

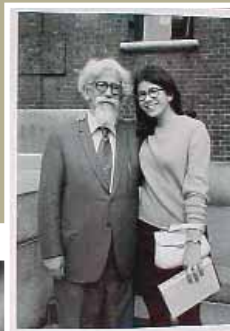
# America

June 18-25, 2007

THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC WEEKLY

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## **An Interview with Susannah Heschel** On the centennial of Abraham Joshua Heschel



### **Climate Ethics**

*Sean McDonagh*

### **The Detention Drama of Illegal Immigrants**

*Shaina Aber*

### **Finding God in Post- Katrina New Orleans**

*Sean Salai*

### **Design for Others**

*Karen Sue Smith*



ONE OF NATURE'S IRONIES is that when it comes to wildflowers, the semi-arid West, even the desert Southwest in springtime, outdoes the green-forested East. I am told the secret is sunlight. The open forests and high meadows of the Sierra Nevada or Colorado's San Juan Mountains seem to sprout color from every crack in the earth. Though my brother Phil, an environmental engineer, tells me he has seen pastures in central New York carpeted with color, I cannot recall ever having found any scene in the East to compare with sights in the West.

In California, gold is spread deep, even in hot, open landscapes, by some 30 varieties of mustard. Legend has it that the early Franciscans, as they moved from mission to mission, seeded mustard along their trail to mark what later was known as the Camino Real. Now mustard is as ubiquitous as lavender in Provence. During a 30-day retreat in 1986, I tried to learn the names of just the varieties that inhabited Tilden Park, a regional preserve on the crest of the Berkeley hills, but I failed miserably.

It was in Yosemite that I first really began to learn my wildflowers from Don Gelpi, our Jesuit wilderness guide. His memory for wildflowers is prodigious. The one exception are whites. Perhaps he found them uninteresting, but his list seems to run out after daisies, white asters and yarrow. I once asked him why. He said, "There are just too many to learn."

For myself, I had special difficulty learning the violet-colored flowers. For that reason, I took great pleasure a few years ago in leading Don to a field of shooting stars, a deep purple flower whose downward facing point is trailed comet-like by four or five skyward trailing leaves. I had prayed a couple of days in solitude alongside a pond adjacent to the meadow. Don was looking for somewhere different to pray. When we arrived at the site, he was delighted. Never had he seen as many shooting stars in one place. He sat there the whole day long, as if in the Elysian fields, praying and journaling.

Even though the brightest flowers often grow in hot, dry soil, wildflowers flourish best in moist land. One September, when several of us took a pre-semester backpacking trip, we were astonished by the gardens of flowers we found at the relatively low altitude of 7,000-8,000 feet. It had been a rainy, El Niño year,

and the snowpack lay on the ground until late summer. The sure sign of the recent melt were the snowplants, red, fat, asparagus-like spears, which make their appearance with the last remaining snow.

In hotter seasons, I have been astonished upon finding an abundance of wildflowers wherever there are seeps and springs. At the end of one backpacking vacation, we put down camp at Red's Meadow, a campground on the eastern side of the Sierra. We were looking forward to soaking in the area's hot springs, but to our surprise we discovered the usually drier eastern slope was a watershed, hosting dozens of varieties of wildflowers. Another summer I was the guest of Dr. Sam and Mary Abu Ghazaleh at their cabin in the Black Hills. The place, well named Seven Springs, was home to an astonishing range of flowers. Most remarkable were the wild roses. I was used to seeing an odd plant or two here or there along a trail, but at Seven Springs dozens and dozens were to be found.

Why do wildflowers draw me so?

Especially considering that my memory frequently fails me, and I return from a walk

to consult a field guide, often to no avail. The color and variety, and sometimes the fragrance, fill the senses. Their combination of fragility and hardiness offer a lesson in existentialism; but they can also instruct us in the tranquil beauty at the heart of things.

One July I was camped with Dan Groody, C.S.C., at Triple Ute Pass in the San Juans near the headwaters of the Rio Grande. The monsoons came three weeks early that year, and it seemed we did much of our retreat inside our tent. Because of the danger of thunderstorms we learned to stick close to camp. One morning I seated myself on a rock ledge just above a slope cascading with color. The choice of a text came naturally: Luke 12:28-29, "the lilies of the field." It turned out to be a memorable hour of prayer, blessed with an extraordinary sense of peace that brought many graces in the hard year to follow.

The tranquility wildflowers embody continues to draw me, as it does others. Whether it is the simple peacefulness of the scene, the gentle existence of the flowers themselves, the quiet that comes in their study or the holy peace for which they can be an occasion, they are balm for the soul.

*Drew Christiansen, S.J.*

## Of Many Things

# America

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106 West 56th Street

New York, NY 10019-3803

Ph: 212-581-4640; Fax: 212-399-3596.

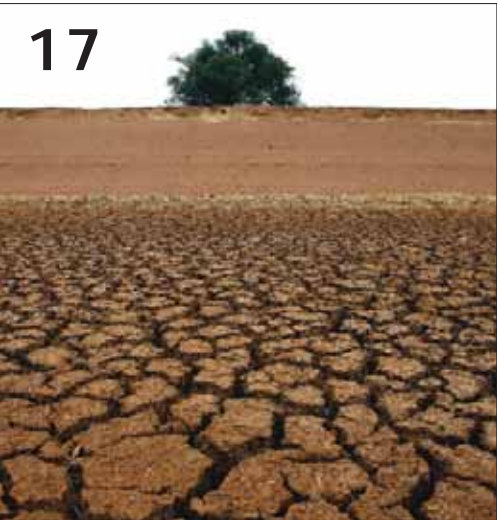
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<b>Articles</b>	
<b>Lovingly Observant</b> <i>Doris Donnelly and John Pawlikowski</i> An interview on Abraham Joshua Heschel	10
<b>Climate Ethics</b> <i>Sean McDonagh</i> Facing the challenge of the 21st century	17
<b>A Brewing Storm</b> <i>Shaina Aber</i> The detention of illegal immigrants	20

<b>Current Comment</b>	4
<b>Report</b> Pastoring Hispanics <i>Karen Sue Smith</i>	5
<b>Signs of the Times</b>	6
<b>Morality Matters</b> 18 Months to Go <i>Maryann Cusimano Love</i>	9
<b>Poem</b> Voice of Our Father <i>Barbara Lydecker Crane</i>	24
<b>Faith in Focus</b> Beckoned by the Desert <i>Alan F. Simek</i> Dating God <i>Daniel P. Horan</i>	23 25
<b>Of Other Things</b> The Grace of Suffering <i>Sean Salai</i>	28
<b>Art</b> Design for Others <i>Karen Sue Smith</i>	30
<b>Book Reviews</b> <i>Thérèse of Lisieux; The Challenge of Human Rights; Letters to Sam</i>	32
<b>Letters</b>	36
<b>The Word</b> Decrease and Increase; Traveling Time <i>Daniel J. Harrington</i>	38



### Negotiating With Iran

The meeting of the U.S. ambassador to Iraq with the Iranian ambassador to Iraq in Baghdad on May 28, under the auspices of the Iraqi prime minister, Nuri Kamal al-Maliki, was an encouraging step in the direction urged by the Baker-Hamilton Iraq Study Group. The meeting's agenda was confined to the war in Iraq and how to improve conditions in that war-torn country. The policies of the Iranian government pose a serious challenge to the United States on another important front. Iran continues to pursue its uranium enrichment program in defiance of the international community. The unexpected detention in Iran of two academics with dual U.S. and Iranian citizenship presented yet another obstacle to wider progress in any bilateral negotiations.

For all of his poisonous bluster calling for the destruction of Israel, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad does not enjoy strong support among his own people, as recent elections have shown. Different factions are at work within Iranian society, so mixed signals in the conduct of international diplomacy are inevitable. But one thing is clear: the posturing of Vice President Cheney and those neoconservative warriors who insist on a provocative display of U.S. military strength in the region promotes a strategy destined for disaster. If this continues, the United States will have learned nothing from the historic blunder that was the preemptive invasion of Iraq in 2003, which turned that country into a breeding ground for Islamic terrorists. Patience in diplomatic negotiations is a far better strategy than military posturing. Patient dialogue promises greater stability in the region by both limiting the dangers of nuclear proliferation and ending the spiral of violence in Iraq.

### The Black Legend

Spanish historians speak of La Leyenda Negra or the Black Legend, a negative version of Spanish history advanced by generations of Anglophile historians magnifying the crimes of imperial Spain and overlooking those of their British adversaries, especially the tyrannical Tudor monarchs. The iconic centerpiece of the legend has always been the Inquisition. Viewers of the Public Broadcasting System's "Secret Files of the Inquisition" during the week of May 9-16, saw an updated version of the legend. Telling the story of the institution from its origins in the persecution of the Cathars in the 13th century, through the infamous Spanish Inquisition and the founding of its Roman counterpart, the series, despite concern for historical accuracy, makes only a faint stab at offering a balanced presen-

tation. The abstract comments of a present-day Vatican official cannot compete with the detailed history and dramatization of what the Catholic Church today regards as sinful behavior committed "in the service of the Truth." Viewers will have no sense, for example, of how for decades both civil and church officials, including popes, opposed the establishment of the Spanish Inquisition and attempted to limit the harm it could do. The series appears to be an instance of PBS's genteel, middlebrow hostility to organized religion. The forthcoming series "A History of Unbelief," to be hosted by Jonathan Miller, who admits to little knowledge of religion, is another example. Believing Americans can take solace in the solid work still being done by Bob Abernethy in his "Religion and Ethics NewsWeekly," though member stations seldom schedule it, as they do miniseries, in prime time.

### Artist, Nun and Chapel

An overflow crowd gathered last month to see a film ("A Model for Matisse") and hear a reading (from *Blue Arabesque*). The event was sponsored by the Fordham Center for Religion and Culture. The filmmaker Barbara Freed met the writer Patricia Hampl there for the first time, but they already had much in common. Both had produced new works focused on the art of Henri Matisse; both had discovered an extraordinary friendship between the artist and a local woman, Monique Bourgeois, who entered his life in 1941 at age 16. She was his night nurse, later became his model, then entered a Dominican convent as Sister Jacques-Marie and was to be his lifelong friend.

Their friendship was full of color, joy, teasing, affection and letters, in which Matisse expressed the spiritual side of his art. The friendship blossomed into the Chapel of the Rosary in Vence (France), which Matisse considered his masterpiece. In the hourlong documentary (readers should insist that their local museums show it), one sees a mature artist, still recuperating from abdominal cancer surgery, cutting out his famous shapes, some of which were made from colored papers painted by Sister Jacques-Marie. The talented nun built a plywood model of the chapel that Matisse used for four years as he tended to every aspect of the design—the ceramic tile glaze, the stained glass window patterns and colors, the tabernacle placement, the stations of the cross, the vestments. He wanted the changing light through the windows to fill the black and white drawings around the room with life. When Sister Jacques-Marie noticed that from inside the chapel, one could see the outside world through the windows, Matisse said, "Of course, you have to pray for them too."

# Pastoring Hispanics

**A**S HISPANICS IN THE UNITED STATES increase in number, they will likely exert more influence on the nation as a whole, and especially on the U.S. Catholic Church. For while Hispanics make up 14.2 percent of the population, they make up more than a third of its Catholics, a percentage expected to increase through immigration. Typically Hispanics are religious: more than eight in ten continue to practice the religion in which they were raised.

That figure and the data reported here come from an important study by the Pew Hispanic Center and the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life. It is called *Changing Faiths: Latinos and the Transformation of American Religion*, and its findings are based on 4,600 telephone interviews. The study explores Hispanics of all faiths and none, yet because more than two-thirds are Catholic, some findings can help observers to understand better what Hispanics look for in religion, what they believe and practice, and how they perceive today's Catholic Church.

Even as the number of Hispanic Catholics has grown, the study finds, nearly one in five have moved in the opposite direction, leaving their parents' faith behind. Most of these Hispanics affiliate with another worshipping community, usually Pentecostal or evangelical, but more than a quarter stop practicing any religion. Of these "seculars," two in three are U.S.-born, English-speaking males (not recent immigrants) with markedly higher levels of education and income than the Hispanic population in general, and they hold liberal views on several specific issues. Among the former Catholics, two-thirds support married men and women becoming priests, and three-fifths disapprove of Catholic restrictions on divorce. These secular Hispanics appear to have assimilated to U.S. culture, and their differences with the church are straightforward.

Divergent views about church teaching, however, do not matter much to Hispanic Catholics who have become evangelicals. While nearly half (46 percent) of evangelical converts disapprove of church restrictions on divorce, for example, only 5 percent said they left the church because of the restrictions. Another four in ten converts agree with the teaching on divorce. Converts to evangelical Christianity also continue to hold at least two very positive views of the Catholic Church: two in three believe the church respects women at least as much as it does men, and three in four believe that the church welcomes immi-

grants. Such positive views did not keep these individuals Catholic, but neither did their differences with church teachings cause them to convert. Since greater percentages of Puerto Ricans convert than any other Hispanic group (nearly one in three), ethnicity may play a role.

Two credible explanations for conversions offer clues about possible pastoral responses. To most Hispanics, worship matters more than issues. Of Catholics who became evangelicals, three in five said they do not typically find the Mass "lively or exciting" (roughly a third gave dissatisfaction with Mass as a reason for converting.) By contrast, nearly three in four Hispanics who practice their Catholic faith said the typical Mass is lively and exciting.

What does "lively and exciting" mean to Hispanic Catholics? For more than half, worship must be charismatic or Spirit-filled. The 54 percent of Hispanic Catholics who call themselves charismatics regularly speak in tongues, evangelize, pray for divine healings and take the Bible literally. Nearly six in ten of them have less than a high school education, and six in ten were born outside the United States. Along with charismatic practices, however, most Hispanic Catholic charismatics retain a strong Catholic identity: they believe in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, regularly pray to Mary and pray the Rosary. It is striking that three in four of all Hispanic Catholics attend Masses in which several factors come together: the language is Spanish, the presider is Hispanic, and the congregation is mostly Hispanic.

SOME HISPANICS LEAVE THE CATHOLIC CHURCH because they are inspired by an evangelical pastor (35 percent), others because of a deep personal crisis (26 percent) or marriage to an evangelical (14 percent). But the former Catholics themselves gave the most plausible explanation: more than eight in ten desired a direct, personal experience of God. Such a desire would be good news, were it not for the heartbreaking inference that they did not experience such an encounter at their local parish. These people are not angry or negative about Catholicism. Rather, they yearn for something deeply spiritual: more of God. While most Hispanic Catholics find the Mass lively and exciting and stay, another group finds worship lacking and, seeking a direct personal experience of God in community worship, quietly go elsewhere. If parishes are to reduce the departure of nearly one in five Hispanics, they will have to meet this spiritual need.

