JESUIT EDUCATION

America

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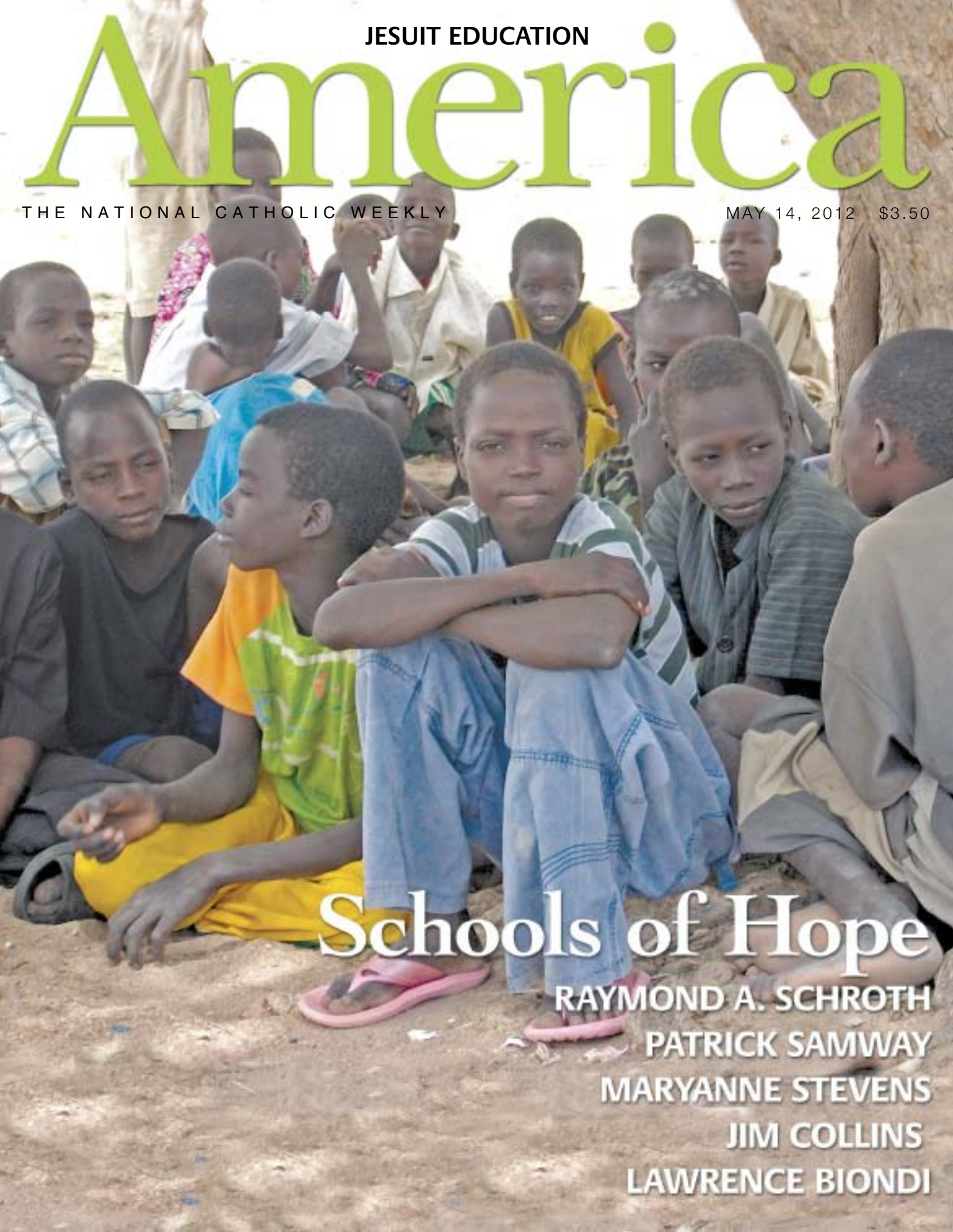

Schools of Hope

RAYMOND A. SCHROTH

PATRICK SAMWAY

MARYANNE STEVENS

JIM COLLINS

LAWRENCE BIONDI

OF MANY THINGS

As a former university president, I am always happy when **America** turns its attention to Jesuit higher education. For over three decades I called campus home at five Jesuit institutions. But it wasn't until recently, when I asked, "When is spring break?" that I realized how much I missed the groves of academe.

Jesuit universities in the United States cast a wide shadow of academic excellence and community engagement. But that was not always so. It was only in the years following World War II that many of these schools evolved into authentic universities, many of them moving into the ranks of America's most respected institutions.

Part of that success is our distinct mission; that distinctiveness informs how we educate, how we engage our host communities, how we craft a disposition for service in our students and why our graduates continue to make a difference.

Jesuit education is rooted in a spirituality that affirms the human dignity of all and espouses the idea that, to quote Gerard Manley Hopkins, S.J., "the world is charged with the grandeur of God." In other words, the created world is both good and worthy of study. This Jesuit idea of finding God in all things presupposes a genuine regard for the mystery within the universe and the mystery within the human person. Consequently, the university must be a place of disciplinary mastery, intellectual honesty, pluralism and mutual respect as students study and reflect on the abiding questions of the meaning of life, moral behavior and the conduct of human affairs.

Students are drawn to Jesuit schools in pursuit of wisdom and competence, maturity and spiritual depth, as well as by a desire for ethical grounding, social solidarity and global awareness. In the face of advancing technology and scientific advancement, social disconnection and moral confusion, we hope to provide a compass that will facilitate the kind of intellectual, ethical, social and religious integration Jesuit education has traditionally espoused.

Undoubtedly members of Jesuit universities fall short of perfection in executing this vision, but that does not mean we do not continue to seek the greater good. Students may champion the secular but not lose the faith; indeed, they may develop a rich spirituality and sense of justice; they may adopt a cause or develop political views different from their parents; or they may be civilly disengaged. Yes, they may return home and even live in their former rooms, but their Jesuit education remains within them—an inner compass.

Then again, they may develop a deep and mature faith and prayer life, embrace environmental sustainability, continue being generous in service, develop a global perspective, actively embrace a diversity of persons and ideas, be gainfully employed and learn how to live well and do good for others—all guided by their Jesuit compass.

A few weeks ago, our editors asked Jesuit university students to tweet their observations about faith and life choices [see p. 14 ff. of this issue]. Here is a sample of their responses:

> I see faith convincingly at work on campus in the demeanor that every teacher has towards students; they care about us.
>
> ...faith plays a large role in my decisions.
>
> My faith is constitutive to the way I experience and see the world around me and, thus the way I choose to live my life.
>
> I see faith guiding service activities.

When it comes to Jesuit education, I paraphrase what St. Paul says in the Acts of the Apostles: "I am compelled to proclaim what I have seen and heard."

JOHN P. SCHLEGEL, S.J.

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Cover: Students wait for class to begin in Chad. Photo: Nicolás Dorronsoro

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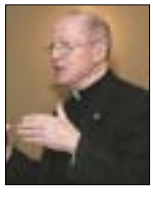
BOOKS & CULTURE

ON THE WEB

John P. Schlegel, S.J., and Leo J. O'Donovan, S.J., right, talk about the role of **Jesuit education** on our podcast. Plus, a video report from **Fordham Prep**, where students use **America** in the classroom. All at americamagazine.org.



Praise for Sisters

We would be seriously remiss if we published an issue focusing on education without mentioning the extraordinary contributions women religious have made to Catholic education in this country. It is even more important to highlight their contribution in the wake of the "Doctrinal Assessment of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious" just issued by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, which saddened many religious sisters in the United States by its strong critique. The L.C.W.R. represents over 80 percent of women's religious congregations in the United States.

Working for meager pay (which they passed on to their communities), women religious have taken the lead in working with people on the margins: not only schoolchildren, but indigent patients in hospitals, the imprisoned in jail cells and the homeless in the inner cities. Not satisfied with works of charity at home, they have labored in fields afar; some have paid with their lives. The martyrdoms in Central and Latin America of Ita Ford and Maura Clarke, Maryknoll Sisters; Dorothy Kazel, an Ursuline nun; and in Brazil of Dorothy Stang, a Sister of Notre Dame de Namur, testify not simply to the Gospel but to a certain kind of woman. These were the women who wholeheartedly embraced the reforms of the Second Vatican Council and the post-conciliar decrees by revisiting the founding documents of their orders and throwing themselves into ministry with the poor, all as the church had asked of them.

Ironically, the C.D.F. assessment was released the same day the Vatican announced that reconciliation talks with the Society of St. Pius X, which rejected many of the reforms of the Second Vatican Council, were proceeding apace.

Question Time

In the wake of the Vatican's doctrinal assessment of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, with many others we offer our support to the sisters. Ten years after the emergence of the sexual abuse crisis, transparency in disciplinary proceedings is more important than ever. Gaps in the public record need to be filled in.

First, there is the history of the assessment. Catholics in the United States and elsewhere are curious about where it came from. How did it originate? Who were the petitioners? Was the U.S. bishops' conference ever involved or consulted? When and how? When and why and at whose request were Network and the Resource Center for Religious Institutes added to the inquiry?

There is the matter, too, of the selective nature of the inquiry. Have conferences of religious in other countries been criticized for being less vocal and active in their advocacy than their bishops would have liked? Have conferences of religious in other countries also spoken too softly on issues about which the American sisters were allegedly too quiet? Are other institutes and societies, such as personal prelatures and associations of the faithful, under similar scrutiny for their public involvement or lack thereof?

The process should now be an occasion for respectful, candid dialogue. It will be aided by the inclusion of more bishops and other religious, especially those who are canonists, theologians and pastoral ministers. As we wait for more information and for the L.C.W..R.'s formal public statement, we need to calm our hearts. As Bishop Robert N. Lynch of St. Petersburg noted on his blog ("'The Nuns' Story," April 24), some investigations, like that of American women religious in the 1980s, improved understanding on both sides and strengthened working relationships. Let us pray that may be the case again.

Norwegian Justice

In the wake of the slaughter of 77 people in Norway last summer, questions swirled around the trial of the gunman, Anders Behring Breivik. What twisted ideology prompted him to embark on his rampage? Why didn't the police act sooner to stop him? One matter was already settled, however: despite the heinous nature of his crime, Breivik will not be executed. In Norway use of the death penalty in peacetime has been outlawed since 1905.

Breivik's trial began in April; ironically, he has requested that the state put him to death. Yet the citizens of Norway remain firm in their opposition to the death penalty. A poll conducted after the shootings found that only 16 percent of Norwegians were in favor of capital punishment. Meanwhile, Norway's government has worked against the use of the death penalty beyond its borders. In line with its commitment to international treaties, the government has refused to release Mullah Krekar, an exiled Kurdish leader of an armed Islamist group, to the Iraqi government until that state forswears his execution.

Scandinavian countries are often mocked in American political discourse for their secularist, "socialist" policies. On the issue of the death penalty, Norway has set a moral example that countries with higher rates of religious practice would do well to follow.

Studying Public Religion

The need for study of the nexus between religion and politics has seldom been greater. Ignorance of religion and bias against it are rampant. Religious prejudice is used to stigmatize President Obama, a Christian, as a Muslim; and anti-Mormon prejudice threatens to reduce support for Mitt Romney among Republican evangelicals. The abuse of religion, even by those we should expect to be most solicitous for its integrity, is common. With alarming hyperbole, one bishop recently associated President Obama with Hitler and Stalin.

The issue of religion has forced itself into the presidential election campaign. During the long Republican primary campaign, no issue produced as much heat as the place of contraception in health care. Now, as the election campaigns shift into high gear, the U.S. bishops have announced "a fortnight of freedom" to challenge a multitude of court decisions, legislative initiatives and executive decisions by both state and federal governments as violations of religious liberty.

In light of these developments, we ask what should students in Catholic colleges and universities know about the role of religion in public life? What sort of religious literacy will prepare them to read today's headlines critically? Here are a few topics that schools might explore:

Religion's role in public life goes far deeper than politics. The churches, along with synagogues, mosques and temples, are "the first of [American] public institutions." They are the places where neighbors first examine local issues and learn to speak in public. Church volunteers are recruited for civic roles, poll watching, hosting blood drives or collecting disaster aid. Religious congregations sponsor schools, hospitals, clinics and retirement homes. All these belong to what the Catholic tradition used to call "society," the set of associations that are intermediate between politics and the market. For individuals, families and communities, society remains an alternative to and a bulwark against both big government and big business.

Over two millennia Christians have taken a variety of postures toward the state: from sectarian disengagement to the social gospel and from the imperial papacy to state churches. The current wave of conservative American evangelical politics followed long periods of political disengagement, but evangelicals are not uniformly conservative. The evangelical community includes liberals like Jim Wallis and moderates like Richard Cizek and Ron Sider. Contemporary Catholic social action stems from the church's engagement with the world begun at the Second Vatican Council. Today the American Catholic mosaic includes the Knights of Columbus and seamless-garment Catholics as well as Feminists for Life. Political stereotypes fail to reflect the complexity of attitudes toward politics even in one denomination.

