Among the company’s dozens of international subsidiaries, the Italian worker-owners do not bother promulgating cooperative values or possibilities in any way. And this is one of the real co-ops—a dues-paying, upstanding Legacoop member. There are also tens of thousands of “false” co-ops in the country, firms that permit no oversight from the big associations and whose sole purpose is often to enable erstwhile employers to bypass workers’ collective-bargaining rights. Even the storied social co-ops can play this kind of role. As critics feared, their rise has coincided with a long process of privatizing public services, enabling local governments to deliver services without paying government-level wages.

“Cooperatives have transformed into institutional loopholes,” contends Lisa Dorigatti, a researcher at the University of Milan who has studied co-op labor markets. Even Pope Francis has noticed the problem. “Counter the false cooperatives,” he told a 2015 Confcooperative meeting, “be-

cause cooperatives must promote an economy of honesty.”

Today, the pioneering types of people who built Italy’s cooperative movement a century ago are not necessarily flooding into co-ops. They are not attending Coop Italia’s annual meetings or holding out hope of becoming a Sacmi member. If they are organizing co-ops, they are often treating the required board structures as a legal formality and governing themselves more like an open-source software project—whether they are writing code or growing vegetables. They are forgoing co-op language altogether, speaking instead about “political consumerism” and “solidarity purchasing.” Yet according to University of Bergamo sociologist Francesca Forno, “I think we are going back to the roots of cooperativism.” They want something more cooperative than an Ipercoop superstore.

Insiders and outsiders alike frequently mistake cooperative enterprise for a utopian project. But it never has been that, or it never remains one for long. Constructing a commonwealth is not an instant cure. It is recovery.

CO-OPS IN THE UNITED STATES

We in the United States would do well to learn Italy’s lessons. The list is growing of cities that have recently drafted policies to promote worker-owned cooperatives. New York

Photo courtesy of the author



Ipercoop is the largest kind of store in the Coop Italia system, a national chain resulting from decades of mergers among local consumer cooperatives.

has put several million dollars into worker co-op development; Madison, Wis., has passed its own co-op ordinance, and so have Austin, Tex., and Oakland, Calif. Cleveland, Ohio, has its struggling, but widely promoted, Evergreen Cooperatives, with businesses like solar retrofitting and an urban greenhouse; other cities have dispatched field trips of policymakers to visit them. The country now has a few shining examples of functioning worker co-ops, which beckon hope for more. Advocates are hoping to find candidates among the millions of Baby Boomer-owned businesses now poised to close with no succession plan. This past May, Bernie Sanders led a group of Democratic senators and representatives to propose ambitious federal legislation on behalf of worker ownership, part of the party's newfound appetite for progressive economic proposals.

I watch the news of these co-op developments closely. But when I first heard from Felipe Witchger, the young executive director of the Community Purchasing Alliance, I had never heard of him or his organization. And when I attended the group's last annual meeting in a Washington, D.C., school's multipurpose room, I realized what a lapse this was. (I delivered the keynote address at that meeting and was compensated for doing so.)

Seated around me were representatives of the 160

D.C.-area organizations—mainly churches and charter schools—that used C.P.A. for purchasing such unglamorous necessities as electricity, security, sanitation and landscaping. After three years in existence, the co-op had saved them nearly \$3 million. (A woman seated next to me, a part-time church staffer, said she had cut out \$17,000 on copier contracts alone.) Many of them were switching to renewable energy, and their purchase of 580 solar panels had already brought down the price of solar for everyone in the region. In the back of the room were staff members from a black-owned security company whose size more than doubled because of C.P.A. contracts. Witchger was talking with some of the group's contractors about converting their businesses to worker ownership. But worker ownership was only part of the commonwealth he and C.P.A. members were building.

A new generation has rediscovered cooperative enterprise in the United States since the 2008 financial crisis. Perhaps it is a kind of Marxist hangover that inclines us to believe economic change must always begin with labor. Take the popular left-wing economist Richard Wolff, who has become a leading co-op promoter through his writings, radio sermons and an advocacy organization called Democracy at Work. The locus of production is so important to him that he would reserve certain governance rights solely to “producer” workers, who physically make a given widget, over the “enablers,” who answer phones, sweep floors and craft contracts and the like. This kind of laborist fixation does not do much to serve a post-industrial economy of increasingly automated production, permanent part-time, and peer-to-peer services over online platforms. It also inclines us to neglect how pockets of commonwealth might emerge from zones of economic life other than factory floors—from schools, from churches, from taking out the trash.

In U.S. history, worker co-ops have represented a miniscule proportion of the cooperative sector. (More than two million workers are part of employee stock ownership plans, but these offer little-to-no worker control.) Far more of the sector has consisted of formations like credit unions, consumer-owned electricity co-ops and business-to-business purchasing co-ops like C.P.A.—or Ace Hardware or Best Western. Part of what helped C.P.A. become so successful so quickly was that it built on this legacy, taking help from co-op veterans and existing co-op financial institutions. Even if one's goal is to build a new generation of worker co-ops, perhaps the best way to start



*Unlike capitalism's
penchant for perpetual
disruption, cooperation
works best when it
can work with what is
already at hand. ●●*

is with other, more familiar kinds—kinds that come with history and muscle-memory and maybe even a replicable track record for financing.

The largest worker co-op back in Boulder, just up Broadway from Colorado Recovery, is Namasté Solar, a solar-panel installation company with more than 100 member-owners. It's a certified B Corp with an award-winning workplace culture and six weeks of vacation for employees every year. Since converting from a partnership to a co-op in 2011, it has been a thriving business, and it has no trouble finding investors willing to finance growth without demanding control. But its real, systemic effect has happened outside the worker-ownership structure. Also in 2011, Namasté first spawned a spin-off, Amicus Solar, a purchasing cooperative that helps small solar companies across North America stay competitive against large corporations. That, in turn, spun off a co-op that pools maintenance services. Now, the Namasté team is helping to create the Clean Energy Federal Credit Union, which specializes in loans for homeowners nationally who want to adopt renewables. One thing led to another.

When we know the diversity and dexterity of past models, they can help find creative new combinations for the present. The trouble is, the ideal and the unfamiliar tempt us more than the unfinished commonwealths of the past, whose salvation remains incomplete in ways we know too well. People long for new worker co-ops but forget to vote for their old credit union's board. Unlike capitalism's penchant for perpetual disruption, cooperation works best when it can work with what is already at hand.

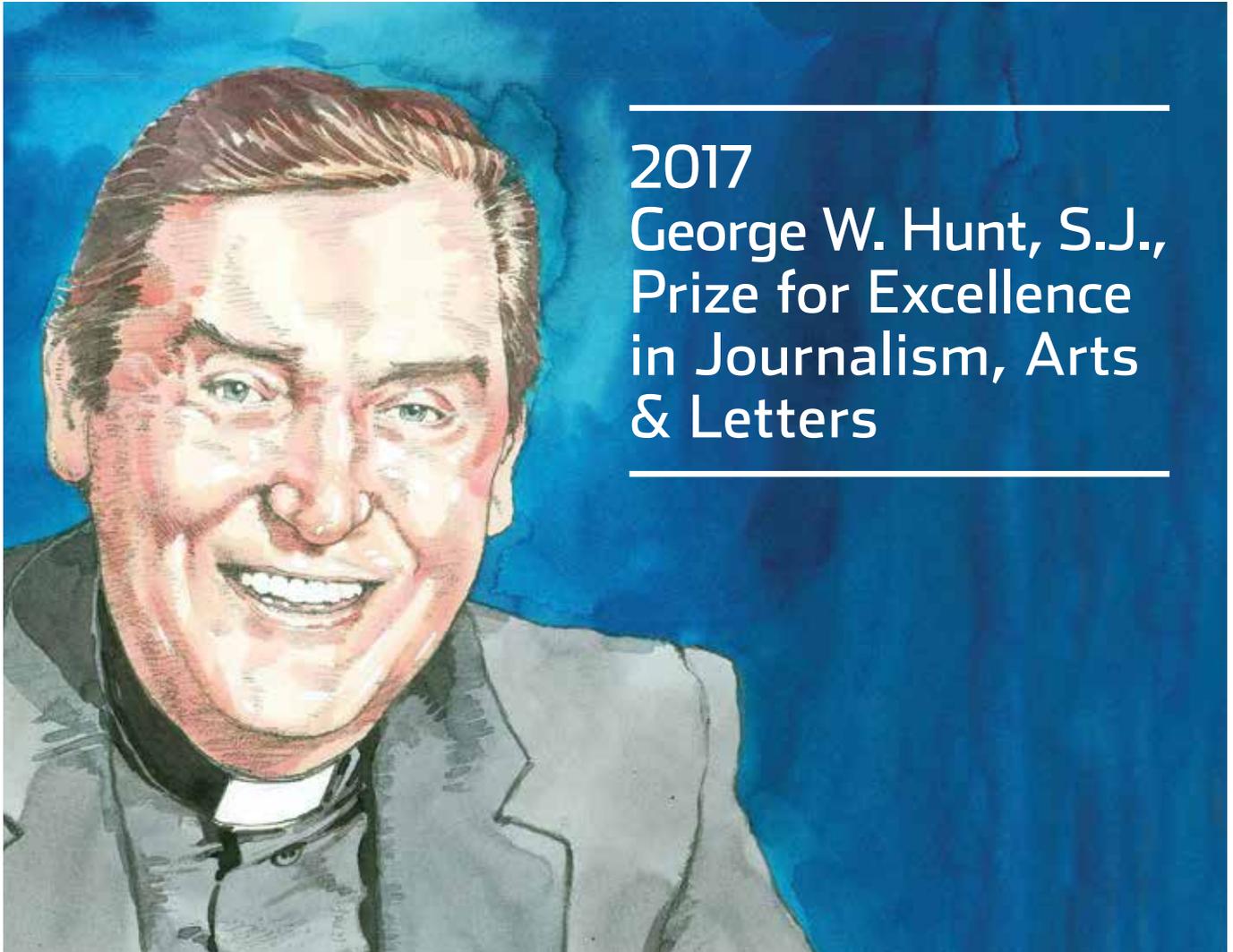
Cooperators today neglect the local, unnoticed, compromised co-op legacies at their peril—the big, rusty co-

operative grain elevators across the rural United States, or the big, ugly aisles of an Italian Ipercoop. These are achievements that can give the commonwealth of the future a head start and can help it cross lines of political party and social class. Small, pioneering experiments help new generations make the commonwealth their own. But we also need to build on what we already have, where we already are, even if that includes fluorescent superstores. If there is any democracy left in them, can't old co-ops be made new? Young cooperators can learn from this challenge. At the same time, the cooperative establishment needs to step up more to invest in and support new ventures, including risky ones. The future of their legacy depends on it.

If advocates for a commonwealth in the United States were to encourage not just worker co-ops but agricultural, utility, purchasing and credit co-ops as well, they would see their political base become drastically wider—not just Bernie Sanders, a longtime champion of worker ownership in Vermont, but Mike Pence also, whose base has included Indiana electric co-ops and credit unions. That kind of bridge-crossing can seem unpleasant in hyper-partisan times, but it is possible. If Italy's Catholics and Communists could unite around the practical work of building a commonwealth, perhaps Democrats and Republicans can, too.

Now, co-ops in Italy have to reach across an even wider gulf than simple political divisions. Social co-ops have taken a lead in employing and integrating new migrants from Africa and the Middle East, who have transformed the demographics of the country within a decade. As many as 100,000 migrants are now applying for asylum each year. The newcomers do not claim the same medieval inheritances that the native-born Catholics and Communists had in common. Migrants are creating co-ops of their own now in Italy, bringing their cultures and habits with them. People seeking an inclusive, responsive economy must continually relearn the lessons of commonwealths past—to work with what they have and seek out the fullness of what they might share with one another.