**Karen Sue Smith**

### World Must Boost Funds for AIDS Drugs

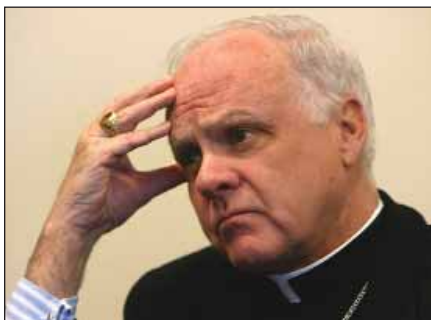
The world community needs to boost its funding to provide antiretroviral drugs to people with H.I.V. in poor countries, a top Vatican official told the U.N. General Assembly May 22. Archbishop Celestino Migliore, the Vatican nuncio at the United Nations, said the apparently huge amount of money needed to bring life-saving drugs to those who cannot afford them would average out to “only \$3 to \$4 per person on the planet.” The fact that only 28 percent of the 7.1 million people get the antiretroviral treatment they need “represents a sorrowful ratio,” he said. Archbishop Migliore spoke during the 61st session of the U.N. General Assembly, which met to follow up on the “Implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on H.I.V./AIDS.” In 2001, governments pledged to help provide universal access to H.I.V. prevention programs, treatment, care and support by 2010.

### Latin American Sisters Rethink Mission and Life

Changes in vocations and in the needs of people in Latin America and the Caribbean are forcing women religious to rethink their mission and community life. Throughout the region, sisters are engaged in traditional work, such as health care and education, but in new ways. Increasingly they also seek “the frontiers, the places where human dignity faces the greatest threats,” said Sister Maria de los Dolores Palencia of Mexico, a member of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Lyon and vice president of the Latin American Confederation of Religious. “We want to be newly attentive to the signs of the times and to needs,” she told reporters during the Fifth General Conference of the Bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean, in which she is participating. Those pastoral frontiers include work among people with AIDS, indigenous people and those descended from African slaves, street children and people with addictions, she said. The need far exceeds the number of sisters. While 43 percent of the world’s Catholics live in Latin America, the

region is home to just 17 percent of the church’s women religious.

### U.S. Must Honestly Assess Iraq



Edwin F. O'Brien

At this stage in the war in Iraq, the United States “must honestly assess what is achievable in Iraq using the traditional just-war principle of ‘probability of success,’ including the probability of contributing to a responsible transition,” said Archbishop Edwin F. O’Brien. The United States and its allies “also have a grave responsibility, even at a high cost, to help Iraqis secure and rebuild their nation,” unless the conclusion is reached that “a responsible transition is not achievable,” he said. The archbishop, who heads the U.S. Archdiocese for the Military Services, made the comments in a Memorial Day pastoral message to Catholic men and women in the U.S. armed forces. He delivered the same message at a packed session on May 25 during the 2007 Catholic Media Convention in Brooklyn.

### Church in Puerto Rico Looks to Future

Caught between two cultures, the Catholic Church in Puerto Rico is regaining its identity and looking to the future. The “great goal” for the church is “to re-evangelize and rekindle the faith of our people,” said Archbishop Roberto González Nieves, O.F.M., of San Juan, the capital. “In Puerto Rico, because of the identity crisis that occurred a little more than a century ago, that re-evangelization is more difficult.” Although Puerto Rico is a U.S. commonwealth, “its deepest roots are Latino,” Archbishop

Gonzalez said. U.S. rule began in 1898, at the end of the Spanish-American War, but indigenous, African and Spanish cultures “shaped its identity for 400 years” and that influence “cannot be undone overnight,” he told Catholic News Service. Issues being discussed at the Fifth General Conference of the Bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean are highly relevant to the church in Puerto Rico, because it has more in common with those regions than with the mainland United States, Archbishop González said.

### More U.S. Catholics Preparing for Ministry

The Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate reports that in 2006-7 it identified more permanent deacon candidates and more students in U.S. lay ecclesial ministry programs than in the previous year. The number of seminarians in graduate theological studies during this past academic year was down slightly. While enrollment was up in college seminaries, it was down in high school seminaries. The biggest change was in the number of people working toward degrees or certificates for lay ecclesial ministry—20,240, or 25 percent higher than reported in 2005-6. CARA, in Washington, D.C., has been tracking U.S. seminary enrollments for 40 years. In more recent years it also has conducted annual surveys of enrollment in deacon and lay ministry formation programs across the country. The results of the latest studies appear in the 2007 edition of the *CARA Catholic Ministry Formation Directory*, due to appear in early June.

### Bishops’ Exhortation to Latin Americans

Bishops from Latin America and the Caribbean voted overwhelmingly to approve a final document calling the region’s Catholics to renew their commitment to discipleship and mission and setting directions for the church in the region for the next 10 to 15 years. “We are saying that being disciples of Jesus Christ means living as he lived,” Bishop Álvaro Ramazzini Imeri of San Marcos,

Guatemala, said. "It obliges us to be more authentic and more radical in our option as church and, in my case, as bishop." The bishops voted 127 to 2, with one abstention, to accept the fourth and final version of the document. Because of problems with the electronic voting system, they did not know the exact wording of some sections of the document until the morning of May 31, when they gathered for the closing session of their 19-day meeting. The final document, which is more than 100 pages long, was not made public. It will be sent to Pope Benedict XVI, who is expected to release it officially in June.

## Ten Years Under China a 'Series of Frustrations'



Joseph Zen Ze-kun

For people in Hong Kong, the first decade under Chinese rule has been "a long series of frustrations," said Hong Kong's Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-kun, S.D.B. "On the surface, everything is as before," Cardinal Zen said in Washington May 30. But, he added, Chinese government authorities "are not keeping their promises." For instance, he said, although universal suffrage is contained in the Basic Law, the miniconstitution that governs Hong Kong until 2047, Chinese officials ruled out direct elections of the Hong Kong chief executive in 2007 and the special administrative region's legislature in 2008. "They are always directed by fear," the

From CNS and other sources. CNS photos.

cardinal said. "They are full of fear about Hong Kong people because we protest" and, "for Communists, anyone who protests is the enemy." In May 1989, while Hong Kong was still under British control, a million residents protested the Chinese crackdown in Tiananmen Square. Hong Kong reverted to Chinese control and became a special administrative region of China in 1997.

## U.S. Efforts to Protect Religious Freedom

The daily news from Capitol Hill is focused on the often-combative process of passing legislation to reform immigration, fund the war in Iraq or even reauthorize the farm bill. But it is possible to look back at another carefully negotiated bill that took a less contentious course. Ten years ago a diverse coalition of religious and human rights organizations and a bipartisan group in Congress worked together to create a system for addressing religious freedom abuses internationally that arguably is doing what it set out to

accomplish. The International Religious Freedom Act, passed by vast majorities in both houses of Congress and signed into law by President Bill Clinton in October 1998, created a multipronged system for promoting religious freedom, including establishing the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom. Nearly 10 years later, some of the people involved in passing the measure point to flaws in how it has worked, but said it has improved the U.S. government's interest in and ability to respond to abuses of religious rights. Tom Farr, a former director of the State Department office charged with implementing the law, said, "There are probably hundreds, maybe thousands of people walking the earth free today because of this law." But Farr, now an author and vice chair of the board of Christian Solidarity Worldwide-USA, an international nongovernmental organization that advocates religious freedom, quickly added a caution. "But has it perceptibly reduced religious freedom abuses in the past 10 years?" he asked. "The answer is it has not."

## Pope Clears Way for Causes of Saints

Approving a series of decrees, Pope Benedict XVI cleared the way for the causes of martyrs. In the decrees issued June 1, he also formally recognized the martyrdom of 188 Japanese Catholics, 127 victims of the Spanish Civil War and an Austrian layman, Franz Jägerstätter, executed for refusing to fight in the German army. Jägerstätter was an Austrian farmer and parish sexton in St. Radegund who was beheaded in Germany, on Aug. 9, 1943, for his stance, leaving behind his wife and their three daughters. Recognition of martyrdom is one of the first steps on the way to beatification.

Bishop Malcolm McMahon, O.P., of Nottingham, England, said: "The extraordinary courage of Franz Jägerstätter, a faithful Catholic, has been an inspiration to many and a powerful witness to peace and nonviolence. In an age of war and violence we urgently need the example of those who use their consciences to make judgments about what is evil—and refuse to take part in it. The recognition of this man's holiness by the church should encourage us all to stand

up for peace, justice and human dignity." With the publishing of the martyrdom decrees, the beatification ceremonies can be scheduled.



A tapestry of St. Marie Eugenie de Jesus Milleret, a 19th-century nun who founded the Religious of the Assumption order in France, hangs from the facade of St. Peter's Basilica during her canonization Mass at the Vatican June 3.

## Voting for Abortion Rights Called Unacceptable

Britain's two cardinals reminded Catholic politicians that it is unacceptable for them to vote for abortion rights.

Cardinals Keith O'Brien of St. Andrews and Edinburgh, Scotland, and Cormac Murphy-O'Connor of Westminster, England, denounced the 1967 Abortion Act on May 31 as the act approaches its 40th anniversary. "I remind them to avoid cooperating in the unspeakable crime of abortion, and the barrier such cooperation erects to receiving holy Communion. I speak most especially to those who claim to be Catholic," he said. "I ask them to examine their consciences and discern if they are playing any part in sustaining this social evil." In a May 31 statement, Cardinal Murphy-O'Connor urged "all Catholics, especially those who hold positions of public responsibility, to educate themselves about the teaching of the church and to seek pastoral advice so that they can make informed decisions with consistency and integrity." He added, "The longstanding tradition of the church teaches that anyone who freely and knowingly commits a serious wrong should approach the Eucharist only after receiving faithfully the sacrament of penance."

## Tucson Diocese Explores Ministry Strategies

The Diocese of Tucson will develop a ministry to homosexuals, Bishop Gerald F. Kicanas said in a column in the diocesan newspaper, *The New Vision*. In the May edition of the paper, Bishop Kicanas said he thinks the church should be doing more to minister to people with a same-sex orientation rather than following the approach he and his priests' council settled upon several years ago. The consensus of those discussions was that ministry to homosexuals was best accomplished at the parish level, through spiritual direction and the sacrament of reconciliation. "I thought then that was a sound approach to ministry," he wrote. "I still think that, but I also now believe we should be doing more." At recent meetings with pastoral leaders and parishioners, he said he heard "that in whatever ministry we ultimately may develop we must challenge any attitudes, language or

actions in the church and in society that demean people of same-sex orientation." He said he also heard "that we need to be clear about the church's moral teaching on homosexuality" and that "it is important that we articulate a positive vision of how a person of same-sex orientation can live in communion with the church and remain faithful in living as a Catholic."

## Former Vatican Radio Officials Win Judgment

An Italian appeals court overturned the convictions in 2005 of two former Vatican Radio officials accused of polluting the environment with electromagnetic waves from broadcasting towers. In a June 4 ruling, the Rome appellate court absolved Cardinal Roberto Tucci, S.J., former president of Vatican Radio's management committee, and Pasquale Borgomeo, S.J., formerly the general director. In May 2005 they were found guilty of the criminal charge of "dangerously showering objects" on residents near the Santa Maria di Galeria transmission center outside Rome and were given suspended 10-day jail sentences. Vatican Radio also was ordered to pay the plaintiffs' legal costs. Vatican Radio has repeatedly defended itself against the charges, saying that even before Italy issued legal limits for electromagnetic emissions, the agency had been adhering to international norms.

## Vatican Documents Show Pius XII Helped Jews

Thousands of Vatican documents demonstrate that Pope Pius XII worked quietly but effectively to help Jews and others during World War II, a top Vatican official said. Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, S.D.B., the Vatican secretary of state, said June 5 that the documentation of papal charity is the most convincing response to the "black legend" that has depicted the late pope as indifferent toward the victims of Nazism. The cardinal said a fair reading of history must recognize "the enormous work of charity that the pope promoted, by opening the doors of seminaries and religious institutes, welcoming refugees and the persecuted, and helping all." Cardinal Bertone made the comments in Rome at the presentation of the book *Pius XII, Eugenio Pacelli: A Man on the Throne of Peter*, by the Italian journalist Andrea Tornielli. The cardinal's lengthy talk came four weeks after the Vatican's Congregation for Saints' Causes declared that the late pope heroically lived the Christian virtues and recommended that Pope Benedict XVI advance Pope Pius' cause for sainthood. The cardinal did not refer directly to Pope Pius' sainthood cause, but he described the pope as a shining example of personal holiness and said his pontificate was "long, fruitful and, in my opinion, heroic."



AN IMAGE TAKEN FROM TELEVISION shows guards pinning a man down during Pope Benedict XVI's weekly audience in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican June 6. The man leapt over a barricade and tried to jump onto the popemobile but was stopped by guards. The 27-year old German was undergoing psychiatric treatment following the incident.



# 18 Months to Go

## ‘Troops will be withdrawing no matter who wins the White House.’

**W**HEN WILL the United States draw down its troops occupying Iraq? In the political showdown between the president and the Congress over the war in Iraq, attention has focused on legislating a specific timetable for troop withdrawal. This issue will be revisited in September, when debate over war funding begins again.

But we already have a timetable for troop withdrawal from Iraq, whether or not the specific language was included in the law. In 18 months we will have a new president. No matter which candidate or political party wins the 2008 presidential election, no one will be as wed to the current policy in Iraq as is this administration. Troops will be withdrawing in 18 months, whoever wins the White House.

There are a number of reasons for this. Republicans want significant troop withdrawals to occur before the fall 2008 elections in order to boost their electoral chances. Democrats want troop withdrawals to show the public that they heard and responded to their electoral mandate in 2004. And practically, the volunteer Army cannot sustain the current operational tempo indefinitely.

The question is not whether the United States will draw down its troops in Iraq, but what we will do in the meantime to help the Iraqi people build a just and sustainable peace in their country. Will we pursue a responsible transition as we go? There is no military solution in Iraq, despite debates over the military surge policy or immediate withdrawal. As

MARYANN CUSIMANO LOVE is professor of international relations at The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., and consultant to the U.S. Catholic bishops' Committee on International Policy.

the occupying force in Iraq, the United States has international legal responsibilities, and withdrawals take time. The gradual draw-down that will occur between these two extremes is the policy space we have. Having unnecessarily and regrettably invaded Iraq, the United States bears the responsibility, legally and morally, to try to do our best by the Iraqi people, not to do what is most politically expedient or will most benefit U.S. candidates, parties and corporations. The Iraqi people have borne the brunt of the U.S. invasion. Currently 3,000 Iraqi civilians are dying each month in the violence—a monthly Sept. 11.

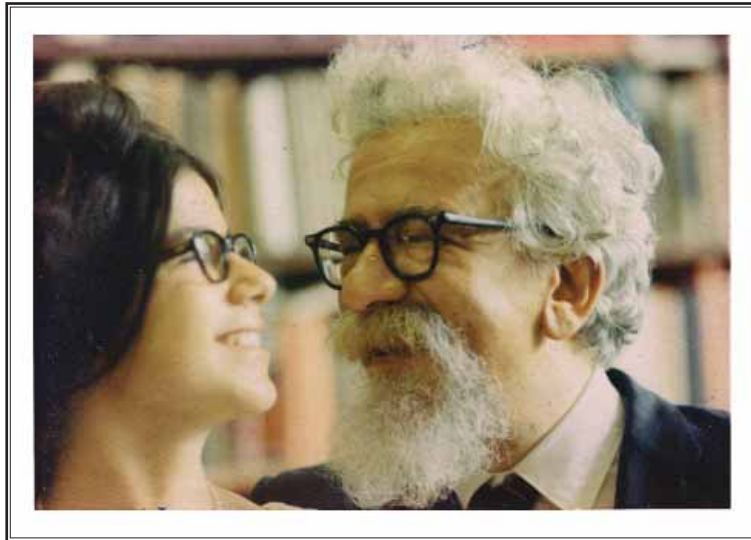
What do the Iraqi people think would be helpful at this juncture? Polling of Iraqis yields a somber picture. They do not trust us. According to a University of Maryland poll and other polls, 80 percent of Iraqis suspect the United States plans permanent military bases in Iraq; 87 percent favor setting a timeline for withdrawal of U.S. forces; 65 percent oppose the presence of U.S. and coalition forces in Iraq. And between 47 percent and 61 percent of Iraqis support the attacks on U.S.-led forces. But only 36 percent of Baghdad residents want U.S. troops to leave now, according to polls by ABC News.

