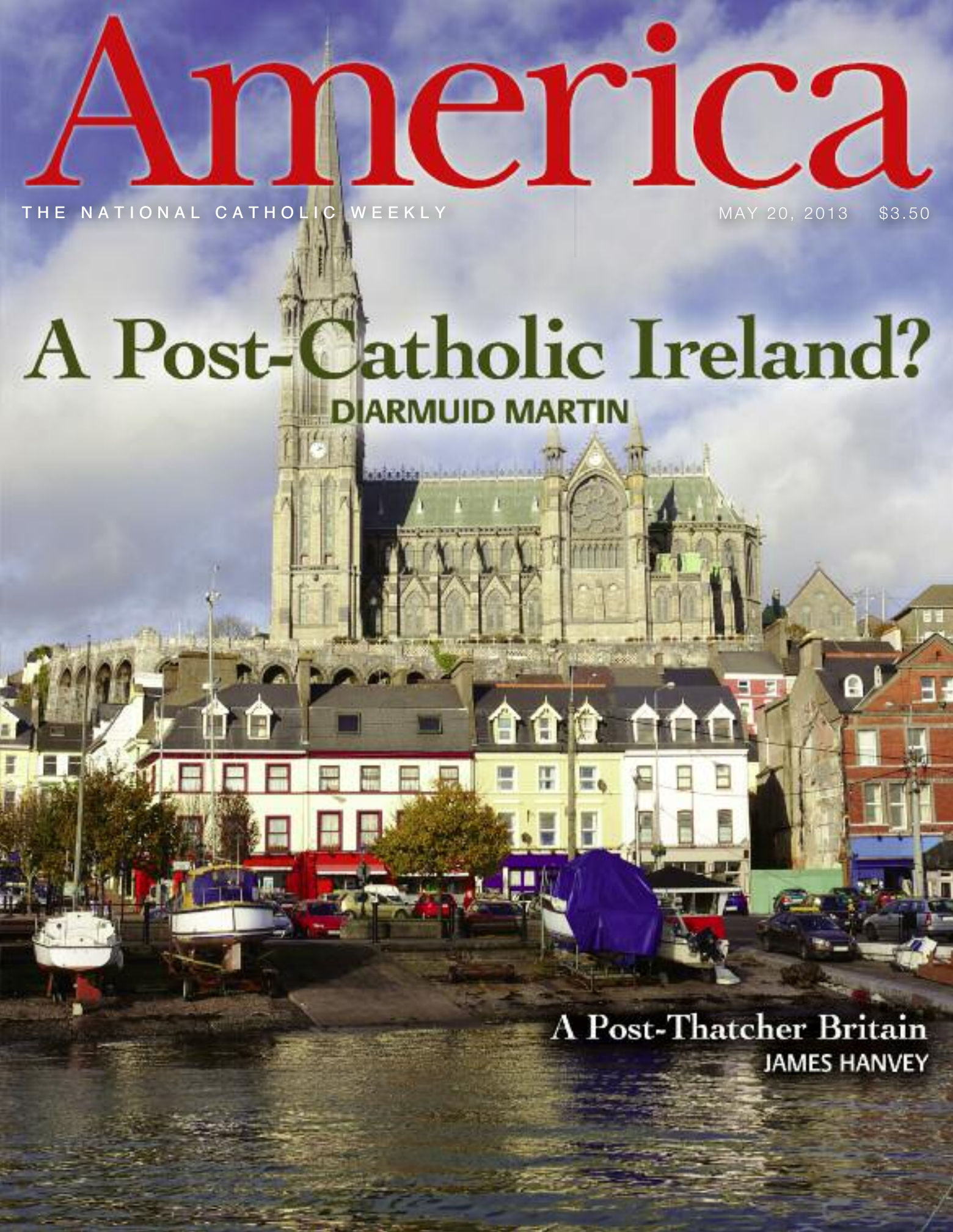
America
THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC WEEKLY
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A Post-Catholic Ireland?
DIARMUID MARTIN
A Post-Thatcher Britain
JAMES HANVEY

OF MANY THINGS

The British have a funny relationship with spectacle. On the one hand, they have a deep-seated love of pageantry—a centuries-old belief in the power of public performance to tell their national story. Over the centuries, this constellation of fact, myth and élan has done the job of uniting the otherwise utterly dissimilar peoples of Great Britain. On the other hand, the British capacity for self-mockery knows no bounds; this is the country, after all, that practically invented modern satire. It's nearly certain, then, that the most cynical view of the British penchant for spectacle is to be found among the British themselves.

So it was not surprising that in the build-up to Margaret Thatcher's funeral last month there were howls of protest among many Britons. "Too many pounds and too much pomp for too little purpose," they pouted; protests were planned and boycotts announced. Few people actually turned out to protest on the day of the funeral, however; the British respect for respectability triumphed again. Still, as the Iron Lady's cortege wended its way to Saint Paul's Cathedral, an impassioned debate followed its every turn. To be sure, Lady Thatcher was a polarizing, transformative figure, a sort of spectacle in her own right. Yet in the legacy debate last month, she was frequently spoken of as something even greater than that. In the minds of many Britons, Margaret Thatcher was either the messiah or Mephistopheles.

That kind of hyperbole, of course, is an inevitable byproduct of any vigorous politics. But last month the language was particularly strong, the posturing particularly grotesque and the stakes unnecessarily high. So what gives?

Part of the answer lies in understanding what the philosopher Charles Taylor calls "the secular age" that we currently inhabit. According to Taylor, a secular age is characterized by the widespread rejection of the "beyond"; it is an age in which we live in "the immanent frame," a this-worldly "constellation of orders, cosmic, social and moral" that characterize the modern age.

The political implications of Taylor's thesis are obvious: If there are no goals beyond human flourishing, no shared acknowledgment of something beyond the short, brutish nastiness of this life, then what fundamentally concerns only this life becomes all the more important. Politics, therefore, becomes liturgy, and ideology becomes theology as society displaces the church as the locus of community. Politicians like Margaret Thatcher become ever more powerful (and priestly) symbols. Instead of the patient grace of God, the state is what transforms the *pluribus* into an *unum*. The political stakes grow higher and higher as a result. We no longer live in a fallen world but in an imperfect society; our politics, then, becomes a debate about the best means to self-perfection, a goal that is equal parts cynical realism and tragic fantasy. As James Hanvey, S.J., writes in this issue, "any society that has substituted arguments about means for arguments about ends is a society in decline."

There is a different kind of decline taking place across the Irish Sea, Archbishop Diarmuid Martin writes in this issue. At first glance, it might be unsettling to find an article about the Irish church and an article about a British prime minister in the same issue. Perhaps. After all, as has so often been said, "What the English could never remember, the Irish could never forget." Still, these two stories have more in common than one might think. For in order to find their way out of their very different troubles, the English and the Irish must both remember the same thing, the same someone, the true savior, who presides in loving splendor within and beyond the immanent frame.

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Responses to Archbishop Diarmuid Martin's essay on Catholic Ireland. Plus, **Naomi Schaefer Riley**, right, talks about her book, *'Til Faith Do Us Part: How Interfaith Marriage is Transforming America*. All at americamagazine.org.

Shocking Assaults in India

Out of India have come disturbing reports recently of brutal assaults on girls as young as 5 years of age. In central India, one 5-year-old girl died on April 29, succumbing to a brain injury inflicted when her rapists attempted to smother her cries. In New Delhi another 5-year-old was raped by two men over a two-day period. The stories of these incomprehensible attacks follow the account last December of a fatal assault by a group of men on a young woman returning from a visit to a cinema. Does the sudden rush of these sordid reports indicate a new criminal phenomenon? Probably not.

Unfortunately, gender bias has long undermined respect for the human dignity of girls and women in India—a problem, of course, not isolated to India—and attacks like these have been going on for a long time. Their frequency, however, may be on the rise as a vast social dislocation continues as armies of young people in India are driven from subsistence agriculture in the countryside and into work of all kinds in the nation's rapidly growing urban centers.

If there is any good news to be found in these reports, it is the fact that they are being reported at all. Caste and poverty biases figure in the problem; police often do not respond to assaults on poor women and children. Many low-caste and poor victims and their families have never even bothered to report their suffering before. Now national media are publicizing the problem and pushing for more thorough investigations and other reforms. The news reports have outraged the public and have awakened it to the problem. Perhaps this new attention may result in fewer girls being so horribly victimized in the future.

Courage on the Court

"I'm a 34-year-old N.B.A. center. I'm black. And I'm gay," wrote Jason Collins in Sports Illustrated (5/6). All his life he had faced pressure to meet social obligations he naturally could not. He dated women and was even engaged, he said. "I kept telling myself the sky was red, but I always knew it was blue." He endured years of difficulty, he wrote, and went to "enormous lengths to live a lie." Now Mr. Collins is the first openly gay athlete in a major professional sport. In his case, courage defeated fear, acceptance trumped self-doubt, and truth overcame dishonesty.

In a pastoral letter, "Always Our Children," the bishops of the United States in 1997 wrote that same-sex attraction, in itself, "cannot be considered sinful, for morality presumes the freedom to choose." They continued: "God loves every person as a unique individual. Sexual identity helps to define the unique persons we are, and one component of our sexual identity is sexual orientation." When a person freely chooses to reveal that he or she is gay, sometimes at great personal risk, that person deserves the respect and support of others. The bishops also reminded us that when a person "comes out," when he or she speaks the truth in this way, it can have a positive, even transformative effect on others. "Love can be tested by this reality," they wrote, "but it can also grow stronger."

"The truth shall set you free," says Jesus. Speaking the truth about one's sexual identity is consonant with—not opposed to—a life of integrity and faith. No one should be pressured to reveal his or her sexual orientation, but no one should be ashamed to do so either. The choice to tell this particular truth, moreover, is distinct from other personal, political or moral choices, which may be justly criticized. If we cannot make this distinction, a distinction embedded within the church's living tradition, and support Mr. Collins and others as our brothers and sisters in Christ, then the call to respect and love all of God's children is nothing but a clanging cymbal.

Mr. Collins, a 12-year N.B.A. veteran, becomes a free agent on July 1. He hopes to continue his career and, he wrote, to be "genuine and authentic and truthful." Our hopes and prayers are with him.

Poverty and Generosity

Ken Stern, author of *With Charity for All*, reported in The Atlantic (April 2013) that the wealthiest Americans (the top 20 percent in earnings) in 2011 gave only 1.3 percent of their income to charity, while the bottom fifth of Americans gave 3.2 percent.

Why do the rich not give more? Some say the drive to get rich is inconsistent with the idea of communal support; they are more likely to prioritize self-interest. On the other hand, when both groups are shown a video on child poverty, their willingness to offer help becomes identical, according to research by Paul Piff, a psychologist at the University of California-Berkeley. Another study revealed that those who live in exclusively wealthy neighborhoods give less than those who live in diverse surroundings. Perhaps the wealthy would be more generous if they knew better how the other half (or 99 percent) live.

Mr. Stern writes that the poor are more likely to give to religious and social service organizations, while the rich give to universities. The pity is, concludes Mr. Stern, most people like to believe there is a connection between personal success and generosity toward others. There is, but not the way they think.

Life, Not Death

How we choose to respond to events of inexplicable violence both reflects and shapes our values. In an interfaith prayer service on April 18, Cardinal Seán P. O'Malley, O.F.M.Cap., said of the Boston Marathon bombings: "In the face of the present tragedy, we must ask ourselves: What kind of a community do we want to be?"

In Boston, Dzhokhar Tsarnaev could receive the death penalty if found guilty of the bombings on April 15 that claimed three lives and injured at least 260 others. Meanwhile Dr. Kermit Gosnell, whose grisly murder trial ended this month, could suffer the same fate. According to a grand jury report, Dr. Gosnell committed hundreds of acts of infanticide at a Philadelphia abortion clinic; babies were born alive and viable only to have their spinal cords snipped. Most of these heinous acts, however, cannot be prosecuted because of a statute of limitations or because files were destroyed. Dr. Gosnell therefore faces just four counts of first-degree murder and one count of third-degree murder—the latter case is that of a Nepalese refugee who was oversedated while awaiting an abortion.