*Nathan Schneider is a reporter and professor of media studies at the University of Colorado, Boulder, as well as a contributing writer for **America**.*



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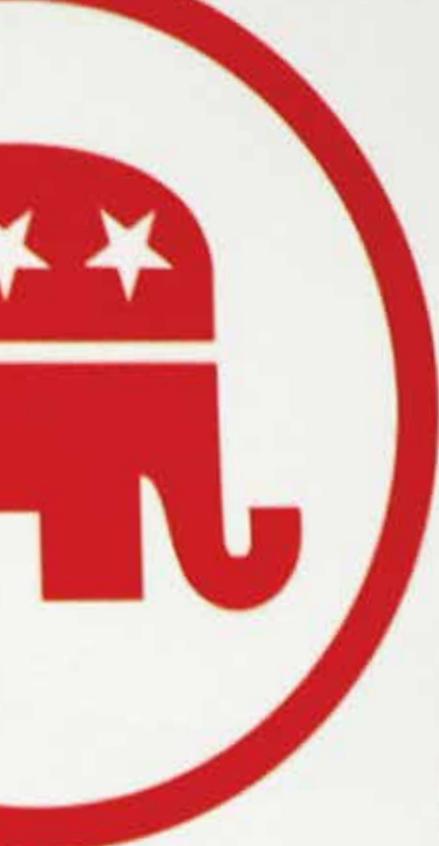
SUMMER



ASHVILLE

I'M A
CONSERVATIVE
LATINA

The Standing Committee on Rules at the Republican National Committee summer meeting on Aug. 24 in Nashville, Tenn.



MEETING



Is there a place for me in Trump's Republican Party?

These are strange times to be a conservative Mexican-American.

I do not see myself as a person with one foot in the United States and one foot in Mexico. A large portion of my family are Tejanos, people who lived in Texas when it was a part of Mexico, and those of us who did cross the border have been here for generations.

It is as a Catholic Latina and a student of conservative politics that I am now torn between two worlds.

Since the election of Donald J. Trump, I have

seen the indignities endured by my fellow Latinos. My brother and his friend had trash thrown at them on the road by white men who yelled racial slurs and told them to “keep curfew.” My sister was hit with a shopping cart at a grocery store by a white woman who wanted to look at an item on a shelf. When my sister stayed put, the woman mocked her in pidgin English, saying “You don’t speak English?” My cousin, who was born here, was pulled over in his truck, not because he was driving in any suspicious way but because the

By Ashleen Menchaca-Bagnulo

officer wanted to ask him if he is legal or not—a perfectly legal stop under Texas’s recently passed State Bill 4.

The Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Va., on Aug. 11 and 12 showed the nation what many minorities have personally attested to, only to be met with disbelief and dismissal: Racism is alive and well, and it is deeply entrenched in conservative politics. At the gathering, the former Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke said: “We are going to fulfill the promises of Donald Trump. That’s what we believed in. That’s why we voted for Donald Trump, because he said he’s going to take our country back.” The president, who has little trouble denouncing his “enemies” in the media and Congress, struggled to immediately and unequivocally disavow neo-Nazis and white supremacists.

Hearing Mr. Duke’s words, I remembered the shudder I felt watching Mr. Trump during the presidential campaign as he articulated his platform, particularly his immigration policy, in terms of “taking our country back” and “making America great again.” Watching the violence in Charlottesville unfold, I recalled my sympathy with the thousands of protesters who took to the streets after Donald Trump’s inauguration with chants of “Not my president.” Though I did not march, I know the fear and despair expressed by many Americans, especially immigrants and people of color, over our country’s inability to take seriously the persistent problems of racism.

At the same time, I understand the conservative Trump supporter who is not motivated by racial animus. I understand the frustration of feeling unfairly blamed for the detestable behavior of those who happened to support the same candidate.

But in the face of an emboldened white supremacy movement, I find the defensive posture of some conservatives more and more trying. Having known and seen family members bear the humiliations of racism, it is hard to accept the alliance Republicans made in 2016 with Donald Trump and to watch the way that compromise has poisoned the discourse on immigration policy. As the evidence of some connection between President Trump and racism mounts and reports of hostility to minorities continue, Republican voters who I once considered my political allies remain indifferent or incredulous. Perhaps because they themselves did not vote for racist or anti-immigrant reasons, it is difficult for them to imagine that others have done that.

Still, it is important for conservatives to confront racism in our ranks and to question our unsavory politi-

cal alliances, rather than to minimize or deny the rise of racism under President Trump. Only then can we engage constructively in debates over immigration policy. Indeed, conservatives, who consider themselves students of the Western tradition of justice, can bring to these discussions compelling questions about what we as a nation owe undocumented immigrants. What constitutes just treatment toward laborers who have built up our communities and contributed to the fabric of the United States? What constitutes fairness toward the labor families, often comprised of citizen children and undocumented parents, who are being torn apart under an immigration policy that has vacillated over the decades between terms of cooperation and paths to citizenship to talk of mass deportations? These are the questions conservatives should be asking about immigration policy, but the American right grows less and less able to express ourselves in these terms.

‘BAD HOMBRES’?

During his campaign Donald Trump characterized illegal Mexican immigrants as the refuse of Mexican society, claiming that they are “bringing drugs...bringing crime.” They are “rapists,” he infamously said. Mr. Trump later clarified that he was only drawing attention to the portion of illegal immigrants who commit serious crimes—a notably small percentage of the illegal immigrant population. These “bad hombres,” we were told, would be the targets in any deportation roundup under the Trump administration.

The reality on the ground already looks quite different. The deported include many who are guilty of offenses related to their illegal status but not of the violent crimes Mr. Trump warned of. In February, Guadalupe García de Rayos, a 35-year-old mother of two citizen children who has lived in the United States for 20 years, was deported to Nogales, Mexico, for using a false Social Security number and living in the country illegally. Maribel Trujillo Díaz, a mother of four citizen children in Fairfield, Ohio, was deported to Michoacán, Mexico, in April. She has no criminal record and under the Obama administration was able to work and remain in the country so long as she checked in with Immigration and Customs Enforcement once a year. In 2008, Jesús Lara López came to immigration officials’ attention when he was caught driving without a license, but he was permitted to continue living and working in the country. In July, the father of four American children was deported to Mexico.

Continued on Page 35.

AMERICA'S GUIDE TO RETREATS

Many of our readers are curious about retreats. What does one do on a retreat? Where does one go? What are some good retreat houses? Simply put, a retreat is an extended period of prayer, usually done in silence, and usually at a retreat house, where a team of spiritual directors helps you find God in your prayer. There are also different kinds of retreats. On a directed retreat, a person meets with a spiritual director on a daily basis to discuss what is happening in prayer. A guided retreat focuses more on one topic (say, women's spirituality) and offers presentations as well as opportunities to meet with a director a few times. Preached retreats consist in listening to presentations and praying on your own, but with less opportunity for direction.

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CNS photo/Michael Reynolds, EPA

Seven-year-old Walter Escobar of Texas holds a photo of his family, including his father, Jose Escobar, who was deported from the United States. Experts say law-abiding migrants are at greater risk of deportation under President Donald Trump.

The fact is that while Mr. Trump has promised to deport two to three million people, there are not even two million illegal immigrants with criminal records to be deported.

President Trump's rhetoric around immigration and enforcement actions have at best underestimated the challenges posed by immigration. At worst, he has contributed to a dangerous climate of racism and xenophobia.

At Texas State University in San Marcos, Tex., where I teach, students were spat upon following President Trump's election; some had their hair pulled, and others were told to "go back to Mexico." There have been anti-Semitic and white supremacist fliers distributed on the campus four times since Mr. Trump's election. Other fliers encouraged students to report undocumented immigrants to federal authorities. At a university where minorities make up 50 percent of the student population, these flyers sent a clear message: You are not welcome here.

THE ROOTS OF RACISM

Racially driven opposition to immigration among conser-

vatives did not begin with Donald Trump. The late political scientist Samuel P. Huntington, though himself a lifelong Democrat, championed views on the dangers of large-scale Latino immigration that have been embraced by many on the right. In his book *Who Are We? The Challenges to American National Identity* (2004), he drew a firm boundary between the cultural resources of Latinos and the American experiment: "There is only the American dream created by an Anglo-Protestant society. Mexican Americans will share in that dream and in that society only if they dream in English." For Mr. Huntington and like-minded conservatives, Latinos not only need to learn how to read, write and speak English to succeed in the United States; they must aspire to act like white Protestants. It is a disturbing call for ethnonationalism and a poor interpretation of the Declaration of Independence's revolutionary (if aspirational) claim that all are created equal.

At a more grass-roots level, the radio host Rush Limbaugh famously characterized the Mexican-American population as underperforming and lazy and warned the Republican Party against assimilating them. "The way the

Republicans are looking at it is that they think that Hispanic immigrants are made-to-order conservatives,” he said. “For some reason, culturally, they think that they’re invested in hard work.” The implication, of course, is that they are not.

I have heard similar sentiments expressed by my peers. At an academic conference I once attended, a presenter spoke about how Latinos pose a threat to “American identity” because they have a culture of “handouts” and a love for “authoritarianism.” I had to leave the room in quiet tears.

How widespread are these beliefs among voters? The research paints a complicated picture. A Pew Research study published in August 2016 found that while only one-third of Trump supporters believe undocumented immigrants are “less hardworking and honest than U.S. citizens,” 50 percent thought illegal immigrants are “more likely to commit serious crimes than citizens.” The majority of Republican primary voters did not support the mass deportations of illegal immigrants (though 52 percent of those who initially backed Trump for the nomination did). Another study found that 56 percent of Republicans support a path to legal status for undocumented immigrants.

Other studies, however, have shown that there are hidden biases against immigrants from Mexico that complicate the debate about Latino immigration, in particular. In one study, researchers asked U.S. citizens how they felt about specific behaviors among immigrants, like overstaying a visa, accepting under-the-table pay and flying one’s native flag. They found that white Americans found these actions to be more offensive when the person in question was originally from Mexico, as opposed to the United Kingdom or Canada.

In another study, respondents were asked about one of three hypothetical immigrants: a Mexican immigrant named “Juan”; a Chinese immigrant named “Yuan”; and a German immigrant named “Johan.” Fewer respondents believed that “Juan” should be granted a pathway to legalization. The researchers said the results suggest that “in the absence of other information, whites in our sample rely on ethnic cues to ‘fill in the blanks’—assuming undocumented Latinos are uneducated, unassimilated and potential financial problems for U.S. society.”

FAMILY VALUES

It is painful for me to read these characterizations of Mexicans by some on the right. After all, I think of my family

as a part of what makes America great. When I hear some members of the Republican Party calling Mexicans “lazy,” I think of my grandfather, who used to have to eat in kitchens away from white people at restaurants, even though he and his brothers fought for our country overseas. When I hear about the mythical greatness of an American dream unshattered by Latino immigration, I think of family stories of citizen children who were told to sit in the back of the school bus by the white school bus driver and how they persisted in their efforts to attain their goal of receiving an education.

It was my parents’ insistence on devotion to family and their belief in the opportunity of education that drew me to conservatism. In college, a time when many young people begin to explore the political left, I found myself drawn to conservative ideas. I saw the Western tradition as a transmitter of wisdom from generation to generation, a fertile intellectual soil for Americans confronting important political and philosophical questions. I viewed the conservative account of the family as the fundamental unit of society as an echo of my experience growing up in a multigenerational home, and the conservative account of marriage was the most accurate portrayal of the kind of committed love I longed for.

Years later, during my pregnancy as a female academic, I experienced first-hand the benefits of conservative “family values.” My male colleagues not only encouraged my vocation as a mother but supported me in my decision to continue my work at the university. This positive stance toward pregnancy is the fruit of robust philosophical accounts of human dignity and sexual difference, and evidence to me that conservatism is well situated to answer the hard questions that the left has traditionally posed about racial inequality, gender inequality and sexual ethics.

This is emblematic of what is best in conservative thought. We have great potential to articulate modern problems in a way that draws on the wisdom of the past, without being chained to the past. We seek to conserve rather than to progress beyond or abandon what previous generations have accomplished. We possess the intellectual resources to distinguish between things as they should be and things as they are. Conservative thinkers—heirs of Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas and Augustine—possess the intellectual precision for the careful dance that is required between liberty and equality in a republic.

But instead of relying on intellectual riches of the conservative tradition to answer the hard questions about race and privilege brought out in the election of 2016, many on



Joe Arpaio, recently pardoned by President Donald Trump, intentionally disobeyed a judge's order in an immigration case.

the right put their heads in the sand rather than confront the United States' persistent racial sins. Some parts of the Republican Party have even openly challenged the connection between racism and American history, buying into a nostalgic and ahistoric view of the Civil War.

WHAT WE OWE

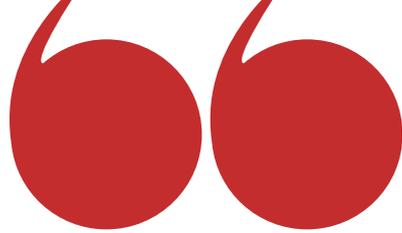
The further we get from the election, the more the Republicans' decision to rally behind President Trump seems like a mistaken last stand, a flight away from what is best and most noble on the right. But I am not without hope. That is because I think conservatives are well situated to deal with some of the more serious questions concerning race and immigration if they turn toward their roots, which emphasize subsidiarity and the common good.