In the four years since invading Iraq, the United States has focused too much on the military and not enough on the political, economic and social requirements for reconciliation and building peace. The list of failures on the part of U.S. leadership is lengthy. De-Baathification stripped the government of trained civil servants and left Sunnis no stake in the current state and every reason to fight. By the U.S. military's own figures, the number of insurgents in Iraq has increased to 70,000 today from between 3,000 and 5,000 in 2004. Of this

70,000 only around 1,000 are Al Qaeda or foreign fighters. The United States spent reconstruction dollars on U.S. contractors instead of giving Iraqis jobs and a stake in their own country, and economic reconstruction moved too slowly and accomplished too little. The United States has focused on training Iraqi police and security forces, but without a moderate, nonviolent power-sharing political center, these will be used in violence to come. Reconciliation and power sharing have not been effectively pursued. Four years after the invasion, there is still no agreement on sharing oil revenue among the factions in Iraq, no progress on new election laws, scheduling provincial elections, disbanding the militias, amending the constitution to address Sunni concerns, increasing Sunni participation in the government and developing a plan of national reconciliation. These failures are all the more regrettable because they were avoidable.

The Catholic Church has been right about Iraq. Prior to the invasion the Vatican and the U.S. bishops cautioned against it. During the invasion and occupation, Catholic Relief Services and others serve the poor, the refugees and internally displaced most at risk, even as our own government abandons the two million refugees and one million internally displaced our invasion has created. After the church's warnings came true, rather than say, "We told you so," the U.S. bishops have been counseling a policy of responsible transition and of political, economic and social reconstruction to build a just and sustainable peace in Iraq and throughout the Middle East. Peace does not happen simply because we wish it. It happens when we do the work of negotiating with warring parties and unsavory characters, when we help refugees so they are not overcome by cycles of conflict, when we strengthen international institutions and coalitions, when we create just, inclusive economic and political orders that give all a stake in the system. The United States must use these next 18 months in Iraq—better than it has used the previous four years—to work with others to create a framework for a just peace.

*Maryann Cusimano Love*



An interview with Susannah Heschel  
on the life and work of Abraham Joshua Heschel

# Lovingly Observant

– BY DORIS DONNELLY AND JOHN PAWLIKOWSKI –

*SUSANNAH HESCHEL, the daughter of one of the foremost 20th-century Jewish thinkers, Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907-72), holds the Eli Black Chair in Jewish Studies at Dartmouth College. Last March she visited Poland to honor Stanislaw Musial, S.J. (1938-2004), a Jesuit of the Southern Poland Province, for his work in Jewish-Christian relations. The interview was conducted there by DORIS DONNELLY, professor of theology and director of the Cardinal Suenens Center at John Carroll University in Cleveland, Ohio, and JOHN PAWLIKOWSKI, O.S.M., professor of ethics and director of the Catholic-Jewish Studies Program of the Bernardin Center at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago.*

## WHAT LED YOU TO ACCEPT *our invitation to Poland?*

My father was born in Warsaw in 1907, one hundred years ago this year, into a family recognized as spiritual nobility in the Jewish world. Because he descended from prominent Hasidic rabbis, even as a child he was regarded as a genius by adults, who would rise when he entered a room. With the rise of Hitler, the world my father knew, the world that had nourished him, disappeared. My father was fortunate to get an American visa in 1939, just six weeks before the Nazis invaded Poland, and he never again returned. I owe my existence to Poland. I wanted very much to come on my father's anniversary and at the same time to honor Father Musial, whom I knew.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SUSANNAH HESCHEL

***Did your father use his visa to come to New York?***

Actually, his first position in the States was at the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. The college had very little money, but they provided the visa, and their invitation saved his life. He arrived in 1940 and it was a very difficult time for him. He earned \$500 a year and lived in a dormitory, where he had a little refrigerator so that he could prepare his own meals because the cafeteria was not kosher. He was lonely, poor, did not know English and was desperately trying to obtain visas for other members of his family and friends. He found his students odd and they found him odd as well. They were also not as well prepared as his students in Germany.

***Did the family he left behind in Europe survive?***

Only those who fled before the war survived. His mother, sisters and other relatives were all murdered.

***How do you suppose he was able to manage the sadness?***

There is a phrase in the Zohar that says only someone with a broken heart is a whole person. It is a very cryptic statement, and one of the interpretations is that when the heart is broken, then the Shekinah, God's presence, comes and fills it.

I also think there are certain qualities of personality that go together with being a religious person, a person who prays. When my father got upset or discouraged, he never held on to a bad feeling. He would move on. He had a capacity to overcome depression and despair.

***You referred to your father's German students...***

My father did his doctoral studies in Germany and also taught in Berlin in both Orthodox and Reform rabbinical schools. He loved Berlin and would have been happy to spend the rest of his life there. But he finished his dissertation on prophetic consciousness just as Hitler came into power. Soon, because he was Jewish, the issue of having his work published—a requirement for getting the doctorate—ran into serious difficulties. Fortunately, the Polish Academy of Sciences in Krakow agreed to publish his dissertation, and by exception it was accepted at the University of Berlin as fulfilling requirements even though it was printed outside Germany.

***Did he stay long in Cincinnati?***

Long enough to meet my mother, Sylvia Straus (1913-

2007), a concert pianist. They fell in love and were married in 1946. She continued her piano studies in New York, and my father accepted a position at Jewish Theological Seminary, also in New York City.

***Were things happier there?***

Not really. At Jewish Theological Seminary, for a long time he was allowed to teach only undergraduate students, those preparing to be teachers, and not the rabbinical students. His field was Jewish theology, which at the time was regarded as unimportant by many members of the faculty. Very

rarely was he offered an *aliyah* to the Torah (the honor of reciting a blessing over the Torah reading) at the seminary's synagogue services, and never in his 27 years there was he asked to deliver a sermon—an honor frequently given to students but not to him. Because of academic politics, he was also not permitted to sit in the front row of the synagogue.

One of his former students, now a rabbi, told me with embarrassment that students read newspapers while Rabbi Heschel was lecturing. They

mirrored the disrespect many of the faculty had for my father. Students even complained when my father cancelled classes to march in Selma; other faculty members routinely rescheduled classes when they had to be away.

It should be said, though, that my father was not singled out for rude treatment. There were other accomplished scholars who also suffered the jealousies and pettiness of academic life. Some left Jewish Theological Seminary. My father was hurt and dismayed, but he stayed.

***It sounds like the classic story of the prophet not honored among his own.***

It is true that the more he was excluded at J.T.S., the more he was invited and honored elsewhere. One important event was Reinhold Niebhu's enthusiastic review of *Man Is Not Alone* (1951) in a Sunday edition of the New York Herald Tribune. Of Abraham Heschel, Niebhu wrote, "It is a safe guess that he will become a commanding and authoritative voice not only in the Jewish community but in the religious life of America." Imagine, my father had experienced an all-out effort in Germany in 1933 to get rid of the Old Testament from the Christian Bible, to make the Bible *Judenrein* (purged of any Jewish influence), and then comes this glorious review!

**Rabbi Heschel Speaks...**

When I was young, I admired clever people. Now that I am old, I admire kind people.

He who is satisfied has never truly craved, and he who craves for the light of God neglects his ease for ardor.

Just to be is a blessing. Just to live is holy.

In a controversy, the instant we feel anger, we have already ceased striving for truth and have begun striving for ourselves.

Wonder rather than doubt is the root of all knowledge.

When it appeared, my parents, in their naïveté, expected calls from colleagues to say “mazel tov” and “congratulations,” but none came. It was their first experience of academic stinginess, and they were shocked. Reinhold Niebhur and my father, however, became very good friends. My father said that no one understood his work better than Niebhur; and Niebhur, in a touching expression of friendship, asked my father to deliver the eulogy at his funeral.

***Your father was also honored by Catholics, isn't that so?***

Yes, yes, he had many friends among Catholics. He was deeply impressed by Cardinal Augustin Bea and Cardinal Johannes Willebrands, both tireless supporters of dialogue with non-Christians. He spoke highly of the Jesuit priest Gustave Weigel and adored the University of Notre Dame's president, Theodore Hesburgh, C.S.C. Notre Dame, among other Catholic colleges, gave my father an honorary degree.

Some of his friendships with Catholics came about because of his involvement with *Nostra*

*Aetate*, the Second Vatican Council's “Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions.” Some bishops insisted that the ultimate conversion of Jews be included in the final version of the document. My father's objection was unequivocal: the phrase had to be eliminated. If faced with the alternative of conversion or death, he said, he would rather go to Auschwitz. I was terrified when I heard him say this. My father met with Pope Paul VI to make his objection clear, and he said many times that he was told after their meeting that the pope took his pen and crossed out the sentence.

Other Catholic friendships came about because of a common, unwavering belief that the Vietnam War was a moral outrage. For my father politics and religion were inextricably connected, and he became an outspoken critic of American foreign policy and the mind-boggling reticence of the religious community to declare the war an unmitigated evil. He said many times that people have a will to be deceived and politicians know how to manipulate that will. The lies of politicians were abhorrent to him; even more was the gullibility of Americans. He could not sepa-

rate religion and politics. Political issues were moral issues, religious imperatives—that was the message I received constantly at home. At a demonstration against the war, someone asked him why he was there. His answer: I am here because I cannot pray. “In a free society, some are guilty but all are responsible” was his mantra; it galvanized the imagination and action of many—Catholics, Protestants and Jews.

My father said that Christians understood his work better than Jews. He had more positive—more intelligent—reception from Christians. My father particularly enjoyed lecturing at Catholic universities. There was such warmth and hospitality, friendship, humor and laughter on these occasions. And often, when he returned to his room, there would be a bottle of brandy waiting for him.

***How did the Jewish community react to your father's involvement at the council and among Catholics?***

A few made their displeasure known: “Who are you to be the representative of the Jews?” and “If you want to see the pope, let the pope come to you.” My father had a wider view of the importance of friendships for the future of Jewish-Christian relations, and he always put things in a historical perspective. Of course, there were Jews who were grateful to my father for his interfaith commitment.

***Was the political-moral connection the reason he went to Selma and aligned himself with the civil rights movement?***

Absolutely. Racism in America was a grave moral issue. My father shared with Martin Luther King Jr., an understanding of God as the “most moved mover.” He disabled the image of the God of the Old Testament as a God of wrath by pointing out that God has passion—anger, yes, but also tenderness, affection and forgiveness—and responds constantly to us.

For my father, religion may begin with a sense of mystery, awe, wonder and fear, but religion itself is concerned with what we do with those feelings. Religion evokes obligation and the certainty that something is asked of us, that



Susannah Heschel

PHOTO COURTESY OF SUSANNAH HESCHEL

there are ends which are in need of us. God, he once wrote, “is not only a power we depend on; He is a God who demands.” God poses a challenge to go beyond ourselves—and it is precisely that going beyond, that awareness of challenge, that constitutes our being. We often forget this, so prayer comes as a reminder that over and above personal problems there is an objective challenge to overcome inequity, helplessness, suffering, carelessness and oppression.

My father understood God’s passion for us, and our partnership with God, as divine pathos. The civil rights movement was a privileged place for us to accept the challenge for justice.

#### ***How did your father see himself institutionally?***

He never labeled himself with any of the movements, and he freely criticized all of them: not enough *halakha* (law), not enough *agada* (story); too much focus on having big synagogues, a reflection of an “edifice complex”; religion in decline because the theology was insipid; Jews as messengers who forgot the message. Always observant, he was nonetheless insistent that we cannot live as Jews today the way we lived yesterday. Change is imperative. Like Pope John XXIII, whom he quoted, he realized that no edifice, no religion, could survive without repair from time to time.

There’s an expression Jewish people sometimes use. They’ll say someone is “strictly observant.” It occurs to me that the word “strict” just doesn’t fit my father. He was not about being strict. I’m not sure what the right expression might be, but “lovingly observant” might be it.

When I left home and went into the world, I discovered people were different from my family. I was surprised that some Jews who kept the Sabbath worried about fine points of Jewish law. We never did that at home. Things were so much more natural. Observance was the breath of life. It was how we lived.

#### ***Did your father know the philosopher Martin Buber?***

My father met Martin Buber in 1936, when he was in his 20’s and Buber in his 50’s. Of course, he looked up to Buber and was excited to be invited to his home. He wrote a letter to a friend describing the meeting and a debate they had over tea. Buber said what’s important in Jewish education is to teach people the words of the prayer book, to teach them

the prayers to recite. My father said no, what’s important is to teach people the meaning of prayer, how to pray.

My father thought of prayer as not an occasional exercise but rather like an established residence, a home for the

innermost self. In his essay “On Prayer,” he says that all things have a home: the bee has a hive, the bird has a nest. For the soul, home is where prayer is, and a soul without prayer is a soul without a home. Continuity, permanence, intimacy, authenticity and earnestness are its attributes. “I enter [this home] as a suppliant and emerge as a witness; I enter as a stranger and emerge as next of kin. I may enter spiritually shapeless, inwardly disfigured and

emerge wholly changed.” We pray because there is a vast disproportion between human misery and human compassion. We pray, he said, because our grasp of the depth of suffering is comparable to the grasp of a butterfly flying over the Grand Canyon.

### **Books by Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel**

*The Prophets*

*The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man*

*Man is Not Alone: A Philosophy of Religion*

*God in Search of Man: A Philosophy of Judaism.*

*Man’s Quest for God*

*A Passion for Truth*

*Moral Grandeur and Spiritual Audacity: Essays  
(with Susannah Heschel)*

***How did your father respond to the work of the German-American theologian Paul Tillich?***

My father came to theology with a point of view opposite to that of Paul Tillich. Tillich spoke of faith in terms of “ultimate concern” whereas my father spoke of faith in terms of “ultimate embarrassment”: “the awareness of the incongruity of character and challenge, of perceptivity and reality, of knowledge and understanding, of mystery and comprehension.” For him, loss of face is the beginning of faith. There is no self-assurance or complacency in a religious person. A religious person could never say, “I am a good person.” A religious person is always questioning, challenging, never satisfied. He wrote, “I am afraid of people who are never embarrassed at their own pettiness, prejudices, envy, and conceit, never embarrassed at the profanation of life.” Embarrassment is meant to be productive; the end of embarrassment would be a callousness that would mark the end of humanity.