Many people, justly outraged by these coldhearted crimes in Boston and Philadelphia, believe that if convicted, Mr. Tsarnaev and Dr. Gosnell deserve the most serious penalty available. Massachusetts forbids the death penalty, but Mr. Tsarnaev was charged in the federal system, which allows for it. Senator Chuck Schumer, Democrat of New York, told CNN on April 21 the Boston bombings are "just the kind of case" the death penalty should be applied to. Seventy percent of Americans, according to a new Washington Post-ABC News poll, agree with Mr. Schumer.

The reason for this popular support of the death penalty is not solely a desire for retribution. Many believe the death penalty demonstrates ultimate respect for the lives of victims by sending an unambiguous message that such grave crimes will not be tolerated. Others, however, see the rancorous cycle for what it is: appalled by murder, some call for even more death. This cycle of violence affects all of us.

Public officials have the right and duty to dole out a punishment proportionate to the gravity of the offense. But punishment, in the Catholic tradition, in addition to helping restore public order, also has a remedial purpose. Blessed John Paul II wrote in "The Gospel of Life" (1995) that punishment should offer the offender "an incentive and help to change his or her behavior and be rehabilitated." If the guilty party accepts the punishment, it helps atone for the wrongdoing. Therefore, Blessed John Paul explained, what we choose as punishment "ought not go to the extreme of executing the offender except in cases of absolute necessity: in other words, when it would not be possible otherwise to defend society."

This raises an obvious question: In what places are public authorities actually incapable of safely and effectively incarcerating those convicted of serious crimes? Almost nowhere. "Such cases are very rare, if not practically nonexistent," John Paul wrote. This indictment of the death penalty, admittedly a development in the Catholic moral tradition, is now shared by a growing number of Catholics.

Robert P. George, writing about the Philadelphia case for First Things, rightly asked all people who identify as pro-life to support sparing the life of Dr. Gosnell. "No matter how self-degraded, depraved, and sunk in wickedness, Dr. Gosnell is also 'our brother'," wrote Mr. George, "a precious human being made in the very image and likeness of God. Our objective should not be his destruction, but the conversion of his heart." Some might dismiss this aim as completely unrealistic, but "if there is a God in heaven," Mr. George wrote, then "there is no one who is beyond repentance and reform; there is no one beyond hope. We should give up on no one."

The Catholic position on the death penalty reflects deeply held beliefs about the sacredness of the human person and what kind of world we want to live in. Pope Francis, as archbishop of Buenos Aires, said, "Life is something so sacred that not even a terrible crime justifies the death penalty." This undoubtedly applies to the cases of Mr. Tsarnaev and Dr. Gosnell.

At the interfaith prayer service, Cardinal O'Malley shared the prayer of Pope Francis that the people of Boston "be united in the resolve not to be overcome by evil, but to combat evil with good." In the face of darkness, the easy choice might be a form of justice marked by revenge—an "eye for an eye." But when Cardinal O'Malley invited us to consider what kind of community we want to be, he offered his own view: "It cannot be violence, hatred and fear." We agree. Our response must be life, not death.

SYRIA CRISIS

Jordan, Lebanon Struggle Under Refugee Deluge

Nearly 2.5 million refugees are now scattered in camps in states bordering Syria, a crisis that threatens to overwhelm underfunded U.N. capacity and upset regional political order. Jordan warned the U.N. Security Council on April 30 that the swelling refugee population was a threat to its stability. Around 1,600 Syrians crossed into Jordan on May 1, raising the total number of refugees that week alone to over 12,000, according to the Jordan Armed Forces.

The new arrivals included 70 wounded refugees, as Damascus' aerial offensive on rebel positions along the Jordanian-Syrian border entered a second week. Speaking after a private meeting with Security Council envoys, the kingdom's permanent representative to the United Nations, Prince Zeid al-Hussein, said Jordan faces a "crushing weight" if the refugee numbers, which have already reached over 500,000 since the onset of the conflict in March 2011, keep growing.

Prince Zeid complained that international help has been "insufficient" and that "from the perspective of the Jordanian government, unless the support is forthcoming, then we consider this to be a threat to our future stability," which could mean closing its borders. The United Nations predicts there could be 1.2 million refugees in Jordan by the end of the year—equivalent to a fifth of the kingdom's population.

Meeting at the Vatican on May 3, Pope Francis and President Michel Sleiman of Lebanon called on the international community to offer concrete aid to Lebanon and other countries that host refugees from Syria. In late April the United Nations said more than 440,000 Syrians, about 10 percent of Lebanon's current population, were registered or were awaiting registration as refugees. Sleiman said that when refugees staying with relatives in Lebanon were also counted, the total number exceeded one million, which places an enormous burden on the country.

Increasing numbers of Palestinian refugees in Syria are being killed, injured or displaced amid the intensifying violence, the U.N. Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East reported on April 30. An estimated 235,000 Palestinians inside Syria have been displaced, with Palestinian refugee camps directly affected by the escalating violence. The agency confirmed the additional displacement of some 6,000 Palestinians from the Ein El Tal refugee camp, just north of Aleppo, after armed groups overran the camp. Mortars and small arms were reportedly used in the assault, which damaged numerous refugee homes and contributed to dozens of fatalities and injuries.

"Ein El Tal is the latest manifestation of a cycle of catastrophic violence in which the conduct of all parties has transformed Palestine refugee camps into theatres of conflict in which heavy weapons are used, resulting in severe suffering for Palestinian civilians," the U.N. agency reported.

The refugee crisis sparked by the conflict in Syria is increasingly straining health services in surrounding countries, while refugees are finding it harder to access the quality treatment they need, the United Nations refugee agency warned in a report released on April 26. According to the report, more than a million refugees need treatment for a wide range of both common and conflict-related conditions.

With no end to the conflict in sight, U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon called on the Security Council and countries in the region to come up with a unified position that might persuade all actors to come to the negotiating table. "We risk an entire generation of children being scarred for life. The children of Syria are our children. They need our help," he implored.

SYRIAN EXODUS: Refugee children at play in a camp in Lebanon that is supported by Caritas Internationalis

PHOTO: CORDAID/EVERT-JAN DANIELS

VOCATIONS

New Priests: Reviewing the Class of 2013

The median age of men ordained to the priesthood in 2013 is 32; two-thirds are Caucasian; and 26 percent carry educational debt. These figures stand out in "The Class of 2013: Survey of Ordinands to the Priesthood," the annual national survey of men being ordained priests for U.S. dioceses and religious communities. The study, conducted by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, a Georgetown University-based research center, received responses from 366 of 497 potential ordinands nationwide. Three in 10 respondents were born outside the United States, the largest numbers coming from Mexico, Vietnam, Colombia, Poland, the Philippines and Nigeria.

Mexico is the most frequently mentioned country of birth among the responding ordinands born outside the United States. The ordinands identified a total of 35 different countries of origin. On average, respondents who were born in another country have lived in the United States for 14 years.

Most of the ordination class were baptized as infants, but 9 percent became Catholic later in life. Eight in 10 report that both parents are Catholic, and more than a third have a relative who is a priest or religious.

On average, respondents report that they were nearly 17 years old when they first considered a vocation to the priesthood. Two in three say they were encouraged to consider a vocation to the priesthood by a parish priest. Others who encouraged them include friends (46 percent), parishioners (38 percent) and mothers (34 percent).

Two-thirds of the respondents report their primary race or ethnicity as Caucasian/European American/white. Compared to the U.S. adult Catholic population, men to be ordained are more likely to be of Asian or Pacific Islander background (10 percent), but less likely to be Hispanic/Latino (15 percent).

More than half of the class of 2013 (52 percent) report having more than two siblings, while one in five report having five or more siblings. Ordinands are most likely to be the oldest in their family (40 percent). Before entering the seminary, 6 in 10 ordinands completed college (63 percent). Almost one quarter (23 percent) entered the seminary with a graduate degree. One in three (29 percent) entered the seminary while in college.

Ordinands of the Class of 2013 have been active in parish ministries. Two-thirds indicated they served as an altar server and about half (47 percent) participated in a parish youth group. One-fifth participated in a World Youth Day before entering the seminary.

More than 4 in 10 of respondents (42 percent) attended a Catholic elementary school, which is a rate equal to that for all Catholic adults in the United States. In addition, ordinands are somewhat more likely than other U.S. Catholic adults to have attended a Catholic high school, and they are much more likely to have attended a Catholic college (44 percent, compared with 7 percent among U.S. Catholic adults). Many ordinands specified some type of full-time work experience prior to entering the seminary, most often in education, accounting, finance or insurance. Four percent of ordinands indicated that they had served in the U.S. Armed Forces.

The survey also found that new priests in dioceses and religious orders have educational debt. Just over a quarter (26 percent) carried debt at the time they entered seminary, averaging just a little over $20,000.

PRAY BALL! The DC Padres team in Waldorf, Md., on April 28. The DC Padres, priests and seminarians of the Archdiocese of Washington, use America's pastime to raise awareness for vocations.

'Irresponsible' Decision

The Food and Drug Administration "acted irresponsibly" with its decision to lower the age limit from 17 to 15 for purchasing an over-the-counter emergency contraceptive, said an official of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. "No public health consideration justifies the unsupervised sale of such drugs to young teens," said Deirdre McQuade, spokeswoman for the U.S.C.C.B.'s Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities. Plan B One-Step now will be sold openly on pharmacy shelves, while generic brands will still be sold under pharmacy counters and only to people 17 years of age or older. A ruling by a federal judge in early April said the F.D.A. must make emergency contraceptives available to all ages by May 6. The Justice Department announced on May 1 that it is appealing this decision, arguing that the judge who issued the ruling had exceeded his authority. The appeal and a request for an injunction will not affect the F.D.A.'s April 30 decision to allow emergency contraceptives to be sold without a prescription to 15-year-olds.

Power Review

The need for improved relationships and a rebuilding of trust in the church is the message that emerged from a meeting of the International Union of Superiors General, which opened in Rome on May 3. The conference brought together 800 leaders of women's religious communities worldwide. The head of the Vatican's Congregation for Religious, Cardinal Joao Braz de Aviz of Brazil, spoke of recent tensions with the Leadership Conference of Women Religious in the United States during a session on May 5 and called for a review of structures of power within the church. "As our Holy Father Pope Francis has said recently, power has to do with service to others; it is not power for power's sake," the cardinal said. He told the religious that the Vatican decision in 2012 to place the L.C.W.R. under the control of bishops was made without consultation with his office, a decision that caused him "much pain." According to The National Catholic Reporter, Cardinal Braz de Aviz told the sisters: "Cardinals can't be mistrustful of each other. This is not the way the church should function."

Gang Truce Sought In Honduras

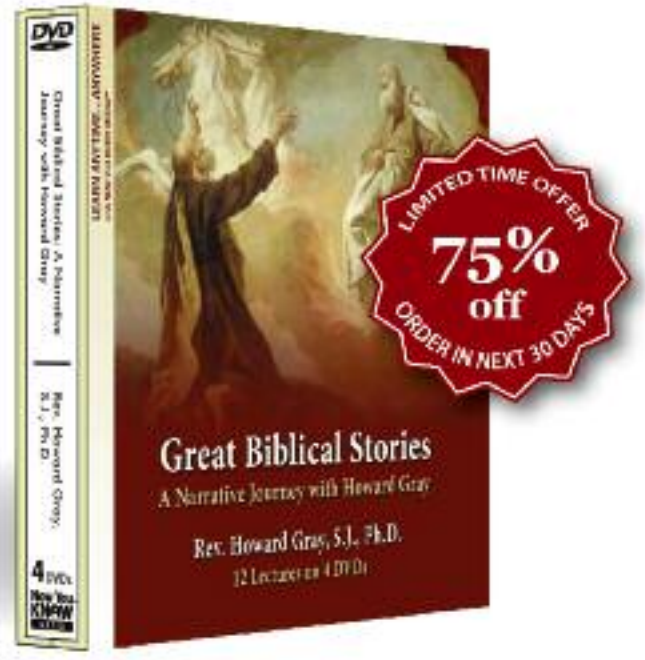
Msgr. Romulo Emiliani Sánchez, C.M.F., auxiliary bishop of San Pedro Sula, Honduras, has begun a dialogue with the main criminal gangs in his Central American nation in an attempt at a truce modeled after an agreement that has reduced gang violence in the neigboring country of El Salvador. "We are in a process of recovering respect for life; we are listening to both gangs, but the government has not yet given an answer," said Bishop Sánchez. The two gangs are the Mara Salvatrucha and the "18 Street" gang. The bishop has acknowledged that the government is reluctant to talk to the gangs, but "we have the example of countries such as El Salvador, Guatemala and Colombia," where authorities have negotiated with gang members to promote peace. Bishop Sánchez said the progress of the peace efforts may be measured in "generations' time."