One question I think conservatives can pose well is this: What do we owe, in fairness, to the illegal immigrants who have worked in the United States? Drawing on John Locke's treatment of labor and property, we might ask what the labor of those who have worked here illegally should

merit. The common-law notion of adverse possession or "squatters' rights"—which recognizes the link between the cultivation of the land and a claim to the ownership of it even in the absence of a legal title—reflects an intuitive understanding that there is some sort of connection between obligation and labor, even when ownership is not involved.

There is no doubt that the United States has benefited from the labor of undocumented immigrants, though the just compensation of this work is an appropriate area for policy debate. According to a 2016 Pew Research Center study on unauthorized immigrants living in the United States, 11.1 million illegal immigrants made up 3.5 percent of the U.S. population and 5 percent of the workforce in 2014, with significant representation in farming and construction occupations. Half of that population had lived in the United States for at least 13 years.

The data tell us that many illegal immigrants have become a part of the American community, whether we realize it or not. They have lived in this country for a significant amount of time, building the houses we live in, paving the roads we drive on, cleaning the businesses we work at and



Many on the right put their heads in the sand rather than confront the United States' persistent racial sins. ●●

growing or preparing the food we eat. On top of that, illegal immigrants pay \$6.9 billion in sales and excise taxes, \$3.6 billion in property taxes and more than \$1 billion in income taxes. They also add \$37 billion to the nation's gross domestic product. One 2007 study from the Congressional Budget Office showed that "the taxes paid by immigrants and their descendants exceed the benefits they receive."

Historically speaking, we are also in debt to the labor of Mexicans. Beginning in 1942, we relied on Mexican labor that was not fairly compensated until 2008. The Bracero Program contracted temporary workers from Mexico to work on farms and on railroads in the United States in order to keep the country's economy functioning during World War II. This arrangement was renewed by the federal government in some form until 1964, and the advantages of it redounded more to our national benefit than to the contract workers (as is evident by their delayed compensation). Whether we realize it or not, the labor and contributions of citizen and non-citizen Latinos are woven deeply into the national fabric.

Another question I believe conservatives can ask and resolve fairly is what justice requires for the citizen children of illegal laborers. Unlike their parents, who do not have the status of citizens, these children possess all the rights of citizenship and can claim those rights when we are considering what policies that affect the common good. This situation calls for deftness and nuance to balance the demands of border security with the concerns of the vulnerable parties involved; too often, Republican lawmakers are choosing to take a hammer to the entire system, with devastating results for parents and children.

This is not in the best tradition of conservatism. Conservative thought recognizes the family is the building

block of society and that governmental interference in this essential unit is something that should only occur in grave circumstances. The right to a mother or father within the family unit is to be defended from unnatural intervention by federal authority, authority that by the doctrine of subsidiarity is only legitimately exercised in certain spheres. Our current willingness to break up the families of citizen children is a massive display of top-down state overreach that conservatives so often decry.

Immigration is a complex issue, as evidenced by the failure of Republican and Democratic administrations alike to reach a comprehensive solution for the 11 million people living in this country without documentation. But the personhood of those involved should be the starting point of political inquiry. Republican presidents from Ronald Reagan to George W. Bush understood this. Though one may disagree on the means, these conservative leaders identified and confronted the most vocally racist among their supporters.

Today, instead of a relying on a tradition that focuses on limited national oversight, subsidiarity, the relationship between labor and property, and a sensitivity to the trends of local, historical development, I fear that the right is green-lighting the darkest aspects of conservative engagement with immigration policy. I am tempted to think the reason that citizen children and undocumented laborers are not considered in conservative reflections on the common good is that they somehow matter less. Then I wonder how my fellow Americans think of me and the beautiful culture and family values that have shaped me as a Catholic, a conservative and a citizen.

Ashleen Menchaca-Bagnulo is an assistant professor of political science at Texas State University in San Marcos, Tex.

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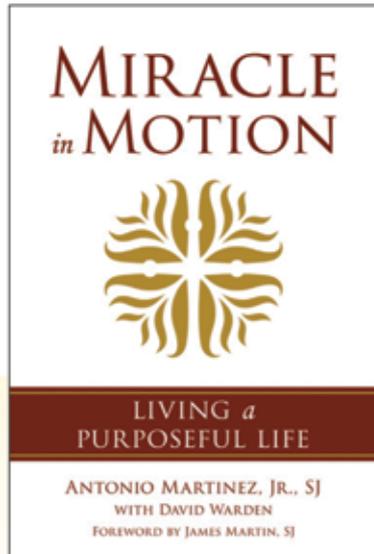
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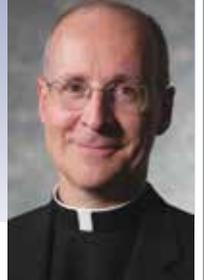


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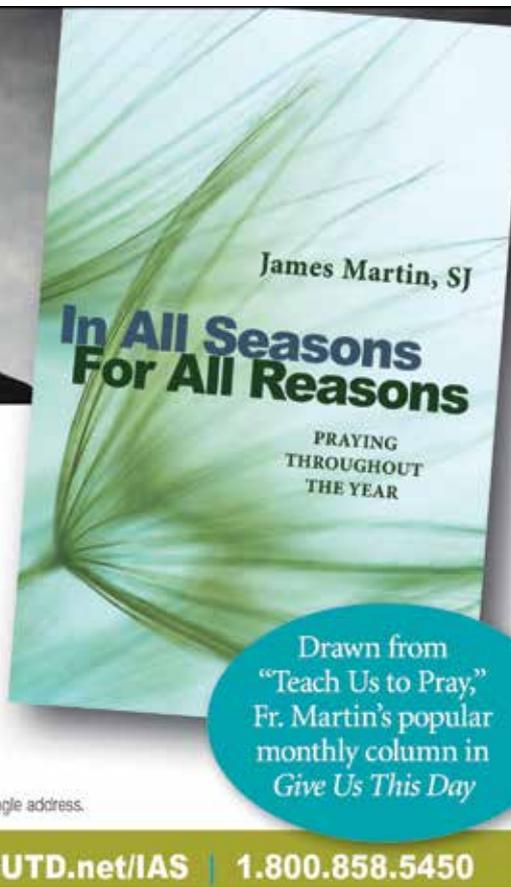
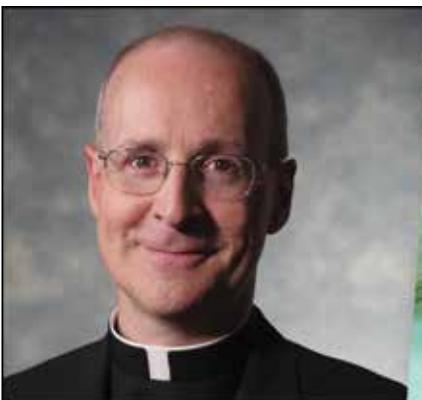


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When the Nazis Came to Skokie

Discerning the difference between demonstrating and terrorizing

In the days before the white supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Va., a court weighed how to balance the demonstrators' rights to free speech and assembly against the potential for violence. Forty years ago, the National Socialist Party of America applied for a permit to march through Skokie, a largely Jewish suburb of Chicago, displaying swastikas and other Nazi symbols. The American Civil Liberties Union famously argued in defense of their First Amendment rights to do so. America's editors acknowledged that the "current political majority or the local audience" could not be allowed to determine what speech was acceptable, but they argued that there was an important distinction between political speech aimed at persuasion and a "menacing parade" aimed at intimidating and victimizing a community.

In a skillfully executed publicity campaign, a small group of people who profess some of the beliefs of Hitler's Nazi Party has succeeded in gaining prolonged national attention. This group repudiates genocide but wants to wear Nazi uniforms while staging a small demonstration in Skokie, a largely Jewish suburb of Chicago in which many survivors of the actual Holocaust reside. The American Civil Liberties Union has championed the right of the Nazis to hold their demonstration. The American Jewish Congress has challenged that right in the Supreme Court of the United States.

When judges are asked to decide questions like this, they tend to avoid generalities and to concentrate on particular facts [about how, when and where the demonstration will be conducted].

•••

What the judges do not focus on is the political philosophy or objectives of the demonstrators. The judges do not ask whether the demonstrators are in favor of civil rights, abortion, the neutron bomb, a Palestinian state or the legalization of marijuana. The judges do not ask how popular the demonstrators' cause is or how welcome it will be in the area where the demonstration takes place. The judges are concerned with two things: the maintenance of the public peace and the freedom of public debate.

The Nazi stunt in Skokie could safely be left to the courts, were it not for the public debate it has occasioned about the limits of freedom of political expression. The Nazis have

not yet demonstrated or marched in Skokie. They keep changing important details in their plans. It is very unlikely that they ever will, or even really want, to demonstrate in Skokie. Their lawyers and public relations men seem peculiarly adept at projecting, but not precipitating, crises. Certainly, the Nazis know that if there is to be a test of physical strength in Skokie, they will lose.

The public, however, has a right to be concerned about the legal principles that are applicable to the types of demonstrations that the Nazis have said they want to have in Skokie. The principles are the same, whatever the cause: civil rights for blacks, ending the war in Vietnam or reducing the Jewish influence in commerce and communications. Some causes are just, and others unjust; some causes are moral, and others immoral. But in our society the choice has been made that, with respect to peaceful demonstrations, the legal right to demonstrate shall not depend upon the justice or the morality of the demonstrators' cause.

That choice is based not on moral or political agnosticism but on hard historical experience. The civil-rights movement would never have succeeded, the Vietnam War would never have ended, if the demonstrators could have demonstrated only where their views were initially popular and welcome. If the current political majority or the local audience is allowed to decide which peaceful demonstrations are permissible, the only morality or justice we will have is that of the current political major-

ity or of the people in the neighborhood of the demonstration.

There is an enormous difference, of course, between a peaceful political demonstration and a physical or psychological assault upon particular individuals. It is certainly regrettable that in recent years the U.S. Supreme Court has so blurred this distinction that the doctrine of “fighting words” has little current significance. In dealing with the Nazi demonstration in Skokie, the Supreme Court should reaffirm that no one has the right, under the guise of peaceful political advocacy, to terrorize anyone. Freedom of speech does not protect sinister and dangerous assaults on others. A conventional rally in the town square would be altogether different from a

menacing parade through residential streets. The Nazis’ right to persuade whom they can is not a right to persecute whom they will.

The dangers from freedom of peaceful political speech are much smaller than the dangers from giving the current political majority or the local audience a legal right to suppress speech they condemn. The best response to the Nazis is to give them the attention they deserve: extremely little. What they advocate, even in their deceptively diluted brand of Nazism, is abominable. Their hypocrisy and malevolence are evident in the uniforms they choose to wear and in the place they have chosen for their demonstration. Because they have chosen those uniforms and that

place, they may be lawfully forbidden to march like specters from the past through the residential streets of Skokie. But to say that they cannot demonstrate at all because of the nature of their political beliefs would contradict sound and fundamental principles of American constitutional law. Even worse, such a prohibition would give the Nazis more dignity and credibility than they deserve. It is always a mistake to make martyrs of fanatics and freaks.

Editorial, June 17, 1978



Christianity at the Crossroads:

Navigating the Fault Lines of Gender

Tuesday, October 17, 2017 | 6 p.m.

Pope Auditorium | Fordham University
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On the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, many Christians remain divided on issues surrounding gender and sex. Women’s roles, sexuality, and gender fluidity continue to spark profound polarization, which could lead to irreparable rifts within churches.

Can Christian theological and ethical traditions lead to greater understanding on these issues, and help us transform these challenges into sources of greater unity among Christians?

Luke Timothy Johnson

Author and professor emeritus at Emory University

Eboni Marshall Turman

Preacher, author, and professor at Yale Divinity School

Eve Tushnet

Blogger and author, *Gay and Catholic: Accepting My Sexuality, Finding Community, Living My Faith*

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A SON'S PRAYER

CAN I BE A GOOD HUSBAND AND FATHER IF MY OWN DAD WASN'T?