***One of your father’s most celebrated books is *The Sabbath*; is there an insight you can single out from your home celebration of Sabbath?***

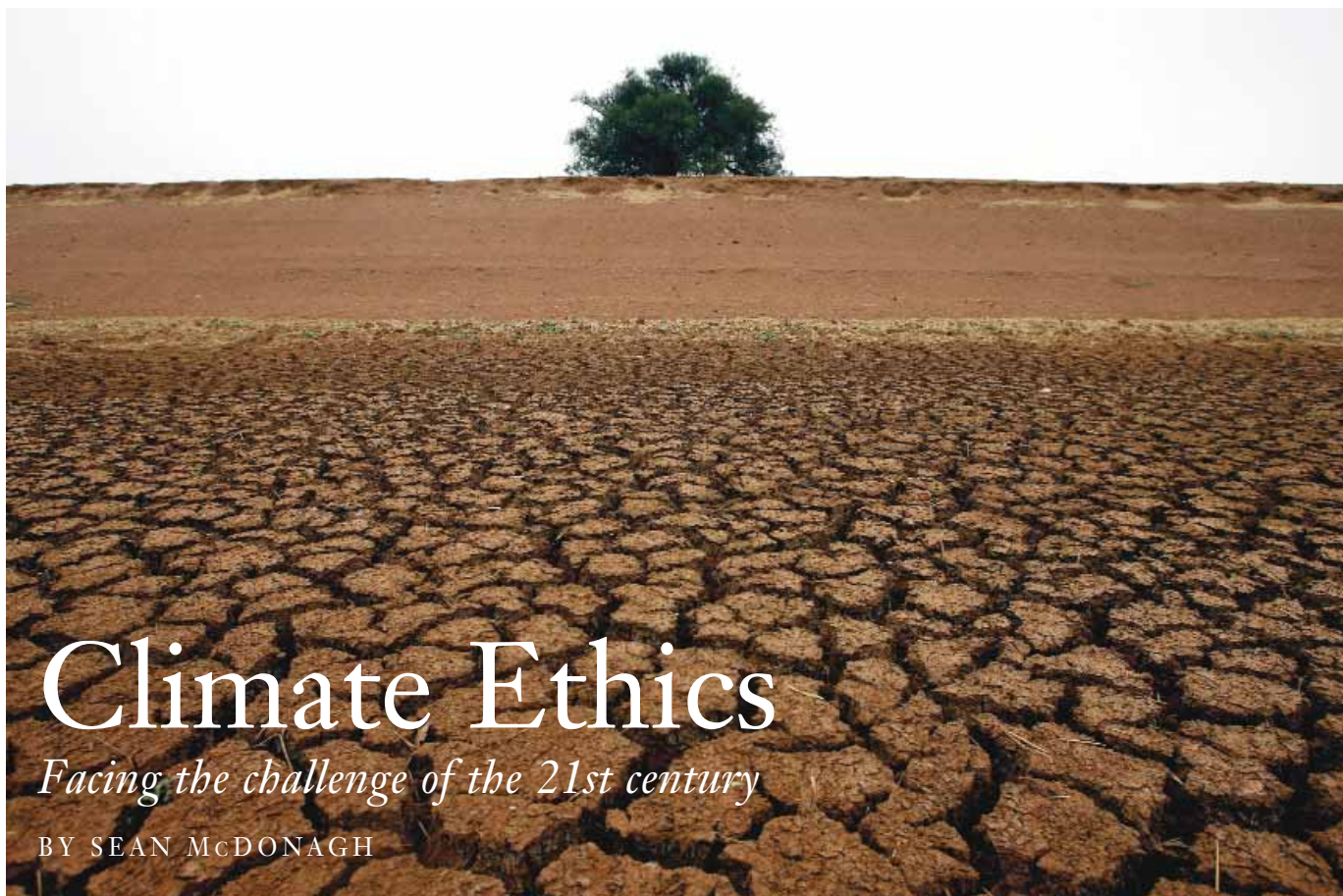
I have written about this in the preface to the new edition of *The Sabbath*, which is to be published soon. There are some helpful Sabbath laws—the shutting out of secular

demands and refraining from work. In enumerating the categories that constitute “work,” the Mishnah presents types of activities necessary to build technological civilization. My father went further. Not only is it forbidden to light a fire on the Sabbath, but, he wrote, “Ye shall kindle no fire—not even the fire of righteous indignation.” In our home, certain topics were avoided on the Sabbath (politics, the Holocaust, the war in Vietnam) while others were emphasized. Observing the Sabbath is not only about refraining from work, but about creating *menuha*, a restfulness that is also a celebration. The Sabbath is a day for body as well as soul. It is a sin to be sad on the Sabbath, a lesson my father often repeated and always observed.

***Was there something your father did not live to see, something you think he wished he could have done before he died?***

My father died before Jim and I were married, but he had a wish to dance at my wedding. He told me that often. There is a very obscure passage in the Zohar that says on your wedding day, if a parent has died, God goes to the Garden of Eden and personally escorts the soul of your parent to your wedding to stand under your wedding canopy. My father often told me, when I stand under my *chupa* all of my ancestors will stand with me. It’s a very old tradition, and I think it happened at my wedding. **A**





# Climate Ethics

*Facing the challenge of the 21st century*

BY SEAN McDONAGH

Cracks are seen in a dried-up dam in western New South Wales, Australia, located over 400 kilometres west of Sydney in 2007.

**W**ITH THE PUBLICATION of the report of the fourth Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, it should now be clear to everyone that climate change is one of the most serious ethical issues facing humanity in the 21st century. Even President George W. Bush, after almost a decade of denial, has used the dreaded words “climate change.” The facts speak for themselves.

## The Costs of Climate Change

China’s glaciers are diminishing each year. If they disappear, where will the 250 million people who depend on their meltwaters get water during the dry season? The water supplies for the cities of Lima in Peru and Santiago in Chile also depend on meltwaters from glaciers in the Andes.

Australia is now in the grip of a severe drought that is most probably due to global warming. Will there be enough water to support the population of Perth or Sydney? A rise of one meter in sea level would make it impossible for over

30 million Bangladeshis to live in the delta area of their country. A significant rise in sea level will inundate many cities around the world, including those on the east coast of the United States, and create a torrent of environmental refugees.

It is obvious from reading a summary of the I.P.C.C. document that the 2,500 scientists who compiled the report have done humanity a great service. They have made it clear beyond reasonable doubt that there is a direct relationship between burning fossil fuels and climate change. In the past few months the economist Sir Nicholas Stern has added his voice to the debate. He argues that global warming constitutes the greatest failure of market economics. From an economic perspective alone, it is crucial that we take remedial action immediately.

Stern argues that if we address global warming, the cost will be only 1 percent of the global gross domestic product. If we take no action for another 10 or 15 years, however, the cost could be 5 percent to 20 percent of global G.D.P.

## The Ethical Values at Stake

At the U.N. climate change conference in Nairobi in November 2006, almost all discussion of climate change

SEAN MCDONAGH, S.C.C., is a Columban missionary who has written several books on ecology and religion. His latest book is *Climate Change: The Challenge to Us All* (Columba Press 2007).

PHOTO: REUTERS/DAVID GRAY

cited scientific, political and economic data. Rarely were core ethical values invoked, values that should govern any human activity, particularly a destructive one like emitting greenhouse gases. Unless these ethical issues are addressed, individual nations will continue to seek their short-term economic gain no matter how it affects the global common good.

A fundamental ethical principle calls for identifying those who bear responsibility for the damages caused by climate change. A nation cannot use the excuse of minimizing the cost to its own economy as an ethically acceptable reason for failing to take action on greenhouse gas emissions that affect the entire planet. Yet this was the reason that President George W. Bush gave for withdrawing from the Kyoto Protocol that his predecessor had signed.

If I were to persist in pouring a substance into another person's house that makes it impossible for people to live there, I am sure that reasonable people would quickly conclude that what I was doing was morally wrong. My excuse that this action was necessary for my economic growth would not be morally acceptable. I would be required to desist immediately and compensate my neighbour for the damage I had done. Rich countries, which are mainly responsible for releasing greenhouse gases into the atmosphere over the past 200 years, should be obliged to pay compensation for climate change damages that are unavoid-

able. In a spirit of global solidarity, these nations are also morally bound to make resources and new technologies available to poor communities so that these countries can adapt and enjoy a decent standard of living without adopting the polluting Western model of development.

### Who Pays?

When it comes to allocating the cost of global emissions among nations, "the polluter pays" principle is consistent with the demands of distributive justice. This means that there is an ethical imperative on every nation to try to promote sustainable development policies. Faced with the disruption that climate change will bring, every nation, especially industrialized countries, must assume responsibility for cutting carbon emissions. On the other hand, poor countries need to increase their carbon output so that their citizens have access to the basic necessities of life.

President Bush and others have used the excuse of scientific uncertainty with regard to climate change to avoid cutting greenhouse gas emissions. Once again, this excuse contradicts basic ethical norms. When there is a possibility that an activity, in this case burning fossil fuels, will cause great harm, then the precautionary principle dictates that governments take measures to avoid harming other nations.

While the level of denial in relation to climate change is diminishing, some still believe that new technologies will

solve all our problems. The fact is that there is now no adequate technology to capture and safely store carbon. The only way to proceed at this point is to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels. The I.P.C.C. estimates that we need to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by 60 percent to 80 percent by the year 2030 to stabilize greenhouse gases.

### Religious Concern for Creation

On the theological level, as Christians we are called to care for God's creation. Climate change is upsetting the natural cycles upon which creation—animal, plant and human—depends. Sometimes we forget that we humans depend on the natural world for almost everything.

Religious faith calls us to care for others, especially those who are most vulnerable. We know that climate change will have a severe impact on the poor, the very people who did least to cause the problem in the first place. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' document *Global Climate Change, A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence and the Common Good* (2001) accurately analyzed the future impact of climate change. Unfortunately, the bishops did not directly challenge the morally questionable course of action on greenhouse gas emissions being pursued by the Bush administration.

In the Magnificat, Mary tells us that God's mercy reaches from age to age for those who fear him (Luke 1:50). Each

generation is called to hand on to the next generation a world as fruitful and as beautiful as the one it inherited from parents and grandparents. Unfortunately, the complete impact of climate change will take decades and maybe centuries to unfold. Future generations will not thank our generation for making the world a less hospitable place for each succeeding generation to live in.

### A Stronger Catholic Response

Unfortunately, the Catholic Church—in its diocesan structures, religious communities, development agencies and Vatican offices—has not taken the lead in educating people about climate change and what actions must be taken to avoid it. The Catholic Church in Australia is an exception. In November 2005 their bishops' Committee for Justice, Development, Ecology and Peace published an excellent document called *Climate Change: Our Responsibility to Sustain God's Earth*. Given the potential disasters facing humanity and the planet, climate change should be a central pastoral priority for every parish, diocese, religious congregation and the Holy See. Christian churches working together with people of other faiths—Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists—could create a moral climate that would make it easier for political leaders to urge the necessary sacrifices that this generation must make to protect creation for all succeeding generations. **A**

# A Brewing Storm

## *The detention of illegal immigrants*

BY SHAINA ABER



A woman reads during a Mass at a Department of Homeland Security federal detention center.

**T**RAGEDY STRUCK THE FAMILY of Francisco-Javier Domínguez Rivera, a 22-year-old native of the State of Puebla in Mexico, in mid-January 2007. Francisco was shot to death by a U.S. Border Patrol agent while attempting to cross the desert between Bisbee and Douglas, Ariz. The agent reported that he had felt endangered while apprehending Francisco, his two brothers and his 19-year-old sister-in-law, who had crossed the border illegally.

Francisco's death was a distress signal for many concerned with justice for immigrants. It called to mind the thousands of migrant deaths in the desert in past years and the tragedies that arise from the current atmosphere of divisiveness, fear and vilification of migrants and Border Patrol agents alike.

### **Eucharist Behind Bars**

A few days after the killing, 60 migrant men gathered to celebrate the Eucharist in a detention center 100 miles from the Arizona-Mexico border. Most were scheduled for deportation within a few days. Dressed like prisoners in identical red uniforms, they took part in the liturgy, reading and singing with devotion. Many of the men lined up after the Mass to receive a blessing for the journey. At the back of the room sat Francisco's two brothers in prayer and sorrow.

**SHAINA ABER** is a policy and advocacy officer at Jesuit Refugee Service/USA in Washington, D.C., and an attorney member of the Maryland State Bar Association.

The tearful pair, still in shock over their brother's death and worried about the fate of Francisco's sister-in-law, from whom they had been separated upon arrest, were totally disoriented by the detention environment. They were two simple men, their dreams of finding a new life now dashed, struggling to come to grips with why their brother had died.

Francisco's death and the subsequent incarceration of his family members highlight the suffering and loss surrounding the American detention drama. Responsibility for the operation of many detention centers is being delegated away from the federal government to for-profit corrections companies. Jesuit Refugee Service/USA and other advocates have become increasingly alarmed at the growing disregard for the human needs and the spiritual rights of undocumented migrants, whose only offense in many cases is crossing the border in pursuit of the American dream. Current immigration and detention policies have not deterred the steady flow of migrants crossing our border.

### **Detention Increase**

The practice of detaining migrants has grown exponentially in the United States in the last decade. In 1994, the government held about 5,500 such detainees on any given day. That number is expected to reach 27,500 by fall 2007, and 62,000 by 2010. Even now some 250,000 people churn through the detention system each year. Most are deported to their point of origin. A lucky few are granted asylum or equitable relief from deportation and then released to a new life.

PHOTO COURTESY OF AUTHOR

The U.S. detention program eats up approximately one third of the immigration enforcement budget, about \$600 million annually. As a result, the detention of migrants is now a multimillion dollar business and a magnet for corporations in the private corrections industry.

Conditions vary widely in the contract facilities for detainees. A recent series of articles in *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times* and *The Houston Chronicle* described the substandard conditions reported by advocates who visited a former jail in Southern Texas that now houses detained families. Ringed with razor wire and containing 300 penitentiary-style cots, the former county jail is operated by Corrections Corporation of America. The office of the U.S. inspector general is investigating some C.C.A. facilities after reports of detainee deaths, inappropriate disciplinary procedures and malnourishment of detained children. Under the terms of C.C.A.'s contract with the U.S. government, however, this Texas facility need not comply with many of the standards originally set for federal immigration detention institutions. Why? Because the government defines the facilities as Inter-governmental Service Agreement contractors, a designation that robs the current administrative detention standards of teeth and allows these privately owned facilities to operate under a lower standard of care.

Detainees arrive in jails, detention centers, prisons and contract facilities for a variety of reasons. They include refugees fleeing persecution and war; men and women apprehended while working illegally in the United States as domestic servants, factory workers and migrant farmers; lawful permanent residents who have committed one-time, minor and nonviolent crimes; and a small minority (roughly 2 percent) who have served prison sentences for more serious crimes. Among them are many longtime residents with dependents who are U.S. citizens. Although the majority of immigrants in detention represent no danger to the community, all are detained like criminals.