From CNS and other sources.

NEWS BRIEFS

Shimon Peres, center, in Assisi

The Rev. Scott Deeley, assistant chancellor of the Archdiocese of St. Andrews and Edinburgh, said that while the church "won't be telling people how to vote" in the fall 2014 referendum on **Scottish independence,** "some bishops have indicated unofficially they'd have no problem with independence." ✦ Foreign Policy magazine included Pope Francis and Carolyn Woo, president and chief executive officer of Catholic Relief Services, among **the 500 most powerful people** in the world in its May/June issue. ✦ Israel's President Shimon Peres, named **an honorary citizen of Assisi,** Italy, on May 1, noted that St. Francis of Assisi called people "to love the faith and the poor, to pursue the value of peace and to respect nature," precepts that are of "fundamental importance today just as they were in 1208." ✦ It was announced on May 3 that Pope Francis has **appointed Michael Barber, S.J.,** director of spiritual formation at St. John's Seminary in Brighton, Mass., to be bishop of Oakland, Calif. ✦ The Vatican spokesperson Federico Lombardi, S.J., said on April 25 that he "would not exclude" the possibility of the publication of **Pope Francis' first encyclical** "within this year."



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MARGOT PATTERSON

Liberty or Death

When I first heard the news of the hunger strike at the U.S. detention center in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, my impulse was to tune it out. A few days later The New York Times printed a column on its op-ed page by one of the strikers, and my eyes moved past it to other articles on the page. What he described was too awful to contemplate: the detention center, still open after all these years; the prisoners languishing in the legal black hole they've been cast into for more than a decade; the coercive measures the authorities at Guantánamo were taking against the hunger strikers. Years ago I read Dorothy Day's description of her experience in prison in 1917 after she and other women picketing outside the White House for women's suffrage were arrested. The suffragists staged a hunger strike to dramatize their cause.

"Those first six days of inactivity were as 6,000 years," Day wrote in her memoir, *The Long Loneliness*. "To lie there through the long day, to feel the nausea and emptiness of hunger, the dazedness at the beginning and the feverish mental activity that came after."

Eventually, the women were moved into solitary hospital cells. An older woman was being force-fed in the cell next to hers. "It was unutterably horrible to hear her struggles," Day recalled.

As of this writing, 100 of the 166 prisoners remaining at Guantánamo are on hunger strike. Their demand is one heard in this country long ago: Give me liberty or give me death. They are saying no to indefinite detention without trial, saying no in the only way possible for them—by risking their lives.

It seems a terrible irony that the men confined in Guantánamo are bearing witness to the human need for dignity and freedom, that the country that confines them is one that holds itself out as a beacon of freedom to the world but will neither try these men nor let them go. Due process and the rule of law do not exist at Guantánamo.

In recent years, Congress has restricted detainees at Guantánamo from being transferred to the mainland or to other countries, but the Pentagon can grant individual exceptions. None has been given, though many of the men are innocent of any crime. Eighty-six of them have been cleared for release or transfer, some by the Bush administration years ago. Fifty-six prisoners are Yemenis, who cannot go home because Mr. Obama has barred transfers to Yemen, citing security concerns about the country.

> The prisoners are saying no in the only way possible for them.

Samir Naji al Hasan Moqbel, the author of The New York Times op-ed, is one of these. "I could have been home years ago—no one seriously thinks I am a threat—but still I am here," he writes.

Moqbel is one of 23 prisoners being force-fed as of this writing, a procedure the World Medical Association has called torture and that the 35-year-old Yemeni describes: "I will never forget the first time they passed the feeding tube up my nose. I can't describe how painful it is to be force-fed this way. As it was thrust in, it made me feel like throwing up. I wanted to vomit, but I couldn't. There was agony in my chest, throat and stomach. I had never experienced such pain before. I would not wish this cruel punishment upon anyone."

Until I saw myself ignore the news about Guantánamo, I had always wondered at the silence of people in countries where historic human rights crimes had been committed. I'd attributed their inaction to indifference. Perhaps for some it was. Perhaps others simply felt helpless, thinking, as I had, that nothing they could do would change the situation. Living, many of them, in conditions where protest might cost them their liberty or even their life, they had a greater excuse than I do for inaction. I am free, after all, unlike the prisoners in Guantánamo, who can protest only by not eating.

My mind turned to Dorothy Day when I heard about Guantánamo because she had described so vividly the misery of that brief time she spent on hunger strike when she felt only desolation and despair. It's a curious accident that the same woman would in later life demonstrate the strength of Christian conscience, protesting against war, nuclear weapons and oppression. She and the desperate men at Guantánamo make me realize that hope is not an emotion but an action, a step often taken in darkness and against all odds.

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

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/ ILIGHT FOTO

A Post-Catholic Ireland?

BY DIARMUID MARTIN

I entered the seminary in Dublin in October 1962, just one week before the opening of the Second Vatican Council. The winter of 1962-63 was one of the bleakest in decades, and our seminary was a very cold place in more ways than one. My memory of the seminary is of a building and a routine, a discipline and a way of life that seemed to have been like that for decades. Even to someone who was not a revolutionary, it all seemed very out of touch with the world from which I had just come, and in which my friends were thriving. But one was not supposed to think that way. Things were to be done as they had always been done. The Catholic Church was unchanging, but that was about to change.

MOST REV. DIARMUID MARTIN *is the archbishop of Dublin. This article is adapted from an address presented as the Russo Family Lecture at the Fordham Center on Religion and Culture in New York on April 24, 2013.*

For decades Ireland was looked on as one of the world's most deeply and stably Catholic countries. Today Ireland finds itself, along with other parts of Europe, being classified as "post-Catholic." Everyone has his or her own definition of the term. You can fully define post-Catholic only in terms of the Catholicism that has been displaced. Irish Catholicism has its own unique history and culture. Renewal in the Irish church will not come from imported plans and programs; it must be home-grown.

Ireland does, of course, share the same currents of secularization with other countries of the Western world and thus shares many of the same challenges. There are specific challenges within Europe; there are specific challenges common to the English-speaking world. Yet the fact that Ireland is an English-speaking country does not mean it can be put into the same category as the United States and Great Britain.

Ireland is different. Neither the United States nor Great Britain was ever a predominantly, much less a dominantly, Catholic country. The demographics and the cultural presence of Catholicism in society were different and remain different. Indeed, one would have to say that today Catholicism in Northern Ireland, where years of conflict forged a tighter Catholic identity, is different from that in the Republic of Ireland.

There is a growing difference between the social realities in Ireland North and South because of the evolving differences in social policy and the emergence of a perhaps unforeseen consequence of the peace process: a new Northern Ireland identity. You can no longer simplistically equate Catholicism and nationalism in Northern Ireland. A very large number of Northern Irish Catholics would favor staying in the United Kingdom.

What Happened to the Old Ireland?

For years now people have looked to Ireland as a vibrant and sustainable model for strong economic growth. Today the economic situation of Ireland is full of uncertainties, precisely at a moment when confidence and trust are urgently needed. Why did so much happen so quickly? The deeper question is: What were the values that underpinned the better-times Ireland? How did we underestimate the fact that the success of an economic model ought to have been evaluated in terms of long-term social sustainability of jobs, mortgages and borrowing, of lifestyle, education and health care and sustainable opportunity for young people?

Ireland is today picking up the pieces economically and paying the price socially. In modern Ireland many children come to school without having had breakfast. There is growing anxiety that the austerity measures introduced to respond to the economic crisis are now coming to a social breaking point. In a time of rapid change, ownership of social change is vital. Who, however, wants to own policies of austerity? There is a certain flight from political ownership. In Ireland it is easy to put the blame on the previous government. It is too easy simply to say that it is being imposed from the outside or by necessity and that we would really prefer to do it somehow differently. You will not generate ownership if the measures imposed are applied arbitrarily across the board and do not appear to differentiate according to real situations, especially the situation of those already vulnerable. We see that in Ireland in some policies regarding education or health care or the care of the elderly. I attended a national congress of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul where it was noted that people who one year ago were contributors to the society are now turning to the society for help. Patience is wearing thin; it is hard for some to hope.

The Catholic Church in Ireland had for far too long felt it was safely ensconced in a 'Catholic country.'

When I was asked to return to Dublin, Pope John Paul II asked me why secularization had taken place so rapidly in Ireland. It was one of the rare occasions when I told a pope he was wrong! The roots of change in Ireland were there but were not seen. It is not that Ireland is today in a momentary out-of-the-ordinary period in its history, somehow temporarily adrift from what is really the default position. There is no default position anymore, and there has not been such a position for some time. In many ways the church in Ireland had been trapped in an illusory self-image. The demographic majority the church enjoyed hid many structural weaknesses, and the church became insensitive to such weakness. In the immediate post-Vatican II period there was a moment of enthusiastic renewal in the Irish church, and the positive acceptance of change probably indicated that there was already a deep dissatisfaction and a desire for change in the Irish church and that the church leadership was out of touch with the religious sentiment of the people.

The Catholic Church in Ireland had for far too long felt it was safely ensconced in a "Catholic country." The church had become conformist and controlling not just with its faithful, but in society in general. I was at a seminar last week about the church's self-understanding as a "perfect society." All I can say is that anyone who might have thought that "Catholic Ireland" was anything like a perfect society must now be very disillusioned.

Faith in Jesus Christ must open us out beyond human

horizons. Christian faith requires changing our way of thinking, of trusting in God's love rather than in the tangible securities of day-to-day life. When faith leads to conformism, it has betrayed the very nature of faith. Conformism falsely feels that it has attained certainty. Faith is always a leap into the unknown and a challenge to go beyond our own limits and beyond our own certainties and the distorted understanding that comes from them.

In the comments Pope Francis made at the congregation of the cardinals just before the conclave, he spoke about the need for the church to to break out into what he called the outskirts—the frontiers—of human existence. And he added when the church does not break out of herself to evangelize, she becomes self-referential and so shuts herself in. One of the keys to understanding the mismanagement of the recent sexual abuse scandals in the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland must be precisely the measure in which the church in Ireland had become self-referential.

The effects of the child abuse scandals have had a demoralizing effect on the entire church in Ireland and continue to do so. In one sense the scandal crisis could not have come at a worse time, in that confidence in the church was well on the wane; and when the scandals broke, their effects were devastating. Today Ireland has strong child protection measures in place, and the Irish church is a much safer place for children than in the past. I would like to pay tribute to the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church, and in particular Ian Elliot, for their extraordinary contribution to helping make the church a safer place for children. One still has to ask, however, where the roots of this scandal and its mismanagement were to be found within the church. Was the issue simply the action of a few deviant priests who did not represent the church, or was there something deeper?

Certainly the overwhelming majority of priests in Ireland led and lead an exemplary moral life; they carry out their ministry with great dedication and enjoy great support and affection from their people and contribute and support the new ethos of child safeguarding.

What is extraordinarily high is the number of children who were abused. We are talking about thousands. There is no way you can simply explain away the huge number of those who were abused and the fact that this took place undetected and unrecognized within the church of Jesus Christ. Today we are in a safer place, but it took decades to attain this.

One of the great challenges the Irish Catholic Church still has to face is that of strong remnants of inherited clericalism. The days of the dominant or at times domineering role of clergy within what people call the "institutional church" have changed, but part of the culture still remains and from time to time reappears in new forms. We often overlook the fact that the very term "institutional church" has meaning only in a context of clericalism.

Clericalism will be eliminated only by fostering a deeper sense of the meaning of the church; that understanding of the nature of the church will come not from media strategies or simply by structural reforms, but by genuine renewal in what faith in Jesus Christ is about. If we focus only on structures and power, there is a risk that clericalism might be replaced by neo-clericalism. The Christian presence in society is not achieved by the imposition of a manifesto or simply by high-profile social criticism. It is more about the witness people give to Christian principles, mediated within the particular responsibilities they carry.

A Changed Society

For generations now the Irish Catholic Church relied on Irish society in general to be the principal instrument for the passing on of the faith. Day by day that becomes less and less the case. The religious culture of Ireland has changed. Many people say to me that they reject the church but still consider themselves believers in Jesus Christ. The difficulty is that in such a situation, without a personal and rigorous intellectual encounter with the Scriptures and Christian tradition, a person can drift into something that is their own, rather than a challenging encounter with their faith. The realities of faith, if viewed, consciously or unconsciously, through secularized lenses, can easily end up with a distortion of faith or an inability to understand the logic of belief.