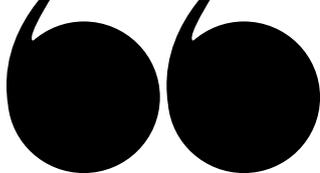
By Tim Price

I watch with alarm as flurries drift from the sky on a late spring day in upstate New York. My fiancée, who went to college here, brushes it off. This is the real upstate, not the everything-above-the-Bronx definition used by those, like me, who grew up in the five boroughs. I worry that if the weather is this cold in May, come October, when we are due to be married here, it could be even worse. It can snow at almost any time, my fiancée confirms.

By coincidence, we are visiting on Pentecost. We decide to go to an afternoon Mass in the college chapel, where the wedding ceremony will be held. Most of the students are either packing up or already gone for the summer, so it is just us and the last few choir kids in the pews. I feel like an undergraduate who has skipped every lecture and has shown up to take the final. My fiancée, the magnanimous Quaker, is unfazed.



Composite image: iStockphoto.com/America



WHY IS THERE SO MUCH WRONG IN THE WORLD, AND WHY DO I HAVE SO LITTLE POWER TO FIX IT? ●●

The priest tells the story of the apostles huddled together in fear, not knowing where to turn. Their savior and teacher has been brutally killed. Are they next? Was it all for nothing? Though they have each other, they have never felt more alone. But then, impossibly, there is hope. The Spirit comes upon them and they are renewed, imbued with the courage of their convictions and the power to share their good news with all who hear them.

I find myself identifying with these men, with their battered faith and potent doubts. I worry that I do not really know how to be a good husband to my future wife or a good father to the children we plan to have some day. Still, I begin to acknowledge and let go of the things, like the weather, that are beyond my control. If it is clear and sunny on our wedding day, we will get married. And if it snows, we will get married. Like the apostles, I have seen enough to believe that there is beauty and purpose in the world. But I have also experienced enough to perceive the darkness encroaching on it.

DARKNESS CREEPING

My father was a decorated New York City police officer, but he retired early to focus on his drinking. Prone to alternating fits of rage and melancholy, he never taught me or my brother to shave or drive a car or talk to girls, as some fathers do, but he did teach me a few things. He taught me to lie about my home life and isolate myself from my peers. He taught me not to make too much noise when he slept until dark. Like the Old Testament God, he taught me that everything—our house, our money, my physical safety and that of my mother—were granted at his mercy and could be revoked without notice. He taught me dread, which is broader and deeper than fear and lasts, as far as I can tell, indefinitely.

Though he had some religious notions, I cannot recall

my father ever setting foot in a place of worship outside of the obligatory weddings, baptisms and funerals and on the days I made my first Communion and confirmation. I do remember how, when he found himself on the losing end of an argument, he would declare, “We’re all going to start going to church more!” If he ever did go, he did not seem to find what he was looking for.

A week before my high school graduation, as I am drafting my valedictorian speech, my father dies from complications related to alcoholism. Initially, this comes almost as a relief. For the first time that I can remember, my family is free from his reign of terror and from the misery of watching him slowly waste away. But relief soon curdles into anger. How like him to die so selfishly close to graduation day, casting a shadow over my accomplishment. How thoughtless to leave his wife and sons with nothing but debts and bad memories. The thought of mourning him now, of taking pity on a lost soul, only unsettles me.

During college, I armor myself with cynicism. Fancying myself a learned agnostic, I scoff at the idea that there is inherent meaning or purpose in anything. With seemingly so little at stake, I find this an easy pose to maintain at first. Then one day, as I am walking to the bus stop to meet a friend for a concert, I am overcome with nausea and feel convinced that I will die if I go. I press through it, dismissing my first full-blown anxiety attack as an aberration.

A year and a half later, as I am walking to the same bus stop, I am run over by a paratransit van that comes speeding through the crosswalk. I am dragged down the road and left with a compound leg fracture, pulverized collarbones, a broken shoulder, burns across my back and left arm and gravel permanently embedded in my face. I force myself to stay awake until I am taken to the hospital and wheeled into surgery, terrified of what fate awaits me if I close my eyes.

My parish priest comes to visit me in the recovery room. We joke and talk about the 2008 presidential primaries. Even as the surgeons fuse my bones with titanium, I feel some of my armor beginning to chip away.

IN RECOVERY

As the years pass I make a full physical recovery, but the accident adds stress to my underlying anxiety. This heady cocktail makes every day a challenge, to be managed minute to minute and hour to hour. Too often I fall back on the bad habits of my childhood, hiding my fears from friends and loved ones out of a sense of shame. I turn to prayer because I feel I can only be fully honest with God, who after all, already

knows everything about me. Every morning and throughout the day, I run silently through my list of grievances. Illness. Death. Poverty. Loneliness. The oceans are rising and angry young men are armed with automatic weapons. Why is there so much wrong in the world, and why do I have so little power to fix it?

Then there is the wedding—and the new life that comes after. I love my fiancée, and in time I allow myself to share with her the fears I have only confided to God. But still, I worry. I am struck by Pope Francis' suggestion that couples who do not fully understand the challenges before them may not have valid marriages. I have no role model for this relationship, only a cautionary example. What if, in the end, I am no better than my father?

On the long train ride home from our visit upstate, I begin reading a book about the life of Jesus. As always, I find myself drawn to the role of Joseph and his quiet strength. Here is a man who took the ultimate leap of faith. Husband to the mother of God, father figure to the father of all. He could have laughed in Mary's face and turned her out of his house. Instead he took a leap of faith and chose to believe the unbelievable. He did what he could and taught his son what he knew. In the end we never learn what became of him, but

we know enough: We know he was the man who loved Mary. Maybe that is my answer. If I can be the husband who loves my wife and the father who loves my children, maybe that is all they need. Maybe that is all that is asked of me.

A month later, I pass St. Patrick's Cathedral on my way home and stop in to light a candle. I pray for myself, for all who have come before me and for all who will come after. And as I often do these days, I say a prayer for my father. If forgiveness still seems out of reach, then at least I can offer some understanding of the demons with which he wrestled. He will not be there for my wedding, for the birth of his grandchildren or for anything else in this life. But he is no longer an unwelcome guest, merely an absent one who cannot traverse the long distance between us but who does, I believe, send his regrets.

I always hoped that as I got older the answers to life's great mysteries would reveal themselves to me, appearing like tongues of flame. For now I still find myself huddled, fearful, waiting for a sign. But I no longer feel alone.

Tim Price is editorial director of the Roosevelt Institute, a public-policy think tank based in New York City, and a graduate of Fordham University.

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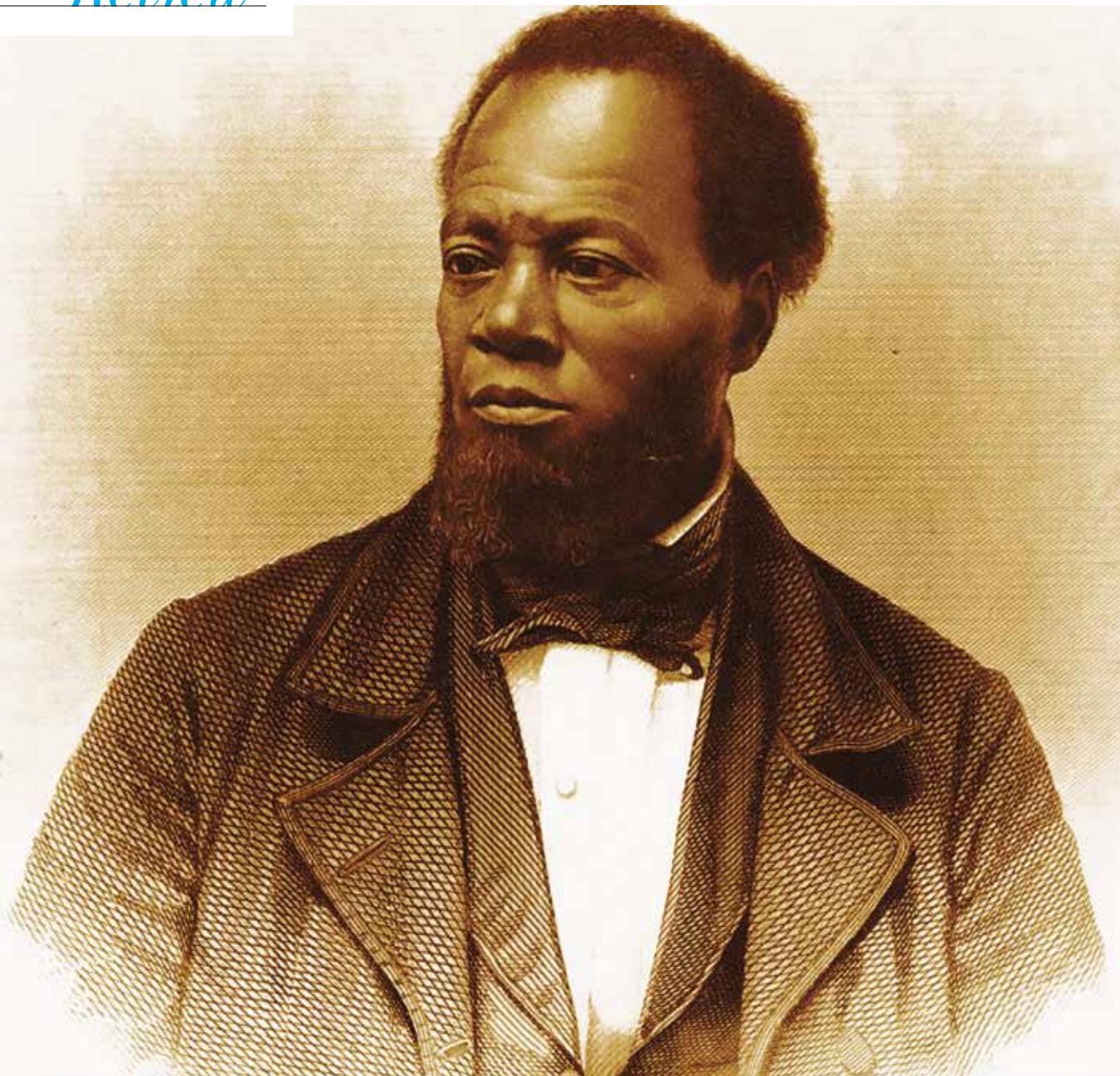
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*Currents of Race and Religion
Flowing Along the Waters
Of the Erie Canal*

By S. Brent Rodriguez Plate

◀ Austin Steward believed new technology flowed together with social progress toward a “state of earthly perfection.”

Austin Steward was born into slavery in 1793 in Virginia, where he worked as an errand boy on the plantation of a cruel master. Whippings were common, and meager food and clothing were all he was given for his excruciating labor. Yet he was a person of remarkable energy and spirit. He managed to teach himself to read in secret, an act for which he was beaten.

Steward eventually escaped after his master sold the plantation and moved his household and slaves to New York State. Steward gained his final freedom with legal help from the New York Manumission Society, an abolitionist group, and made his way to Rochester. In short order he opened a butcher shop and then a general store on Main Street, creating a thriving business. He was just 24. He saw his success as a reason to help others and found time to teach Sunday School, host black reform meetings and distribute abolitionist newspapers. Freedom was not simply the release from a former state of being. For Steward it was a call to action and responsibility.

Ten years later Steward had become such a key figure for the black community of Rochester that he was asked to give a speech during celebrations marking the end of slavery in New York, on July 5, 1827. His Emancipation Day oration began with optimistic words: “The age in which we live is characterized in no ordinary degree, by a certain boldness and rapidity in the march of intellectual and political improvements.”

The Erie Canal had recently

been completed—Steward’s shop was but a couple of blocks from its waters—and his speech teemed with confidence about new technologies and how technology flowed together with social progress toward the “state of earthly perfection.” Begun in 1817, by its completion the canal connected Rochester with the Great Lakes in the west and Albany and New York City to the east. It was a technological marvel that radically transformed the young United States, producing large amounts of wealth in New York and reconfiguring national religious and social dynamics by connecting the continental interior with the eastern seaboard.

During this time, Steward gained prominence by offering goods for Rochester as the town fed off the canal; the town’s population swelled by 500 percent between 1820 and 1830. For business owners like Steward, economic markets created in canal towns provided independence. Farms, industry and consumer stores could be locally owned and operated while remaining connected to the global market.