### Legal Limbo

The legal limbo into which detainees are placed adds to a paradox at the heart of current detention policy: While immigration detainees have often committed no worse "offense" than crossing a border or declaring the intention to seek asylum at a port of entry, they may be held indefinitely, without the same legal protection or access to coun-

sel given U.S. citizens charged with serious crimes. Once apprehended, detainees must live behind bars or barbed wire with little control over their fate and no way to know when or how their ordeal will end. Some refugees live in terror of deportation into the hands of the governments that have persecuted them. Others, who are willing to go home, are prevented from doing so by a sluggish bureaucracy. Such frustration is reflected in the statement of a 17-year-old immigration detainee from Guatemala, held along with about 100 other undocumented migrants in a maximum-security prison in Virginia. The young man earnestly

told me, "I miss my family; I don't know why I'm here.... When they first caught me, they told me if I signed the papers admitting I was here illegally, I could go home. It's been four months now, and nothing."

## The legal limbo into which detainees are placed adds to a paradox at the heart of current detention policy.

### Family Breakup

One of the most poignant episodes in the detention drama results from the lack of regard for family integrity, highlighted by the March 6, 2007, detention raids in New Bedford, Mass. In those raids, without any hearing or finding that people were in fact illegally working in Massachusetts, more than 100 workers were apprehended and almost immediately transferred to a facility in South Texas, with little regard for the rights of their family members, many of them U.S. citizens.

Such seemingly arbitrary transfers of detained persons away from their support networks and communities should be ended. Many long-term residents who have overstayed their visas or lived and worked quietly in the United States for years without documentation are being wrenched from their communities in sudden raids. Like those apprehended crossing the border, they are incarcerated in remote locations, far removed from legal service providers, making it impossible for them to understand fully or exercise their legal rights. In fact, 80 percent to 90 percent of the detainees face immigration proceedings without any legal representation.

One of the greatest indignities they suffer is depersonalization. A woman living in immigration detention reported, "The worst thing is that the guards call me by my bed number. Here I have no name."

### Honoring Religious Rights

In 2001 the Department of Homeland Security acknowledged the importance of providing detainees at the eight

federal detention centers with spiritual counseling and support and the ability to exercise their religious rights. Not only is there a First Amendment basis for the provision of such services, but the management of these facilities also recognized the calming presence of chaplains.

Jesuit Refugee Service/USA and Church World Service, with funding from D.H.S., started a chaplaincy program in the eight federal facilities. Based on a non-proselytizing model that is ecumenical in scope and practice, the chaplains promote courage, hope and peace of mind for those in detention. In addition to pastoral counseling, chaplains facilitate religious activities like worship, prayer, Scripture services and fellowship within the traditions of each person's faith. It is in the course of this work that the chaplains first come in contact with grief-stricken detainees like the Domínguez Rivera brothers. As the two traverse this critical point in their spiritual journey, they can depend on the fellowship and support offered by Jesuit Refugee Service/USA chaplaincy staff.

Others are not so lucky. Only eight detention centers are directly operated by the federal government. At the more than 400 non-federally operated detention facilities, the situation is very different. Like the South Texas center, these are effectively excused from many of the standards of care that apply to federal detention facilities, including not only the guarantee of religious care but also the prescribed

amount of time given for meals and the quality of food service and health care.

A disturbing account of detention conditions emerged in 2001 following a visit by 18 religious leaders to a New York facility. The National Council of Churches reported that when the leaders "emerged from a tour of an immigration detention center in a warehouse district near J.F.K. Airport...[they] expressed shock that people seeking political asylum in the United States are held in worse than prison conditions." The right to asylum is guaranteed under U.S. and international law.

### **Public Scrutiny Needed**

The expansion of immigration detention must be subject to a public scrutiny that recognizes the policy's human and financial costs. A recent D.H.S. report by the inspector general, publicly released on Jan. 16, 2007, found many violations of the department's detention standards—violations that the inspector general declared were not adequately tracked by the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement's internal compliance reviews. Congress should follow up on the report and the well-documented failure of the B.I.C.E. internal review process. Above all, the routine use of immigration detention for asylum applicants and survivors of torture is inconsonant with international human rights principles and should be limited to the greatest extent possible. The delegation of detention services to contract facilities is a troubling trend, contributing to an erosion of respect for the human dignity and legal rights of detainees. The federal government should set high standards for the treatment of all immigration detainees, particularly asylum seekers and refugees, with zealous protection of their psychosocial, pastoral and legal support needs. As detainees struggle to cope with the despair and uncertainty of the detention experience, we should avoid treating them like criminals.

In their November 2000 statement *Responsibility, Rehabilitation and Restoration: A Catholic Perspective on Crime and Criminal Justice*, the Catholic bishops of the United States confirmed that "the fundamental starting point for all of Catholic social teaching is the defense of human life and dignity: all people, regardless of race, gender, class or other human characteristics, have an inviolable dignity, value and worth...which must be recognized, promoted, safeguarded and defended." More than simply a Catholic viewpoint, this perspective reflects a deeply rooted American belief, grounded in our finest civic traditions and endorsed across faith communities. It is a proud tradition that should be revisited as we consider the human implications of the rapidly expanding detention system. Simply put, tripling the number of people in immigration detention by 2010 is ill-advised and un-American. **A**

# Beckoned by the Desert

## An antidote to subjective spirituality

BY ALAN F. SIMEK

**E**ACH YEAR I SPEND at least a few weeks in the deserts of the Southwest. My favorite places include the high desert canyons of northwest New Mexico, the Great Sonora Desert of Arizona, Death Valley, and the Big Bend area in Texas. Many of my friends in New York City cannot quite understand the attraction. Yet courted patiently and with devoted attention, the desert will slowly reveal her charms, even to the skeptic. Even more, the desert may cause us to look at our world and ourselves in a new way.

The desert continually surprises. Familiar landmarks look unfamiliar in different times and seasons: at dawn her colorless landscape becomes a riot of hues and pastels as the rising sun's rays dance off canyon walls peppered in gold, turquoise and crimson. Somber blues and grays fill the sky with an approaching winter storm. At daybreak the red-tailed hawk circles in the sky looking for the scampering kangaroo rat, and at dusk the wild coyote howls its lonesome hymn to the moon through the high desert air. The desert is the lover with the new dress or hair style,

ALAN F. SIMEK, a freelance writer, lives in Merrick, N.Y.

her appearance always familiar yet fresh and boldly different. On each occasion she entices me with her beauty as if for the first time.

I sometimes think of the desert as one of the immortals of whom Homer and Hesiod sang. She seems to have existed essentially as she is today since before I was born, and she will continue to exist unchanged after I am gone. In an age of restlessness, in which my home city has been built up, torn down and rebuilt in my lifetime and the familiar places of my childhood disappear almost daily, the desert offers the comfort of permanence, the promise of continuity in a world of change.

### A Vast and Lonely Muse

In her stability lies also the inspiration of a muse. Here I do not easily lose myself in the dazzling variety and ever-changing newness of things. The desert will not entertain me; she is no Disneyland. Instead she inspires awe and prods me to wonder why anything is at all, to reflect on the mystery of what is and who I am.

I know that the small stream running through the canyon shaped the canyon walls, cutting them from bedrock millions

of years ago. I know that the melting mountain snow caused the stream, and that the pinyon pine and juniper came from seeds blown by desert winds that found root in clay and sand. Yet what attracts my attention and causes me to wonder is not this chain of causes, but that these desert things simply are, exist, have come to be and endure in this harsh and hostile place. If on the one hand she seems forever the same, her inhabitants may cease to be, or at least be the way they are, without so much as an apology. The desert is dangerous, unpredictable, open to sudden upheaval of wind and storm, drought and flood, and the predatory instincts of beasts and birds, and I discover here that the things of the desert "need not be." The desert is a journey to the great mystery that all being is at heart radically contingent.

This includes my own being. The desert environment threatens, challenges, poses constant dangers, most of which cannot be clearly foreseen. Temperatures are extreme, with exceedingly hot days and very cold nights. Storms are sudden; small streams and dry arroyos quickly turn into life-swallowing torrents. Animals, birds and reptiles that evolved deadly defenses against prey and keenly honed



PHOTO BY MICHAEL FLECKY, S.J.

mechanisms of attack may unintentionally bring me into their deadly sphere of influence.

Moreover, its sheer scale provokes feelings of dependency and smallness of self. The desert is a vast and lonely landscape, with great distances separating the few locations that provide any protection and comfort. Intensified by stretches of unbroken vistas of land and sky, perspective is distorted. Roads are few, and those are no more than dirt trails, rutted and strewn with rocks, impassably muddy after a rain or packed hard as concrete by the

bleaching sun. Even the best prepared may meet the unexpected, the freak storm, the slip or fall off a trail, the sudden strike of the surprised rattlesnake. In the final analysis, only the fool thinks he can rely on his strength and skill alone. In short, the desert escapes my control.

For this reason my mind is drawn quietly, patiently, naturally, toward someone outside myself on whom I can lean. In the desert I think not so much of causes as of the Cause, whatever or whoever holds all of this firm but fragile being in existence. To some this may surprise. The desert is

frequently spoken of as a place to escape, to withdraw from life and descend more deeply into the self. Many, I think, view the desert fathers this way. They imagine desert monasteries to be enclaves of world-weary introspection. They suspect them to be places where those who do not love the world—oddities and misfits, escapists of every stripe—go to empty themselves of pleasure, of desire, of things that are supposed to make up the humanness of life.

### From Introspection to Praise

Ironically, like so many of the world's evaluations of things that on its own terms it cannot understand, I have found this opinion to be true neither of the desert Benedictines, whose home and hospitality in the Chama Canyon I occasionally share, nor of my own experience as a wanderer in the deserts of the Southwest. The desert escorts me out of myself, drawing me away from self-preoccupation, self-absorption. As the Rev. Donald Goergen noticed during his time in the desert ("The Desert as Reality and Symbol," *Spirituality Today*, Vol. 34, 1982), the desert is not conducive, immediately and directly, to producing "inner peace" as are some other landscapes. Rather than turning inward, the experience of the desert is more about recognizing God's glory in the created world than about finding the divine spark within. The desert experience calls forth gratitude, thanksgiving and trust, not brooding introspection. I thank God for the goodness of creation, for the glory he has chosen to share with his creatures. I praise him for the gift of life, of existence, he has bestowed on me and on all creation. I am grateful for his help in sustaining me in the face of all of the dangers intrinsic to my contingency, my helplessness. For an age that is fascinated by subjective spiritualities of every stripe and too often seeks in religion the comfort of a supposed "stress-free zone," the desert is the ultimate antidote.

We may, like Jesus, meet and be tempted by the enemy in the desert. We may, like the Baptist, be forced to dine on grasshoppers and wild honey or, like Paul, discover our life's mission in a desert encounter with God's grace. One thing is certain, however: If we come to the desert, we will change. **A**

## Poem

### Voice of Our Father

We'd scatter at our father's thunder bark:  
*Stop that bleating. Go to your lairs.* There,  
if wayward radio squawked back with rock,  
we'd hear his awful bellow from the stair,  
*Turn down that confounded caterwaul!*  
We felt the rain of his staccato words,  
*Dagnabbit. What unmitigated gall.*  
*Up and at 'em! Stir your stumps, sluggards.*  
We'd bask, though, in his smile like applause  
when, tender under bluster, he'd exhort,  
*Brush your snaps. Wash your dirty paws.*  
*Sleep tight. Tribe, hold down the fort.*  
His icy stare was like an April blast,  
a fearsome squall that wouldn't last.

**Barbara Lydecker Crane**

**BARBARA LYDECKER CRANE**, a poet and quilting artist, lives in Lexington, Mass.

# Dating God

## A young friar's experience of solitude

BY DANIEL P. HORAN

**'G**TO YOUR ROOM!" It is no wonder that solitude is a scary experience when, from one's earliest years, time alone or "time out" was a common consequence of childhood shenanigans. Time out, however, was nothing compared with the dreaded "being grounded," which not only required solitude but also limited one's use of the Internet, telephone and television. In our modern prisons and schools, too, the final response to bad behavior often entails forced solitude and ostracism, in the form of solitary confinement or a trip to the principal's office. It may not be surprising, then, that I had mixed feelings about the idea of spending 10 days in solitude secluded from the modern world in a hermitage.

I am a Franciscan novice. Both of those words are open to misinterpretation, so let me clarify. I am a Franciscan friar, a member of the religious order of men founded by St. Francis of Assisi. As such I live following the *Rule of St. Francis*, which outlines a way of life modeled after the Gospel. A friar is neither a monk nor a secular cleric, but a man who lives in a community of brothers who profess to live with nothing of their own (poverty), without marrying (chastity) and under the direction of their superiors (obedience). While this outline does little justice to the complexities of Franciscan life, it is at least a foundation.

Novices, quite literally, are beginners. In our way of life a novice is one in his second year of what totals five to seven years of formation, or training. I

am not only a beginner in my second year, but at 23 I am young, which earns me the title "novice" twice over: I am also a novice at life. I mention my relative youth because it directly affects my hermitage

experience and future experiences of solitude. Having entered the Order of Friars Minor immediately following my graduation from college, I am a child of the technological age, or, as we have been dubbed, a "millennial."

Being a millennial is an important factor for a person in religious life. We millennials have grown up bombarded by stimuli too varied to count. With satellite television, satellite radio, MP3 players, the Internet and cellular phones, silence is a rarity; and with communication technology always a reach or click away, loneliness can easily be masked. None of these devices or activities is inherently bad; on the contrary, appropriately used, they are all good and useful. But because of them



DANIEL P. HORAN, O.F.M., a Franciscan friar in initial formation for the Most Holy Name of Jesus Province, is in residence at St. Paul's Friary in Wilmington, Del.

ART BY DAN SALAMIDA

and our predisposition to fear solitude (like a time out), the embracing of solitude can be difficult for a millennial. So when my novice master informed me that I would spend 10 days in the woods of eastern Pennsylvania on a hermitage experience, apprehension and anxiety soon followed.

### Dating God

If you never spend time with another person, you can hardly describe yourself as being in a relationship with the other. To foster a healthy and meaningful relation-

ship with someone, you must set aside time during which the other person is your focus and your presence to each other takes priority. Understandably, such effort can be a challenge. With all the distractions of life and the pressures of work and society, it seems sometimes nearly impossible and often improbable that time can be made just to be and to be with another.

The difficulty in finding time and space to be present to another seems to occur more frequently in a relationship that is taken for granted or in a compla-

cent relationship that has been relegated to a lower status on one's priority list. It is different from the time when one first began to know a person, what in romantic relationships we call dating. Dates are specific times reserved solely for experiencing the presence of another, to learn about him or her and to build a history of shared experiences.

Transcending the stereotype of the romantic encounter, an experience like dating can be found in all types of relationships. When we first get to know a new friend, we want to spend time exclusively with that person; we desire to be around him or her. We want to learn all we can about the other and to include this new and exciting person in all of our activities. Doesn't this sound like dating minus the romantic nuances?

As time goes on and the friendship becomes more established, life more busy and work more burdensome, what once was natural and easy requires planning and intention. Maintaining a relationship, romantic or otherwise, requires effort.