Jefferson's metaphor of a "wall of separation" between church and state obscures the real-life interaction between religion and government. The Constitution forbids the establishment of any one religion, but it also guarantees the free exercise of religion to all its citizens; and within a wide margin of freedom, believers and their institutions interact daily with government. From chaplains to the houses of Congress and in the military services to contracts with humanitarian agencies, the U.S. government interacts with religious organizations all the time. Every year presidents and members of Congress participate in prayer and Communion breakfasts, just as judges and legislators attend Red Mass celebrations. Religious leaders lobby administration officials on immigration and refugee protection. They communicate with congressional committees drafting legislation on moral matters as different as marriage and arms control and on their institutional interests in education and health care.

Religion is not essentially violent and is often a force for peace. The history of organized religion from the Crusades to jihadism and the Jewish settler movement has included violent currents. But religion has also been the source of pacifist movements, including monasticism East and West, the Mennonites and Quakers, the Catholic Peace Fellowship and the Catholic Worker. Religious leaders, like Gandhi, Abdul Gaffar Khan and Martin Luther King, led history-making nonviolent movements. In meetings in Assisi, world religious leaders have gathered with Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI to reject religious violence and pray for peace. Religious groups like the Mennonite Central Committee, the Catholic Peacebuilding Network and the Community of Sant'Egidio are working to transform conflicts and reconcile one-time enemies.

Alumni of Catholic colleges and universities ought to understand the complex history of church-state relations, the contemporary realities of religion in society and the contributions of religion to the common good and world peace. So informed, they will be better able to participate in the recurring debate over the role of religion in public life.

INTERNATIONAL LAW

Taylor Conviction Signals No Impunity for War Crimes

The conviction of Liberia's former president, Charles Taylor, should send a clear message that the era of impunity for heads of state guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity is over, said Professor Rosa Brooks of Georgetown University Law Center. On April 26 Taylor became the first African head of state convicted by an international tribunal for such offenses.

The verdict should be especially of interest, said Brooks, to current leaders such as Omar al-Bashir of Sudan, who is already under indictment, and others, like Bashar al-Assad of Syria, who may be facing prosecution in the future. "Bashir should be paying close attention to this, and he should be worried," said Brooks.

"It's good to see [Taylor] brought to justice," Brooks added. "He played an enormous role in perpetuating the conflict in Sierra Leone and Liberia. It was a particularly brutal conflict with atrocities, mutilation, use of coerced child soldiers, rape, you name it." She added, "It's quite clear that the conflict would not haven been as brutal or sustained had it not been for Taylor's willingness to supply weapons" to rebel forces in Sierra Leone. Taylor accepted what came to be known as "blood diamonds" in exchange for his support of Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front.

Taylor, 64, was convicted on all charges—five counts of crimes against humanity and six counts of war crimes—for aiding and abetting such offenses as murder, rape, conscripting child soldiers and sexual slavery during intertwined wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Taylor, who was president of Liberia from 1997 to 2003, supported and directed R.U.F. rebels in the 11-year civil war in neighboring Sierra Leone that killed more than 50,000 people. His sentence will be handed down on May 30.

Joe Turay, the head of Caritas Makeni, in Sierra Leone, said Taylor's conviction "is only part of the process."

"We mustn't forget the plight of the survivors of this horrific war who are still suffering: the orphans, the amputees, the displaced and the thousands who are still living with the mental trauma of the horror of the war," he said. "They are all in need of investment to support them to rebuild their shattered lives."

Brooks said Taylor's conviction was significant in a number of ways. The tribunal's decision, she said, "sends the message [that] the age in which you could say, 'I have immunity because I was acting as a head of state' is over." State leaders will no longer be allowed to flee into exile or relinquish office without being held responsible for their crimes. According to Brooks, the deterrent value of that precedent is worth the short-term dilemma it may create. Because of the Taylor decision, the international community will have one less carrot to offer when dealing with contemporary perpetrators of crimes against humanity. In the long run, however, said Brooks, "You want to have a system where current and future heads of state will think twice before they commit crimes against humanity."

The verdict was also important, said Brooks, because it demonstrated the effectiveness of the "hybrid court" in the Hague. Taylor was convicted by the U.N.-sponsored Special Tribunal for Sierra Leone, jointly composed of jurists from the international community as well as from Sierra Leone itself. The use of such a mixed tribunal, said Brooks, allows the victims of war crimes to take an active role in bringing perpetrators to justice and has a secondary effect of improving judicial capacity in the victimized state.

A boy walks past a rusted tank abandoned by the roadside in eastern Sierra Leone.

GENERATIONAL TRENDS

Snapshot of Millennial Views

America's millennial generation came of age during a period of acute economic uncertainty. That may explain why more than three-quarters of them say unemployment and finding a job are their greatest concerns, according to a new survey of "millennial values" from the Public Religion Research Institute and the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and

World Affairs at Georgetown University.

The second greatest concern of this young generation—its oldest members are pushing 30 and its youngest are on the verge of college—looks toward future economic problems; 55 percent say addressing the federal deficit is critically important, ranking education next (54 percent) as a major concern. Only one in five say social issues like abortion (22 percent) or same-sex marriage (22 percent) are critical social issues.

More than 15 percent of Americans now check the "none" box when asked about religious affiliation, and the survey offers no reason to believe that trend is likely to reverse. More than 25 percent of college-age millennials describe themselves as religiously unaffiliated. Twenty percent of college millennials describe themselves as Catholic, but another 8 percent said they had been Catholics in childhood but were no longer, indicating a significant drop-off of Catholic affiliation by adulthood.

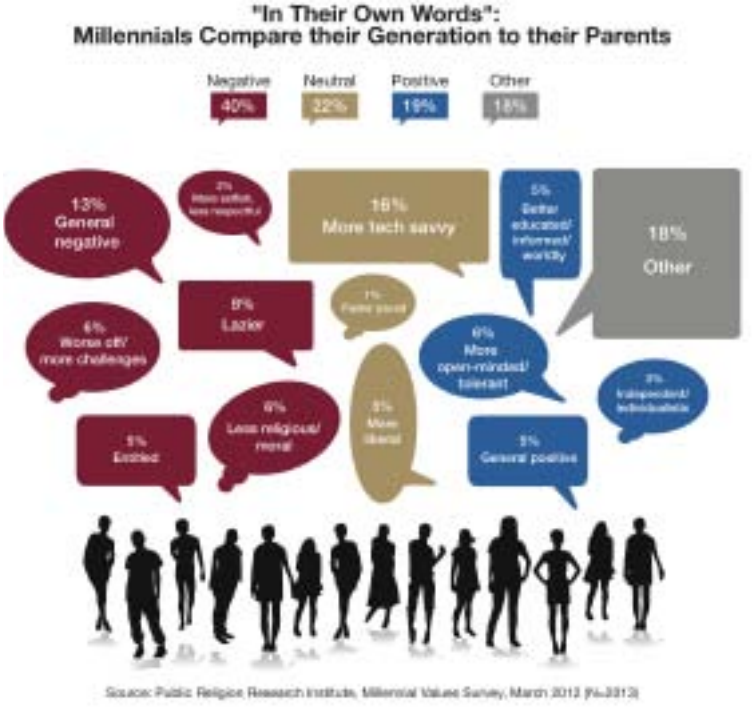
Most (58 percent) say that Christianity is relevant to their lives, but they have mixed feelings about it. Nearly two-thirds say Christianity is too judgmental, anti-homosexual and hypocritical. The rates of disapproval are even higher among unaffiliated millennials. About 80 percent of them describe Christianity as hypocritical and "anti-gay," and 73 percent of them think Christianity is too involved in politics. Only 40 percent of Christian millennials agree.

Regarding other U.S. faith traditions, 12 percent describe Mormons in negative terms, and 47 percent believe that Islamic values are at odds with American values and way of life.

"College-age Millennials are also notable for their support for economic reforms that address the gap between the rich and the poor," said Daniel Cox, Research Director at the Public Religion Research Institute. "More than 6-in-10 Millennials say that one of the biggest problems in this country is that we don't give everyone an equal chance in life."

Nearly 70 percent believe that the government should do more to reduce the gap between the rich and the poor, and 72 percent favor the "Buffett Rule," which would increase the tax rate on Americans earning more than $1 million a year. At the same time, two-thirds also believe that poor people have become too dependent on government assistance.

President Obama can still count on the support of millennials this fall, just not as many as had backed him four years ago. Not only has his once commanding lead among millennials slipped, but a good number of young people may be sitting out the November election. The survey finds that President Obama holds a seven-point lead over a generic Republican candidate, with nearly half (48 percent) of millennial voters saying they would prefer that Obama win the 2012 election. But the survey also finds that only 61 percent of college-age millennials are currently registered to vote, and only 46 percent say they are absolutely certain they will vote in November.



Market Mayhem

The global financial crisis and the worldwide recession it triggered have demonstrated that allowing financial markets to regulate themselves does not serve national interests nor the good of the international community, according to Archbishop Silvano Tomasi, the Vatican's permanent observer to U.N. agencies based in Geneva. Speaking on April 22 during a U.N. Conference in Doha, Qatar, Archbishop Tomasi said the 2008 financial crisis "marked a turning point for the world economy." The subsequent global economic recession, he said, "eliminated at least 30 million jobs around the world." As a result, "the enjoyment of fundamental economic and social rights by countless persons has been compromised, including the right to food, water, decent work, education and health." He added, "The international community cannot let the financial system continue being a source of global economic instability; it must urgently take measures to prevent the outbreak of other financial crises in the future."

L.C.W.R. Prequel?

The U.S. Leadership Conference of Women Religious is not the first national group of religious reined in by Rome because of "serious doctrinal problems." Two decades ago the Vatican appointed a bishop to oversee the work of the Latin American Confederation of Religious, known by its Spanish acronym C.L.A.R. "It was a very difficult moment for the confederation," said Gabriel Naranjo Salazar, a Vincentian priest who is now secretary-general of the organization, because it "affected [C.L.A.R.'s] ecclesial independence and its mentality, but also because it seemed completely unjustified," he said. Now the group has a strong relationship with the Vatican and the Latin American bishops' council. Father Naranjo said the transition, while painful at the time, was made easier by a good working relationship with the Vatican delegates.