I am not saying that reform of structures is not necessary within the church. Anything but! What I am saying is that such reform without ongoing radical renewal in the faith will end up with the wrong structures and indeed might end up just answering yesterday's unanswered questions tomorrow. Clericalism will to some extent vanish when a new culture of co-responsibility and collaboration develops.

There is a further and more vital need: that of charting a new path to allow the church once again to have an impact on society and mediate the Christian message into the broad culture of the Ireland of tomorrow. Reform is not just an inner-church reality. A church trapped in inner-church squabbles will never be attractive to others.

The church will relinquish many of the institutional roles it has held in Ireland. But this does not mean that the church should retreat into sacristies or into the private values systems. If anything, its presence must become even more vigorous within society. I am not advocating here imposing one's belief on others or establishing a sort of Catholic mafia to manipulate society. I am not thinking just of the area of sexual morality. I am talking about the place of faith and of believers in the social, economic, political and cultural world. I am talking about the type of person I have so often encountered in international life. These are people

who are recognized by their colleagues as people whose religious faith brings an added dimension to the quality of their professional life and to their broad humanitarian concern.

The Catholic Church requires lay men and women whose faith enables them to dare to hope and who will challenge us to expand the parameters of our hope beyond the narrow confines that each of us individually and as communities consciously or unconsciously fix for ourselves. The church has to re-find its ability to form leaders in an Ireland that is facing new challenges culturally, economically, politically and religiously.

We have men and women who take this task on in the media world. But much of our Catholic punditry is as ideological as much of the punditry of the other side. Catholic punditry of this kind will only appear to the other side as narrow defensiveness, while the analogous secular punditry will be perceived as entrenched anti-Catholicism. Why is it that the type of mature dialogue between believers and atheists and nonbelievers that we find in other European societies—in the academic world, in the media and indeed in churches—does not happen in Ireland?

ON THE WEB
America's coverage of Ireland.
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Demographics

Let me take a brief look at the changed demographics of Catholic Ireland. Church attendance is very low in some areas, especially in socially deprived areas. In Dublin, Mass attendance is generally highest in middle-class parishes, where parishioners are middle class economically and liberal middle-of-the-road on matters of church teaching. They are parishes, however, where there is a sense of community and activity. There is a growing interest in adult faith formation, but as yet generally on an irregular basis. Irish Catholics are generous to the church even in hard times. The International Eucharistic Congress in Dublin in 2012 was financed above all by the voluntary contributions of ordinary Catholics. The presence of young people in the life of these parishes, however, is minimal. The strong backbone of good Catholics in Ireland is an aging group.

Where there are signs of youth participation in the Irish church it is among more conservative young Catholics. Is this where the future of the church lies? I am not sure. Many of these movements of young, more traditional Catholics are very limited in numbers and make few inroads into the lives of their peers. When it comes to new evangelization, the Irish church has to ask radical questions about where it should direct its resources.

On the question of vocations, numbers are low and the seminarians are divided between two establishments, one in Ireland and one in Rome, neither of which can really achieve its aims on the basis of such small numbers. There are religious congregations that have not had an ordination for 15 years and more. There are dioceses that have currently no seminarians. No one from west of the River Shannon entered the seminary this year. It is not the case of a secularized, urban Ireland and a healthy, rural Ireland. The same cultural processes are at work across the country.

With regard to the Archdiocese of Dublin, we have been able to carry out detailed research on the basis of the most recent census figures of 2011, matching them to parish boundaries and to the boundaries of the entire diocese. There are a number of interesting facts. The population of the diocese has gone up significantly, but the numbers of those who registered as Catholics has remained at about 1.2 million. About one quarter of the population of the archdiocese registered as something other than Catholic, well above the national average. It is very clear that of the three quarters who ticked the "Catholic box" on the census form, many would not be practicing or even in any real contact with the church. This gives a very different demographic picture than the one at times presented or presumed. There are already parishes in Dublin where Catholics are in a minority, and it is clear that the cultural Catholicism that today still exists will not continue forever.

Another significant fact is that the number of those under 6 years of age is higher than of those over 70. Ours is a young diocese. Demographers estimate that the population of the island of Ireland will once again reach the eight million of pre-famine Ireland and that 50 percent of that population will live on a narrow strip of land along the east coast of Ireland from Gorey to Dundalk, most of which will be within the territory of the Archdiocese of Dublin. Will that emerging demographic reality still be "Catholic Ireland"?

The Future of Irish-Catholic Education

Until now the formation of young Catholics depended in great measure on the schools. The specific preparation for the sacraments of first Communion and for confirmation took place within the schools, and at times the link between family, school and parish was problematic. Almost all Irish education at the elementary level has traditionally been denominational, with Catholic schools making up well over 90 percent of all such schools. These schools are fully funded by the state and were thus until very recently the only form of state school that existed. With greater pluralism there is growing demand for other forms of school patronage.

All the indications, however, are that a sizeable number of parents wish to see high-quality denominational education remain an essential pillar, alongside other models, of

our national educational system to help young people to grow and flourish within the religious tradition to which they belong. Obviously such denominational education should not become divisive or exclusivist, but neither should religious education be reduced to simply a colorless presentation of the history or the sociology of religion.

The presence of the Catholic Church in the educational landscape of the United States is quite extraordinary. At times in Ireland there is a latent fear that Catholic schools and Catholic higher academic institutions are somehow a little outdated in a pluralist and increasingly secularized world. There is an ambiguity about how to define their Catholic specificity. I am uneasy when I hear of Catholic education being defined somehow as a service of quality education with religious veneer offered in general to society and within which anyone can feel fully at home.

I fear that in the current debates about divesting patronage of a substantial number of Catholic schools, the argument is being presented that Catholic schools are so "open" that there is really no need for schools of different patronage. The Catholic Church in Ireland has to focus its energies more clearly on how it wishes to ensure a presence, in a more pluralist educational system, of schools and institutions that are truly Catholic. The contribution of Catholic academic institutions to the good of society is not something that extinguishes the ecclesial nature and vocation of those institutions. Their Catholic identity is an essential part of the package that has built their excellence. Indeed, one could rather say that any downplaying of their Catholic vocation and identity could well result in a downgrading of their academic excellence.

In the past, if one was talking about renewal of the church in Ireland one would in the first place have looked toward the seminaries. That is still the case, and the crisis of vocations has to be addressed. But vocations spring from within the life of believing families and communities. The renewal of the church in Ireland and the challenge of creating a new Christian presence in Irish society tomorrow will come from a renewed generation of lay men and women who feel confident to witness to the meaning that their Christian faith brings to their lives.

One of the great surprises of the recent International Eucharistic Congress in Dublin was the extraordinary interest the various seminars and catechesis aroused. Many seminars were repeated to accommodate the audience, and for the first time, hundreds of people had to be turned away from attending my initial talk. (I must add that on that occasion mine was the only event on offer and it was raining outside.)

There is a strong desire within Irish Catholics for a deep renewal in formation in faith and in prayer, and this is not being responded to sufficiently. We have a first-class national directory for catechesis, "Share the Good News," that indicates what is needed at every stage. But its implementation is slow, and it encounters resistance to change. Our school system and our teachers have made an immense contribution to the transmission of the faith. But many teachers no longer practice, and there is a growing danger that because of curriculum pressures, catechesis will be limited to two events—first Communion and confirmation—and stop there. Young people have in many cases already drifted away from religious practice before they enter second-level education. The church's presence at third-level education is often limited to pastoral care, with minimal faith formation.

All this is taking place at a time in which there is a growing secularization of culture and politics. I could list many examples of the distance between politics and the church and examples of unbalanced media coverage. But to do that would probably be interpreted as saying that it is politicians, journalists and the media who are to blame for the crisis in the Irish church. The causes of the crisis lie within the church itself. Much of the heritage of Catholic-dominated Ireland still entraps us from being free witnesses to the Christian message within a secular society that is seeking meaning. It is not a time to be lamenting; it is a time to be rising to the challenge with courage and Christian enthusiasm. A

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The Divided Kingdom

Margaret Thatcher's historic and haunting legacy

BY JAMES HANVEY

How can we ever forgive Meryl Streep for making Margaret Thatcher lovable? Maybe it is because she is an American actress and America can approach Margaret Thatcher with an innocence denied those of us who lived through her 11 years as prime minister.

Margaret Thatcher in 1991

Even before her forced exit from power, Baroness Thatcher had achieved iconic status. Icons can hide or distort the human; but somehow Meryl managed to remind us that behind the carefully constructed image, a human being might be found. The film "The Iron Lady" was not a political biopic; it was a love story. Not only did it show us Margaret's slow diminishment; it showed us the love at the center of her life—her husband, Denis.

Against the very domestic ordinariness of love, loss, death and letting go, the film interwove the high drama of politics: the massive tectonic shifts in world power, economies, political orders and ideologies that Mrs. Thatcher not only lived through but helped bring about. In a subtle and perhaps unintentional way, "The Iron Lady" reflects on what, in the end, was real. When the great office of state has gone, and the borrowed robes of power are put away for someone else to wear, before the infirmities of mind and body begin to lay their claim, what remains?

If Thatcher held fast to her oft-quoted poet Rudyard Kipling, the film leaves us catching the whispered voice of Philip Larkin—a very post-imperial English voice—in "An Arundel Tomb": "what will survive of us is love." But Margaret Thatcher, loved?

Meryl Streep in 2011

Long before her death, her political ghost still stalked British politics and culture. No one is yet strong enough to exorcise it. Successive governments—Labour, Conservative or coalition—have merely tried to appease it. In her death we find that the divisions, as much as the admiration she inspired, have surfaced once again. The "mummy" has returned!

We can admire her courage, stamina and steely resolve whether in facing down the male, class-ridden British establishment to become the first woman prime minister, or prosecuting the war against Argentina's military junta to recapture the Falklands. Her appearance, immaculately dressed and in full command after the Irish Republican Army's attempted assassination, was as fresh and determined as ever, with the shattered Brighton hotel behind her. This was not just defiance, it was a political coup. This statement made it clear to the I.R.A. that the political process would prevail over the bullet and the bomb.

Nations, especially those that still believe in their own imperial greatness, need such iconic moments of leadership. Here, the leader—the president or the prime minister—may represent a complex magnificence about human triumph, national identity and stability in the face of disaster or malign intent. All of this is real, and one can only be grateful for it. But it can also be dangerous. Sheer strength of personality and conviction, convinced of its own rightness, can erode a nation through the social struggle and division it almost needs to create to claim its triumph and legitimacy.

One of Mrs. Thatcher's acronyms, TINA, "there is no alternative" (to her way), reveals an odd contradiction at the heart of her defense of democracy in Britain and elsewhere. On the one hand, it was driven by a peculiarly bourgeois morality of self-determination that eroded the social capital and social conscience she wanted to restore. On the other, her nostalgia for the "Great" in Great Britain prevented it from creatively rethinking its role in Europe and world affairs to take account of its long postimperial international

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and economic position. Her desire to restore British "greatness" through free-market philosophy, conjured from Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman, actually divided the country and sapped much of its confidence and energy.

Values or Vices?

Mrs. Thatcher undid the carefully constructed postwar social contract, claiming to retrieve "Victorian values." Yet the United Kingdom experienced more of their vices than their imagined virtues. "Thatcherism" legitimated hedonistic wealth creation—for the few—but demonized the poor. While soaring unemployment destroyed communities and squandered the public benefits of being an oil-rich nation, she nevertheless blamed the victims of her policies for their moral failure of being poor and lacking in enterprise. This massive restructuring of British society was also a restructuring of the British imagination; it shrank to the small possessive pronoun, repetitive improvisations on the theme of "me" and "mine." Civility and humane generosity, noblesse oblige that belongs to our very humanity itself, left British culture.

Downing Street: Day 1, 4 May 1979

The paradox continued. Mrs. Thatcher, who reinforced both Britain's mistrust of Europe and its demand of entitlement for its market and benefits, took Britain more deeply into the European Union than any other prime minister. While ruthlessly and foolishly allowing the I.R.A. to make a massive moral and public-relations victory out of the death of Bobby Sands and the other hunger strikers, she nevertheless signed the Anglo-Irish agreement without which the Good Friday Peace Agreement would not have been possible. That was the end of the beginning of the end of Ulster Unionism.