The purpose of a hermitage experience is to set aside a time and create a space for solitude. Living alone in a small cabin means no television to entertain, Internet to distract or music to soothe. Following the instruction set down by St. Francis on how friars are to live while at a hermitage, my fellow novices and I set out for 10 days of solitude. Adapting the Gospel passage about Jesus' encounter with Martha and Mary (Luke 10:38-42) into a model for life in a hermitage, St. Francis designated that half the friars take the role of Martha and the other half that of Mary. The Marthas look after the needs of the Marys by preparing the meals, planning the prayer and protecting the solitude of the Marys. Halfway through the experience the friars switch roles. After serving my brothers in the role of Martha, my time came to go off to the hermitage, and I was left alone. Or so I thought.

Not long in the silence of solitude, I understood that I was not alone. With all the initial awkwardness of seeing a friend for the first time in a long time, I realized I was on a date with God. Soon I began to acknowledge that the awkwardness of this date was not mutual. God, like a patient and understanding friend, was simply present and comfortable with me. It was I

who was uncomfortable. Burdened with self-consciousness and doubt, projecting my own insecurities and self-judgments on God, I found myself in a state of nervous confusion. It was not until I took a walk in the woods that I realized, as with a best friend or a wonderful date, my presence was all God desired. In turn, God's presence was enough to calm my nerves and assure me of my value and my ability to be loved. I experienced a form of transcendence while walking among and as part of creation with my creator. It was a very good date.

### The Importance of Solitude

The concept of dating God is not new. Throughout history believers have sought solitude to hear more clearly the quiet, gentle voice of God. While in a cave awaiting the Lord, Elijah did not find God in the heavy wind, earthquake or fire, but in a tiny whisper (1 Kgs 19:9-13). Today we do not find the Lord on the Internet, television or radio, but in the quiet of time set aside for God.

This is not to suggest that solitude is the only way to experience God. Similarly, time alone with another is not the only

form of dating. We find God in community with our sisters and brothers, in the activities of work or leisure and in art—to name a few other ways. While it is joyful and enriching to go on a date with someone to a professional basketball game or to the movies, it is difficult to enter into intimate conversation at that time. Some dates with God will be experienced in liturgy, faith sharing, friendship, music and so on. However, there is a fundamental need to create a space and set aside a time that is just for God, where a deeper conversation can take root.

Jesus built close friendships with men and women. He often chose to spend time with his friends; at other times he joined the larger community to teach and share a meal; but frequently Jesus withdrew into solitude. After his baptism, "Filled with the Holy Spirit, Jesus returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the desert for 40 days" (Matt 4:1, Mark 1:12, Luke 4:1). It was the custom of Jesus to pray on the Mount of Olives (Luke 22:39). When we answer his call to "Follow me"

(Luke 5:27, John 1:43), we follow Jesus to the Father in solitude. Jesus shows us that in solitude we are never alone. We are with our creator, to whom we are the beloved children created in God's image.

Dating God does not require a hermitage any more than taking a prospective spouse on a date requires a first class restaurant. Solitude comes when we create the space and set aside the time to enter more deeply into the mystery that is the love that gives us life and meaning. It can be found in the quiet of the morning before a busy day, a 10-minute walk at lunch or in restful moments before bed.

Solitude may appear scary at first. Yet by confronting that fear, one takes the first step toward deepening one's relationship with God. The prospect of learning more about another person or oneself can be daunting, too, yet the reward comes in the connection formed when the two know each other in the openness of an intimate friendship.

Isn't it time to go on a date with God? **A**



# The Grace of Suffering

## Finding God in post-Katrina New Orleans

BY SEAN SALAI

**T**HE DRAB PINK house on Ge-n-o-i-s Street in New Orleans does not have power, water or what most people would call walls, but Tracy and Ava Smith have been living in its shell ever since they returned from a shelter two months after Hurricane Katrina's landfall. On a recent spring day, Tracy, a hardware store employee and former Loyola University photographer, pointed out to visitors how the unscathed baby blue walls of the couple's second-floor bedroom contrasted with the hollowed-out ground floor, still littered with debris and marked by a four-foot high water line where the flood waters of Katrina stopped in September 2005.

"There's so much to do that I have to compartmentalize things just to get out of bed in the morning," said Tracy, who was robbed in the Lower Ninth Ward while bicycling through chest-high waters to find his mother-in-law. "Sometimes I just want to hit something." The slow recovery of the Smiths, whose midcity neighborhood remains mostly empty and strewn with rubble, is not unusual in a town where Mardi Gras and bumper stickers like "New Orleans Is Coming Back!" belie a harsh social reality—tens of thousands are still living in FEMA trailers and just a fraction of the city's social ser-

SEAN SALAI, N.S.J., is a second-year Jesuit novice in Grand Coteau, La. He spent the spring semester working in campus ministry at Loyola University in New Orleans.



vices (hospitals, schools, public transportation) are back in operation.

### Volunteers, a Bright Spot

For many families like the Smiths, whose two grown children live out of state, the only bright spot comes with the thousands of young volunteers who still travel from around the country to gut and rebuild homes. Although some people may have forgotten New Orleans, 10,000 volunteers from high schools, colleges and beyond descended on the city this past March to give up their spring break for the second consecutive year. Among them were more than 500 faith-driven students from Jesuit institutions, who augmented their work by gorging on statistics and local residents' stories at "Rebuilding Communities: Facing Racism and Poverty," a social justice conference co-sponsored by the San

Francisco-based Ignatian Solidarity Network and the New Orleans Province of the Society of Jesus.

Under the watchful eye of Ava Smith, students from Jesuit College Preparatory School in Dallas spent their week cleaning up broken plaster and sheetrock in the house, rebuilding her prized backyard garden, and restoring a large statue of Mary to prominence in the garden's center. As they did so, Ava told them her Katrina story, fed them lunch and took them grocery shopping. "My mother's house was flooded and my sister's house was flooded," she related. "The worst thing isn't the physical damage, but the emotional wear and tear of losing friends and family."

### Learning From Suffering

For the suburban Dallas students, making their first relief trip to the city, the Smiths'

PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

frustrations opened their eyes to previously unseen social problems. "I've never experienced this kind of suffering in my life," said Joseph Martinez, a senior. "It's one thing to see it on television, but to actually live with it for a week is something else." His classmate Walden Avery expressed anger that people with adequate financial resources had been able to rebuild their homes, while the rest of the city was still waiting. "It's not right that some people are back on their feet and others can't come back," he observed.

The campus minister who accompanied the boys, Keith Reese, said that a key part of the group's experience was realizing how little they could do to "fix" the situation. "You do a little each day, but you also feel helpless."

To many of the volunteers, it was no coincidence that their service trip fell during Lent, the period before Easter when, as Christians, they embrace fasting, penance and almsgiving in an effort to share the 40-day suffering of Christ in the desert. The volunteers shared in the uncertainty behind the daily routine of many local residents: tearing down and fixing up houses in once thriving neighborhoods, which may be demolished anyway when the dust finally settles. They faced the same unanswered questions: How long will the rebuilding last? Will the neighbors come back? What will the government do?

### **A Route to Resurrection**

But despite the hardships they shared, the volunteers also saw how suffering is a route to resurrection. Bobby Westbrook, a senior at Dallas Jesuit, said as he placed rocks around Ava Smith's garden that he could see Easter approaching in the early New Orleans springtime and in the time he spent smiling and laughing with the Smith family. "You struggle with the monotony of the work, but you see little signs of things coming to life. It feels good in the end."

And Ava found herself smiling more because of the young men. "They walked with us in our suffering. What they did around the house is not as important to me as who they are and the fact that they were here. Just to have someone acknowledge what you're going through makes all the difference in the world." **A**

# Design for Others

## Beautiful and low-tech solutions for daily problems

BY KAREN SUE SMITH



The Q-Drum helps transport water over long distances.

A SMALL BUT IMPORTANT collection of ingeniously designed yet simple-to-use devices from around the globe is currently on display at the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum (part of the Smithsonian Institution) in New York City, where it will be on view until Sept. 23. Organized outdoors in the lush garden behind the former town house of Andrew Carnegie, the Bill Gates of his day in terms of personal wealth, the exhibit highlights affordable, innovative products created specifically for the world's poorest people, as well as for disaster victims and refugees.

The exhibit, titled "Design for the Other 90%," also focuses on designers as agents of social change, who can use their skills and creativity to house, feed, educate and otherwise assist people without electricity, adequate shelter, clean water,

KAREN SUE SMITH is the editorial director of *America*.

books or even a shady public spot in which to gather with families and neighbors. Designers from many nations have been responding to widespread basic needs and, along with the manufacturers, have envisioned potential business startups and markets among the 2.8 billion people who live on less than \$2 a day. This is revolutionary, since designers typically work with just 10 percent of humanity in mind—the few who buy everything.

Cynthia E. Smith, the curator, has assembled products for viewing that already work, rather than blueprints or untested notions of what might work. The only exception appears to be the \$100 laptop (nominated for the 2006 People's Design Award competition sponsored by the museum), a bright-green-and-white mini-model made of slick rubber that is still in production. Several governments stand ready to purchase the first batch of computers later this year.

Arranged on the grass are assorted

water pumps, water filters, rain catchers and water storage devices. One finds the Domed Pit Latrine Slab—a concrete disk with two footprints and an opening—part of a kit that furthers sanitation in refugee camps worldwide. One of my favorite products is the Pot-in-Pot cooler (from Nigeria), a non-mechanical refrigerator made of two clay pots with a layer of sand and water between them, which can keep produce fresh for 21 days even in arid climates. Small construction businesses in East Africa are buying an efficient steel block press that makes strong, uniform building blocks of various dimensions. Such products save time, labor and money. Others shelter, educate and promote health among whole communities.

Many of the products provide low-tech solutions to huge problems encountered daily. Think of the women in sub-Saharan Africa, who spend 15 to 30 hours each week just transporting necessities like water, firewood, crops and grain. How

PHOTO © 1993. P. J. HENDRIKSE

much better their lives would be if they could use the drip irrigation system on exhibit. It reduces water consumption while increasing crop yields. Just a bag and some plastic tubing, it needs very little water pressure to work properly. The result: more food for less work and less water. More than 600,000 systems have been sold so far. Then there is the Q-Drum, which is manufactured in South Africa. The one on display is a bright blue plastic doughnut, hollow inside, with a plastic rope attached. The newfangled water wheel transports by rolling along or by pulling as much as 75 liters of water—no lifting required. Big Boda is a load-carrying bicycle with a woven seat made to carry two passengers or oversize loads, and it is easy to manufacture locally. And what might the women do with a bamboo treadle pump on their land, so simple that a child can use it to irrigate a field?

Other equipment on view is high-tech by comparison. Imagine the excitement that would be stirred up by five motorcycles arriving in a remote Cambodian village, bringing temporary Internet access to all. Called the Motoman Network, it provides mobile Internet access points and a satellite uplink. That enables schools to send and receive e-mail and to use the Internet for a few hours or over several days of instruction. A visiting nurse can examine and digitally photograph patients, transmit the information to a hospital (the one described is in Boston) using a solar-powered computer, and physicians can respond within hours with medical opinions and treatment recommendations. All this takes a highly coordinated effort and tools (an antenna, solar panel, satellite and the motorcycles), but one team can move from village to village on a schedule.

At the exhibition one can examine each object up close. I stood inside the plywood hut built by Georgia Tech students originally for Atlanta's homeless, and I felt the cool shade under the New Orleans 7th Ward Shade Pavilion, designed by University of Kansas School of Architecture students for a community center damaged in Hurricane Katrina. Being there helps one judge the dimensions and stability of a temporary cardboard shelter that requires no tools to assemble and can be mailed flat. And one can note how tiny are the Kinkajou micro-



The Life Straw filters impurities from water.

film projector and portable library, a solar- and battery-powered teaching tool that eliminates the need for books. With this one projector, Design that Matters, Inc., a U.S. company, has helped more than 3,000 adults in 45 rural villages in Mali learn to read.

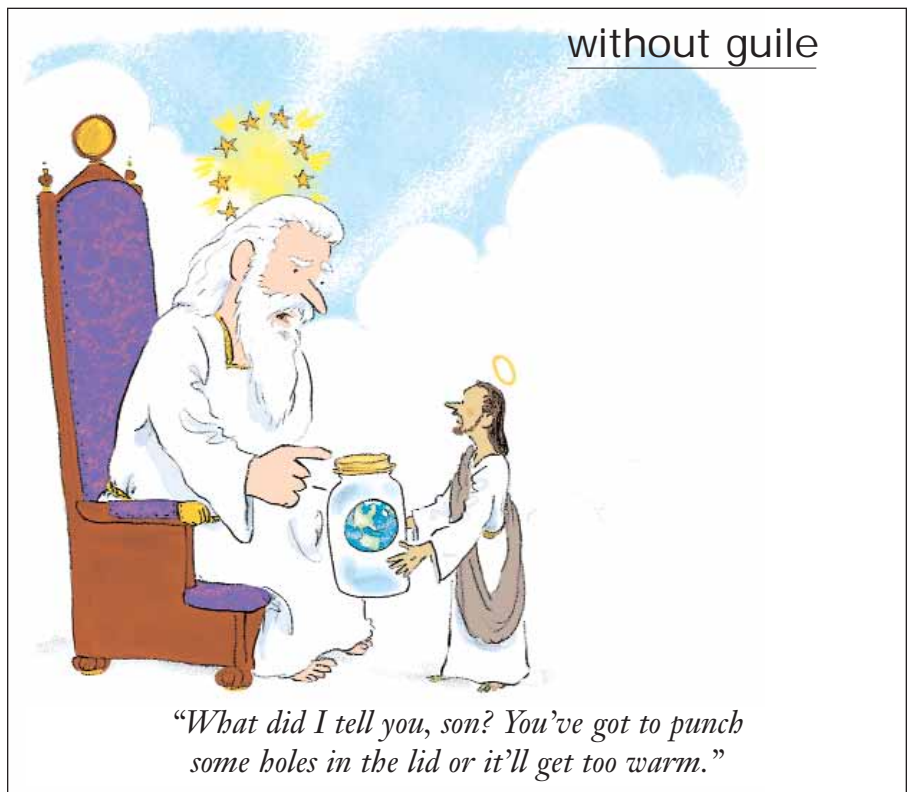
It is unfortunate that the exhibit is not scheduled to travel, but many small museums could mount a limited collection like this. If you cannot see the exhibit in New York, try the museum's attractive, infor-

mative Web site, [www.Cooperhewitt.org](http://www.Cooperhewitt.org). The only thing I found missing is a list of what each item costs and who constitutes the market for it. Are the people the buyers or are nongovernmental organizations, the United Nations or governments the target? The works themselves are so humble and unassuming that one sees in many of them how beautiful and practical simplicity can be. Many of the products depend on computers and recently developed microtechnology.

Andrew Carnegie, the steel magnate turned philanthropist when he retired, would have approved of this exhibition in his backyard. It meshes well with his philosophy of building wealth through thrift and hard work and of improving oneself through education. It also would have made E. F. Schumacher proud. The economist and author of *Small Is Beautiful* extolled appropriate technology and urged finding ways to help people to help themselves out of poverty. The movement he spawned in the 1970's has inspired some of the designers whose work is on display here.

Not every problem made worse by poverty is intractable or unsolvable, as these socially responsible and thoughtfully designed objects so clearly demonstrate.