The Waters of Opportunity

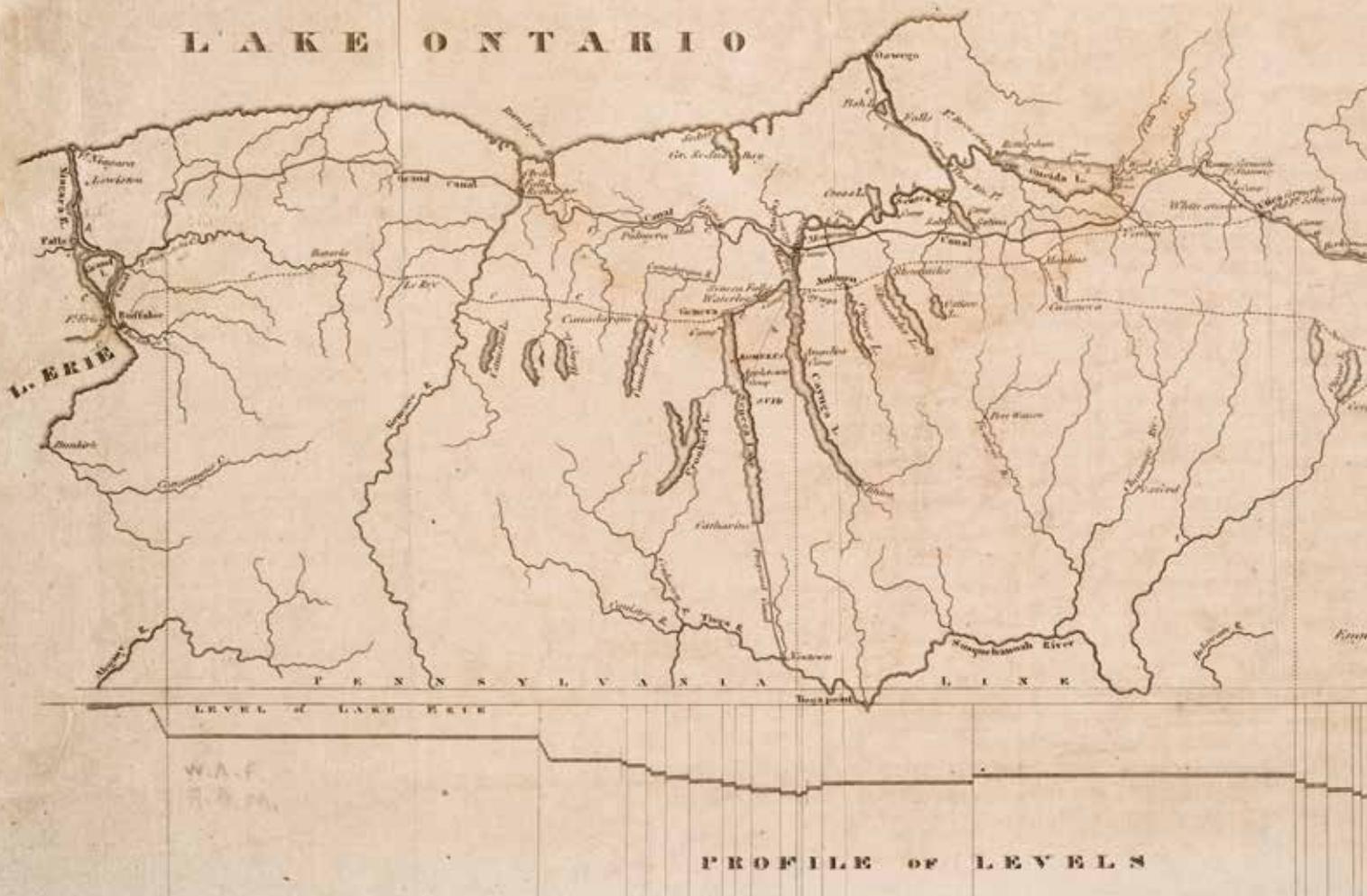
As new life flourished along the canalway, New York State took many of the antislavery currents flowing across the country and brought them rapidly to prominence (though it must be noted that emancipation came much later in New York than it did in other Northeastern states). The canal generated an economy that did not rely directly on slave la-

bor, and it made New York’s economy the most dynamic of the antebellum era. Meanwhile, the canal’s transportation network created branches for the underground railroad—churches all along the canalway provided stations—and soon began carrying abolitionist newspapers and pamphlets for distribution across the nation.

Religious arguments over slavery were anything but settled at the time. Congregations split over the issue, while new ones were formed, including many African-American denominations, as theological interests intersected with economic interests and political movements. “Religion had given birth to abolitionism in the Burned-over District,” notes historian Milton Sernett, referring to central and western New York, in his study of African-American freedom movements, *North Star Country*, “but now abolitionism pitted Christian against Christian.”

Presbyterian, Methodist and Baptist denominations all had major theological debates about slavery, sometimes leading to schisms over abolition, usually separating along north-south lines. The Methodist Episcopal Church, the largest denomination and probably the most influential institution apart from the federal government itself in ante-bellum America, split in 1844 over abolition. Its northern denominations were increasingly opposed to slavery, leading to the formation of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in which clergy were not allowed to own slaves, but they took no

LAKE ONTARIO



explicit stance against slavery for the general population.

Meanwhile, a great many of those working for African-American freedom were devout Christians. People like Steward, Frederick Douglass, Sojourner Truth, Jermain Loguen, Samuel Ward and Harriet Tubman all connected with one another across the Erie Canal corridor and called on fellow Christians to rise up against the sinful injustice of slavery. Yet theology does not work well in abstraction, separated from geographical and technological realities.

Religious historians have long noted the impact of Charles Finney's revivalist theology as part of the Second Great Awakening that burned along the canalway. Finney helped overturn then-current Calvinist theologies rooted heavily in a divinely

determined world that left little room for individual freedom of choice. For the puritanical Calvinists who dominated the beginnings of the nation, improvement and ultimately perfection were in the hands of God. This is what Finney intellectually turned upside down.

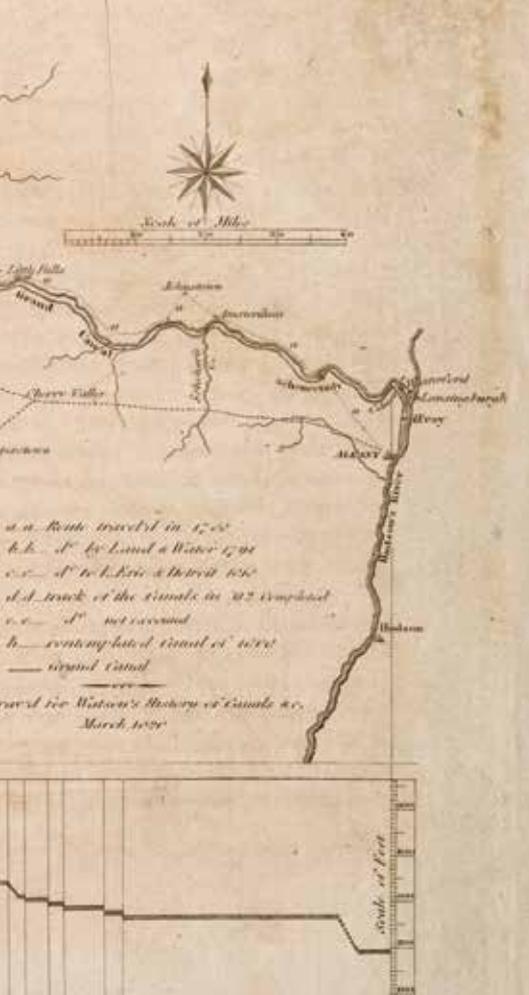
Yet ideas like free will and earthly, human perfectibility that Finney espoused would have found no purchase without the waters of the canal, along which he lived and worked for many years. For there, directly in front of people like Steward, was the aquatic thread that linked them to a globally based economic prosperity, a democratic governance made possible through the spread of news and information, and an enthusiastic religious life whose currents traveled far and wide. Mormonism, Spiritualism, Ad-

ventism and several other seemingly utopian societies all emerged along the Erie Canal soon after its completion. Steward and others living in the canalway did not just hear revivalist and utopian society leaders speak about perfection; they saw perfection's potential flowing through the streets.

Austin Steward's Freedom

In this environment, Steward became a Rochester subscription agent for *Freedom's Journal*, the first ever black-owned and operated newspaper. It was started in March 1827 in New York City and distributed across upstate New York cities over the canal. The newspaper was founded by the Rev. Peter Williams Jr. and edited by John Russwurm and Rev. Samuel Cornish to counter the racism found across much of the main-

Erie Canal as planned in 1820. Map Division, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundation



► New York State took many of the antislavery currents flowing across the country and brought them rapidly to prominence.

and white, worked for the emancipation and education of African-Americans. Along the canalway in the first half of the 19th century, new educational institutes like the Oneida Institute, Whitesboro Seminary and Clinton Seminary emerged to provide education to whites and blacks alike. (Even so, formal education for blacks, outside home and church, was almost nonexistent until late in the 19th century.) It was seldom enough to abolish slavery; it was essential to create a socioeconomic structure that provided free blacks with a life of meaning, work and purpose.

As Steward became more involved in the socio-political arena, he hosted reform meetings around the region, and he was made the vice president of the first national “Colored Convention” in Philadelphia in September 1830. The Rev. Richard Allen, founder of the African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) church denomination, the first independent black church in the nation, was president. Conversations at the convention centered around labor rights and black education, while one of the key tasks of the conveners was to organize The American Society of Free Persons of Color in Canada.

The following year Steward took his money to Canada to help the fledgling society—later renamed the Wilberforce Colony, after the British philanthropist and abolitionist—to create a free place for African-Americans fleeing oppressive situations in the United States. The colony was a direct response to riots that occurred in 1826, and again with more virulence in 1829, in Cincinnati. Here whites, many of whom had moved west when

the Erie Canal was completed, rose up against the waves of blacks who arrived from the south and competed for menial labor jobs.

Having seen the success of the Erie Canal and its impact on New York state, Ohio had undertaken its own canal building projects in 1825, with the Miami & Erie Canal linking Cincinnati with Lake Erie. Unlike Western New York, however, the tensions between groups of people, especially those with “lower” status, including those digging canals, were more pronounced in Cincinnati as they fought over resources, leading to white attacks against blacks. The violence continued for months, and by the end of summer 1829 over 1,000 African-Americans fled the city. Many moved north to Canada, and a number of them ended up in the Wilberforce Colony established for free blacks.

Steward uprooted his family and his money from Rochester in 1831, took a canal boat to Buffalo, another boat across Lake Ontario and finally rode a wagon to the colony. After a two-day journey north of Toronto, the land was “one unbroken wilderness,” as he recalled it, and Steward found the people there starving and destitute. For those who had already come, it was nonetheless a better alternative than staying in Cincinnati. Steward brought his skills and money, and was quickly named president of the Wilberforce Colony. Collectively they established schools and crops, two churches and a temperance society, and were gaining in number for some years, reaching 166 persons by 1835.

Yet fundraising proved difficult, leaving the Wilberforce Colony and hence Steward nearly broke, prompt-

stream press and focus on the unique African-American identity. From the beginning, Cornish and Russwurm stressed the centrality of education for black people in society, and the paper’s work was “to urge upon our brethren the necessity and expediency of training their children, while young, to habits of industry, and thus forming them for becoming useful members of society.” Even though Freedom’s Journal was published for only two and a half years, it helped open the door for many African-American and abolitionist newspapers to come, including William Lloyd Garrison’s *The Liberator* (1831–65), and eventually Douglass’s *The North Star*, begun in 1847 in Rochester.

Steward believed in education as a way to empower black youth, and Christian groups at the time, black



ing him to sheepishly return to Rochester by 1837. Steward later looked back on the time in Canada with jaded eyes. His autobiography, *Twenty-Two Years a Slave and Forty Years a Freeman*, tells a series of depressing, occasionally gruesome, stories about his time there.

Two Freedoms

There is a kind of freedom that can be expressed as freedom from: freedom from enslavement, freedom from economic centralization putting money in the hands of kings, and freedom from church authorities tightly regulating salvation and access to the sacred. As early Americans followed the canal westward, farther from the institution-

al churches and governmental structures of old England and New England alike, freedom from the past became a central preoccupation.

On the other side is freedom to: freedom to work and create one's own business, freedom to worship and assemble and perhaps even form one's own religious movement, and freedom to enable others to escape the bonds of slavery and start a new life. Such positive freedom entails effort, as Steward's life suggests: distributing newspapers, establishing utopian societies and schools, delivering speeches and community organizing.