For a politician totally committed to the Union, her decision to implement the poll tax in Scotland resulted in the rejection of her government in Scotland and the end of the fragile Scottish Conservatives as a significant force in Scottish politics. This contributed to the resurgence of the Scottish Nationalist Party and the push beyond devolution to independence.

I am sure Mrs. Thatcher, with her Methodist upbringing, was familiar with the old saying that even the devil can quote Scripture. Did she think this might apply to her when, with astonishing crassness, she undertook to interpret Christ's parables as a complete legitimation of her economic policies? Could the Good Samaritan, she asked, afford to be so generous if he had not first acquired wealth? Does the parable of the talents not give divine sanction to the entrepreneurial spirit? Strangely, her exegesis did not lead her to support sanctions against the iniquity of apartheid in South Africa.

Was There Another Way?

If all this is part of the complex, painful and divided legacy that now emerges upon Mrs. Thatcher's death, there

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remains still one aspect that is hardly noticed. As in the United States, so in the United Kingdom, there are moments when politics surprises its practitioners; it actually realizes the moral and social good that it speaks about. Sometimes this happens in moments of genuine national crisis; at other times it happens through the normal mechanisms of government: the repeal of oppressive laws, the enactment of a justice long denied or policies that frame a vision of humanity and human dignity. In these moments the political process redeems itself.

Margaret Thatcher was right: Politics does need a moral vision even when it is at its most mundane and pragmatic. It needs constantly to reflect upon the sort of society that creates and sustains human flourishing for all its people, not just the articulate, powerful or privileged. It is precisely our disagreements about what this society might look like and how it can best be achieved that makes democratic politics worthwhile. Yet when the moral vision becomes an imposition, enforced by personality or conviction, when it cannot hear alternatives, when it must always win, then it ceases to build a society; rather, it paralyzes it.

Since Mrs. Thatcher left office, British politics has been afraid to claim a moral vision because it still remembers the cost of hers. In the main, it has been about staying in power or tacking to the shifting winds of the focus group, as if this can substitute for a formative public discourse. Any society that has abandoned its moral vision, that has substituted arguments about means for arguments about ends, is a society in decline. Neither affluence nor power will save it from its own internal contradiction and corruption.

When Mrs. Thatcher stood on the steps of No. 10 Downing Street having been elected the first woman prime minister of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, she recited the prayer of St. Francis of Assisi:

> Lord, make me an instrument of your peace;
> Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
> Where there is injury, pardon;
> Where there is doubt, faith;
> Where there is despair, hope;
> Where there is darkness, light;
> Where there is sadness, joy.

What a magnificent vision for a truly great society. What a noble task for politics and politicians. If politics is about hard, impossible choices, why should we not make them in favor of those that enlarge our hearts, our wills, imagination and purpose; those that take us beyond ourselves into a greater good? You see, there was another way after all. What a pity that Margaret Thatcher—with all her courage, energy and political skill—seems not to have understood the prayer she spoke as she entered our public lives. A

The Unspeakable

The Boston Marathon and the beginning of Christian hope

BY DANIEL P. HORAN

There are some events we encounter in life for which there is simply no language to describe adequately our experience or words capable of consoling the afflicted. The events last month at the finish line of the Boston Marathon and the siege of the city four days later might rightly fall into this category. Images of the explosions, biographies of the victims and interviews with the witnesses circulated through cyberspace, on television and in print with hypnotizing rapidity and emotion-dulling saturation, only increasing the overwhelming experience of those days. As a resident of Boston, my memory of that week in April will forever be marked by the surreal nature of a scene that seemed closer to an action movie than to the reality playing out in my backyard.

In the initial silence of that Monday afternoon, as confusion ensued and victims were treated, I thought of the renowned spiritual writer, social activist and Trappist monk, Thomas Merton. He had a term that seemed to capture this event: the Unspeakable. There are times when we encounter something so terrible and terrifying, the experience pushes us to the edges of the effable. Such experiences of sin and violence in our world are concrete encounters with the Unspeakable. Merton explains, in part, what he means in his 1966 book *Raids on the Unspeakable:*

> It is the void that contradicts everything that is spoken even before the words are said…. It is the emptiness of "the end." Not necessarily the end of the world, but a theological point of no return, a climax of absolute finality in refusal, in equivocation, in disorder, in absurdity, which can be broken open again to truth only by miracle, by the coming of God…for Christian hope begins where every other hope stands frozen stiff before the face of the Unspeakable.

PAYING RESPECT: A makeshift memorial in Boston

CNS PHOTO/JIM BOURG, REUTERS

The Unspeakable is neither a word of comfort nor a greeting of consolation. It is a moniker that is challenging and indicting. It names a reality that most people would rather forget. James Douglass, in his book *JFK and the Unspeakable*, describes Merton's concept of the Unspeakable as "a kind of systemic evil that defies speech." However, it is not simply the object of our fear or an enemy from outside. Douglass continues: "The Unspeakable is not far away. It is not somewhere out there, identical with a government that

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became foreign to us. The emptiness of the void, the vacuum of responsibility and compassion, is in ourselves."

To confront the Unspeakable requires that we face the ways we too are always already complicit in a culture of violence present in our world. This does not mean that individuals are exonerated from the particular and egregious acts of violence they commit, but it does mean that to look into the void of the Unspeakable involves looking into the mirror of our own participation in systems of violence.

Our Culture of Violence

One temptation we encounter in the face of violence like the events at the Boston Marathon or in Newtown, Conn., is to objectify the source of the violence and place it as an evil in opposition to the rest of us. This happens frequently, for example, in the use of the phrase "culture of death" (which originally comes from Pope John Paul II's 1995 encyclical "Evangelium Vitae"). There is a sense in which a Christian might claim to be "for life" and therefore make the "culture of death" an exterior enemy to be fought.

ON THE WEB
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americamagazine.org/things

Merton's approach to evil, sin and violence in the world is more nuanced. To begin, we might realize that "death" is not the most opportune word and recall that death is a natural part of life. Talk about a "culture of death," while the intention is good and the meaning important, could be taken to suggest that death in itself is a bad thing. St. Francis of Assisi, for instance, has a different take on this. In his "Canticle of the Creatures," Francis praises God for the gift of "sister bodily death," whom all living creatures will inevitably encounter. As a people of the Resurrection, we also believe that Jesus Christ has "put an end to death" (2 Tm 1:10) and that death does not have the last word. Death should not be feared in itself.

But violence, unlike death, is not a natural part of life. Violence is made manifest in little and big ways, in words and actions, in things seen and unseen. Merton's concept of the Unspeakable captures the significance of this reality in two key ways. First, violence is not something that is ascribable only to individuals who commit evil acts, like murder and terror. In his book *New Seeds of Contemplation*, Merton describes how we are often quick to blame others and acquit ourselves.

> When we see crime in others, we try to correct it by destroying them or at least putting them out of sight. It is easy to identify sin with the sinner when he is someone other than our own self.
>
> In ourselves, it is the other way round; we see the sin, but we have great difficulty in shouldering responsibility for it. We find it very hard to identify our sin with our own will and our own malice.

It is difficult to accept that all of us are somehow implicated in the finitude and sinfulness of humanity. Merton writes that "we tend unconsciously to ease ourselves still more of the burden of guilt that is in us, by passing it on to somebody else."

Here we have the second insight about the Unspeakable, which arises from the realization that we are also sinners and participants in an unnecessary culture of violence. What makes the Unspeakable unspeakable is the masking over and avoidance of this reality in which we too are always already a part. Unlike common conceptions of the "culture of death," which is an outside enemy to be fought, a "culture of violence" exists in the language, presuppositions, behaviors and attitudes of a population. This is what is hidden, what is reflected back to us when we are forced to look into the void or face of the Unspeakable.

Michael Cohen, a columnist for the British newspaper The Guardian, wrote a sobering piece the day after the bombing suspect Dzhokhar Tsarnaev had been apprehended and his brother, Tamerlan, killed. He asked pointed questions that shine an uncomfortable light on a society that, in the same week, can shut down a major metropolitan city because of one suspect on the loose, yet fail to pass federal legislation to mandate criminal background checks for gun sales, a reform supported by nearly 90 percent of the population. He asked, with all due respect and sympathy to the dead and maimed in the Boston attack, how a society in which more than 30,000 deaths are caused by gun violence annually could react so drastically to the specter of terrorism when, in the past year, 17 Americans were killed in terrorist attacks. Cohen's concluding comments echo Merton's concern:

> It is a surreal and difficult-to-explain dynamic. Americans seemingly place an inordinate fear on violence that is random and unexplainable and can be blamed on "others"—jihadists, terrorists, evil-doers, etc. But the lurking dangers all around us—the guns, our unhealthy diets, the workplaces that kill 14 Americans every single day—these are just accepted as part of life, the price of freedom, if you will.

Part of what makes the culture of violence Unspeakable is our strong desire not to face the reality of our complicity in perpetuating injustice through our economic choices, attitudes, language, behaviors, lifestyles, biases, support (or lack thereof) of legislation and so on.

It is a lot more comforting to blame the "other"—whether a "terrorist" or an amorphous "culture of death"—than it is to accept our individual and collective roles in perpetuating our unspeakable culture of violence.

The Beginning of Christian Hope

On the day of the attack in Boston, Cardinal Seán O'Malley, O.F.M.Cap., archbishop of Boston, wrote: "In the midst of the darkness of this tragedy we turn to the light of Jesus Christ, the light that was evident in the lives of people who immediately turned to help those in need today." There are times—for example, when those who might otherwise run away from danger out of fear run toward others to provide care and assistance—when signs of Christian hope displace the behaviors and attitudes of the culture of violence. Christian hope is not a belief in a far-off utopia that will come from outside. It is a description of God's presence in the world now, when, like Jesus, we love the unlovable, forgive the unforgiveable, embrace the marginalized and forgotten and heal the broken and brokenhearted.

Christian hope is a hope that withstands the challenge as it appears to us when we look into the void of the Unspeakable and realize that we can do something about violence in our world and live a different way. It is a hope that proclaims through the incarnate Word of God that what was once ineffable in the Unspeakable can be named and overcome, but it also requires our honest admission of "what we have done and what we have failed to do." Only then do we confront the culture of violence that we would rather forget.

The Unspeakable culture of violence extends far beyond the city borders of Boston and Newtown. It is perhaps more acutely seen in the communities of Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan and in places largely unknown to us. There the experience of the Unspeakable witnessed on a sunny Boston afternoon is an everyday reality: Marketplaces, buses, houses of worship, elementary schools and neighborhoods are all affected by the terror of violence and fear that we in the United States cannot begin to imagine.

In his essay "Letter to an Innocent Bystander," Merton challenges us with a truth that undergirds the perpetuation of an Unspeakable culture of violence on the local, national and world stage: "A witness of a crime, who just stands by and makes a mental note of the fact that he is an innocent bystander, tends by that very fact to become an accomplice."

Merton's challenge for us in Boston and around the world is to overcome the fear that leads us to claim innocence while scapegoating the "other," to embrace the Gospel and become more human in compassion and to look into the void of the Unspeakable so as to accept our complicity in the continuation of a culture of violence in so many little and big ways. Then we might be able move on to speak and live the word of Christian hope that begins there in the face of the Unspeakable. A

I Remember Mary

Can we revive a classic Catholic name?

BY MARY VALLE

I'm a Mary. My mom is a Mary. My older sister is a Bridget Mary. Although I was born in the decline-of-Mary era, I was never the sole Mary around, because I attended Catholic school, although some of my fellow Marys got to go by their middle names or nicknames. As a child, I wished that I had a "beautiful" name like Heather or Melissa and not plain old Mary. Later, I wished for something unisex, like Quinn, or exotic, like Siobhan.

I never wished to be Mary. Besides, I felt I had been given a "used" name, since my mom and sister had been there first. My dad has always called me Mary Katherine in order to differentiate between the Marys in his life, which I rather fancy. A few friends call me Mary K or Mare, but I'm pretty much "just Mary." And for years I have been in the good company of many others who share my name. But that is changing. According to an article by Philip Cohen in a recent Atlantic, "In absolute numbers, the number of girls given the name Mary at birth has fallen 94 percent since 1961." He adds, "In the recorded history of names, nothing this catastrophic has ever happened before."