PHOTO © 2005 VESTERGAARD FRANDSEN



CARTOON BY PAT BYRNES

# Great Saint of the 'Little Way'

## Thérèse of Lisieux

God's Gentle Warrior

By Thomas R. Nevin

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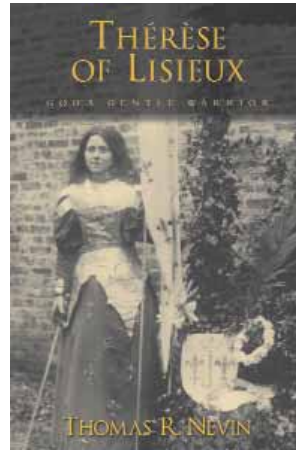
At a recent viewing of the film "Into Great Silence," I was mesmerized as the camera circled the austere perimeter of a new Carthusian novice's cell and oratory, stripped of any comforts or signs of individuality. And then, there she was: pasted to the wall near a bare cross, a small, celebrated photo of a young Carmelite nun, the only human face this man would see during long hours of solitary contemplation at La Grande Trappe. Removed in time by more than a century, St. Thérèse of Lisieux still influences and fascinates millions, reaching a world unimagined by the French bourgeois Catholicism from which she emerged. Her relics have circled the globe, including Iraq, Siberia and Cameroon. She is venerated as "daughter of Allah" in Islamic circles, with her own shrine in Cairo. The complete body of her written work is available on the Web, and library databases list over 300 published volumes on the subject of Thérèse. Is there anything left to unearth about the Little Flower, one of the church's most beloved saints? This new monograph illustrates how an enterprising researcher can approach this saint's deceptive simplicity and find there a complex spiritual universe for postmodern exploration.

Thomas Nevin begins his unconventional study by firmly rejecting any hagiographical objective, with a  *caveat*  that Thérèse has had more than her share of pious biographies. A professor of classical studies at John Carroll University, Nevin has authored works about Simone Weil and others he describes as "overripe intellectual sorts." After reading Thérèse's autobiography, he abandoned plans for a scholarly book on 19th-century French Catholicism and chose to focus entirely on her. Combing through the extensive published collection of primary and secondary

works, as well as previously untapped archival materials, Nevin has achieved an intriguing and uncompromising social history of Thérèse, of her "life and times" as daughter and sister, as Carmelite, author and tubercular patient. The unconventional titles of *Thérèse of Lisieux's* nine chapters are a tip-off that Nevin will forgo the chronological approach for a richer and more challenging portrayal of Thérèse from within her historical and cultural contexts. One chapter, for example, "How They Paved the Little Way," focuses on 19th-century Carmelite life and practice. Two are given over to Thérèse's "theatricality" and writings, with emphasis on her poetry and plays. One focuses on tuberculosis, Thérèse's doctors and how they treated and mistreated her disease. Introductory texts for each chapter have been judiciously chosen, and all citations are in the original French, with accompanying translation, which sometimes interrupts the flow of the narrative account.

From the outset, Nevin portrays the saint as a surprising antithesis to three well-known figures of 19th-century Catholicism. François de Chateaubriand, Félicité de Lamennais and Ernest Renan, gifted interpreters of post-revolutionary French idealism, failed in their efforts to renew Christianity, while Thérèse succeeded in shifting her co-religionists from a religion of fear to one of love with her "little way."

Many have written about Thérèse's sense of abandonment, beginning with the death of her mother, Zélie, when she was only four, and of her lifelong quest for the nurturing of maternal love. Of nine children to whom she gave birth, Zélie lost two sons and a daughter in infancy, and another daughter at the age of five. Thérèse was born when Zélie was 42, her health and psychic stamina already severely compromised. A constant in the Martin family dynamic was the overarching presence of suffering and death and the challenges these posed to their Catholic faith and hope. Nevin devotes a chapter to this subject by examining Zélie's abundant



correspondence, 217 extant letters that offer clues to her inner life and her evolving relationships with each of her surviving daughters. They reveal the "travails" of a wife and mother, as well as the economic ups and downs of a shrewd and hardy businesswoman. Nevin argues that through Zélie the lace-maker, we come to know the Martin family more intimately and

realistically than through Louis, the dreamer-father who looms large in most Theresian biographies.

With his last chapter and "inconclusions," Nevin achieves a profoundly creative interpretation of Thérèse's theology, centered on the compelling imagery of the "table of sinners," a recurring theme in her "Manuscript C," the last section of the autobiography. He disputes "the consolations of the commentators," who try to illumine and soften what she herself describes as near-blasphemy. Portraying herself as the sister of those who have no faith, who eat the bread of sorrow, Thérèse takes her place at that table, without faith or hope, in the shadows of exile. Among the unbelievers and the derelict, she finds her bodhi tree and sits there with empty hands and a heart full of love—little, weak, a nothing. This, Nevin claims, is the source of her luminous theological originality, and qualifies her as an exemplar of where the love of God and others meets Christ crucified in the human community, and as "Christendom's foremost voice to non-Christian worlds."

This is a book to be pondered and discussed, by those who think they know Thérèse well, and by those at the table of

## The Reviewers

**Janice Farnham, R.J.M.**, is adjunct professor of church history at Weston Jesuit School of Theology, Cambridge, Mass.

**James F. Keenan, S.J.**, is professor of theological ethics at Boston College, Chestnut Hill, Mass.

**John McLaughlin** is director of Education Across Borders in Seattle, Wash., and author of the novel *Run in the Family* (coming this fall from Univ. of Tennessee Press).

darkness, doubt and grief she continues to share and bless.

Janice Farnham

## Just a Good 'Idea'?

### The Challenge of Human Rights Origin, Development, and Significance

By Jack Mahoney

Blackwell, 232p \$29.95 (paperback)

ISBN 9781405152419

"Human rights is the idea of our time," wrote Louis Henkin in *The Age of Rights*.

Throughout the field of ethics today, it is impossible to escape the language of human rights. Not surprisingly, we find this language in social ethics; but we also encounter it in sexual ethics, medical ethics and even the ethics of the environment. Take, for instance, the topic of H.I.V./AIDS. Inevitably, we must ask: why are there 14,000 new infections every day, with more than half occurring in women? Moreover, of these new infections, why is one out of seven found in children under 15? Why are the burdens of this virus being borne by women and children? What leaves them so vulnerable?

When people are desperate in their poverty and do not have access to basic goods like drinking water, food, health care, education and work, inevitably they come to depend on persons who sooner or later compromise their health. Public health officials have been telling us for years: the greater the social and economic stability, the greater the protection from the virus. Is not the guarantee of human rights to these goods pivotal for securing a stable world in which the transmission of the virus is greatly reduced? Can we study a pandemic that has already infected 62 million persons without elaborating on human rights?

Admittedly, human rights have become indispensable for ethical discourse, but what does that term mean? Individual rights, or social ones? Are human rights nothing more than simple assertions of power, or are they based in human reason? How many rights are

there? Do they automatically multiply, or is there a method for arbitrating which are real and which are not? Who decides what is and is not a human right? Are they nothing more than Western creations, or do they have universal applications?

In *The Challenge of Human Rights: Origin, Development, and Significance*, Jack Mahoney, S.J., emeritus professor of moral and social theology, University of London, answers each of these questions in a thoroughly engaging introduction to the topic. His book is the most comprehensive and accessible work on human rights that I have yet seen.

Readers of **America** are familiar with Mahoney for his landmark work, *The Making of Moral Theology: A Study of the Roman Catholic Tradition* (Oxford, 1989). In this new work on human rights, he provides five chapters on the historical roots of human rights, the modern human rights movement, philosophical clarifications about these rights, the basic logic for them and a forecast for their future. Each chapter is complemented by a comprehensive bibliography.

Let me highlight the first and fourth chapters. In the first, while noting that the concept of human rights is a product of the Enlightenment, Mahoney traces two deeply significant features that contributed to the eventual emergence of human rights: "the centering of human morality on the idea of justice and the recourse to human nature as a source of moral knowledge." Here, Mahoney mines the Greek, Roman and biblical traditions, but he pauses in the medieval world. There he sides with Brian Tierney, the author of *The Idea of Natural Rights*. Tierney argues that contemporary rights are not inimical to ecclesial purpose but rather an essential part of it. He demonstrates that 12th-century canonical decrees about papal and episcopal rights and responsibilities carried within them this ongoing sensibility about human nature's dependency on equal justice. Rather than thinking of rights as arbitrary assertions of power, Tierney conveys them as deeply rational and deeply human.

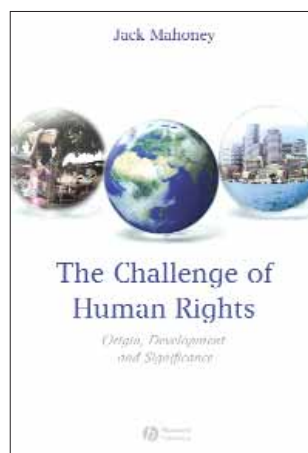
In the fourth chapter, Mahoney carefully surveys and discusses the various attempts to explain human rights in order to formulate a single compelling, logical proof for their existence. The religious argument from creation and another from natural law (itself a theological argument) are fine, so long as we grant religious belief. "Intuitionist approaches," as the author calls them, concern the fact that we recognize an emerging, international consensus about human rights: is there not in that recognition itself evidence that we are claiming their essential validity? But which comes first: their validity or our recognition, which establishes their validity? Under the rubric of "human dignity," he argues that human rights are indispensable guarantees of the future of humanity.

But then he notes that we human beings have sustained some sense of human dignity for thousands of years before we ever articulated human rights. History shows, then, that human dignity does not necessarily depend on human rights. Thus for every argument for human rights that Mahoney offers, he proffers a

contrary claim; here he helps us to see that no single argument will ever emerge that in itself compels us to assent to the existence of human rights. So he turns to John Henry Newman and the "convergence of probabilities" to suggest that taken together, all these arguments form a type of moral certitude about the legitimacy of these human rights.

In both of these chapters, the reader cannot help but note Mahoney's use of Catholic claims from natural law, natural rights and human dignity—which allows him to suggest, at least implicitly, a certain affinity between moral theology and human rights. Here this splendid book also stands as a certain Catholic apologia for human rights.

At the end of the book, in discussing the notion of cosmopolitanism Mahoney advocates a greater expansion of human rights. This concept helps us to understand ourselves better as citizens of the



world. In a world in which there are such grave economic and social disparities, where, for instance, the ecological damage already done now deprives the poor of even their drinking water, we can no longer think of the two issues of justice and human nature from the vantage point of national self-interests.

The key to the future of human rights, as Mahoney's work makes abundantly clear, lies in an appreciation of our humanity, undifferentiated by nationalities, but rather bound together in solidarity. This, above all, is the "idea of our time."

James F. Keenan

## Wise Words From a Wheelchair

### Letters to Sam

A Grandfather's Lessons on Love, Loss, and the Gifts of Life

By Daniel Gottlieb

Sterling. 176p \$17.95

ISBN 9781402728839

In his beautiful and moving *Letters to Sam*, Daniel Gottlieb, a renowned psychologist who has lived with quadriplegia for 25 years, imparts uncommon wisdom about the lifelong journey of becoming a man. Written as a series of letters to his grandson, Sam, the book—which draws on Gottlieb's personal, often tragic life circumstances, as well as stories and parables from Jewish, Christian, Greek, Sufi and Zen traditions—is a beacon of hope for our age, especially for people of faith. With a serenity that can come only from one who has made peace with his wounds, Gottlieb fashions profound, simple (yet never simplistic) life lessons from the gritty, messy stuff of everyday life. "Confusion," Gottlieb quotes one of his mentors as saying, "is like fertilizer. It feels like crap when it happens, but nothing grows without it."

Yet Gottlieb's everyday life is not so everyday; nor is Sam's. When he began writing these letters, shortly after Sam's birth, he was a 53-year-old man 20 years into a new, shockingly different stage of his life. Shortly before his 10th wedding

anniversary, he was driving on the Pennsylvania Turnpike, in perfect health, on his way to pick up a surprise gift for his wife. In the road's opposite lane, a 100-pound wheel flew off an approaching tractor trailer; it smashed into the roof of his car, breaking his neck and severing his spinal cord, leaving him able only to talk and to feel his face and shoulders. Over time, through much suffering, he regained limited use of his arms and some measure of independence, but not before his marriage was in ruins.

When Sam was born, Gottlieb was unsure how much longer he himself would live, given his fragile state. He began crafting the letters of this book as a way to guide his grandson into manhood and, equally important, to allow Sam to know him. But even that simple goal was quickly thrown into doubt: at 14 months, Sam was diagnosed with a severe form of autism. Gottlieb kept writing, however, holding out hope that one day his grandson would be able to read and understand his letters, despite his disability.

Gottlieb writes of the boy's disability, and his own, with candor and tenderness, and without a touch of self-pity. In fact, he counts his vulnerability as a blessing, contending that his perspective from a wheelchair lends a unique acuity to his reflections on what it means to be a man, and beyond that, to be human. He relates, in a letter entitled "Give Kindness a Chance," how flipping on his hazard lights while driving his specially-equipped van in stormy conditions often elicits compassion, rather than rancor, from other drivers. In "Your Grandmother Sandy," Gottlieb delves into delicate territory, telling Sam how his wife's cancer and his own accident created a festering co-dependency that eventually destroyed their marriage.

Years after the divorce, Gottlieb visited Sandy, who was then living with multiple sclerosis, in an attempt at reconciliation. Her apartment, however, was not wheelchair-accessible, and they were unable to carry on more than a superficial, distant conversation—over her wrought-

iron gate at a distance of 20 feet. Two years later, receiving news of her death, his grief surprised him, showing him that because of his vulnerability—swallowing his anger to visit her, wheelchair and all—on some level, he had healed.

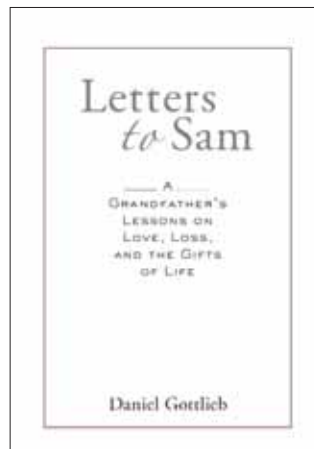
And in a stunning anecdote within "Compassion Works Both Ways," he recounts how he was visited, while in intensive care immediately following his accident, by a mysterious woman in the night. She had heard that Gottlieb was a psychologist, and came to him with her suicidal tendencies. Little did she know that Gottlieb was harboring suicidal

thoughts himself, unable to contemplate continued life as a quadriplegic. But he listened to the woman. And as he did, he was filled with compassion, and gave her a referral. "Everyone else had been trying to convince me that I was still a worthwhile person," Gottlieb writes, "but the only way I could really learn that lesson was from someone who asked something of me. Quite possibly, that evening, she and I saved each other's lives."

In other letters, Gottlieb delivers lessons on sexuality, anger, family relations and "success." Through all of these, he counsels Sam to embrace his vulnerability, advice that is certainly countercultural, though not necessarily uncommon. Gottlieb's genius lies in drawing this out beyond the realm of self-help to that of social justice, and the remarkable power of this book rests in his own witness: overcoming extraordinary adversity to become an agent of change and healing. "Very often," he writes, "people who step outside of themselves and begin helping others wind up getting better more quickly. They become part of the larger world. Their own problems no longer fill it up."