These freedoms are two sides of the same coin, a coin that has become part of the religious currency of the

United States. And it was in the Erie Canalway where the coin was gradually flipped, where freedom from yielded to freedom to, awakening the American dream as not merely God-given but as something a person must work toward. Steward's life pivoted around both sides, freedom from slavery allowed him to have freedom to work for justice.

In a land where a former slave like Steward could become a successful business owner and Sunday School teacher on Main Street in a booming canal city, the perfectible state of humanity seemed to be within range. With the arrival of revivalist theology, abolitionist movements and canal system technologies, the ground was dug for a new way of experiencing the so-

Image: iStockphoto.com/Whiteway

◀ The Erie Canal was a technological marvel that radically transformed the young United States.

cial order and working toward a “state of earthly perfection.”

Austin Steward’s narrative is mostly a success story about the after-effects of the Erie Canal and the socio-economic and religious freedoms it engendered. After he returned impoverished from Canada, he was helped by former social and business contacts. He built a new business along the canal in Rochester and once again became a prominent leader for antislavery, black suffrage and temperance causes. He would go on to teach school, preside over New York State black conventions and become a subscription agent for the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*. Following the success of *A Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave* (1845) and Solomon Northrup’s *Twelve Years a Slave* (1853), Steward published his autobiography in 1857, telling of a life flowing alongside broader social movements of his day. He died of typhoid in 1869, four years after the end of the Civil War.

S. Brent Rodriguez Plate, is a writer, public speaker, editor and part-time college professor at Hamilton College in Clinton, N.Y. His recent books include *A History of Religion in 5 1/2 Objects and Religion and Film: Cinema and the Re-Creation of the World*.

The Peacock Pin

for E.B.

By Annabelle Moseley

Roman catacombs are filled with paintings of that bird,
symbol of Christ; their feathers shed, regrown.
Down in the dark, in hidden places where air meets root—
the peacock struts a bold resurrection.

These days, I've been wearing the peacock pin you gave me years ago.
Its sharp point reminds how your body has suffered,
how our family's body will bleed when you go.
Yes, you should know how it will be between you and us.

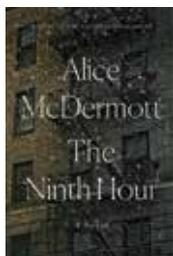
When you leave us, we'll work to raise our tremolos in song—
to transform knee-sore anguish into prayer.
This, because we know your feather-shaped soul will jubilate,
as it joins the great wing of saints.

But—there will be a fastening.
I say it again. I shout it. I swear it.
We pin you to us.
Do you hear?
Even as you go, and I mean really travel well,
We pin you to us.
We pin your beauty,
we pin your sorrowful and glorious mysteries,
We pin you
to the unfinished saints you leave behind.

Annabelle Moseley is the author of nine books, including the double volume *A Ship to Hold the World & The Marionette's Ascent* (Wiseblood Books). She teaches theology and literature at St. Joseph's Seminary and at St. Joseph's College in New York.



In the old neighborhoods of Brooklyn, Sister knows best By Jenny Shank



The Ninth Hour
A Novel
By Alice McDermott
Farrar, Straus and
Giroux. 256p \$26

This summer's blockbuster movie “Wonder Woman” featured a society of Amazon women on a secluded island, relentlessly training, each of them strong, competent, uniformed and tidy, each gifted with uncanny knowledge of what to do in any situation that arises in combat. *The Ninth Hour*, Alice McDermott’s absorbing new novel, also focuses on a community of female superheroes: the Little Nursing Sisters of the Sick Poor in Brooklyn, N.Y., in the early 20th century. These sisters swoop into fraught situations in their Irish Catholic neighborhood with such assurance and competence that at times they seem mythic, although as always,

McDermott’s apt details render each of her characters distinct and human. The battles the sisters fight are not against armed foes but against mortal sin and the collateral wreckage that it causes.

Alice McDermott is perhaps today’s pre-eminent American Catholic novelist, with three novels named as finalists for the Pulitzer Prize and one awarded the National Book Award (*Charming Billy*). Many of her eight novels feature the Brooklyn Irish Catholic community that she grew up in, but in none is it so thoroughly embedded as *The Ninth Hour*, which begins when a nun steps in to assist in the aftermath of a suicide and follows the consequences of that day for decades.

On a bleak February afternoon, Jim, a melancholy young man, takes his own life. His wife, Annie, is out shopping when he barricades the door with furniture, stops the gaps under the doors, turns the gas oven on and lies down on his bed. Jim has

just lost his job as a trainman for the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen, the nation’s largest union of railroad workers, because he “liked to refuse time,” often showing up to work an hour or two late to prove that his time “belonged to himself alone.”

At 6 p.m., Sister St. Savior, tired at the end of a long day of alms-begging, encounters the scene. A neighbor had lit a match to illuminate the hallway outside Jim and Annie’s apartment, causing an explosion. The firemen, policemen and neighbors are relieved to see Sister St. Savior and instantly cede to her the care of the devastated Annie. From the way the policemen defer to Sister St. Savior, gesturing that Annie is “right in here,” it is clear that the nuns run this section of Brooklyn.

The sisters clean up after disasters, nurse the sick, keep track of the children, widows, widowers and disabled and offer psychological counsel in the form of spiritual advice. Every-

one else is more than glad to turn these duties over to them. As one neighborhood woman reflects: “The priests were pampered momma’s boys compared to these holy women.... ‘Princes of the Church,’ my eye.... Spoiled children they are. It’s the nuns who keep things running.”

Sister St. Savior assesses the situation with a practiced eye and learns that Annie is pregnant and has no relatives in the area. She secures Annie a job as an assistant to the convent’s laundress, the exacting Sister Illuminata, who makes a ceremony out of doing laundry: “She thumped the black iron against the wooden board, thumped and lifted and thumped and shook—the steam rising—as if each piece she pressed involved some feat of determination and strength, a mortal struggle.” There, amid the bleach and starch, Annie’s daughter Sally grows up, so taken with the nuns who raise her that she eventually pursues a vocation.

For these sisters, part of determining the state of the souls living in a house is to assess the house itself. The nuns open every drawer, inspect the level of every liquor bottle, strip the sheets off the beds to reveal the stains and judge how clean and kempt the rooms and children are.

The sisters’ attentive watchfulness extends to the streets of their neighborhood, where the formidable Sister Lucy bluntly interrogates a pregnant woman with a baby, asking, “Is your husband good to you?” After they part, Sister Lucy reflects: “If he was good to her, he might let her catch her breath before starting another child.... He might think of her health instead of his pleasure.” McDermott writes, “All joy was thin ice to Sister Lucy.”

McDermott is considered a Cath-

olic novelist not only because many of her characters practice this religion but also because the themes of Catholicism often provide the drama of her plots. In *The Ninth Hour*, the sisters, like any proper band of superheroes, spend their days seeking justice—but justice of a particularly Catholic sort. They strive to balance the scales, making up for the sins of others through atonement and good works. If a poor, pregnant woman’s husband wrongs her by killing himself, well, provide her a job and a place for her child to stay. If your beloved mother turns out to be a sinner, as Sally learns hers is when she is a young adult, well, as one sister suggests: “You could simply do some good in your mother’s name. Until your mother’s ready to do something for herself.”

Even McDermott’s subplots illustrate this quest for cosmic balance. The grandfather of Sally’s eventual husband is a wealthy man who paid another man to serve in his place in the Civil War. When this replacement soldier ends up wounded and disabled, the family takes him in and the grandfather’s sister spends her life caring for him.

While Superman might set the balance of the world right by spinning the globe backward on its axis to reverse time, the sisters try to perform much the same magic through their mortal powers—mending, cleaning, cajoling, matchmaking and prying into people’s business, actions that often have a similar reparative effect and the benefit of being discreet. “All things mortal bend toward ruin” one sister explains about her efforts, “which means toward pain, toward suffering.”

The action of *The Ninth Hour* centers around several characters’

attempts to right wrongs, but McDermott is too skilled a narrative tactician to rely on a simplistic version of the Catholic redemption plot. Instead, McDermott makes an intriguing choice, introducing at the end of the first chapter a paragraph of first-person-plural narration from the future, reflecting on this story from the past. This “we” narrator turns out to be Sally’s kids. Children, McDermott suggests, are the only people whom a story of simple tit-for-tat punishment, atonement and redemption will please. “We sat back...satisfied, as children will be, at any tale that is resolved with the restoration of order.” This future perspective complicates the nuns’ ideas of order and at times invites the reader to question the harshness of their rules in the face of actions that qualify as sins but that are doing the people committing them some good while harming no one.

The grave stakes that the sisters live by—that sin could lead to eternal damnation—lends every daily decision great drama. Even the contemporary narrators, who do not share all of the sisters’ beliefs, are astonished by their sacrifices in the light of their staunch faith. “We marveled to think of it: how much went unspoken in those days. How much they believed was at stake.”

Alice McDermott has once again delivered a novel to ponder and cherish, from its moral quandaries down to its wry humor and hypnotic prose.

Jenny Shank’s first novel, *The Ringer*, won the High Plains Book Award. She is on the faculty of the Mile High M.F.A. program in creative writing at Regis University in Denver.

The transformation of Islam

It is hard to imagine a more pressing topic for Westerners today than Islam. Christopher de Bellaigue's *The Islamic Enlightenment* provides the kind of comprehensive, carefully researched and nuanced history that can help us put the current situation in perspective. People who call for an Islamic Enlightenment are, says de Bellaigue, "opening the door on a horse that bolted long ago." The story of the Enlightenment of the 19th and early 20th centuries—its origins, champions, achievements, the resistance it has encountered, and the "counter-Enlightenment" that begins after the First World War—forms the subject matter of this book. "Through its characters, the author tells us, 'we will see that for the past two centuries Islam has been going through a pained

yet exhilarating transformation—a Reformation, an Enlightenment and an Industrial Revolution all at once." One wonders if the term *Enlightenment* is broad enough to include all that occurred in this transformation.

After sketching the extraordinary flourishing of Islamic scholarship and philosophical speculation that began in the 8th century and ended in a period of stagnation that lasted up until the 19th century, de Bellaigue begins his study of the Islamic Enlightenment with Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798 and ends it in the post-World War I counter-Enlightenment. De Bellaigue explores the unfolding of this transformation in three centers—Cairo, Istanbul and Tehran, examines the resulting generalized patterns of development in the Middle East along with the rise of nation states, and ex-

plores the counter-enlightenment movements after World War I that brought the transformation to an end and introduced an anti-Western militant form of Islam.

At its best—and most of it is very good—this is a fascinating story, full of engaging characters. At times the detail is overwhelming. Chapter subdivisions would have helped.

Potential readers who hesitate before this book's 370 pages might want to read de Bellaigue's excellent article in the Long Read section of *The Guardian*, "Stop Calling for a Muslim Enlightenment" (2/19/15), as a pro-paedeutic for this truly enlightening longer study.

Peter B. Ely, S.J., is a theology professor at Seattle University.

From empathy to action

Some kinds of anguish need to be shared. That's not because of the common opinion that anxiety will disperse if you uncork the bottle and let it drift into the fresh, clear air. The Pulitzer Prize-winner Ron Powers explains: He did not want to write about his younger son Kevin's suicide. He refused to admit it, to think or reflect. But when his older son Dean began to show signs of schizophrenia, he and his wife took immediate action. They were afraid of losing Dean too.

Powers moves from intense rage and mourning to a broader treatment. First he examines schizophrenia itself. He provides a deep history of the disease. Readers already familiar with stories of Charles Darwin, Her-

bert Spencer, Sigmund Freud, Alois Alzheimer, the Menningers, George S. Patton and Harry S. Truman ("We have done pitifully little about mental illness") may be tempted to skim. Those who do will miss a rich retelling.

Powers, an investigative journalist, sometimes cuts loose like a poet or mystic. Chapter headings give clues to Powers's approach: "Bedlam, Before and Beyond," "Eugenics: Weeding Out the Mad," "Madness and Genius," "Insanity and Icarus" and "Chaos and Heartbreak" are just a few. Powers seeks not to entertain but to persuade. He wants readers to believe as he does, to exert whatever leverage they may have to change the status quo.