Over the years, I have come to love my name. I appreciate that it is so easy to say and spell. I like meeting other Marys and automatically having something in common. I remember being wheeled into surgery a few years ago and a nurse at my side telling me her name was Mary Jennifer, but she went by Jennifer. "Mary Jennifer?" I asked her just before the drugs took me down. "Do you wish you went by

Mary instead?" I see her nodding and laughing in slow motion. I like noticing how many Mary authors there are and hearing Mary songs—"Jolly Holiday" from Mary Poppins being my personal favorite. Of course, there is always the fact that Mary is the name of the Queen of Heaven. I don't mean to brag, but it is, technically, hands down, the most triumphant and holy female name in all of Catholic history. I gather a certain amount of strength from that.

Still, a Catholic high school teacher told me that she did not have too many Marys, but that she had students with some saints' names, including ones like Kolbe (after St. Maximilian) and Normandy (related to St. Thérèse of Lisieux). A native of Spain said that she and her siblings all had saint-related names with lots of Marian references (such beauties as Pilar, Dolores, Concepción and Remedios) but that the next generation of children were not so named.

So why is Mary in precipitous decline everywhere—even (gasp!) in Ireland, where only 106 Marys were born in the year 2011? Baby-naming has become a bit of a competitive sport, it seems, with everyone trying to express their own personal esthetic through the monikers of their offspring. Catholic children no longer have to carry saints' names—the rule is that a child who is to be baptized not be given a name "foreign to Christian sentiment." In other words, Everleigh or Mason is fine but not Lucifer.

I would like to see a return, especially for Catholics, to lots of Mary naming in conjunction with what I consider to be old-school classics like Francis Xavier, Ignatius, Aloysius, Bernadette, Theresa (two of these) and Patricia. Since old-time names like Ruby and Henry and the like have become so popular, why not have a baby Patty? Or Joe? Perhaps there is some value in recognizing that we are all inherently unique, but a name is something that should be solid, formidable and pointing toward greater aspirations of the heavenly variety. Maybe I'm old-fashioned that way.

Mary may well stage a comeback. There is some chatter in the Internet-name community that she may be ready for dusting off and restoration. With "baby name regret" on the rise, I would suggest it as the most classic choice possible and, for Catholics, the most meaningful. I would even go so

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ART: BOB ECKSTEIN

far as to say that Marys made this nation in the form of swarms of Mary-named nuns who built and staffed hospitals and schools everywhere.

I was recently telling a friend about my "used-name" feelings and she said: "Well, it's not like it was something like Daphne. That would have been weird. It's the Mother of God!" It's true, I mused. Then I discussed the topic with my mother, Mary Sr., who lamented the dearth of Marys, though she noted that she hasn't seen the same decline in the Hispanic community. "They haven't given up on Maria," she said. I asked her why she gave me my sister's middle name. "That always struck me as bold," I said. She said, "Well, since you were the sixth child, and we knew you were going to be the last, we just decided to name you after me." Oh. Turns out I mistook "glorious" for "used." Do not make the same mistake, America. We need Marys now more than ever. A

FILM | PETER FOLAN

TAKING THE FIELD

On issues of race, '42' hits home

The logo of the New York Mets—a bright orange *N* and *Y* interlocking on a vibrant blue background—is instantly recognizable for many baseball fans. But the story behind it may be less well known. The Mets rose from the ashes of the Brooklyn Dodgers and the New York Giants, both of whom left the Big Apple for California in 1957. Five years later, when the Mets took the field for the first time, they did so wearing caps that acknowledged their ancestors: the orange of the Giants paired with Dodger blue.

The crowd of 12,447 at the Polo Grounds that first opening day of the Mets likely focused more on the game than on what the players wore. But 15 years earlier at Ebbets Field, when the Dodgers squared off against the Boston Braves for the first game of the season, the crowd's attention rested on an entirely different matter.

It was on that day that Jackie Robinson, the first player to break Major League Baseball's color barrier, took the field. Robinson's journey from the Negro League to the major league is told in **42,** Brian Helgeland's biopic of Brooklyn's most famous Dodger.

Helgeland keeps his viewers' eyes trained on the same matter that captivated crowds that opening day—the color of Robinson's skin—for the entirety of this two-hour film, which he wrote and directed. The journalist Wendell Smith, portrayed capably by Andre Holland, narrates portions of the movie and guides Robinson through the gauntlet of racism and apathy that awaited him at every juncture of his journey from the Kansas City Monarchs of the Negro leagues to the end of his rookie season with the 1947 Dodgers. Chadwick Boseman's fine performance as Robinson and Harrison Ford's steely turn as the Dodgers' president and general manager Branch Rickey produce much of the movie's most memorable dialogue. Rounded out by the superb work of Nicole Beharie, playing Robinson's wife Rachel, the leading cast of "42" pays fitting homage to the revolution Robinson helped spark in

BREAKING THROUGH: Chadwick Boseman and Harrison Ford in "42"

PHOTO: © 2012 LEGENDARY PICTURES FUNDING, LLC/D. STEVENS

Major League Baseball and American society at large.

Still, for those already familiar with the basic contours of Robinson's biography, "42" is more likely to provide supporting details than broad new insights. It comes as no surprise, for instance, that fans and fellow ballplayers hurled racial slurs at Robinson virtually everywhere he played. But many viewers may know little about the extraordinary vitriol of the Philadelphia Phillies' manager, Ben Chapman (Alan Tudyk), whose dugout barkings the movie depicts as more violent than those of any other character. The presence of the Dodgers' manager, Leo Durocher (Christopher Meloni), whose famous quip "Nice guys finish last" earns a spot in the movie, also contributes some interesting details. Though a defender of Robinson's right to play big-league ball, Durocher was suspended for the 1947 season, and the iconic Dodger skipper vanishes from the film shortly after spring training breaks.

What "42" lacks in biographical incisiveness, however, it makes up for in thought-provoking moral and social commentary. One example of this is the way the film handles the virtue of courage or, as different characters call it many times, "guts." Helgeland's script makes tacit appeal to the Aristotelian claim that all virtues have opposites as well as deceptive equivalents, both of which are vicious. In one scene, Robinson questions Rickey, saying, "You want a player who doesn't have the guts to fight back?" Rickey responds: "No. I want a player who's got the guts not to fight back." This marks the first of many times that "42" throws light on the thin line between courage and the vices of cowardice and recklessness.

ON THE WEB
The editors
on Jackie Robinson.
americamagazine.org/pages

Each time Robinson steps into the batter's box amid a cascade of boos and insults, the viewer understands his dilemma: if he lashes out against his critics, if he spins around and jaws with, say, Chapman, Robinson looks rash; if he remains silent, if he goes about his business of hitting .297 that rookie season, Robinson looks cowardly. Either way, Robinson loses. History has correctly decided that Robinson had a superabundance of guts and a stunning lack of both recklessness and cowardice. "42" reaffirms this decision by showing how deftly Robinson navigated the virtuous median between two vicious extremes.

The film also takes on the topic of conversion, both its slowly emerging presence in some characters and its tragic absence among others. One myth "42" dispels is that Robinson was lucky to be called up by the Dodgers, a team in a progressive part of the country that surely would have been glad to break baseball's color barrier. On the contrary, the movie depicts most of Robinson's teammates as apathetic, and some of them as openly hostile, to Rickey's experiment. It is only when pitchers start whizzing fastballs at Robinson's head and the slurs become especially violent that some Dodgers start to stand up for their teammate. Even then, the conversion is sluggish: more than one Dodger clarifies that his support of Robinson has everything to do with the colors on Robinson's uniform, not the color of his skin. Many never even get that far.

While Robinson could not count on the support of every Brooklyn Dodger, his most valuable teammate never set foot in the clubhouse. In one moment, the film paints Rachel Robinson in the colors of a stereotypical American housewife of the 1940s, as she cares for a newborn child, keeps a home in Brooklyn and loves her husband unconditionally. But "42" also gazes beyond this idyllic picture and presents a woman who disregards signs for segregated restrooms, who bears the sting of every threat uttered against her husband and who shows that Jackie is not the only Robinson to whom Americans owe a debt of gratitude.

In one of the more memorable scenes from "42," Pee Wee Reese (Lucas Black), Brooklyn's Hall of Fame shortstop, gives voice to his dream that, one day, "We'll all wear 42. This way they won't tell us apart." To some extent, Reese has gotten his wish. When Major League Baseball celebrates Jackie Robinson Day on April 15 each year, every player and umpire wears the same number: 42. But Reese's words, and "42" itself, also remind our culture of what still needs doing, of the unity and equality our country must work for, not just in ballparks, but beyond.

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ANGELA ALAIMO O'DONNELL

A Mother's Love

May is the month in which the church honors Mary; by happy coincidence, it is also the month when secular culture honors mothers. According to the Bible, Mary's role in salvation history is small but mighty. Through the agency of the Holy Spirit, she conceives the Messiah, gives birth to Jesus and raises him to adulthood. She appears at a few key moments in Christ's ministry—searching frantically for him and finding him teaching in the temple; urging him to assist the hapless hosts at Cana; and, finally, standing vigil beneath the cross. These brief glimpses into the hidden life of Mary suggest that she was an attentive mother, a bit pushy when she needed to be and faithful to her son in his darkest hour.

Admittedly, this isn't much to go on. It seems that the woman given the title Mother of God might have warranted more space in the Scriptures. The Koran contains more mentions of Mary than the Bible—34 references, listing her genealogy and even depicting her childhood. Perhaps it is this relative lack of information about Mary in Christian tradition that has inspired so many artists over the centuries to fill in the gaps. It is the nature of human beings to try to imagine what they cannot know. Given this paucity of knowledge, painters and poets are free to depict Mary as they choose, so long as their images conform to the few established biblical "facts." As a result, artists have had a field day with Mary. No woman has been represented more often in painting and sculpture, inspired more music or had more poems penned in an effort to express her unspoken heart.

A new, and highly unorthodox, depiction of Mary has been in the public eye of late, the Irish writer Colm Toíbín's play "The Testament of Mary." The one-woman play, first produced in Dublin, was recast as a novella, and has returned to the stage, newly revised for Broadway. I greeted the publication of the novella with enthusiasm and attended the play as soon as I could get a ticket. As a devotee of art and literature, I've enjoyed the many versions of Mary I have met on the walls of churches and museums and in the pages of books. Most of those incarnations, especially the more contemporary ones, have emphasized Mary's humanity over her sanctity, dramatizing the ways in which she is like us ordinary mortals. In Henry Tanner's arresting painting "The Annunciation," for instance, we see Mary's youth and vulnerability. There is fear in her eyes as she regards the intruding angel, shown as an explosion of light. In John Collier's painting "Pietà," Mary cradles her dead son, embracing him with both arms and legs in a posture reminiscent of childbirth. Her grief is harrowing. Such depictions of Mary bring her closer to us—and us closer to her. This is especially true for those of us who are mothers, who know what it is to conceive and give birth and fall in utter love with a child.

> It troubles me that Colm Toíbín's Mary is a coward.

And here is where Colm Toíbín lost me. Much as I admire his writing, I could not countenance his Mary. It is not Mary's unorthodoxy that troubles me. Toíbín is trying to deconstruct the images of the passive, bloodless Mary that dominated pietistic art of the 19th and 20th centuries; and I, along with most of his readers, welcome that corrective. What troubles me about his Mary is that she is a coward. After her son is nailed to the cross—a scene described in agonizing detail—Mary runs away. She runs away because she cannot help him, because she is afraid and (here is the hardest part to swallow) because she wants to save her own skin.

Toíbín sins here against Scripture and tradition, yes, but also against the more universal code of Motherlove—that irresistible compulsion that drives a mother to protect her child at any cost. Motherlove is the deep knowledge that you would stand between a killer and your child and take a bullet in the face, that you would dive in front of a runaway train to shove your child off the track, that you would part with your own heart if your child needed it and that you would do this gladly. The inventions of tradition and bad art have provided us with too many impossible Marys who bear no relation to us. Do we need another? Toíbín denies Mary what makes her most human, sinning at last against the law of verisimilitude, and giving us one more Mary we cannot believe in.