Gottlieb (who is donating his royalties to Cure Autism Now) has allowed his vulnerability to lead him beyond his own suffering, and to advocate for changes in the law on behalf of other disabled persons. One suspects that Sam—now four years old, speaking well and showing a growing potential to read—will one day do the same.

John McLaughlin



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ter's degree in religious education, theology or pastoral ministry, and have at least three years' experience as a catechetical leader, preferably with small and/or rural parishes. For a position description and additional information regarding this position, contact: Dennis Beeman, (804) 359-5661, ext. 113; e-mail: [dbeeman@richmondndioocese.org](mailto:dbeeman@richmondndioocese.org).

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## Worth the Reading

Many thanks for the recent *Of Many Things* column (4/30) by Patricia A. Kossmann. I always make it a point to read anything that bears her byline. Thus, this expression of gratitude has been long in coming.

She always mentions books that would ordinarily slip by without being noticed but that are eminently worth reading. Please know there are those out here who do take notice.

*John B. Pesce, C.P.  
West Hartford, Conn.*

## Before We Withdraw

"Why We Must Withdraw From Iraq," by Msgr. Robert W. McElroy, (4/30) is an excellent argument against war in general; but before we carry out his suggested "prudently crafted American military withdrawal" from Iraq, we should make sure that Iran, Syria, Osama bin Laden, the Muslim Brotherhood, Hezbollah and so on read and concur with the article. Then we can all relax.

No one now believes that the preemptive attack against Iraq was a good move. Many at the time believed that Iraq posed a greater threat to us than Osama bin Laden did a few short years prior to the disasters of Sept. 11, 2001. So our leaders made the best decision based on what we thought we knew. Unfortunately we cannot take back our move; so now we must make the wisest choices possible to ameliorate the situation—not only in Iraq, but also in the entire Mideast—with the least harm to all concerned, especially those Iraqis who have been our allies. Before even contemplating our prudent withdrawal, we should examine all likely consequences, one of which is the likelihood that any potential future ally would hesitate to place confidence in our loyalty and commitment.

*Martin Kinnavy  
Warren, Ohio*

## Justifying a Withdrawal

Msgr. Robert W. McElroy's article on the Iraq war (4/30) is an excellent analy-

sis of the four just-war principles that need to be applied to judge the validity of this controversial calamity. Sadly for all of us—Americans, Iraqis and world citizens—continuing the conflict cannot be morally justified on any basis. Nor, as Monsignor McElroy stated well, should opponents of the war be the ones required to justify a withdrawal. Unfortunately, when our country departs from its founding principles by pursuing an imperialistic foreign policy, the results prove to be costly, widespread and probably long-lasting. Pursuing Osama bin Laden in his hide-out in Afghanistan can be defended. The same cannot be said for invading Iraq.

As a former member of St. Gregory's parish in San Mateo, a graduate of the Jesuit University of San Francisco and a Marine officer in the Korean War, I applaud Monsignor McElroy's analysis and conclusions.

*Robert Hanson  
Rancho Murieta, Calif.*

## Uncertain Success

Msgr. Robert W. McElroy begins his discussion as to why the war in Iraq is not justified by saying that the "just cause" argued by the administration is "transformational democratization" (4/30). Rather, I believe, it is the prevention of wholesale slaughter of Sunnis by Shiites and Shiites by Sunnis. This is certainly a just cause. Further, America's intention in this war is now exactly that, namely, the prevention of the slaughter of innocent human lives. I agree with Monsignor McElroy that we need to do everything to initiate dialogue and negotiation, and that the question regarding the "likelihood of success" is uncertain.

*John McCarthy  
Weston, Mass.*

## Inflammatory Language

I read with pleasure your current comment "Unrepentant Media" (4/30) on the Duke lacrosse team incident and the "unaccountable journalism of personal destruction." I thought how good it is

that we have insightful observers trying to improve public discussion. Then I read the next editorial, "Corporate Hall of Shame" and you do exactly what you just criticized others in the press of doing. You give credence to a zealot group's undocumented allegations, in this case about corporations—but apparently without doing any fact-checking of your own.

First you scared me: my throat became parched at the image of Coca-Cola Company "drying up sources of fresh water all over the world...." Then you provided the "facts": "Water bottling...is one of the least regulated industries in the United States" and is less safe than tap water. As a former employee of a federal regulatory agency, I know that bottled water and tap water are in fact regulated, as much or more than other products, under the Safe Drinking Water Act and the Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act; and both are required under these laws to meet the same standards of safety for contaminants.

I think there are a lot of things wrong with bottled water—the price mark-up for the water is over 1,000 percent; the empty bottles are everywhere, are unsightly and environmentally polluting; but certainly two federal laws and several pages for bottled water in the Code of Federal Regulations (21 CFR 165.110) is proof enough that it is indeed regulated by the federal government, in addition to local health authorities.

You earned a place in the hall of shame for this performance. As a Jesuit magazine, you should try to raise the quality and accuracy of public discussion and not amplify the inflammatory language that characterizes so much of today's political and social debate.

*Michael Eck  
Washington, D.C.*

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## Grateful for the Years

I want to thank you for the account by Jim McDermott, S.J., of the racial integration of Spring Hill College in Mobile, Ala. (4/9 and 4/16). I lived in Mobile and experienced some changes. It was good to see Albert Foley, S.J., included. He often welcomed our charismatic prayer meetings in his classroom/office. Elbert Lalande was a leader in our parish Sunday liturgies. Generally, my observance of Mobile, at that time, was that some Southerners were still fighting the Civil War, as the trend was to look upon Northerners as suspect. The people of the small parish of St. Peter Claver were well aware of the restrictions on their lives while seeking equality. I am grateful for the years in Mobile and glad to see the changes to make everyone equal.

*Lucienne LeBlanc, I.H.M.  
Monroe, Mich.*

## Considerable Weight

Bishop Donald W. Trautman is not only a liturgical expert but, as chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Liturgy, his comments should carry considerable weight ("How Accessible Are the New Mass Translations?" 5/21).

It is tragic that his voice has not been heard by the Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments. It is even sadder that they have not consulted with those who could have given good advice.

When Bishop Trautman tells the church of God to speak up, he is right to do so. But if they will not listen to him, to whom will they listen? As a priest who is charged with conducting the liturgy and ensuring participation of the people, I would be tempted to retranslate the words. But that is also forbidden.

As Bishop Trautman states so clearly, "If the language of the liturgy does not communicate, how can people fall in love with the greatest gift of God, the Eucharist?" It is not only the people

who want to be there who will be compromised, but it is also those they struggle to bring—their children, who will have logic behind them when they say, "It's boring!"

*Nicholas W. Punch O.P.  
Webster, Wis.*

## Wise Call

It may well be that Bishop Donald W. Trautman puts the proposed translation of the Roman Missal in the most unflattering light, "How Accessible Are the New Mass Translations?" (5/21) and that the work in progress is altogether much more satisfactory than he thinks.

However, if the translation examples Bishop Trautman uses are in any way representative of the whole project, then I predict a very serious problem: that clergy will take it upon themselves to improvise and make ad hoc adaptations of the prayers for their congregations—or will simply reject the new sacramentary and continue using the present one. This would be a serious breakdown in liturgical discipline and a pastoral disaster with wide implications.

The new sacramentary must not only be presented to the English-speaking world; it must also be received. The key to genuine reception will be the consultation and pastoral testing within the wider church for which Bishop Trautman wisely calls.

*(Msg.) M. Francis Mannion  
Salt Lake City, Utah*

## Audience-Driven

Thank you for the two-part series "Advice for College Grads," edited by Jim McDermott, S.J. (5/7, 5/14). It was both enjoyable and enlightening, and provided the special vicarious experience that makes graduations so special.

But I was slightly disappointed you did not list the sources of the various remarks. After all, context is critical, and communication is audience-driven.

*Tom Singer, O.M.I.  
Belleville, Ill.*

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# Decrease and Increase

The Nativity of St. John the Baptist (C), June 24, 2007

Readings: Isa 49:1-6; Ps 139:1-3, 13-15; Acts 13:22-26; Luke 1:57-66, 80

*"When the time arrived for Elizabeth to have her child she gave birth to a son"*  
(Luke 1:57)

**W**E USUALLY ASSOCIATE John the Baptist with the Advent season. But here in early summer we encounter John once more, in order to celebrate his birth on June 24. So important is this solemnity that today it replaces the Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time.

The New Testament does not supply precise information about the dates of John's or Jesus' birth. In the third or fourth century the birthday of Jesus was assigned to Dec. 25, around the time of the winter solstice, after what we call the "shortest" day of the year, when the time of daylight begins to increase.

In John's Gospel there is a saying from John the Baptist, referring to Jesus, that "He must increase; I must decrease" (3:30). And so the birth of John was

assigned to June 24, after the summer solstice, when the daylight begins to decrease, following the "longest" day of the year. The Scripture readings for the Nativity of St. John the Baptist reflect the dynamic of "decrease and increase" between John and Jesus.

Today's Old Testament reading is one of the "servant" songs from Second Isaiah. It was chosen most obviously for its reference to the servant having been named from his mother's womb (see Luke 1:60). But the passage also

expresses important aspects of John's career as a prophet to God's people and a light to the nations. At the same time his status as servant makes him subordinate to Jesus.

The selection from Paul's speech in Acts 13 reminds us that John played a pivotal role in salvation history and so won a place in the early Christian kerygma (proclamation). Yet here again importance is given to John's own recognition of his subordinate status with respect to Jesus: "I am not worthy to unfasten the sandals of his feet."

In Luke's infancy narrative there are many parallels and comparisons between John and Jesus, both in the announcements of their births and in the accounts of

## Praying With Scripture

- In what sense can John the Baptist be regarded as a servant of the Lord?
- In light of today's readings, how would you describe John's role in salvation history?
- How might the dynamic of "decrease and increase" apply to your life in relation to God and to others?

them. The dynamic is simple: While John is great, Jesus is even greater. The idea is not to criticize John but rather to highlight Jesus' greatness. The birth of John is presented by Luke as the fulfillment of

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God's promises not only to his elderly parents but also to God's people as a whole. Elizabeth and Zechariah insist that the child be named John, a name whose Hebrew form (Yohanan) celebrates God's mercy and favor to his people. If there is any connection between Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls, it was through John, who was "in the [Judean] desert until the day of his manifestation to Israel." The child John grew up to become a herald of God's coming kingdom, the precursor of the Messiah and the mentor of Jesus.

The dynamic of "decrease and increase" can be applied to all Christians. The vocation of every Christian is to let the light of Jesus shine forth to all the world and bear witness to the Word who became flesh and dwelt among us.

# Traveling Time

Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (C),  
July 1, 2007

Readings: 1 Kgs 19:16, 19:21; Ps 16:1-2, 5, 7-9; Gal 5:1, 13-18; Luke 9:51-62

*"When the days for Jesus' being taken up were fulfilled, he resolutely determined to journey to Jerusalem" (Luke 9:51)*

SUMMER IS A GOOD TIME to travel. Many of us interrupt the normal flow of life and go elsewhere for a while. Travel allows us to meet different people and see different things, and we often come away refreshed and renewed. At least, that is what we hope.

Today we begin a journey with Jesus and his disciples. It will extend over several months and feature readings from what is called Luke's travel or journey narrative (9:51-19:44). The journey moves from northern Galilee to Jerusalem and focuses on two themes: the identity of Jesus (Christology) and what it means to follow him (discipleship). Today's inaugural reading from Luke 9 suggests that the

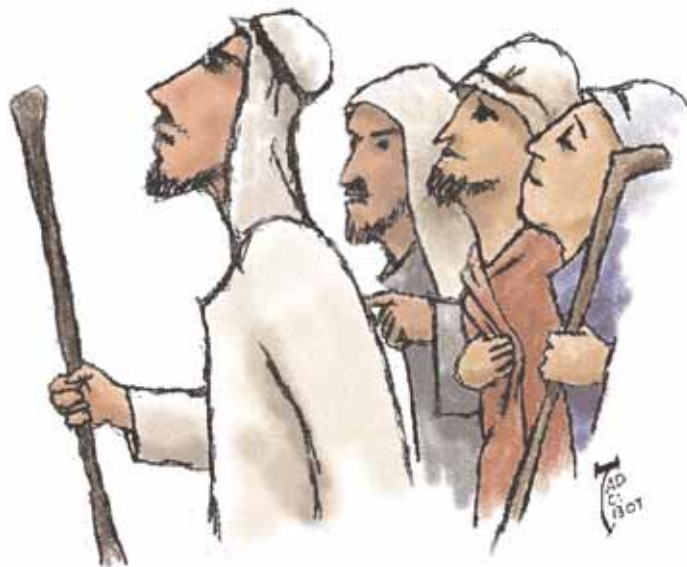
journey may be long, nonviolent, difficult and important.

The journey from northern Galilee to Jerusalem will be long. Nevertheless, despite the trials along the way and the outcome of the journey, Jesus courageously sets his face toward Jerusalem. There he will meet misunderstanding, suffering and death. But it will also be the place of his vindication and glorification at Easter.

The journey will be nonviolent. It is not the march of a military conqueror cutting a path through the land. This leader refuses to destroy his Samaritan enemies or call down fire from heaven on his foes. Instead of acting as some imagined the Messiah would do, Jesus shows himself to be the best example of his own teaching about loving one's enemies.

The journey will be difficult. Jesus warns a prospective follower not to expect physical comfort or a stable residence. Foxes and birds have it easier than the Son of Man does. If it is hard for the leader, so it may be hard for the followers. There is no guarantee of an easy or comfortable life along the way.

The journey will be important, for it concerns proclaiming God's coming kingdom and living under its power in the present through Jesus. To underscore its importance, Jesus uses an example that was even more shocking in his day than it may be for us today. He suggests that following him is more important than attending to the burial of a parent. Even Elisha was allowed by Elijah to say goodbye to his parents. This extreme example



brings out the importance of joining Jesus and his disciples on the way. Their journey is the pilgrimage that we call Christian life.

This coming Wednesday, July 4,

Americans celebrate Independence Day. Today's selection from Paul's letter to the Galatians offers an understanding of freedom more comprehensive, profound and challenging

than any Fourth-of-July orator is likely to provide. According to Paul, through Jesus' death and resurrection we have been freed from the dominion of sin, death and the law (the flesh) and freed for life in the Spirit. Paul could not imagine life without a master, and for him the only master worthy of our service is God. In serving God, we are free to live in accord with what is best in human nature (the spirit), to respond to the Holy Spirit and to fulfill the deepest intentions of the law.

**Daniel J. Harrington**

## Praying With Scripture

- Are you planning a trip this summer? What do you hope from it?
- Do you imagine your Christian life as a pilgrimage? What might you learn about it from today's readings?
- How do you understand freedom? How is Paul's idea of freedom different from our conventional notions?

DANIEL J. HARRINGTON, S.J., is professor of New Testament at Weston Jesuit School of Theology in Cambridge, Mass.

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