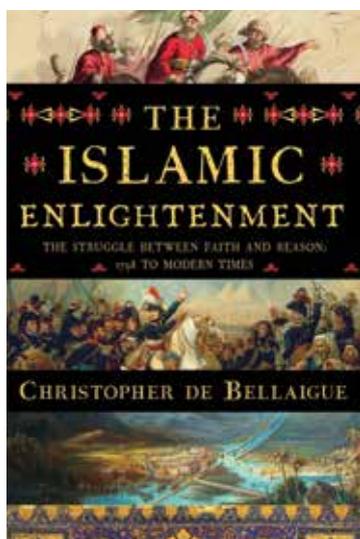
Like social reformers of earlier times, Powers uses every tool at his disposal to move readers beyond em-

pathy toward action, a full and radical change of heart. Irony is one of his sharper tools. He sounds like Dickens, who asks (in Scrooge's words): "Are there no prisons? Are there no workhouses?" For readers who supposed wrongly that such imprisonment was all in the past, Powers wants to shake us from complacency, to master our fears and fight. No doubt he changes hearts. His larger goal, to change the world, will not be simple.

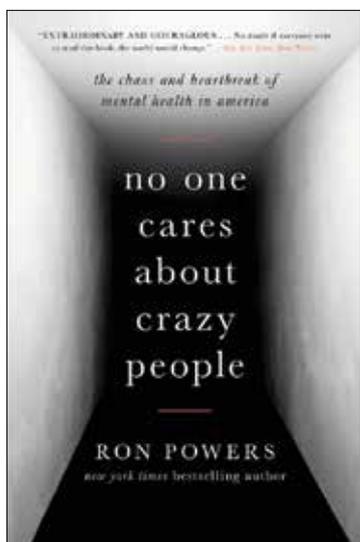
*Emilie Griffin is an award-winning playwright and author of many books on faith, including *Green Leaves for Later Years: the Spiritual Path of Wisdom*.*



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The Islamic Enlightenment
The Struggle Between Faith and Reason, 1798 to Modern Times
Christopher de Bellaigue
Liveright. 432p \$35



No One Cares About Crazy People
The Chaos and Heartbreak of Mental Health in America
Ron Powers
Hachette Books. 348p \$20

Sex and the Catholic college campus

After receiving little attention for decades, there has been an explosion of interest in the “hook-up culture” (sex without commitment) in recent years, especially on college campuses. It began with the wave-making book *Sex and the Soul*, by Donna Freitas, but there was little focus on Catholic colleges and universities. Jason King’s new book now admirably fills that lacuna.

King is a moral theologian at St. Vincent’s College in Pennsylvania, but his research is informed by “field work”—in this case, over 1,000 interviews and surveys of students at 26 Catholic schools geared toward learning about sexual attitudes, values and practices on campus.

We often speak of “the” hook-up culture, but the book expertly shows that there are actually multiple cultures. Depending on their perspective, students on Catholic campuses celebrate hooking up, reject hooking up and/or feel coerced into hooking up. Some hook-ups lead to devastating consequences, including sexual violence, while others sometimes lead to more healthy relationships. It is difficult to speak about “hook-up culture” in a sweeping way.

More nuances come from King distinguishing between different kinds of Catholic campuses: “very” Catholic, “mostly” Catholic and “somewhat” Catholic. Unsurprisingly, students were most hostile to the hook-up culture on very Catholic campuses. But, interestingly, the hook-up culture was

received best on the mostly Catholic campuses. Again, complexity looms large in King’s analysis.

Regular hook-up participants are only about 20 percent of the population and are disproportionately privileged: rich, white, at elite schools, etc. The hook-up culture has a cost, and the privileged students are more equipped to accept it.

And yet there is a perception that the hook-up culture is more prevalent than it actually is. Many students are seeking out alternative, life-giving sexual cultures—not least because of the hook-up culture’s relationship to sexual violence, sexually transmitted infections and lack of meaningful personal connections.

Charles Camosy teaches ethics in the theology department at Fordham University.



Faith With Benefits
Hookup Culture on Catholic Campuses
By Jason King
Oxford University Press. 240p \$30



French-Canadian nuns face modernity in ‘The Passion of Augustine’

It is something of a temptation, having watched Lea Pool’s “The Passion of Augustine,” to say that filmmakers should be discouraged from certain subjects—religious vocation, for instance, the inherent drama of which seems unknowable for the filmmaker without one.

More often than not, it seems as if the stories of vocation are about people who have embraced a religious life for uncertain reasons, with a plot that turns on their comings or goings—the why nots, rather than the whys.

Ms. Pool seems acutely aware of all this, as evidenced by the circum-spect approach she takes to the inner, spiritual life of her subjects, who are the teaching nuns of a convent and girls’ boarding school in Quebec in the mid- to-late 1960s. (The film, which won numerous awards in Canada, is now available online.) Chief among them is Mother Augustine (Céline Bonnier), a stern manager with a sharp mind devoted to the musical training of a student body rich with prodigies that—in the wake of Vatican II and

the secularization of Canadian education—finds itself being jettisoned by a revenue-challenged church.

Into her already upended existence comes a young girl with a floppy hat, a surly look and a Mexican serape. You would know it was the ’60s even if the girl (Lysandre Ménard) didn’t flash a peace sign at her fellow students. Alice has been brought by her mother to be enrolled by her Aunt Simone, a.k.a. Augustine, while Mom goes off to straighten out her life. That Alice and Simone will clash is inevitable.

It is a formula of sorts, this arrangement of staggered conflicts. What will Simone do with the sulky, rebellious Alice? How will she simultaneously save her school? Alice, as it turns out, is a virtuoso: Giving a demonstration to her aunt, Alice delivers a jazz version of a Bach fantasia the likes of which might have been contrived by Claude Bolling. Simone is proud of her niece, but musical improvisation represents the seemingly formless, undisciplined and amoral world into which she and

her sisters are being thrust.

The sisters largely agree, at least about the world. But as we find out more about the sisters through the director’s nuanced disclosures, we see that the relatively spartan lifestyle of the convent is, for some, a crutch. Sister Lise (Diane Lavallée), one of the more stern and demanding sisters, starts to crumble as it becomes clear that the school and convent will be dissolved and the sisters possibly scattered. Mother Augustine, we see through a delicately constructed sequence of flashbacks, had an abortion early in her life that, it seems, drove her to the nunnery. It seems an excessive plot device, though it saves time: A more nuanced backstory would require more development.

The sisters are often hilarious. “Modernity is killing me,” says one. For the younger sisters, the prospect of abandoning their veils for a new kind of dress is both frightening and thrilling. Simone, grasping the modern world with both hands, stages a

The director Lea Pool takes a circumspect approach to the inner, spiritual lives of her subjects.

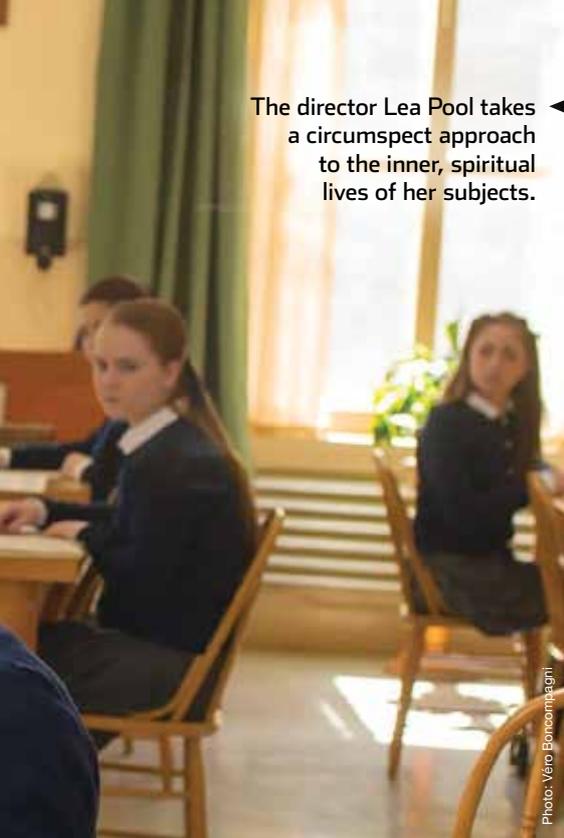


Photo: Véro Bencompagni

media event to publicize the proposed closing of her school. It is the old let's-put-on-a-show device, not very original, but the music is so fine one does not really care. However: Simone's mother general (Marie Tifo), who has been pushing the convent closure while criticizing Simone's lack of humility, is not just outraged but vindictive. And thereon turns the plot.

Lysandre Ménard was cast not for her acting ability but her pianism. The choice really elevates the movie: Any viewer who actually plays music can be taken out of a film by an actor just pretending to play; cutting from someone else's hands on the keyboard to an actor's face is a fatally artificial gesture. Ms. Pool actually takes pains to use shots that travel from Ms. Ménard's fingers to her face. The visual effect is quite impressive, and the playing is marvelous.

John Anderson is a TV critic for *The Wall Street Journal* and a contributor to *The New York Times*.

An unseen environmental disaster

Netflix's documentary "Chasing Coral" recounts the journey of a team of coral scientists determined to unveil a problem hidden beneath the surface of the global debate on climate change: the bleaching—and eventual death—of vast stretches of the world's coral reefs, including the economically crucial ecosystem of the Great Barrier Reef in Australia.

Oceans have already reached levels of warming that threaten the survival of the coral. Coral responds to a temperature fluctuation of even 2 degrees Celsius by expelling the algae grown within their body tissues, losing their characteristic resplendent colors. The coral skeleton turns ghostly white, a sign that the coral animal is on the verge of death. Once an uncommon occurrence, the number of bleaching events has spiked in the past 30 years as oceans have continued to grow warmer.

The scientists profiled in "Chasing Coral" are witnesses to the devastating effects of global climate change. They give themselves over to a passionate defense of the eco-

logically vulnerable reef. They keep vigil at the coral's side as swaths of it pass away.

In "Laudato Si'," Pope Francis draws on the words of St. Francis of Assisi and St. Bonaventure to expand the scope of family to include every living creature. It is in these relationships that we realize that the fate of other creatures is linked to the fate of the human family. Like the coral team, we are creaturely siblings to the coral, made aware of their vulnerabilities and witnesses to their suffering. Having done the physically difficult and emotionally devastating work of documenting the crisis, the coral team has set out to share their findings with the rest of the world. They are on a mission to make witnesses to the coral crisis, hoping that the rest of us will come to see the beauty beneath the waves and act passionately to save it.

Nichole M. Flores is an assistant professor of religious studies at the University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Va.



Photo: XL Callin/Seaview Survey/The Ocean Agency/Aaron Spence

"Chasing Coral" documents a disappearing beauty beneath the waves.

The Rewards of the Harvest

Readings: Is 55:6-9, Ps 145, Phil 1:20-27, Mt 20:1-16

Biblical texts often call Israel “God’s vineyard.” When Israel’s kings were strong and its borders secure, the nation thrived under the care of the God whose glory filled the sky and soil. Vineyards were especially evocative as they produced wine, to “gladden their hearts” (Ps 104:15). Several biblical passages describe the grape harvest as a time of celebration. As literary symbol, a vineyard at harvest speaks security, abundance and the expectation of joy. It evoked feelings like those many readers today might have for Christmas.

Jesus plays on this in today’s Gospel. The vineyard owner, feeling the spirit of the season, shows unexpected generosity to his late-coming workers, giving them a full day’s wage. In its original context, the parable probably spoke to Jews about Jews. Although many had struggled to keep the faith during times of persecution, others had failed to do so. Now, as the end of time approached, Christ had drawn these lost Israelites back and promised them an equal place in the kingdom. Like the generous vineyard owner, God intended to reward at the eschaton any who labored at his son’s side, no matter how much or little they had borne “the day’s burden and the heat.” In fact, Jesus continues, these latecomers may turn out to be pivotal actors in God’s plan. “The last will be first, and the first will be last.”

By Matthew’s time, this context had changed. Gentiles now sought admission to the kingdom. The returning Jews of Jesus’ day could at least claim that God had “hired” them through their ancestral covenant. Gentiles had no such claims. They better resembled thieves clambering over the vineyard wall. Not so, says Matthew. Jesus foresaw this circumstance and left instructions to treat them as full sharers in God’s promises.

God’s ways are not our ways, as Isaiah reminds us. Even among today’s Christians, there are many who have struggled to live their faith, and some express resentment toward those who have not. Some Catholics might focus on how they have struggled for justice at great cost, while others might speak of difficult adherence to challenging

*‘You too go into my vineyard,
and I will give you what is
just.’ (Mt 20:4)*



PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Why did you come to labor in God’s vineyard?
What do you expect?