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BOOKS | KEVIN P. SPICER

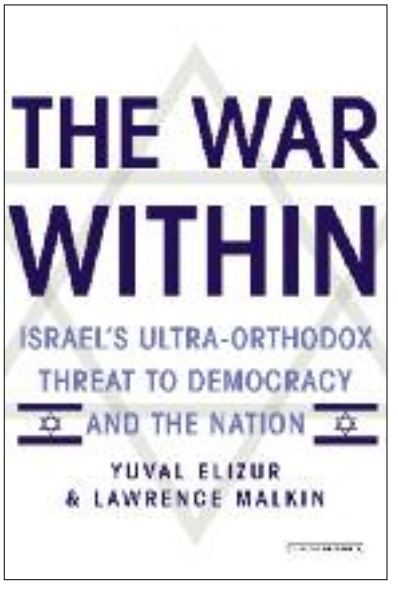
WHEN THE MESSIAH COMES

THE WAR WITHIN
Israel's Ultra-Orthodox Threat to Democracy and the Nation

By Yuval Elizur and Lawrence Malkin
Overlook Press. 224p $26.95

For years, American newspapers have reported on the clashes between Israel and its neighboring countries. Similarly, coverage has extended to the challenging situation facing Jews and Arabs within Israel's own borders. Only recently have we begun to hear of an equally pressing concern for many Israelis—namely, the rising tensions between Israel's Haredim and the rest of its citizens. The term "Haredim" refers to a number of ultra-orthodox groups that reject all religious accommodation with modernity and secular society. According to Yuval Elizur and Lawrence Malkin, seasoned journalists, these tensions have created a domestic crisis akin to "war" that menacingly tears at Israel's fabric and seriously threatens its future. In 2009, Elizur and Malkin exposed this situation in a Hebrew language publication. In *The War Within*, they have revised and updated their study for English-language readers.

At the core of the issue is the question: Is Israel a state for Jews or a Jewish state? The founder of Zionism, Theodor Herzl, originally envisioned a state for Jews. David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first prime minister, had a similar outlook, although a year before he declared Israel an independent state (1948), for political concerns, he made an agreement that called for a religious status quo with Agudat Israel, the political party representing Israel's Haredim. This agreement honored the Sabbath as an official day of rest, observed Jewish dietary laws in the military and government, adopted Orthodox Judaism's marriage rules and traditions for the State of Israel and guaranteed full autonomy for religious instruction. At the same time, it provided for the government to prescribe a nonreligious curriculum for public schools.



At first such an agreement worked, especially since the number of ultra-Orthodox Haredim was small compared with the majority of Israelis, who were less religiously bound or more secular. Many Jews, both in Israel and throughout the world, viewed positively (and continue to view positively) religiously conservative Jews who maintain traditional garb and religious study, and consistently pray.

Elizur and Malkin argue, however, that serious problems began in 1977, when Menachem Begin's Likud Party, an alliance of right-wing and liberal parties, defeated the long-entrenched left wing parties and formed a government through an alliance with the ultra-Orthodox political parties. From this point on, the authors find that successive Israeli governments have over the years granted increasing concessions to ultra-Orthodox concerns. These concessions in turn have affected Israeli society as the line between religious and civil law gradually recedes from view. The authors find this particularly troubling with regard to discrimination against women, government regulations governing Sabbath observance and Haredi control of marriage and conversion.

At the core of Elizur and Malkin's concern is the participation of the Haredim in the life of the State of Israel. Though they live in Israel, many Haredim reject the legitimacy of this Jewish state altogether, believing that this kind of state may come into existence only when the Messiah comes. Until then, the task for Jews is to live a "traditional" Jewish life by studying and praying as they patiently wait for this "transcendent event." To prepare themselves for such a life, Haredi men attend yeshiva—a Jewish higher educational institute devoted to the study of sacred texts. Never in history have so many Jewish men at the same time attended yeshiva. Currently, somewhere between 100,000 to 120,000 Jewish men study full time in Israel. Even at the height of Haredi Judaism in pre-World War II Europe, there were, at most, 4,000 Jews attending yeshivas.

Demographics, however, are not the authors' only concern. Elizur and Malkin also lament that even with this vast number of yeshiva students, no new "breakthrough" scholarship has been produced. The authors are equally troubled by the growth and inconsistencies of what is called independent education—the result of an agreement between the ultra-Orthodox parties and the Israeli government to create a new classification of elementary and middle-schools outside the government-sponsored system. The curriculum in many of these schools, though not all, has in the authors' view devolved into the study of religious texts alone at the expense of state mandated subjects like science,

mathematics and history. Thus independent schools have become in essence preparatory schools for yeshivas that produce generations of Haredi Israelis unequipped for the technical demands of the future.

For Elizur and Malkin, all these developments are extremely troubling. The statistics the authors cite (from 2008) do in fact provide reason for concern: 65 percent of Haredi men between the ages of 35 and 55 are unemployed, and 60 percent of Haredi families live below the poverty line. The state, and therefore Israeli taxpayers, subsidize this system. All yeshiva students, for example, receive a modest monthly stipend from the government without any limits on the length of time such subsidies may be received. By contrast, no similar support is so freely awarded to students who attend Israel's universities. However, subsidies for study are not the only benefits that Haredim receive from the state. Presently, yeshiva students are exempted from serving in the armed forces—a requirement imposed on all Israelis with few exceptions.

Haredim respond to their situation in Israeli society in a variety of ways. Some advocate the imposition of Orthodox norms on all Israeli Jews. Frustrated with breaches, some have resorted to violence like stone-throwing. Other Haredim have followed the "route of pleasantness" by promoting their way of life in a positive manner through educational means. Amid all this, Elizur and Malkin have discovered that some Haredim feel trapped by their secluded life and regimented studies. Yet the option to leave is not always available, and many obstacles exist for those who attempt to integrate themselves into non-Haredi Israeli society.

Elizur and Malkin make their case convincingly. They firmly believe that unless the destructive situation is resolved in a "spirit of tolerance," the chance for the Israeli state to "crum-

ble" and fall into "fragmentation" is a real possibility. In the worst case scenario, the authors believe a fragmenting situation could lead to a single state with an Arab majority. This scenario might not end positively for the Haredim—or for any Israeli Jews, for that matter.

Yet despite the urgency of their words, Elizur and Malkin do little to allow the reader to hear the case of the other side—the Haredim. Almost all the sources quoted, mainly statements by Israeli academics, favor the authors' argument. Similarly, the authors almost vilify the ultra-Orthodox—for example, by graphically recounting three separate times the story of Haredi men spitting on a young girl for her failure to follow their religious norms. Though no one need approve of such crass actions, Elizur and Malkin seem to miss the key point of "the war within." For the Haredim, the "war" is a spiritual battle for the religious soul of the Jewish people, to be won only by following Halacha (God's law) as they await the Messiah. It is a nearly impossible conflict to resolve, but one that Israelis urgently need to face.

KEVIN P. SPICER, C.S.C., *is the James J. Kennelly distinguished professor of history at Stonehill College, Easton, Mass.*

JEFFREY KLAIBER

POPULISM AND POVERTY

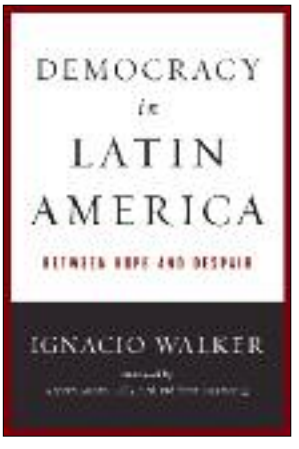
DEMOCRACY IN LATIN AMERICA

Between Hope and Despair

By Ignacio Walker
Translated by Krystin Krause, Holly Bird and Scott Mainwaring
University of Notre Dame Press. 280p
$38

When things go wrong in Latin America, the tendency is to write new laws or a new constitution. But new laws rarely remedy the situation because Latin America's major problems are rooted in deep historical realities that condition attitudes and practices, which in turn undermine the democratic process. In this well-researched and up-to-date study, Ignacio Walker explains to the reader in clear language why democracy has had so much difficulty taking hold from Mexico to Chile. Although democracy seems to be well and alive today, except in Cuba, the author argues that it is far from being deeply rooted in the region.

Walker, a leading Christian Democrat in Chile and a former member of the Vicariate of Solidarity, a Catholic human rights organization, offers a panoramic view of Latin America's battle for democracy from independence up to the current neoliberal and populist regimes. He argues that Latin American politics are still influenced by the oligarchic mentality that the postcolonial elites imposed upon society. This is not a new theme. In the 1960s and 70s, when military regimes swept across the continent, many authors pointed to the authoritarian tradition in Latin America. Others observed that even Mexico under the Institutional Revolutionary Party, though it was not a military dictatorship, was in fact a perfect example of this authoritarian and paternalistic tradition. Although there were elections, in reality the P.R.I. controlled the process and excluded all opposition forces.



Walker's most interesting observations concern the neoliberals and the neopopulists. The neoliberals came to power in the wake of the last cycle of dictators (although some of the dictators, like Pinochet, enthusiastically promoted neoliberalism). They privatized bloated state companies and encouraged outside investments. But they also left the poor without jobs or safety nets.

Neopopulism arose precisely as a response to this Darwinian liberalism. The late Hugo Chávez in Venezuela, Rafael Correa in Ecuador, Evo Morales in Bolivia and to some extent the Kirchners (Néstor and Cristiana Fernández) in Argentina, took up the cause of the "people," nationalized some companies and excoriated North American "imperialism." Although they raised the banner of "21st socialism," and made pilgrimages to Havana, none have gone so far as to actually implant a Cuban-style regime in their respective countries.

But as Walker argues, neither the liberals nor the populists have advanced the cause of democracy. The neoliberals empowered the wealthy and excluded the poor. The populists gave rise to charismatic leaders who centralized all power in their own hands, but to the detriment of democratic institutions. But not all socialists have been irresponsible. Ricardo Lagos and Michelle Bachelet in Chile, and "Lula" in Brazil, were, in fact, quite moderate and avoided the type of demagogic populism that Chávez practiced.

Although democracy in Latin America has made some progress, it still suffers from weak democratic institutions. The judiciary in some countries cowers before the whims of overbearing executives, and in other countries it is simply corrupt. The author borrows a phrase from Fareed

Zakaria to underline the fact that although there are elections, by and large the democracies in Latin America are "illiberal." "Illiberal" in this case does not refer to economic liberalism, but to the absence of a tradition of the loyal opposition. To be more precise, ordinary people do not trust their own governments. Political opposition groups do not dialogue. People do not trust fellow citizens. The culture of civic responsibility is weak. People obey traffic laws only when the police are present.

As the subtitle of the book indicates, Latin America is caught "between hope and despair." There is hope because democracy is here to stay. There is despair because democracy in Latin America does seem to be at times, as Winston Churchill famously declared, the worst form of government, except, of course, for all the others. Walker's study on the state of democracy in Latin America is brilliant, well argued and convincing. It is a must read for political scientists, sociologists, U.S. government officials and nongovernmental organization workers "on the ground" who want to understand how things work in Latin America.

JEFFREY KLAIBER, S.J., *teaches history at the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru in Lima.*

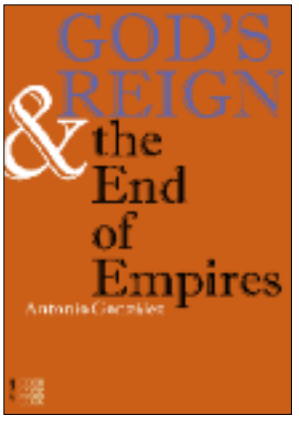
WILLIAM REISER

AFTER EDEN

GOD'S REIGN AND THE END OF EMPIRES

By Antonio González
Convivium Press. 392p $32.95

Antonio González, a Spanish theologian who worked for a number of years in Guatemala and El Salvador, is presently on the instructional staff of the Fundación Xavier Zubiri, a teaching and research center in Madrid. (Zubiri was a Spanish philosopher whose thinking had a profound influence upon Ignacio Ellacuría, S.J.) An earlier work, *The Gospel of Faith and Justice*, appeared in 2005; a number of other titles have not yet appeared in English.



The eight chapters that make up *God's Reign & the End of Empires* are, in effect, a course in theology—and a very good one. The overall perspective of the book is liberationist; its theological feet are planted in the historical experience and social reality of people struggling under the weight of economic and political "empires." By empires González means all those social, political and economic forces that adversely affect individuals and their communities—forces that dehumanize by wounding or destroying relationships, families, whole societies and the planet itself.