NEWS BRIEFS

PHOTO: FORDHAM UNIVERSITY

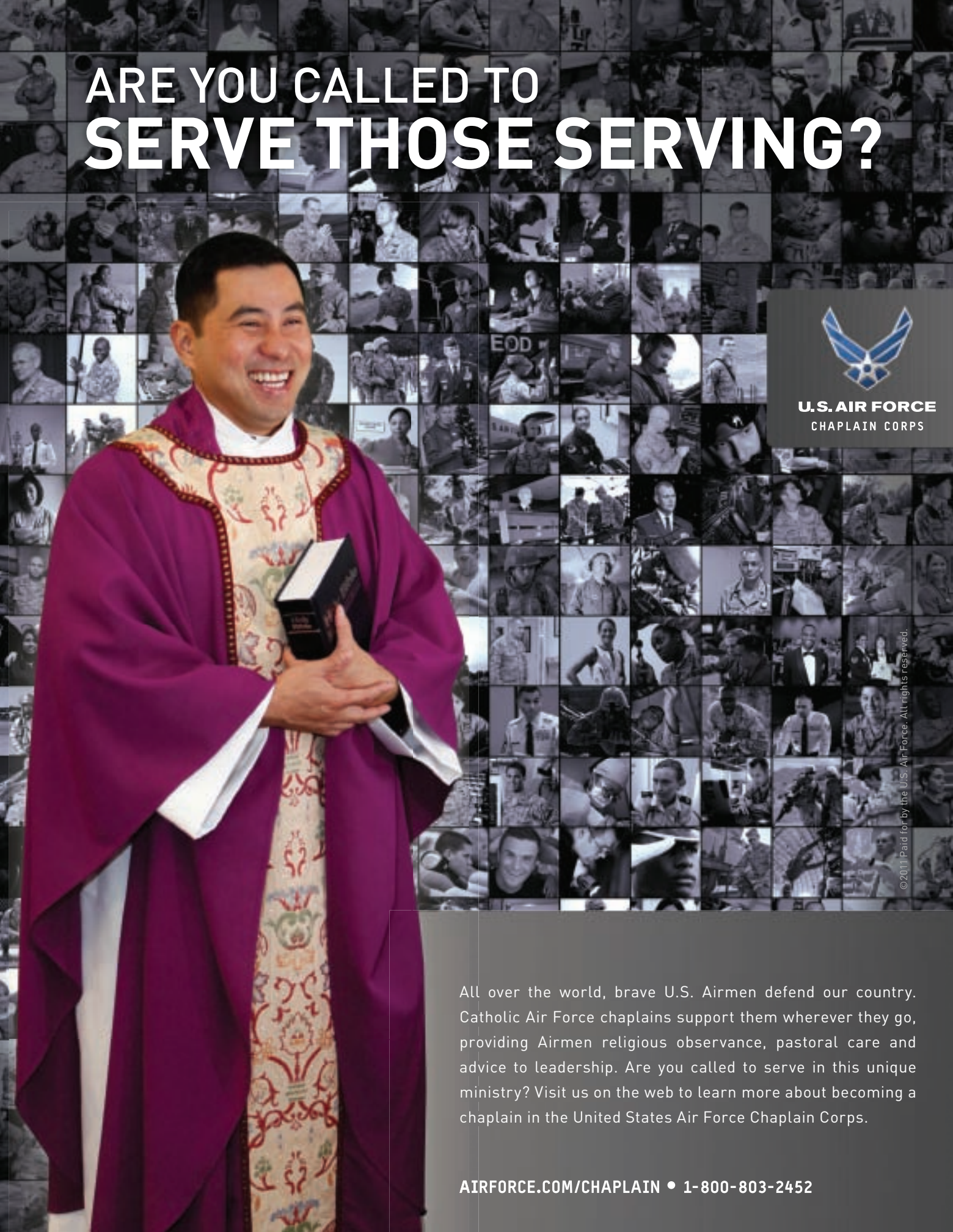
George Doty

Pope Benedict XVI will **visit Lebanon** on Sept. 14 to 16 to formally end the Synod for the Middle East that began in October 2010 and to deliver an apostolic exhortation based on the synod deliberations. ✦ **Jan Karski,** the late Polish-American professor who tried to alert the world to the horrors of the Holocaust, will be honored with the Presidential Medal of Freedom during an event this summer. ✦ Caritas Internationalis is trying to find out more about the whereabouts of three staff members who were arrested on April 23 as **Sudan security forces** shut down the offices of the Caritas-affiliate Sudan Aid in southern Darfur. ✦ More than **22,104 people from 101 dioceses,** 75 percent of them adults, were baptized in China on Easter Sunday, ✦ **George Doty,** a philanthropist noted for funding the repair of the dome of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, passed away in his home in Rye, N.Y., on April 24 at the age of 94. ✦ On April 25 Catholic Democrats and Faithful America, two national groups, **delivered a petition** with 20,000 signatures to Bishop Robert J. McManus of Worcester in an unsuccessful effort to persuade him to reinstate Victoria Reggie Kennedy as the commencement speaker at Anna Maria College in Paxton, Mass.

Communion With Nature

A joint statement produced by the dialogue in the United States between the United Methodist Church and the Catholic Church (co-chaired by Bishop Timothy Whittaker, Methodist, and Bishop William Skylstad, Catholic) calls members of both denominations to "participate more deeply in the Eucharist by recognizing its intrinsic connection with the renewal of creation." The statement, *Heaven and Earth Are Full of Your Glory*, was issued on April 20 in anticipation of the traditional observance of Earth Day. "The Eucharist is regarded as the central form of Christian worship," according to the statement, "because it orchestrates all that humans are and can be on this earth—our senses, abilities, talents, gifts, and intelligence—and offers them back to God the Father in thanksgiving for the Paschal victory of his Son." The statement notes that elements of nature—grain for bread and grapes for wine—become part of salvation through the Eucharist and that salvation itself is an act of God at work in all of creation and all creation encountering God.

From CNS and other sources.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THOMAS MASSARO

Take a Deep Breath

Anniversaries come in all shapes, colors and flavors. A birthday or wedding anniversary, especially of the round-number variety, marks a significant milestone, affording an opportunity to appreciate the sheer longevity of a person or the staying power of a relationship. We all need to celebrate our resilience amid life's challenges and transitions.

Anniversaries of particular historical events also evoke a wide range of emotions. The recent centenary of the sinking of the Titanic prompted a peculiar blend of emotions, most of them gloomy. Washingtonians just celebrated the happier centennial of their city's stunning cherry trees, a 1912 gift from Japan. We in Boston just marked 100 years since the opening of Fenway Park; even Red Sox haters have to admire the continuing appeal of that "lyric little bandbox of a ballpark," as John Updike described it. The university where I teach, Boston College, is gearing up to celebrate its sesquicentennial anniversary, a great opportunity to review its contribution to church and society and to reaffirm its mission.

Few anniversaries can rival the upcoming 50th anniversary of the opening on Oct. 11, 1962, of the Second Vatican Council for sheer influence, theological heft and even drama. Unless you are planning a six-month hibernation, you will be hearing a great deal about this momentous event very soon [see **America**'s occasional series, 2/13 and 4/30], and I wholeheartedly encourage all Catholics to take full advantage of the many offerings that will come their way and to familiarize themselves with the work and legacy of Vatican II.

If I may plug the outstanding work of two friends, you cannot go wrong with investing time in anything produced by John W. O'Malley, S.J. (full disclosure: He is my former colleague and housemate) and Richard Gaillardetz (my colleague these days at B.C.). In books, articles, public lectures and even audio mini-courses, these two scholars of church history and ecclesiology present accessible and insightful analyses of what the council fathers wrought half a century ago. Many parishes, dioceses and colleges are planning excellent lecture series and events to celebrate the opening of Vatican II, though not every one of them can feature O'Malley and Gaillardetz!

Most Catholics could not imagine a church without Vatican II.

Although the council had roots in longstanding theological trends and ecclesial developments, the actual work of Vatican II unfolded between the time Pope John XXIII announced the Council on Jan. 25, 1959, and the conclusion of its fourth and final period on Dec. 8, 1965. The anniversary may occasion a new wave of gripping anecdotal accounts of the council proceedings. Besides the ample politicking that went on behind the scenes, the impressive main stage was the central nave of St. Peter's Basilica, which despite its immense proportions could barely hold the council's nearly 2,500 attendees, mostly bishops.

We all know the buzzwords associated with the council and its 16 major documents: *aggiornamento*, *ressourcement*, people of God, full participation of the laity, the *communio* of all the baptized, development, collegiality, dialogue. Even if most adult Catholics could not offer a complete account of the theological content and significance of Vatican II, they probably could not imagine a church without the legacy it bestowed. The way we today take for granted its momentous contributions—from liturgical reforms to new commitments to both accept and transform the modern world—is proof of its lasting mark on our church.

I was born too late to have a personal recollection of Vatican II, but a wonderful coincidence provides an inspiring note on which to close. As I was drafting this column, the phone rang, and I entered into a delightful conversation with a 90-year-old nun who was seeking a bit of social justice programming advice. When she asked about my next column, I invited her reflections on Vatican II. She waxed poetic about how Good Pope John opened the stained glass windows of the church to let in some fresh air and expressed her fear that her final years might witness a shutting of those windows.

I am grateful for the good sister's recollection. Since we need every deep breath of fresh air we can get these days, let us keep celebrating the style, spirit and vision of the council.

THOMAS MASSARO, S.J., *teaches social ethics at the Boston College School of Theology and Ministry, Chestnut Hill, Mass.*

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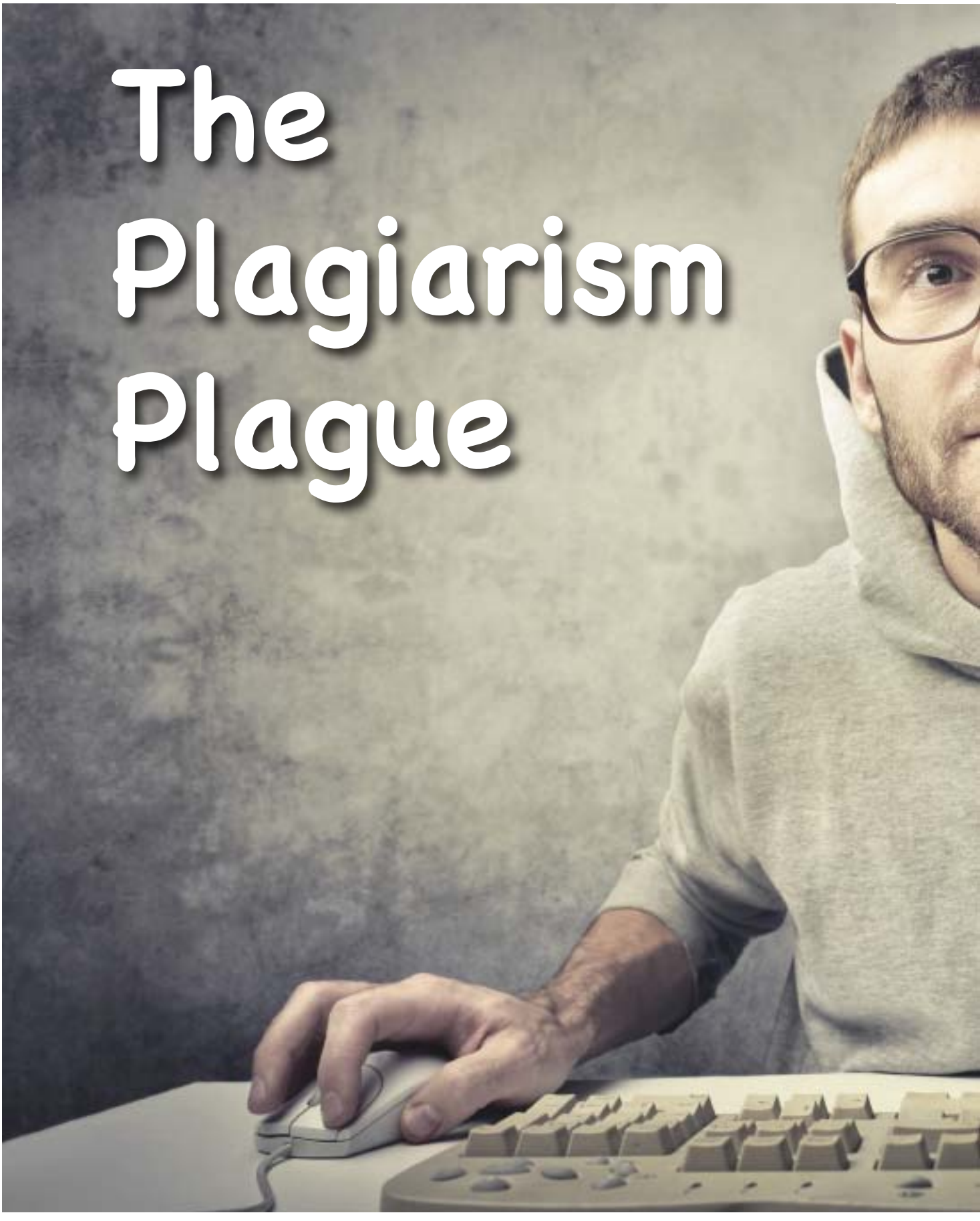
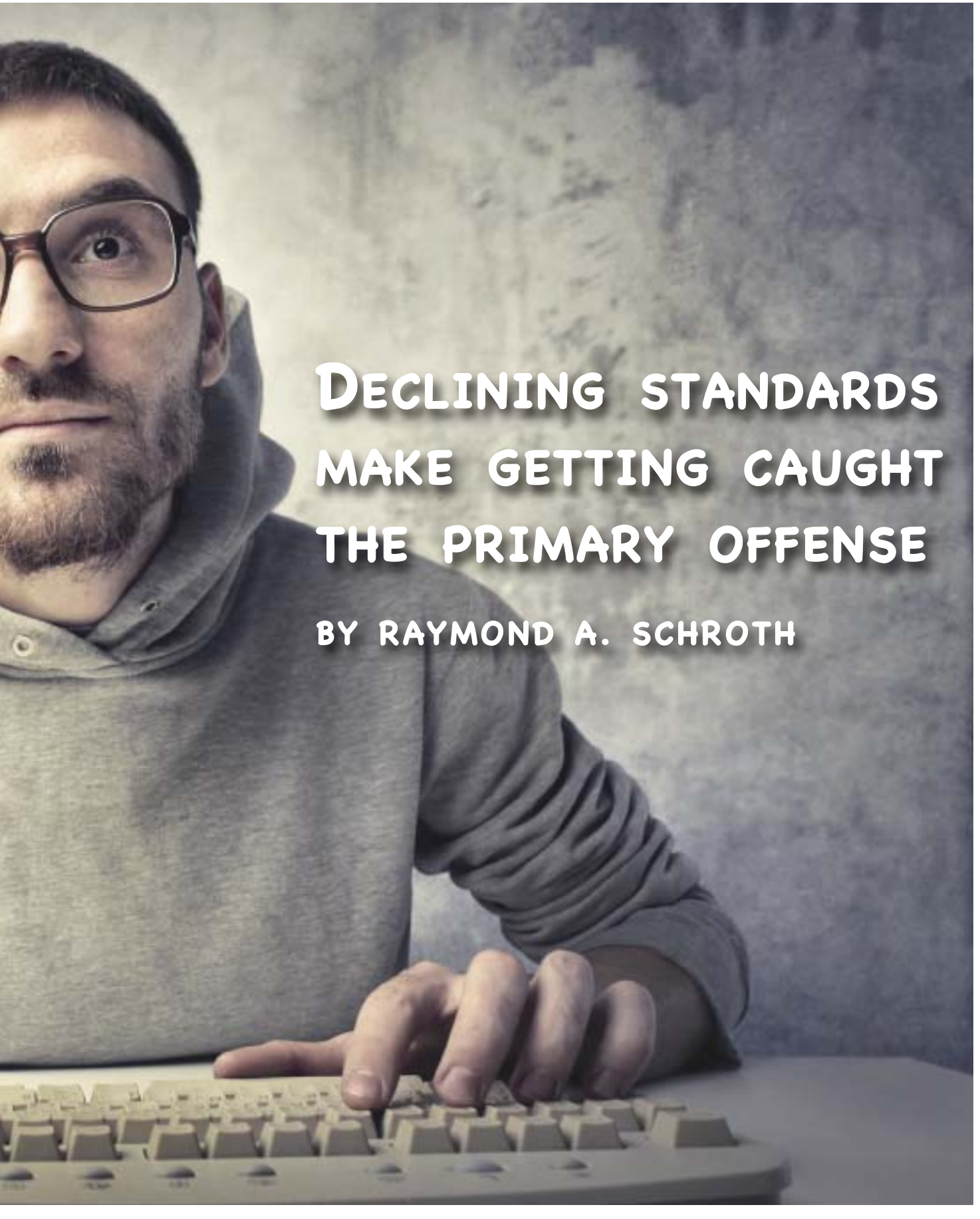