Does your life attract others to Christ’s side?

teachings, but such emphases resemble the complaint of the laborers who bore “the day’s burden and the heat.” They did indeed bear such burdens, but that is not what earned them their reward. The grape harvest is a time of joy. Our labor alongside Christ is its own reward, as St. Paul reminds us in the second reading. Working in God’s vineyard for any other reason is bound to disappoint. By contrast, a person who has spent even one hour laboring alongside Christ has received a matchless gift of grace.

The last shall be first. Several Christians of renown were “late hires.” St. Augustine, St. Angela of Foligno, Avery Dulles, S.J., and Dorothy Day are just a few of the people who came late to the vineyard but fashioned lives of great consequence. When they saw the joy of those working in the day’s heat, they knew their place was among such laborers. We who continue to labor at Christ’s side must keep our attention on him who is our only source of joy and our highest reward.

Michael Simone, S.J., teaches Scripture at Boston College School of Theology and Ministry.

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Rev. Dr. Richard Johnson, Editor, Forum Letter
Dr. J. Patrick Hornbeck, Fordham University
Dr. Catherine Clifford, St. Paul's University, Ottawa

MODERATOR:

Rev. Dr. John Nunes, president, Concordia College

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WHERE: Concordia College, Sommer Center,
171 White Plains Rd, Bronxville, NY 10708

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SPEAKERS:

Prof. Susan Wood, SCL, Marquette University & Rep. of
the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity
Fr. Brian McWeeney, Archdiocese of NY
Rev. Dr. Leopoldo Sanchez, Concordia Seminary, MO
Rev. Dr. Dien Ashley Taylor, Redeemer Lutheran Church,
Bronx, NY

MODERATOR:

Matt Malone, S.J., editor in chief, *America* magazine

WHEN: September 26, 2017 | 6 p.m.

WHERE: Fordham University, University Church,
441 E. Fordham Rd, Bronx, NY 10458

RSVP: events@americamedia.org or (212) 515-0153

Where Is God at Work?

Readings: Ez 18:25-28, Ps 25, Phil 2:1-11, Mt 21:28-32

The Lectionary draws us abruptly from last week's Gospel (Mt 20:16) to this week's (Mt 21:28). The intervening passages, which include the triumphal entry into Jerusalem and the cleansing of the Temple, appear elsewhere in the liturgical calendar, so the church passes over them now.

Now in Jerusalem, the setting for Jesus' mission has changed. He had started on the peripheries of Israel, where his opponents were Pharisees. Although Matthew recounts their sometimes acrimonious response to Jesus, other passages affirm that they agreed with him on many things. Their disputes with Jesus were primarily over matters of interpretation, not principle.

Jesus had a deeper grievance with his opponents in Jerusalem. The great city housed two institutions vital to Jewish life. The first was the Temple, run by officials Matthew calls the "chief priests." The second was the Sanhedrin, a council of elders representing the whole Jewish community. Although Jerusalem was a conquered city, the Temple and the Sanhedrin preserved vestiges of local autonomy and exerted influence on Jewish life throughout the Roman Empire.

Something was wrong. Many felt that in trying to mitigate foreign domination, the chief priests and elders had instead betrayed Israel. Greco-Roman settlers, bringing their own cultural and religious institutions, planted new towns on former Israelite lands now empty from centuries of war-

'Tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God before you.' (Mt 21:31)

PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

What can crowd out your perception of grace?

In what surprising places have you found God at work?

fare. Young upper-class Jewish men received a Greek education, often at the expense of traditional learning. Greek displaced Hebrew in prayer and Aramaic in everyday speech. Some high priests even exchanged their Hebrew names for names from Greek mythology, like Jason or Menelaus.

While the chief priests and elders may have been trying to preserve the nation, others saw their efforts as defeats and feared that Israel was melting away. When Jesus saw the crowds, he saw "sheep without a shepherd" (Mt 9:36). Many Jews found little in their religious tradition to give their lives a sense of meaning. Others followed their leaders' example and collaborated with the Romans. For non-elites, this often meant serving as a tax collector or a prostitute. John's preaching had reached many of these individuals, however. Jesus presents their conversion as evidence that John's ministry was truly of God, unlike the policies of the chief priests and the elders, which had led only to decline.

This is the background of today's Gospel. Jesus offers a stinging rebuke to Israel's leaders, who had promised to tend God's vineyard but did nothing to arrest its decline. Sinners, meanwhile, who had forsaken God's vineyard entirely, now returned to be its most reliable workers. Decades later, Matthew re-interpreted this parable to explain the inclusion of Gentiles. Though their ancestors had not followed God as Israel had, the same mercy God extended to returning Israelites was now theirs as well.

Matthew recognized God at work when John drew in sinners and Jesus attracted Gentiles. Matthew also recognized that leaders who pursued their own plans often missed these signs of grace. We who say yes to God today remain subject to the same temptation. To labor in God's vineyard means that whatever our own preferences, we must first seek out places where grace is thriving and offer our hearts and hands to its service.

Michael Simone, S.J., teaches Scripture at Boston College School of Theology and Ministry.

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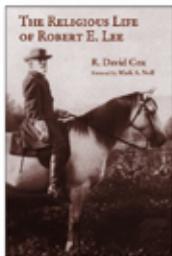


A GATHERING OF LARKS

*Letters to Saint Francis
from a Modern-Day Pilgrim*

ABIGAIL CARROLL

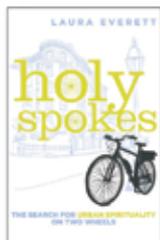
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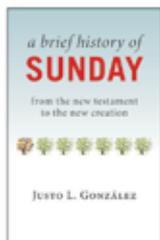


HOLY SPOKES

*The Search for Urban Spirituality
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LAURA EVERETT

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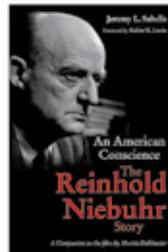


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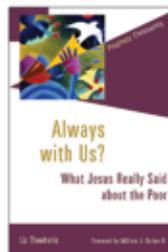


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An Oklahoma Martyr

Stanley Rother will be first U.S.-born priest beatified

By María Ruiz Scaperlanda



On Sept. 23, the Oklahoma farmer and priest Stanley Francis Rother will become the first U.S.-born priest to be declared blessed. The beatification will take place in Oklahoma, a state where Catholics comprise only 6 percent of the population.

No matter how impressive, however, statistics are not what make this missionary disciple from the town of Okarche most remarkable.

In Santiago Atitlán, Guatemala, the village Father Rother served for the final 13 years of his life, the people remember and honor a faithful priest, a farmer who plowed the fields alongside them, a shepherd who proclaimed the Gospel with his life, a courageous man who chose to remain with them even when violence threatened—and eventually took—his life.

Through his faithfulness and gift of presence, Padre Aplá—the name his Tz’utujil Mayan parishioners gave him in their native tongue—embodied the essence of a true disciple. He was a pastor whose love was expressed, above all, by serving, by doing whatever Christ asked of him—even when it seemed impossible, like completing his seminary studies after failing the first year of theology.

In a manner both humorous and courageous, the seminarian who struggled with learning Latin became the missionary priest who not only learned Spanish but also became completely fluent in the rare and challeng-

ing Tz’utujil language.

Then and always, Father Rother put himself completely into the Lord’s hands, with confident trust in divine providence. He lived a life of heroic virtue with a keen awareness of God’s presence in the small and quotidian moments of parish life, as well as in the unfamiliar and often unexpected events of missionary life.

In 1975, at the young age of 40, he became the sole priest and pastor at the Oklahoma mission La Iglesia Parroquial de Santiago Apóstol (St. James the Apostle), which served 25,000 Tz’utujil parishioners.

From celebrating Mass and the sacraments to building a clinic and fixing machinery, Father Rother imitated Christ’s model of servant leadership. And when Guatemala’s violent *conflicto armado interno*, or armed internal conflict, made its way to the remote village on the shores of Lake Atitlán, his priestly duties expanded to include heartbreaking tasks like walking the roads searching for the bodies of the *desaparecidos*, parishioners who had gone missing.

“And what do we do about all this?” wrote Father Rother to a friend. “What can we do but do our work, keep our heads down, preach the Gospel of love and nonviolence.” To use Pope Francis’ image, Father Rother was a shepherd who smelled like his sheep.

Paraphrasing the words St. Paul used in Acts 13:22 to recall God’s rea-

son for favoring King David, it is clear that Christ found in Rother “a man after his own heart,” one “who did all that was asked of him”—to the point of martyrdom.

As he wrote at the end of his final Christmas letter from the mission to his church back in Oklahoma in 1980, “The shepherd cannot run at the first sign of danger. Pray for us that we may be a sign of the love of Christ for our people, that our presence among them will fortify them to endure these sufferings in preparation for the coming of the Kingdom.”

On July 28, 1981, Father Stanley Rother, the servant of love, was murdered in the parish rectory, martyred for the Gospel and for his sheep.

Our missionary journey to the peripheries of our lives will inevitably be different from that of Blessed Stanley Rother. But ultimately, the question we must answer is the same: What is God asking of me today, in this moment, in this place?

If anyone can model this call to holiness in the midst of our very ordinary lives, it is the farmer from Okarche. He would tell us that it all begins with our willingness to say yes to whatever—and whomever—God has placed in front of us.

María Ruiz Scaperlanda is an award-winning journalist and author. The *Shepherd Who Didn’t Run: Fr. Stanley Rother, Martyr From Oklahoma* is her sixth book.

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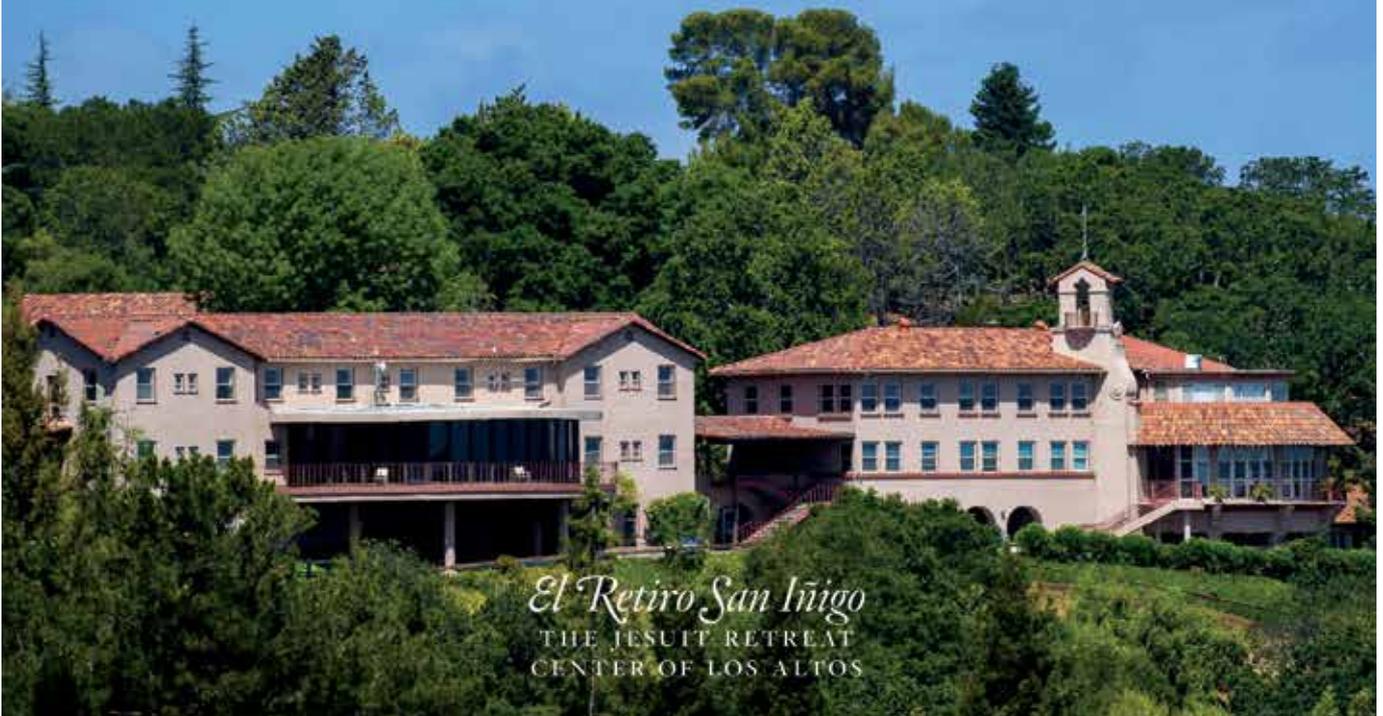
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