Chapter One sets the stage by describing and analyzing the economic and ecological crises the world faces today. Chapter Two interprets the cause of these crises from a biblical perspective, zeroing in on the sin of Adam. Throughout the book González refers to "Adamic logic" as the root cause of humanity's moral disorder, meaning the human proclivity toward self-justifying thinking and acting. On one level, this proclivity shows itself in the belief that by living righteously and obeying the moral law,

human beings convince themselves that they somehow earn God's blessing, that their worth depends upon the success of their endeavors and that human action can bend the divine hand toward benevolence; Saint Paul understood this problem very well.

But there is also a second level. "The quest for self-justification is an attempt to replace God," González writes. "The endless competition with others, the desire to obtain ever greater results, the obsession with growth and production" or "to justify ourselves by the fruits of our own praxis" belongs to the logic of self-justification. All this leads to structures of domination, for which capitalism is the boldest expression. "The Adamic logic is pervasive and enduring; no age or region escapes its grip."

González then moves, in Chapter Three, to the divine response to human waywardness; God reveals the way to escape from empire. The escape route from poverty and injustice is the "dynamic reality" of God's reign, the formation of a society that will be "radically egalitarian and truly fraternal." This leads into a long chapter on the mission of Jesus, his radical social praxis, the meaning of his death and the creation of a way of being together not marked by alienation and oppression but by reconciliation, freedom and love.

The real strength of the book lies in the last four chapters. With their focus on the new community (and the new humanity) that the Spirit of Jesus makes possible, these chapters are a genuine contribution to a contemporary theology of the church. Some people mistakenly believe, González argues, that whereas salvation has a social face in the ministry of Jesus, it assumed a far more spiritual face after his death and resurrection. Not so. He writes, "The social praxis of the first Christians...kept as its horizon the liberation of the Exodus as this was radicalized by Jesus."

Chapter Five examines the earliest Christian communities. González calls them messianic because they preserve, clearly and deliberately, the praxis of Jesus. Just as Jesus' praxis contained an implicit rejection of empire, so too did the life and practice of the early communities. Through the evangelical nature of their family life they were proclaiming God's reign, and God's reign subverts Caesar's and every empire afterwards. He writes, "On the basis of the household, it was possible to constitute a social network different from those of the larger society." And with that social network came a brand new way of thinking about how society could be shaped.

Chapters Six, Seven and Eight work out the implications of conceiving the church as messianic communities: the relation between believing communities and the state, the emergence of what González refers to as "popular economy" and how Christian communities might continue to live out Jesus' mission in a world that does not share their beliefs. His discussion of the state's tendency to divinize itself (and thus force a choice) is thought-provoking. He writes: "On this planet there does not exist the state that does not require oaths of fidelity, that does not organize cultic ceremonies to its flags and symbols, that does not periodically require the sacrifice of human lives, that does not build 'altars of the homeland', or that does not erect great statues to its violent founders." The book's second half would make excellent reading for a course on social ethics.

Experience in the classroom has taught me that when it comes to studying the Gospels, perhaps it's best to start at the end, that is, with the resurrection. After all, Easter is the perspective from which the Evangelists wrote. In the case of *God's Reign and the End of Empires*, instead of beginning with primal disobedience and the manifestations of Adamic logic, perhaps the Easter experience of the first communities would have furnished a more engaging starting point. Domination and oppression are real and pervasive, no matter how the biblical writers may have accounted for their origin. Adam does not necessarily take us to Jesus. But the Easter experience and its transforming effects within individuals and communities were anything but ordinary. And Jesus sooner or later takes us back to the sorry effects of Adam's choice. Nevertheless, it would be easy to structure a great course around this book.

WILLIAM REISER, S.J., *is a professor of theology at The College of the Holy Cross, Worcester, Mass.*

"So this is hell? It looks just like my old cubicle!"

CARTOON BY HARLEY SCHWADRON

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REPLY ALL

Weaving It Together

I appreciated the focus on the new evangelization in the April 22 issue. "Mass Evangelization," by Scott W. Hahn, proceeded further and deeper into the eucharistic mystery and its call, "Do this in memory of me." Cultic practices rightly understand the central place of the Eucharist in our lives. It is not the end point; rather, the beginning and nurturing point.

"Do This in Memory of Me," by the Rev. Robert P. Imbelli, makes this point—confirming the wisdom of *What Happened at Vatican II*, the great work by John W. O'Malley, S.J. The primacy of Jesus is the unifying source of all of the council's documents. These express the work of the Holy Spirit in enlightening and inspiring all of the people of God to holiness by following Jesus and being open-ended and open-minded in doing what Jesus asks.

Loving one another is the essence of doing this "in memory of me." It finds expression in every aspect of life, and we celebrate it as a community when we gather at the Lord's table. This energizes us to take up our cross anew in building the kingdom of justice and peace, an effort that is resisted, rejected and ridiculed by every form of violence, all rooted in refusals to love. These represent the "Other Gods," of which Richard B. Patterson reminds us, the many idols that snuff out life.

MARK FRANCESCHINI, O.S.M.
Denver, Colo.

Mixed Messages

Thank you for "Mass Evangelization." It altered my much earlier impression of Professor Hahn's theological bent.

I believe, however, that the selection of the cover for the April 22 issue does his article a disservice. The cover conveys the Eucharist as having the purpose of providing the church with an "adorable object" in the host. His article appropriately portrays the

Eucharist as the action of the people commissioned for evangelization. The cover undermines this.

Eucharistic adoration is a viable consequence of and in continuity with the activity of God's people celebrating the paschal mystery in union with Christ. But the pre-eminence of adoration, portrayed on the cover, skews our eucharistic faith and the power of Professor Hahn's article.

(REV.) LOUIS L. ANDERSON
Grand Rapids, Mich.

Sports Idol

I enjoyed "Other Gods," by Richard B. Patterson (4/22), but personally I would include sports as one of our prime "other gods" in today's world.

How many parents take little Johnny or Janie to soccer, softball, football, tee-ball and so on instead of to Mass on Sunday mornings! I like sports but more and more realize they have taken over almost as a national religion. It may even border on an addiction. We treat our athletes like gods, so why are we surprised when they try to act like the gods of mythology?

In the artwork included with the article, the Heisman trophy was appropriately included among the trophies depicted.

(REV.) ED DEIMEKE
Watervliet, N.Y.

The Peace Issue

I'm writing to express belated gratitude for your April 8 issue. "A Vision of Peace," by Drew Christiansen, S.J., a review of "Pacem in Terris" on its 50th anniversary, was immensely helpful and set the tone for the entire issue. And "Lethal Responsibility," by George B. Wilson, S.J., on reframing gun control, continued your important recent contributions to the current national debate.

I was especially impressed with "The Cost of War," by Margot Patterson. In just one page she gives a scathing overview of the dimensions of current U.S. militarism, starting with the folly of the war in Iraq and stressing that the same people who urged that war now urge warlike responses to Iran and North Korea, further expansion of our bloated defense budget and continuing unconditional support for Israel.

Her final paragraph, on our annual $3 billion dole to Israel "for the privilege of funding an occupation that everyone else in the world regards as immoral, illegal and provocative," is, I believe, the clearest and best condemnation of U.S. policy toward Israel-Palestine ever written in **America**. As she says, "This is a 'special relationship' one would think we could do without."

JOHN F. KANE
Denver, Colo.

Left in Awe

Re "An Aperture for Grace," by Jerome Miller (4/8): This meditation on Sandro Botticelli's "Annunciation" is, for me, an extended poem on life, beauty, divine grace and holiness. It left me awed!

LUCIEN LONGTIN, S.J.
Wernersville, Pa.

BLOG TALK

The fact that Scott Hahn is writing for **America** magazine is absolutely amazing. Hell has either frozen over, or something is different about **America**.... Three cheers for **America** magazine!?

JOSEPH FROMM
Good Jesuit, Bad Jesuit

STATUS UPDATE

In "The Ties That Bind" (4/29), the editors wrote, "Women in every social class are choosing to delay marriage." How should the church respond?

It seems that people sometimes avoid marriage simply because of how expensive weddings can be. My practical tip: Each diocese should have reception halls and caterers available for the poor "at cost." The couple could have access to these things only upon the recommendation of a pastor.

Maxime Villeneuve

By listening and utilizing their stories as a source for theological reflection.
Sergio Lopez

Education and invitation, just like Christ and Mary.

Marya Ross Jauregui

Educate, counsel and be patient. Respect the primacy of conscience mentioned in "Humanae Vitae," but also respect what's mentioned there about the life-giving power every person has. *Paul Christian Stokell*

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God in Relationship

MOST HOLY TRINITY (C), MAY 26, 2013

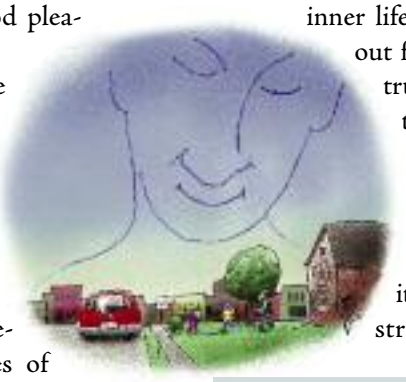
Readings: Prv 8:22-31; Ps 8:4-9; Rom 5:1-5; Jn 16:12-15

"I found delight in the human race" (Prv 8:31)

The mystery at the heart of human life is discovered in our relationships, whose outlines might be simply explained but that are ineffable at the core. How we love and live for one another defies description. We struggle for words to make real what we know through experience. When one of my sons as a small boy told me, "I want you to live longer than anyone else," he expressed his love as a desire that our lives together should continue on and on without end. This being for and with one another takes us to the mystery of Christian life.

God in Christianity is a supernatural mystery; and in the depth of God's mysterious being, we discover the reality of the Trinity. God exists in relationship as Trinity and God exists in relationship with humanity, telling us through our very creation that God wants our lives together to continue on and on without end.

In Scripture, the reality of God as Trinity is revealed through the language of relationship. In the Book of Proverbs, Wisdom describes herself as God's "craftsman…his delight day by day, playing before him all the while, playing on the surface of his earth." While Wisdom is not necessarily identified with a particular person of the Trinity, Proverbs expresses the reality of God in communication, who takes joy in creation. This delight points to the gratuitousness of creation, for the God who exists in perfect communion as triune lacks nothing, but brings humanity into being for God's and our good pleasure.



These same mysteries appear more fully in the New Testament, not as doctrinal or creedal statements, but as the reality of God experienced in the lives of the first believers.

Paul's words to the Romans outline the nature of God by virtue of the relationship Paul has entered into with the living God. Paul explains that Christians have gained "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith." Later Paul states that "we boast in hope of the glory of God...and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us."

Within this short passage, Paul has mentioned the relationships among God the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit and how through them we are given peace, hope and love. Though the word *trinity* is never mentioned, the Trinity reveals itself to Paul through the experience of God's being.

Jesus spoke of God's relational essence as he prepared the apostles for his departure. The Holy Spirit would guide the disciples "to all truth." But this truth that the Spirit speaks, Jesus says, is not the Spirit's "own" but is intended to enlighten believers and to glorify Jesus and the Father as well, for "everything that the Father has is mine." In perfect communion, the Trinity, three persons in one nature, reveals the mystery of perfect relationship: giving of oneself perfectly for the other, in order to bring all of us into the glory of God.

Even with this revelation of God's inner life and God's love poured out for us, it is impossible to truly describe in rational terms the nature of the Trinity. It is the revelation itself of the Trinity, and the experience of the Trinity, that makes it real for us, however we struggle to describe that God is three persons in one nature, that one person became human for us and that God desires that we share in the life of the Trinity.

Still, there is a parallel with human relationships and the way we come to know human beings. We can describe the visible form of persons, the behaviors that show who they are, but it is in being with them that we experience their essence, which concepts and words cannot capture. It is simply that in their presence one experiences love that in a moment becomes unending. God delights in these moments within the eternity of the triune mystery and for reasons that are inexplicable invites us to share in this life forever.

JOHN W. MARTENS

PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Prayerfully reflect on your relationship with the triune God. How has your appreciation for the Trinity grown and deepened over the years?

ART: TAD DUNNE

JOHN W. MARTENS *is an associate professor of theology at the University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minn.*

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Marguerite Stapleton, Wisdom Works Consultant, Spirituality Resources

Former VP for Mission Effectiveness, St. Mary's Health System, Maine

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Ben Michaelis, Ph.D.

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