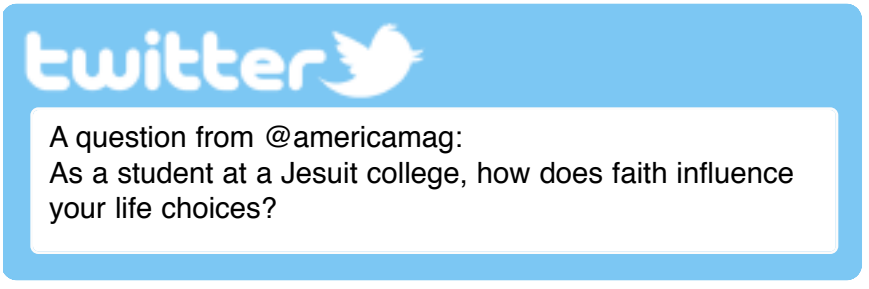
Declining standards make getting caught the primary offense

By Raymond A. Schroth

My heart sank. Joe Hotz (not his real name) had struck me as one of the better students. The assignment had been to read James Joyce's short story "The Dead," watch John Huston's film adaptation of it and then write a one-page essay analyzing one scene. But something did not smell right. I had already graded a half-dozen short essays by Hotz, so I knew his style. This was not it. I searched for one suspicious sentence using Google, and *voila!* He had cribbed his report from someone else.

That was an English class. Worse, in a way, was the case of two students in a journalism ethics class who knew well the current scandals of a humiliated young trio of reporters: Janet Cooke of The Washington Post, Stephen Glass of The New Republic and Jayson Blair of The New York Times. Their careers had shattered like a dropped glass after they had faked stories. How could these students commit the very offense their course aimed to prevent?

To some, academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, is neither a crime nor a sin; it is a mistake. To me, because I see a university education as not just intellectual, but moral, it is all three. The 19- to 25-year-old conscience is still being formed. But the student who finds someone else to write his research paper today is more likely to become the driver fleeing the scene of an auto accident tomorrow than is the student who presents his true self in the classroom.



Evidence shows that academic dishonesty in its various forms is spreading like the flu. A recent New Yorker article profiled a young man who compulsively "writes"—that is, pastes together—crime novels using passages pilfered from piles of other books. To some this is merely a copyright violation that "hurts" no one—no one except the deceiver, who degrades himself and the culture he typifies, where in business and politics the contradiction between the face and the public mask do not matter as long as the charade makes money for some and amuses others.

The China Syndrome

An explosive investigation by The Chronicle of Higher Education, co-researched with The New York Times, assesses the increasing recruitment by U.S. universities, anxious to boost both diversity and income, of students from China's expanding middle class. As a result of China's one-child policy, nouveaux riche families are free to invest heavily in their one offspring's future. This can include sending him or her overseas for an American education and paying (hurrah for the university!) full tuition, whether or not the young person speaks any English or has been intellectually prepared by China's rote-memory learning system to meet American standards. Many of these students stumble through their early college years and drag down the standards in classes, as teachers limit discussion and cut down oral presentations to give the foreign students a break.

Wanting Tang, for example, described on her Facebook page as "really fun" and "really serious," was guided by an agency in Shanghai to the University of Delaware. Her family paid the agency $3,300 to prep her for the university's entrance exam and another $4,000 to write her admissions essay and put together her application. Some other agencies falsify school letterheads and create doctored transcripts and counterfeit letters of recommendation. After interviewing 250 students headed for the United States, a consulting company in Beijing concluded that 90 percent provided false recommendations and 70 percent had other people write their personal essays.

Delaware's president admits that many of the applications are false but notes that it is a problem many universities are grappling with. Interviewing applicants in China would assess their real aptitude, but that would be costly. The Chinese plagiarism phenomenon has been explained on a Georgetown University blog as the result of cultural differences, like the Chinese pressure to conform, the tendency to consider the professor a "sage on the stage" and an understanding of term papers as a copy-and-paste collection of information. American individualists, by contrast, consider academic papers to be creative research projects where "one missing reference could get someone expelled."

How Widespread?

But recent headlines demonstrate that plagiarism and its near relatives are not foreign imports. Plagiarists present themselves as people they are not: the Yale University head football coach described himself on a résumé as a candidate for a Rhodes scholarship, which he was not; the vice president of Claremont McKenna College submitted false statistics for the U.S. News and World Report rankings; a 19-year-old Long Island college student was charged with scheming to defraud, criminal impersonation and falsifying business records after he took the SAT and ACT tests for at least 15 students, charging each $3,600.

RAYMOND A. SCHROTH, S.J., *literary editor of* ***America****, has taught at five Jesuit and three secular universities.*

More troublesome are the academic black—or gray—sheep who by theory or practice facilitate plagiarism. In his article "Uncreative Writing," Kenneth Goldsmith of the University of Pennsylvania extols "patchwriting," a way of "weaving together various shards of other people's words into a tonally cohesive whole. It's a trick students use all the time, rephrasing, say, a Wikipedia entry into their own words." He describes a published essay strung together in this manner as "a self-reflective, demonstrative work of original genius." This is a trend among young writers, says Goldsmith; "For them the act of writing is literally moving language from one place to another."

A commentator counters that this practice is "perfectly compatible with the larger culture's recent depredations: the corporate cooking of the books at Enron, the bundling and sales of toxic mortgages by America's leading bankers, the daily misrepresentations of advertising, the stonewalling by church officials in the pedophilia scandals, the mendacity of campaign ads, etc.... reframing issues with no regards for facts or consequences."

In "The Shadow Scholar," in the Chronicle, Ed Dante (a pseudonym) confessed that he has written 5,000 pages a year of term papers that students handed to professors as their own, including 12 graduate theses of 50 pages each. His staff of 50 is overwhelmed dealing with English-as-a-second-language students who probably should not be in college and lazy rich kids who would rather buy a paper than write one.

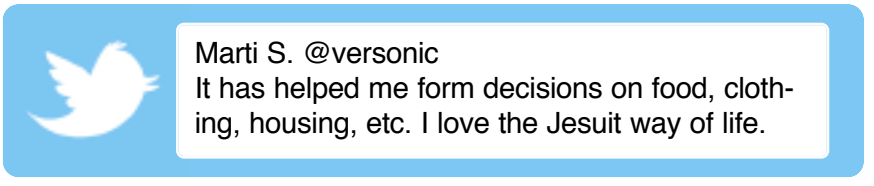
Faculty member readers of the Chronicle blamed admissions offices for letting in weak students, grade grubbers who threaten to sue professors who mark them too low, parents who pressure faculty, students who cheat rather than work—as if faculty members had nothing to do with the students' decision to fake it. Some faculty members "solve" the plagiarism problem by not assigning papers. Dante answered: None of his clients reported that the originality of his or her work had been questioned. Not one had been caught.

George Mason University's Web site History News Network, in an article posted in 2010, summed up academic plagiarism charges against the popular American historian Stephen Ambrose. In January 2002 Fred Barnes had reported in The Weekly Standard that Ambrose's history of the Air Force, *The Wild Blue*, included phrases and sentences from another book without attribution. This opened a floodgate. For five months other writers scoured Ambrose's work and came up with phrases in seven of his books that had been borrowed from 12 writers. Ambrose defended his methods: He writes at his computer, surrounded by interview transcripts, documents and books, which he mixes together to describe an incident. He uses quotes to set off material from interviews, footnotes to source material in other books.

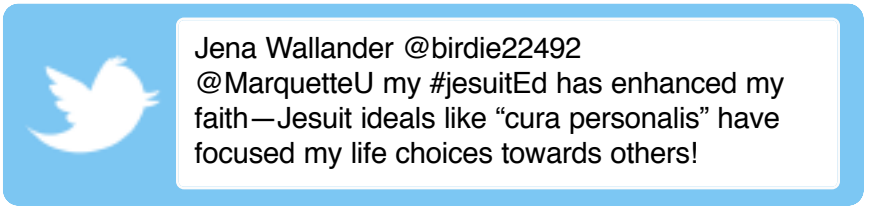
In the end, the Network judged Ambrose's offenses as misdemeanors—just sloppy accrediting, although still ethical lapses. Ambrose survived, but two problems remain. One reporter found the same manner of "mistakes" in Ambrose's 1963 University of Wisconsin doctoral thesis. A more thorough faculty mentor at the beginning of his career might have helped spare him his later embarrassment.

Plagiarism's End

Why cheat? Cultural forces promote it. A university must ask itself to what degree it is willing to distinguish its code of behavior from that of the larger society. Is education moral or merely money-centered? The underlying reason students like Hotz cheat is that they have not committed themselves to the level of work they are obliged to do in college. They do not see study as a priority. When study interferes with their real priorities—football practice, frat or sorority life, an off-campus job, romantic interest or just hanging out—they calculate that they can con their professors and get away with it.



They may be right until they run up against a professor who cares about the quality of their work. Modern professors can be firewalls against plagiarism if they assign readings by the best stylists—Thoreau, Orwell, E. B. White, Joan Didion, Rebecca West, James Baldwin, Virginia Woolf—so students get a feeling for great writing as something to be imitated, not abused; assign a short written reflection (or more) each week to get a sense of each student's style; assign major paper topics inspired by the course, so the student is familiar with some sources; require that half the sources be from printed sources, not material snipped from the Web or Wikipedia; meet personally with the student a week before the paper is due for a progress report, including three pages of a rough draft and discussion of two of the library books; and explain the purpose of documentation, that the reader must be given access to the writer's sources.



Uncovering plagiarism demands effort. Google any sus-

picious phrases or use the Internet-based service called Turnitin, which will reprint papers with every purloined passage in a separate color. Return papers in class and read aloud, without naming the author, an offending passage, followed by the same passage from its original source. It is another way of saying, You will be caught.

The sanction for plagiarism must be at least an F on the paper, accompanied by a letter in the student's file to be consulted if it happens again, with the understanding that a second offense would mean expulsion. This policy will be effective only with leadership from the president and full cooperation from the faculty. If, however, some faculty respond to the plagiarism plague by not assigning papers or by misguided mercy, the problem will continue. As one of my students said recently, "You plagiarize because you don't value what you are doing. And if the teacher doesn't expect much of you, you'll cheat."

About 40 years ago, I published an article on Norman Mailer in Commonweal. A few years later I saw an ad in a journal for a collection of essays on Mailer and ordered the book. It turned out to be a self-published collection of student seminar papers. The professor had made publication part of the syllabus. And there was my article with a student's name on it.

I was not angry, but sad. Why had this professor allowed this young man to hurt himself in this way? Did the student do it again? Where is he today? A

Schools of Hope

Foi et Joie in Chad and Haiti

BY PATRICK SAMWAY

Something new is happening in Chad and Haiti—actually something quite miraculous—and third-world Francophone educators are beginning to take notice. Jesuits in Mongo, Chad and Port-au-Prince, Haiti, have recently started Foi et Joie schools, after having formally affiliated themselves with Fe y Alegría, an international system of education emanating from Caracas, Venezuela. Both terms, one French and the other Spanish, mean the same: faith and joy.

Foi et Joie students in Haiti

Just before 7 a.m. on any weekday school morning in Mongo, a town of 20,000 inhabitants located in central Chad, small bands of students—boys casually dressed in black pants and white shirts and girls in long white *laffafi* and black headscarves—make their way slowly to the local lycée. As they cross one or more of the town's main roads, they all but disappear from sight as swirling clouds of dust envelope them. They accept this environment as normal. In this part of Chad during the dry season, which lasts from November to June, water is extremely scarce. In particularly dry times, bleached-white cattle skeletons lie about the desiccated fields. The omnipresent whirlwinds of dust, tossed 20 feet into the air, are caused mainly by speeding passenger buses and overburdened cargo trucks.

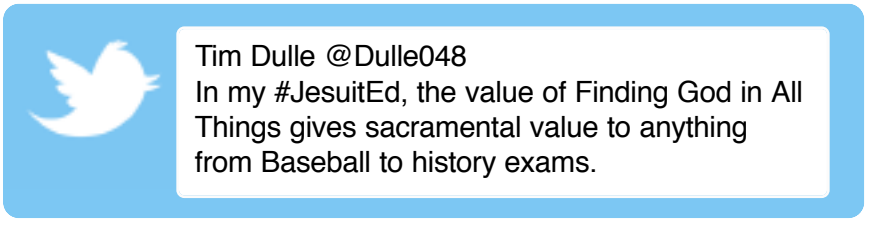
If students in Mongo learn to survive in the forbidding environment of the sub-Saharan regions, those in Port-au-Prince have the equally daunting task of coping with life after the earthquake on Jan. 12, 2010. In those few minutes the lives of some three million Haitians changed, and the architectonics of the city would never be the same. The landmark presidential palace and both the Anglican and Catholic cathedrals still lie in ruins, as if nothing has been done in the last two years. The Jesuit-built Villa Manrèse, an imposing retreat house that the former-dictator François ("Papa Doc") Duvalier took over when he expelled 18 Jesuits in 1964 for promoting issues of faith and justice, now resembles nothing more than an empty parking lot—with not one tiny stone on another!

While Haitian refugees continue to live in fetid, cholera-prone, makeshift camps throughout the city, they do not see progress on the structural and social changes that are so desperately needed. Financial aid poured into Haiti after the earthquake, but it is difficult to track the monies accurately.

PHOTO: AIMÉE TEROSKY

PATRICK SAMWAY, S.J., *is a professor of English at Saint Joseph's University in Philadelphia and the author of* Educating Darfur Refugees: A Jesuit's Efforts in Chad *(University of Scranton Press, 2007). He has spent 18 months in Chad and has visited Haiti regularly over the past 25 years.*

Before Christmas 2011, for example, the Clinton Bush Haiti Fund made a $914,000 grant to Quisqueya, a fairly new university in Port-au-Prince, to develop both current and future business leaders. This fund notes that the total value of damage caused by the earthquake is estimated at about $8 billion, of which approximately $5.5 billion was lost by the private sector. The United States spent $1.1 billion on immediate post-quake relief, according to an Associated Press release (Sept. 29, 2010), yet not one cent of the $1.15 billion promised in March 2010 by the United States for rebuilding had reached Port-au-Prince by the time the AP article was written. And less than 15 percent of reconstruction pledges from 50 other countries ($686 million of almost $8.75 billion pledged for 2010-11) had arrived. Thus the crucial question needs to be asked: What priorities should be established to bring about a transformation of the Haitian landscape and mindscape?



Education by Notes and Rote

As Paul Farmer, a physician and the chairman of Harvard Medical School's Department of Global Health and Social Medicine, notes in his book *Haiti After the Earthquake* (2011), "Human capital had long been Haiti's chief asset, and getting children and young people into safe schools that offered modern pedagogy was a top priority."

There is no need to remind the children of Haiti of the importance of education. Yet, for those who do attend school, the days are filled with a simple, robot-like task: assiduously copying sentences and numbers from the blackboard into their notebooks. They will later memorize what they have written while daylight is still available. In both Haiti and Chad, educational pedagogy has remained the same for decades, part of a way of life deeply entrenched in all too many schools. Students show up for class; teachers write their lessons on the blackboards; and then students twist and angle about to see what has been written. Creativity is rarely expected or demanded. Meticulous penmanship and full notebooks pass as signs of academic achievement.

What is often forgotten is that Haitian and Chadian students have names, come from specific families and aspire to acquire the best of what their cultures and societies can offer—particularly an education that makes such students competitive locally, nationally and, God willing, internationally. Some religiously sponsored schools, like the exemplary Saint Louis de Gonzague school, run by the Brothers of Christian Instruction in Port-au-Prince, and the Chadian, Jesuit-sponsored Charles Lwanga School in Sarh, have been innovative on many fronts. But these are the exception. Overall the educational system in both countries has long needed innovative forms of pedagogy. That task poses linguistic obstacles for populations that officially speak myriad local languages in addition to Arabic/French in Chad, or Creole/French in Haiti.

Chadian and Haitian Jesuits and their lay counterparts are convinced that seeds planted in 1955 by José María Vélaz, S.J., a professor at the Andres Bello Catholic University, and his friend, Abraham Reyes, who turned his own home into a school for the poor, have had remarkable results in Latin America, Spain and now Chad and Haiti. Father Vélaz and Señor Reyes, after touring the shantytown of Gato Negro in Catia, near Caracas, saw that there is a fundamental link between poverty and a lack of education, and they determined to do something about it. Inspired by the 17th-century Jesuit villages in Paraguay, called in Spanish *reducciones*, and by the dedicated efforts of his own university students, Father Vélaz moved forward with audacious speed. During the 1960s, Fe y Alegría opened schools in Ecuador, Panama, Peru and Bolivia before spreading out to other countries.

Today Fe y Alegría includes at least 1,200 schools, 2,400 outreach educational centers, 33,000 teachers and 946,600 students in 19 countries. The Fe y Alegría credo is based on sound philosophical and educational pedagogy: Construct an educated society by allowing those involved to be active partners in building up the academic program, accounting both for faith in God's desire to help people and the faith we all need to have in one another to bring about God's kingdom on earth.

ON THE WEB
A visit to a Jesuit high school religion class.
americamagazine.org/video

Fe y Alegría/Foi et Joie is rooted in the realization that a Christian educational system, which confronts innumerable social and political injustices, can be an important part of the church's efforts to build a more just and peaceful world. The vision of St. Ignatius Loyola—especially the care for each student (in Latin, *cura personalis*)—informs all dimensions of this program.

Applying the Vision

Although organized and chartered as private, independent educational systems, Foi et Joie in Chad and Haiti have the legal recognition and encouragement of the local departments of education where they work. After a few short

years, there are already 25 Foi et Joie primary schools in rural areas surrounding Mongo and neighboring Bitkine. Each school, designed to educate approximately 180 students, has several buildings, including classroom buildings, a library, a kitchen run by parents of the students and a building to store school materials and grains, as well as free-standing buildings containing toilets and washstands. In all cases, students have access to water. The Chadian government simply cannot provide this type of personalized education for the 80,000 primary schoolchildren in the larger Mongo area. It is hoped, however, that the government will see that Foi et Joie's careful planning and innovations can be applied to their schools as well.

Teachers in Foi et Joie schools routinely undergo supervised training sessions, sometimes by personnel who come from outside the country. In November and December 2010, for example, Señora Beatriz Borjas, a leading Fe y Alegría educator in Venezuela, spent two months advising the Chadian Foi et Joie staff and meeting with teachers in plenary sessions, as well as visiting the individual Foi et Joie schools. Likewise, Sr. Anne Minguet, R.C.E., has visited Mongo three times since 2007. The long experience in education of these two dedicated religious women working with Fe y Alegría gives the necessary assurance that Chadian Foi et Joie schools meet international standards.

One major reason that Foi et Joie is taking hold so rapidly is that the parents of the students are involved in important aspects of running the school. In Chad, not only have parents quarried and carried stone to six building sites, but under supervision they cut the individual stones into appropriate sizes. Parents then helped do the construction work for each building. In Haiti, especially at the new Foi et Joie school at Balan, not far from Port-au-Prince near the Dominican border, parents have been involved in constructing and maintaining a series of pools at Babaco. A two-mile system of underground pipes makes it possible for students to drink from a bacteria-free water source. Although many of these parents have never attended a school of any sort, they recognize the value of the work they willingly undertake.

The innovative forms of participation have another definite effect: Students clearly see the results of their parents' hard work—sometimes done under an unforgiving sun—and know that their school communicates the values they need to succeed in life. With such empowering involvement, parents and students cannot but be proud of their local Foi et Joie schools. It does not take long to realize that Foi et Joie is more than a community educational project, since its influence reaches thousands of individuals each year. As these schools become more mature and develop sustainable programs, they can communicate with other schools in need of direction and pedagogical guidance.

A group of faculty members, administrators and other personnel at Saint Joseph's University in Philadelphia, calling themselves SJU Project Haiti: Learning and Growing Together, has entered into a partnership with Foi et Joie: Haiti. Four members of this group, under the leadership of Terrance Furin of the education department, visited Port-au-Prince for several days in October 2011. Their mission was simple: to listen to the needs of the five-member Foi et Joie leadership team, ably directed by Ambroise Gabriel, S.J., and to visit a number of the schools in the area. Two schools, the first in Balan and the second in Ouanaminthe, started by James Boynton, a Jesuit brother, in the northeastern part of the country, are already fully functioning; 26 more are in various stages of construction. Furthermore, SJU Project Haiti invited this leadership team to come to Saint Joseph's University for a week in March 2012. There they visited local schools, like the Gesu School, the French International School, Archmere Academy and Waldron Mercy Academy, and discussed those American forms of pedagogy that might be suitable for their schools.

Yes, change is in the air. And in the years to come, those Chadian or Haitian students who trek to their local lycées each weekday might just become catalysts for more change if they have experienced what Foi et Joie elementary schools have to offer. These students will have been given a challenge, based on very positive educational experiences, to assume leadership roles in all sectors of their societies. Few doubt that positive, constructive education, which involves an entire village or town, is the key to a society's success. Foi et Joie knows this and is doing something about it.

As Father Gabriel is fond saying, in Creole, "Yon timoun ki lekòl se benefis tout moun" ("A child in school helps everyone").

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Faith Moves Off Campus

How Catholic colleges promote the value of religion in society

Today, one in four Americans age 18 to 29 claims no religious affiliation. In this era, how does a Catholic college or university communicate to students the value of religion in society? We asked three presidents of Catholic colleges for their thoughts.

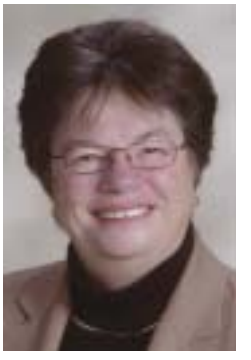
The Editors

PHOTO: COURTESY OF DON A. DOLL, S.J.

"Spirit of Jesuit Education," by Littleton Alston, at Creighton University, in honor of John P. Schlegel, S.J.

Toward a Meaningful Life

BY MARYANNE STEVENS



The obvious answer to the question **America**'s editors pose is that a Catholic college communicates faith as constitutive of a meaningful human life. This compels us first and foremost to nurture the imagination of our campus communities. Communicating the value of religion requires stories, environments, experiences, signs and symbols that lead one to faith and hope rather than despair in a bewildering world.

The experiences, signs and symbols abound at College of Saint Mary. Some are obvious: required theology and philosophy courses; crucifixes in the classrooms; daily Eucharist; meatless Lenten Fridays; small faith-sharing groups and service opportunities sponsored by campus ministry; and the marking of campus celebrations and sorrows with ritual, calling forth God's blessing and announcing our faith and hope in something more than ourselves.

Then there are the less obvious answers, which include careful hiring processes attentive to the college's mission. Not all candidates are Catholic or even Christian. But the processes do ask why a candidate would consider a Catholic college. If prospects respond to questions about the college's Catholic identity with answers like, "I don't have a problem with it," they are disqualified. We are looking for people who believe in something more and will prove to be role models through their understanding of being called to more. Less obvious, too, is the attention to campus aesthetics, which nurtures leisure and an appreciation of beauty.

The trick, then, is to make the connections between how the symbols of Catholicism function to assist with meaning while respecting the fact that the symbols of other religions can do the same. This needs to be coupled with questions like: "What makes for good religion, as opposed to bad religion?" or "What role will I allow authority and discipline to have in my life and why?" The latter question is crucial in a society that has thrived on resisting authority since the colonies threw out the British.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF AUTHORS

I think the most important method of conveying to students the value of religion comes from reflection on that which draws us to understand our limits and how we are bound to that which is beyond, however we name and honor it. This type of reflection can come in a variety of settings: a theology class, which (it is hoped) opens up concepts of God and ritual or doctrine rather than closing off questions; or a biology class where the discussion centers on our limited understandings of the human body despite our vast knowledge; or a literature class in which one comes to recognize the limits of words. It can happen through the religious rituals around important moments marking either joy or sorrow.

The discipline of participation in religion allows one to be part of something greater, to participate in a community of faith and hope. All the great world religions have a compelling vision of a world of "no more tears, a new heaven and a new earth," where all tears are wiped away. The point is that participation in religion, if it is "good" religion—that is, if it leads to further charity, joy, peace and patience—can lead to a meaningful life, a life sought after by many, if not all, of our students.

MARYANNE STEVENS, R.S.M., *is president of the College of Saint Mary in Omaha, Neb.*

Together, in Faith

BY JIM COLLINS

One cannot fully understand or appreciate timeless topics like economics, politics, music, education or medicine without knowing that religion has had an impact on each and continues to do so. Further, as one begins to understand the confluence, conflict, philosophical underpinnings or evolution toward any number of combinations of issues related to these topics, religion can easily be shown to have a profound influence.

Any broad-based, quality education ought to enlighten a student's understanding of religion's impact on society. A Catholic college or university is in a unique position to bring meaning, add clarity and offer insights as it teaches the value and importance religion has in society—past, present and future. One of the great resources a Catholic college or university has is its intellectual tradition. A Catholic college has both the opportunity and obligation to teach the Catholic intellectual tradition in its offerings, both curricular and co-curricular.

I can briefly highlight two very different examples of how Loras College helps communicate the value of religion in society. First, from a curricular standpoint, we offer a unique program for 60 students entitled "Catholic Thinkers and Leaders." Over the course of four years, these students participate in the life of the college like any other student, in that they commit to our general education track, but with a specifically delivered set of course work that incorporates the Catholic intellectual tradition. Regular opportunities to serve outside the college, to study in Italy for one's junior-year study away program and to gather weekly to discuss leadership principles that incorporate the Catholic tradition and liturgical participation are all required components of the program. Having a critical mass of these students, invested in this curriculum, has provided leaven for our campus community and allowed all of us to understand better the value of religion in society from both a lived and intellectual perspective.

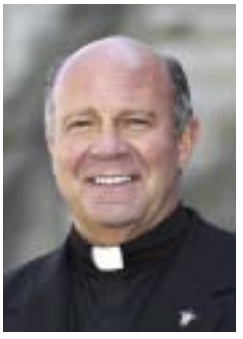
Second, like many colleges and universities, Loras offers a first-year immersion program, which includes a common reading component. This co-curricular program is called "Launch Into Loras." The required reading for fall 2011 was the book *Acts of Faith*, by Eboo Patel. Though we have facilitated this program for a number of years and incorporated many fine readings, this year's book and interactions among faculty, students and staff were especially well received across the board. Mr. Patel, who is Muslim, shares his story of growing up and attending the University of Illinois. It was as a college student that he gained a deeper understanding of his own faith, an appreciation for those of different faiths and a desire to find a common cause whereby shared religious principles, even if from different faith traditions, could drive an effort of unity to serve the larger needs of society.

In both of these examples, and as a Catholic college in particular, we have found successful ways to communicate to our students the value of religion in society. Despite very different approaches, the two examples represent ways in which curricular and co-curricular opportunities unfold. The outcomes for students include a deeper appreciation for persons of different faith traditions and greater understanding of their own Catholic faith and of the ways religion has affected history and continues to influence society. But perhaps the greatest lesson learned has been how one can be personally faithful to one's own religion, deepening one's relationship with God while valuing others. In doing so, our students see the ways in which religion unites us rather than divides us.

JIM COLLINS *is the president of Loras College, an archdiocesan liberal arts college in Dubuque, Iowa. He serves on the executive committee for the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities and on the board of directors for the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities.*

A New Reality

BY LAWRENCE BIONDI



We live in an increasingly secular and superficial world. How can we expect our students to pursue truth, to find God in all things, to lead lives of significance, when reality television stars have become our cultural icons?

While college students seem less likely to embrace religion than they did when I became president of Saint Louis University 25 years ago, I firmly believe that we at Jesuit institutions can reverse this trend, primarily because we do not have to look very far for inspiration. The religious conversion of St. Ignatius Loyola changed the world, and nearly 500 years later his message and his mission still resonate on our campuses and in our communities.

At S.L.U., we communicate the value of religion in many ways. We require all students to take theology courses. We celebrate a Sunday night Mass that draws 1,000 students of varying religious backgrounds. And we structure many service projects in St. Louis and beyond to include faith and reflection, challenging our students to become agents for change. These worthy endeavors are expected at a place like Saint Louis University, of course. To further help students understand the power of religion, sometimes it is necessary to do the unexpected, which, for us, means focusing on other faiths too.

With the hope of nurturing the faith lives of all our students, the campus ministry department works closely with such groups as our Hindu Student Community, Muslim Student Association and S.L.U. Jews, as well as religious leaders and ministers of different faiths from the external community.

A newly chartered Interfaith Alliance, created by students, develops programs that build bridges and encourage understanding. The student founders consciously connect with others of diverse religious backgrounds and find common ground by performing service projects and going on retreat together. I am immensely proud of these students and the example they set. I am also aware that the university could do more to foster interfaith dialogue and interreligious cooperation. I believe all Catholic colleges and universities must do a better job of reaching out to and serving non-Catholic students. If Catholicism is to thrive in these increasingly secular and superficial times, we must not be afraid to stand up for all religions.

Efforts to further our connection with other faiths do not make us any less Catholic or Jesuit. Quite the contrary. It is our charge and our responsibility as Jesuit institutions of higher education to help shape a world of depth and dignity that celebrates all faith traditions. And when we do, we rise to the challenge of St. Ignatius to combat superficiality and secularism as we inspire our students to seek substance and to actively live their faith, whatever it may be.

Now that is a reality worth watching.

LAWRENCE BIONDI, S.J., *is president of Saint Louis University, a major research institution.*

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AMERICA'S NAVY

A GLOBAL FORCE FOR GOOD

ART | CHRISTOPHER EVAN LONGHURST

A SCULPTURE SPURNED

When modern art meets religion

The city of Rome is preparing to unveil for the second time a controversial public sculpture by an acclaimed modern artist, Oliviero Rainaldi. His "Conversations," a 16-foot-tall bronze statue of Blessed John Paul II, was completed in time to commemorate what would have been the pope's 91st birthday (May 18, 2011). The four-ton work was installed last spring in the Piazza Cinquecento in front of a bustling train station. Rainaldi's work is unprecedented: it is the first time a statue of any pope has been erected in a public space in the city of Rome.

But the public panned it. It lacked physical likeness, people said. Worse, the papal zucchetto (or skull cap) made the figure appear bald, and passers-by said it resembled Benito Mussolini. Roman citizens, visitors and critics disliked the "unfavorable representation" of one of the world's great leaders. So the sculpture has been concealed for months behind a high wooden fence, as it undergoes "renovation." The proposed completion date is May 2012.

Though many people still prefer the idealized naturalism of 19th- and 20th-century art, their insistence on physical resemblance obscures the underlying issue: How can the public appreciate modern art and the manner in which modern artists express meaning beyond, and even without, figurative representation? That is the question. Whatever "improvements" may result from the city's current intervention and the artist's modest modification of his work, that public conversation is worth conducting. The public and the art world ought to reflect jointly on the relationship between modern art and religious subject matter, which have been at odds for quite some time. When the ceiling and front wall of the Sistine Chapel were unveiled, Michelangelo had critics, too.

So what is the significance and role of modern art for religion?

For one thing, a modern religious

"Conversations," a statue of Blessed Pope John Paul II in Rome, Italy.

CNS PHOTO/TONY GENTILE, REUTERS

work may reveal a meaning deeper than can be initially seen in form or content. The vital nature of modern art is a kind of prophetic realization. Modern art is not bound to create realistic or idealized portraiture; it is not interested in figurative beauty or the sentimental. Rather, modern art has replaced the post-Kantian idea of art as the contemplation of beauty with the idea of art as social communication. This does not justify poor execution. Art must still be art.

"Conversations" pushes the boundaries of papal portraiture. The essence of Rainaldi's work is social dialogue; its focus is on symbolic communication. To put it a different way, the artist communicates the meaning of human existence as "relatedness." In this work Rainaldi has mirrored a sensitive 21st-century person. The artist has captured a human love finding its true meaning not in self-expression but in dialogue; not in the individualism of a pope but in the universal charisma of one in relation to all creation. This work shows the embodiment of the human person's social and spiritual nature, hence the title "Conversations."

"Conversations" is essentially a postmodern work—existential, minimalist, conceptual and abstract. In the original work, as the pope's head leans forward, his eyes are cast down toward the ground to where his mantel or cloak lies wide open. This suggests a gathering in, like the outstretched arms of a loving father, protective and caring for his children. That immense space inside the pope's mantle is an invitation to all. The artist fashioned no hands or feet to distract the observer from the universal embrace.

Who could have gazed upon this bronze work and forgotten the historic moment when Pope John Paul II hid a child in his own mantel, or those occasions when he spontaneously embraced a child? These gestures, redolent of the pope's life, combine with monumental force in Rainaldi's work to symbolize the strength of character of the leader of the Catholic Church. "Conversations" rendered relationship ever present—relationship to God, humanity and the world.

The work also initiated a dialogue with its audience through the gesture of self-emptying. The pope, in imitation of the *kenosis* of Christ, empties himself to embrace humankind. In this sense Rainaldi's work renders its most sensitive and theological reading.

How does an artist sculpt acceptance and openness to all? A collective embrace? How does he or she express greatness of personality, human stature or a magnanimous soul? How does an artist capture in bronze a conversation, a dialogue with God, with humanity and society? Rainaldi has achieved these feats, despite unfavor-

able interpretations by his audience.

When "Conversations" is unveiled again, despite any shortcomings in the artist's techique, the public would do well to reconsider the role of modern art in society and how issues concerning human existence may be resolved or examined in art.

Already, Rainaldi's original "Conversations" has awakened the city of Rome, which does not conform to any particular style of art but embraces them all—from the ancient to the present. Perhaps the second unveiling of "Conversations" will reassure the public of Rome's timeless and unerring eye for talent.

Rainaldi's artwork would then join the city's other modernist masterworks—Arnaldo Pomodoro's "Sphere Within a Sphere" (1990) at the Vatican's Cortile della Pigna; Igor Mitoraj's doors of the Basilica of Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri (2005) and Richard Meier's church of Nostra Pater Misericordioso (2000) at Tor Tre Teste. Then "Conversations" would feel at home in a city as modern as it is old.

CHRISTOPHER EVAN LONGHURST *is a theologian and art critic whose specialty is the study of theological aesthetics. He works as a docent at the Vatican museums and papal basilicas of Rome.*

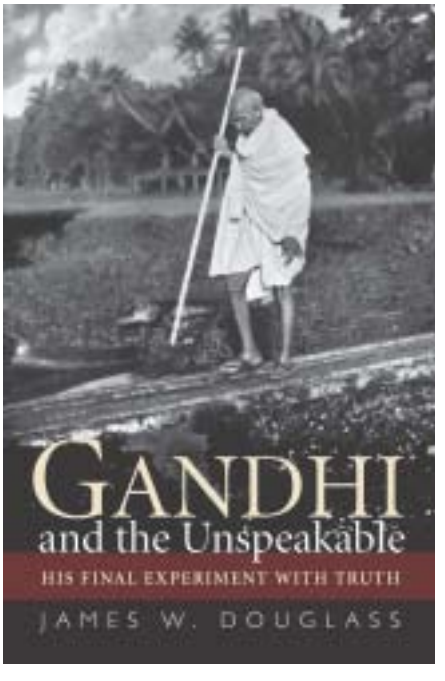
BOOKS | DREW CHRISTIANSEN

DEATH OF A PEACEMAKER

GANDHI AND THE UNSPEAKABLE

His Final Experiment With Truth

James W. Douglass
Orbis Books.158p $24



Nefas, literally "unspeakable," is a Latin word for evil. It is a heavy word, weightier than *malum*, the term for a garden-variety moral wrongdoing. It is an offense against the sacred, a sacrilege in the sense of a ritual violation, but even more in the sense of a violation of the divine, an offense against Goodness itself. It was in this sense that Thomas Merton wrote in *Raids on the Unspeakable* of the crimes of the national security state.

James W. Douglass, a scholar and friend of Merton, also applied the concept, in his book *JFK and the Unspeakable*, a provocative view of the Kennedy assassination, to the American national security state. His latest book, *Gandhi and the Unspeakable*, centers around the Mahatma's assassination in 1948. But its true focus is the hostility of the violent Hindu nationalist movement, the Organization of National Volunteers, known in the West by its Hindi initials, R.S.S., which for 40 years opposed Gandhi's nonviolence and, before it finally succeeded, attempted to assassinate him numerous times, even as it penetrated the nascent Indian state.

When we think of Gandhi's adversaries, we can name the South African colonials whose mistreatment of Indians he first opposed, certainly the British Raj, against which he campaigned for 30 years, and perhaps Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the Muslim leader who forced the partition of Pakistan and India; but we seldom think of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, the ideologue, political strategist and intellectual author of Gandhi's murder. As early as 1906, after Savarkar organized the assassination of the British official William Curzon Wyllie, Gandhi outed the militant, charging that the assassin was "mad" with the idea of liberation by assassination that Savarkar had fomented. The assassin, he chided, "was egged on to do this thing by the half-digested reading of worthless writings."

Three years later, Gandhi debated Savarkar using the Indian epic *The Ramayana* as a common text. Gandhi saw the story as "a vision of suffering for the truth." In nonviolence, he professed, Indians were already free of the domination of empire. For his part, Savarkar drew from the epic the lesson of victory through violence. Rama, he argued, established his ideal kingdom only after slaying Ravana, the oppressor. For 40 years Savarkar and Gandhi sparred. At the same time, Savarkar schemed to eliminate the Mahatma, because he regarded Gandhi's *satyagraha* (active nonviolence) as corrupting Hindu India's martial spirit, weakening it for its conflict with Islam.

The Unspeakable, however, held in its power not just Savarkar and the R.S.S. It included the police and security apparatus, which failed to protect Gandhi despite ample advance evidence of a plot; the courts which let Savarkar go free; members of the government sympathetic to the R.S.S.; and even leading disciples, like Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Vallabhbhai Jhaverbhai Patel, compromised by their ascent to political

power. The ultimate betrayal, of course, came later, with India's rise as a nuclear power with its own national security state. Douglass assembles the record of weakness, malice and treachery with the help of a late (1970) judicial re-investigation of the murder and voluminous studies prepared by Gandhi's heirs in recent years.

Even in the darkest hours, there are moments of light, above all the conversion of Shaheed Suhrawardy, the Muslim chief minister of Bengal, who had abetted his co-religionists in expulsions and massacres of Hindus in Calcutta during the riots surrounding partition. When the minister sought Gandhi's help to return peace to the city, Gandhi challenged him, "The old Suhrawrdy will have to die," he told him, for the two to work side by side so that Muslims and Hindus might live together in peace.

In the months remaining before Gandhi's death, he and Suhrawdry labored together to still the rioting in the rest of India; and Suhrawardy served as an intermediary to Jinnah, attempting to reconcile the Pakistani leader to the idea of a united India. In a long speech the assassin, Nathuram Godse, who on Jan. 30, 1948, had shot Gandhi three times in the chest, cited at his trial the wrongness of Gandhi's "befriending an enemy such as Suhrwardy" as a justification for the assassination. "The enemy," he pleaded, "should be killed."

Gandhi and the Unspeakable is a short book, but it carries a profound lesson about the evil that feeds the politics of violence, reaching from rioting crowds in the streets to the councils of leaders preparing for war. But it offers a deeper lesson still about the godly power to love the enemy as children of the one God. Douglass, who in *The Nonviolent Cross* first celebrated the Second Vatican Council's critique of war and its message of peace, here, by making evil so palpable, argues the case for religiously inspired nonviolence as persuasively as he ever has.

DREW CHRISTIANSEN, S.J., *is editor in chief of* ***America****.*

CECILIO MORALES

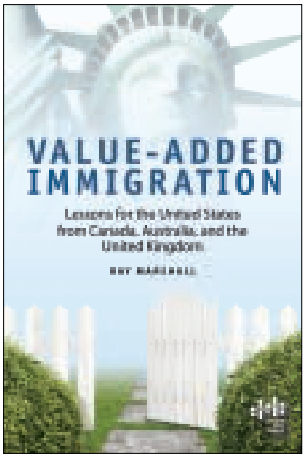
GLOBAL MOVEMENTS

VALUE-ADDED IMMIGRATION

Lessons for the United States from Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom

By Ray Marshall
Economic Policy Institute. 248p $15.95 (paperback)

Although the moving poem by Emma Lazarus at the foot of the Statue of Liberty envisions "huddled masses yearning to breathe free" at New York harbor, immigration to the United States has historically been more about the push and pull of jobs than about lofty ideals. Indeed, specialists are beginning to tell us that during what some call the Lesser Depression of 2007–9, an actual reduction of immigration, with or without visas, took place, just as happened in the 1930s.



These economic factors have for too long been ignored in U.S. immigration policy, argues Ray Marshall, secretary of labor in the Carter administration, who proposes policies that are "compatible with the value-added principle that foreign workers should complement and not compete with domestic workers." Where is such a principle applied? Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom.

Marshall, now an economics professor at the University of Texas at Austin, tells the reader that Canada and Australia, with nearly twice the share of foreign-born individuals as the United States and a similar history as nations of immigrants, have a much smaller unauthorized ("illegal") foreign workforce, as does Britain with about the same share of foreign-born workers.

Granted, Australia and Britain are islands and Canada's only land border is with an even more prosperous country, so at least some of the credit for these countries' relatively greater success at controlling the flow of immigrants should go to geography. Still, the three countries' differing paths focused on "importing more skilled workers relative to less-skilled and family-based immigrants" have yielded intended results.

Australia and Canada began—as did the United States—with large empty spaces that demanded to be filled by immigrants without distinction. Australia and Canada encouraged the addition of people of British stock, while the United States drew from a broader pot of northwestern Europeans.

In 1967 Canada replaced its immigration system based on family ties and national origin with a points-based system that took into account education, language skills, experience in skilled occupations and the applicant's actual job prospects (including possession of a job offer). Five years later, the Ottawa government ran a very broad legalization program that drew most stealth immigrants out into the open, with documented sta-

tus. During recessions, Canada continued to accept "high levels of immigration" (250,000 entrants or more a year) based on the idea that the long-term benefits of immigration stability outweigh short-term drawbacks.

Australians had seen themselves as "a European outpost in the Asia-Pacific region whose citizens and leaders were highly motivated to avoid being inundated by migrants from their heavily populated Asian neighbors," Marshall writes. This is thinking similar to that behind the first U.S. law limiting entry to the United States, which was designed to exclude Chinese immigrants.

Australia replaced "whites-only" policies with a points system designed to attract highly skilled workers, inventors and entrepreneurs from Asia and elsewhere. Policymakers down under also opted for enabling higher wages to draw Australians to worker-hungry occupations and a Working Holiday Maker program that drew young, relatively well-educated foreigners to spend between six months and a year working in Australia.

Until the 1990s, Britain had a "zero net immigration" policy that allowed in just enough people to offset continuing emigration. Economy-based policy had to wait until the Blair government (1997-2007), which expressly borrowed from Australia and Canada by shifting to an employment-based system in a bid to overcome "pressing shortages" in education, welfare and health care occupations and in 2001 to a points system to encourage skills-based immigration in other fields.

That would have been the end of Britain's story, Marshall writes, except for two unexpected developments. First was the flood of immigration after former Soviet-bloc countries joined the European Union in 2004. (The Polish presence alone, a U.K. sociologist explained to me, has transformed Catholicism into the single largest denomination in Britain for the first time since Henry VIII.) Second were the race riots in Bradby, Burnley and Oldham and the 2005 jihadist attacks on London's transportation system. In response, Prime Minister David Cameron has attacked British and European multiculturalism as recently as 2011.

The reader will be well rewarded with Marshall's distillation of "seven lessons" for the United States drawn from this triad of policy twists and turns, mostly because they point to a new consensus that departs from the rhetoric of the past. One of Marshall's proposals—a nonpartisan appointed commission to adjust policy based on economic data—was earlier floated by the Migration Policy Institute. More novel, Marshall demands that policymakers "refuse to permit the importation of foreign workers to substitute for the education and training of American workers," almost as if he were challenging U.S. labor protectionism at a union hall.

CECILIO MORALES *has covered federal policy as a journalist in Washington, D.C., since 1984. He is currently executive editor of the Employment and Training Reporter.*

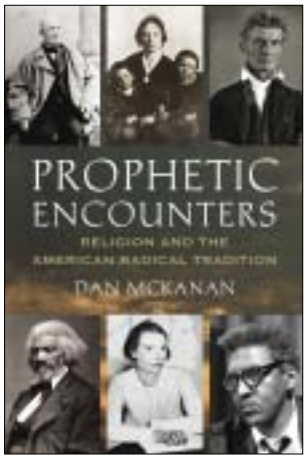
OLGA BONFIGLIO

FROM THE MARGINS

PROPHETIC ENCOUNTERS
Religion and the American Radical Tradition

By Dan McKanan
Beacon Press. 320p $34.95

Speaking to the tradition of religious radicalism, Dan McKanan, the Ralph Waldo Emerson Unitarian Universalist Association Senior Lecturer at Harvard Divinity School, offers a history of the relationships be-tween religion and movements for social change in America.



McKanan argues that religious practices, ideas and institutions are at the heart of a continuous tradition of American radicalism. Radicalism, he believes, embodies a deep faith in the human capacity to transform the world, and it has always been intertwined with the religious practices of Christians, Jews, Buddhists, orthodox believers, humanist heretics and pagans. While not offering a complete history of American radical history, the author aims to "highlight important religious threads within the fabric of the Left."

McKanan looks at some of the greatest victories of the American left, from the abolition of slavery during the Civil War to the elimination of racial segregation during the Civil Rights era, and shows how early radicals were striving to create God's Kingdom on earth. From Martin Luther King Jr. to Dorothy Day and Starhawk, McKanan looks at the prophetic encounters of those American radicals who have worked to extend the revolutionary ideals of liberty, equality and solidarity to all people.

A most interesting chapter is "Encountering the City," which illustrated a new wave of concern in the late 1800s, when a growing urban population was leading to increased social problems of poverty

and alcoholism. It likewise produced new movements that promoted industrial workers' rights, child labor laws, women's rights and civil rights for African-Americans.

Religious radicals emerged to generate a new theology that asked, "What is meant by following Jesus?" which focused on social rather than individual salvation. This Social Gospel inspired settlement houses, church institutions, denominational social justice agencies and ecumenism.

Jane Addams's Hull House in Chicago, for example, helped poor, illiterate immigrants adjust to their new society; and the settlement house movement provided a springboard for interfaith cooperation on such issues as public health, racial justice and clean city government. It also promoted government action to deal with the plight of the poor.

Institutional churches formed social clubs for young people and African-Americans, and they attacked problems of "police collusion." The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People formed from one of these clubs an alliance with W. E. B. DuBois's call for full civil rights for African-Americans. Racial justice, however, would not go far in the white community, especially in the South, where the Jim Crow laws re-created an oppressive society not seen since before the Civil War.

From this heady time also dates the split between the religious and secular as some radicals aimed to reform government policy through socialist agendas of cooperative management of industries, comprehensive social insurance, public jobs programs, progressive income taxes, political and economic equality for women and African-Americans and an end to lynching.

These reforms lasted until they were met by the forces of the right-wing conservatism first articulated by the anti-tax, anti-Communist ideology of Barry Goldwater and the anti-gay, anti-feminist fundamentalist Jerry Falwell. Radicals turned to a more globalized agenda of injustice as Reagan administration policies beat up on little countries like El Salvador and Nicaragua and advanced nuclear weapons proliferation to overwhelm the Soviet/Communist menace. The radicals responded with Sanctuary, demonstrations against the School of the Americas, Plowshares, anti-apartheid, Christian Peacemaker Teams and environmental movements that served up statements, pledges and acts of civil disobedience.

Left-wing radicals were also challenged by the Moral Majority and the Christian Coalition, which used grassroots organizing to advance a political and social agenda that advocated anti-abortion reform, renewal of family values and the mistrust of secularists from the left. Rabbi Michael Lerner, editor of Tikkun magazine, and Jim Wallis, editor of Sojourners, attempted to reintroduce religion into the radical left and to be true to its social agenda. They attracted mostly college-educated baby boomers.

It was Jesse Jackson, however, in his run for the presidency, who made the greatest impact as he resonated with disenfranchised Rust Belt workers and small farmers as well as identity groups that had built up movements during the 1970s. As Wallis said of him, Jackson's Rainbow Coalition created "a new coalition for change which crossed the boundaries of race, class and issues."

Where is radicalism going in the 21st century in the wake of the fall of Communism in 1989, the trauma of Sept. 11, 2001, the decline of the American empire, growing globalization and dominance by corporate entities, the reduction of resources and the increasing dangers of climate change? McKanan says it's too soon to tell. In looking over history, however, he makes this claim:

> American radicalism has endured because it has never been thoroughly defeated and because it has never completely triumphed. We are still living in the age that began in 1776, still trying to discern whether new institutions would better serve the core values that are cherished by almost all Americans.

The hope he sees for more universal change is in the "interpersonal practices of encounter" currently exemplified by community gardens, farmers' markets, volunteers from out-of-town who help people rebuild their lives in devastated places like New Orleans and island nations facing flooding from climate change. He calls these meeting grounds "sacred space," which calls on a "power that has been known variously as spirit, mana, God." They are rooted in the 19th century, when congregations and local religious communities were often the base for American radicals. "Congregations gave birth to the voluntary societies, agitating newspapers, experimental communities and third parties that were unreservedly committed to radicalism," he writes.

While the author's premise is interesting and compelling, the execution is dry, academic and encyclopedic. The book reads like a catalog and sometimes distracts from the author's point.

Today's radicals, however, may be inspired and urged onward by exploring the diverse religious traditions of radical movements through history. *Prophetic Encounters* invites them to follow the path of their predecessors and continue to encounter one another deeply, "glimpse the face of the divine, and change the world."

OLGA BONFIGLIO *is a freelance journalist, a contributor to The Huffington Post and the author of* Heroes of a Different Stripe: How One Town Responded to the War in Iraq.

LETTERS

Inexpert Witness

Re "Stand Your Ground," by the editors (4/16): Nobody really knows what happened that night in Sanford, Fla., yet you assert that Trayvon Martin's offense was "to be a black youth delivering a bag of Skittles." The editors do not concede that there is conflicting "testimony" floating around out there.

Their journalistic transgression might not rise to the level of bearing false witness, but they should be careful. Any time we think we know what took place, and haughtily hold to it, we are being at best shortsighted and at worst actually sinful. Usually penance comes in the form of being proved wrong to one extent or another and feeling properly foolish. This case might be a rare exception, but let's see. The morality still holds in any case.

PETER M. BLASUCCI
North Baldwin, N.Y.

Quick-Drawn Conclusions

Concerning "Stand Your Ground": Debate over gun control misses the heart of the issue. If both sides can cite examples of how arming and disarming citizens have led to safer, less violent societies, then perhaps we're examining the wrong issue here.

Maybe the common factor that unites regions with lower violent crime rates is not gun control or the lack thereof but the mentality that leads to these tragedies, a mentality connected with economics, race and an altogether too American belief that the quickest solution is the best solution. Both sides seem to be guilty of a similar error. They both think the answer to the problem of violent crime lies in the question of what to do with the guns. At best, their convictions are inadequate solutions to a much deeper question.

EMILY TABER
Spalding, Neb.

Grenade Launcher, Anyone?

Re "Stand Your Ground": The Supreme Court has made clear that the Second Amendment does not speak to public safety or to "rationality." It has concluded that it is a pure, individual right and that the state cannot restrict gun ownership merely because the preponderance of statistical and empirical evidence indicates that the proliferation of guns, particularly handguns, increases violence in crime.

Of course, to interpret the Second Amendment in that way is to say that the qualifying phrase about a "well-regulated militia" has no meaning whatsoever. It also raises questions about other regulations. If handguns cannot be restricted, why should fully automatic weapons be outlawed? What about a nice rocket-propelled grenade launcher?

JOHN BRUNSON
Manassas, Va.

Belonging Matters

Concerning "Where You Belong," by Peter Feldmeier (Word, 4/16): The longer I am in this church, the more I realize how important community is to our (and my) faith. Rarely have I met a person who left the church because of dogma or doctrine. They usually left because of what Father, Sister or "those people" did or didn't do. Belonging is the crux of the church and our faith.

(REV.) CHRIS WELCH
Hancock, N.Y.

Revolving Roman Doors

In his review of the book *The Pope Who Quit* ("Celestine's Prophecy," 4/16), Paul Moses says that Celestine V was "the first and only pope to do so." He was neither.

The first pope to resign was Pontian, in 235 after the Roman emperor Maximus Thrax deported him to the "island of death" in Sardinia. He resigned to allow a successor to assume the church's leadership as soon as possible.

Then there was Benedict IX. A book about him might be even more fascinating than the one about Celestine. As J. N. D. Kelly says in *The Oxford Dictionary of Popes*, "He was the only pope to hold office, at any rate

de facto, for three separate spells." At the end of his second "spell" in 1045, he resigned in favor of his godfather, John Gratian, after receiving a huge sum of money from him. His godfather was then elected pope and took the name Gregory VI.

JOHN FINK
Indianapolis, Ind.

Redemptive Grace

Re "Of Many Things," by James Martin, S.J. (4/9): The faith experience of Walter Ciszek, S.J., was not simply one of endurance; he did not simply survive his torture in Lubyanka and his 20 years in Siberian labor camps. Instead, Father Ciszek had a profound conversion experience while in Lubyanka that led to a life of extraordinary grace under the worst of circumstances. That evidence of the Holy Spirit, in my opinion, is what informs the cause for his beatification.

At the Jesuit Center in Wernersville, Pa., I prayed at Father Ciszek's grave for insight into the kind of redemptive grace he experienced. I wanted to know, to feel God in the way that Walter Ciszek and Ignatius and Thomas More and all the rest had felt him, to become more saintly in my own life. And I believe absolutely and completely that Father Ciszek was with me in the spiritual exercises and has been with me ever since. I can't speak to the process that the church will follow in evaluating Father Ciszek, but in my heart and soul, I know that Walter Ciszek is a saint.

JEFFREY D. SEDLACK, M.D.
Belfast, Me.

Incarnational Fulfillment

My thanks to Gerald O'Collins, S.J., and to **America** for his superb article, "Our Risen Selves" (4/9). I think it represents speculative theology in the richest sense: both insightful and conducive to meditation. The one further suggestion I would make is to tie Christ's Incarnation and Resurrection even closer. Resurrection is the fulfillment of Incarnation: the consummation of the flesh-taking, the embodiment of the eternal Son of God.

(REV.) ROBERT IMBELLI
Boston, Mass.

Present Passion

I watched the video tour of Jerusalem and the Via Dolorosa by James Martin, S.J., on **America**'s Web site (americamagazine.org/video). I now look forward to a video of his time in the West Bank, where the present day suffering of Christ continues in the modern Palestinian Christians (and Muslims, too.) Our time in the Holy Land, but especially in the West Bank, opened our eyes to the violence and injustice our country supports. We trust that **America** will continue its excellent coverage of the present day Passion.

MARY RYAN-HOTCHKISS
Portland, Ore.

Spirit Lifting

Getting older, becoming sick and now living with symptoms that will last until I pass away, I wasn't sure I wanted to take "this body" with me anywhere. After reading "Our Risen Selves," however, my heart was gladdened with the thought of having a full history of communication with me and "seeing" others in full communication with God and others. The joy I have knowing my everyday actions are in dialogue with the world and with God and that I am living an imprint of historical sense, truly lifts my spirit and my soul. Living in the now and becoming who I am is a wonderful spiritual gift.

EILEEN COUGHLAN KRIECHBAUM
Faribault, Minn.

To send a letter to the editor please use the link that appears below articles on **America**'s Web site, www.americamagazine.org, or send letters to **America**'s editorial office (address on page 2) or by e-mail to: letters@americamagazine.org.

"Labradoodle sounds wimpy. I'd prefer that you just say I'm a hybrid."

CARTOON BY HARLEY SCHWADRON

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Where Is the Lord?

ASCENSION (B), MAY 20, 2012

Readings: Acts 1:1-11; Ps 47:2-9; Eph 4:1-13; Mk 16:15-20

"He was lifted up, and a cloud took him from their sight" (Acts 1:9)

When speaking of the first cosmonaut in space, Nikita Khrushchev declared, "Gagarin flew into space, but didn't see any God there." The story goes that at the time, a man asked his grandson, a young priest, why God was not in fact encountered, especially since the Bible itself says Jesus ascended right up there into the sky. His clergyman grandson responded, "Grandpa, when the Bible talks about Jesus ascending into the sky, this is a spatial metaphor for the transcendentality of the divine."

"Oh, I see," said his grandfather. "So you're saying those danged Ruskies just didn't fly high enough."

Thus are the typical results of good theology mixed with bad pastoral practice.

There is a problem in expressing the theological meaning of the Ascension. Put simply, how do you speak historically about something that eludes the physical categories on which history depends? The answers the Evangelists would give include "freely!" This is most assuredly the case with Luke. In his Gospel, Luke says that Jesus ascended on Easter evening at Bethany. But in Acts, the same Luke tells us that Jesus ascended from Mt. Olivet 40 days after the resurrection. In our Gospel reading for today, Mark suggests that the ascension took place on Easter evening from the upper room.

PETER FELDMEIER *is the Murray/Bacik Professor of Catholic Studies at the University of Toledo.*

What seems obvious is that the empty tomb is fact and that the disciples experienced powerful, overwhelming experiences of the risen Lord. This raised Christ, however, was also profoundly different. Mary Magdalene did not recognize him until he called her by name (Jn 20:16); other disciples both worshiped him and doubted at the same time (Mt 28:17). The raised body is a mystery, Paul insists. And to anyone who tries to figure it out, his inelegant response is, "You fool!" (1 Cor 15:36). It is also obvious that the disciples' direct, palpable experience of the risen Lord became more indirect. Acts describes this latter period as having happened after 40 days, symbolic of a holy period. He was "lifted up" into heaven, much like incense, prayers and sacrifices rising to God.

Now that the Lord is at the right hand of the Father, is he no longer with us? No, he is still with us. We even see in the Gospel today that after the ascension "the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word through accompanying signs." One tradition has Jesus needing to leave in order to send the Holy Spirit (Jn 16:7), while another seems to blur the two: "the Lord is the Spirit" (2 Cor 3:17). The confusion comes precisely because we are dealing with a reality that eludes tidy concepts.

I take the truth of the Ascension to be that the Lord Jesus has gone cosmic. He is not isolated by time and space as he was when he walked the roads of Palestine: "Even if we once knew Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know him no longer" (2 Cor 5:16). For Christ now reconciles all things to himself that he may be "all and in all" (Col 1:20; 3:11).

The feast of the Ascension is not about getting the historical facts down, as they themselves reside in utter mystery. What is important is engaging the reality of the Ascension. That Christ is no longer with us "according to the flesh" allows us to know him widely, from the indwelling in our souls to the life and sacraments of the church to the breadth of the universe.

Today we celebrate the lordship of Jesus Christ as one who has penetrated the whole universe and holds all things in his love. He is there when the Muslim bows to pray. He is there when the scientist pursues a cure. He delights with a child who laughs, and he guides a senior in her wisdom. He is "all and in all."

PETER FELDMEIER

PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

- Imagine Christ permeating every atom of the universe.
- Where do you see Christ most clearly in the world?
- Where is the risen Christ clearest in your life?

ART: TAD DUNNE

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Ordained Lutheran Pastor and Author, President & Founder of The Brick Wall2, Inc.
Living an Authentic Spiritual Life: Lessons from the End of Life that Inform, Change, and Give Us Hope (1 credit or audit)

Rev. Luigi Zanotto, M.C.C.J. - (July 16-19, morning/evening choices)
Pastor of St. Lucy's Parish in Newark, Author and International Consultant on Catechetics, Secretary of the Mexican Bishops' Biblical Commission
Catolico! Conoce la Biblia!: Ven y Aprende a Interpretarla
(Catholic! Know the Bible!: Come and Learn to Interpret It)

Retreats

Twilight Retreat
Tuesday, July 10, 3 pm to 8 pm (includes light supper)
The Gift & Challenge of Aging
Brother Romeo Bonsaint, S.C., Ph.D., and **Brother John Hamilton, C.F.X.**
Co-Directors of Resources in Spiritual Formation, Danvers, Massachusetts

Morning or Evening Retreat
Wednesday, July 11, 9:30 am to 12:30 pm or 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm
"Where Belief Meets Science - The Power of the Brain to Connect to Your Spirituality and Enrich Your Life"
Dr. Charlotte Tomaino - Neuropsychologist and Author of *Awakening The Brain– The Neuropsychology of Grace*

Retreat
Saturday, July 14, 9 am to 2 pm (includes lunch)
Forgiveness and Unfinished Business...Healing and Growth for the Journey of Life!
Brother Loughlan Sofield, S.T.
Missionary Servant of the Most Holy Trinity and Senior Editor of *Human Development* magazine

Saturday Retreat for the Hispanic Community
Saturday, July 14, 9 am to 3 pm
The History of the People of Israel as a Starting Point in Reading and Interpreting Scripture
(Tema: La historia del Pueblo de Israel como punto de partida para leer e interpretar la Biblia)
Rev. Luigi Zanotto, M.C.C.J.

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