America

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American and Catholic

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on David O'Brien

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on honest patriotism

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by Robert Hirschfield

Of Many Things

JUST AS THIS TIME of the year involves picnics and beaches, so May seems to be the time for installations and things, things like graduations, first Communions, confirmations, even retirements. All of these figured in my family's doings this year. Being part of these celebrations provided a welcome respite from the streams of bad news globally. Two of them stand out in my mind and memory because of what they evoked.

The first was at St. Gabriel's Church in Riverdale, in New York City's borough of The Bronx. I had been there before, often, since confirmation comes some years after baptism and first Communion. This time Michael Eugene *Patrick* McSweeney was being confirmed with his school class of 30. The proceedings were conducted with the precision of a 1950's May procession, but with none of the attendant anxiety of those days. The whole mood was the perfect mixture of seriousness and joy, in no little part thanks to the celebrant, Bishop Dominick Lagonegro, a fellow seminarian of the pastor, Msgr. Thomas Kelly. His personality is as expansive as his piety is genuine. It was clear that he considered this day to be as much a "big deal" as the kids did. All elements of the liturgies for both sacraments were conducted with care and very engaged empathy with each student. Afterward, the bishop was in no rush and sat for pictures for an hour. Little brother Liam Dennis McSweeney can be seen in one holding the crozier like a hurler. This confirmation took place during a regular Saturday evening Mass, and the influx of admiring relatives and more than usual length seemed not to disturb the parishioners. Quite the opposite: most of them stayed on for the reception. Many of those who spoke to me bragged—I have to call it that—about the parish, the school, the pastor and the principal. This came as no surprise. The principal, Deborah Pitula, had told a similar crowd at a kindergarten graduation some years ago, "We believe that our most important task is handing on our faith."

It used to be said with respect that this or that religious was a "living rule," meaning that if the rule of the order were to be lost, it could be rewritten by observing that woman or man. I'd have to assert that St. Gabriel's is a "living parish."

On to the next day, for some native air in the Philadelphia suburbs. This time the occasion was a baptism for Hayden Pedro Kelly, in from Chicago with his entourage to be greeted by an even larger local one, members of St. Philip Neri parish in Lafayette Hill, Montgomery County. There we were welcomed by Msgr. Charles Vance, who might have been a clone of Msgr. Thomas Kelly in his graciousness and efficiency—and in his pride in his own "living parish" and delight in his parishioners. It is no secret that the feeling is mutual. My brother and sister-in-law were the godparents and assumed the obligation of looking after older brother Declan Pablo Kelly during the proceedings. Then we all repaired to an inn, also named Lafayette, where our server's name was Kelly!

After a weekend of "enough religion to last until Labor Day," as someone said, I was taken to ponder the words of Deborah Pitula at the graduation that our task is handing on our faith, and to reflect on the role of the two exemplary pastors I'd been with. As in all cases, grace builds on nature, and I thought of the vocation and formation of both men: St. Joseph's Seminary, Dunwoodie, N.Y., for Tom Kelly and St. Charles Seminary, Overbrook, Pa., for Charlie Vance. War stories about both places are common clerical currency, perhaps especially among the most faithful alumni. They and their classmates were formed in an atmosphere of intellectual rigor and love for the church—not for the church as an abstract concept, but for the church of the people whom they were preparing to serve. Now, as they perform the service for which they were prepared, their inborn courtesy and humility have led them to gather around them willing and enthusiastic partners in the task of handing on our faith.

Both parishes have vibrant schools and religious education programs; parishioners are active in the ministries, and they have a palpable sense of ownership in the community. I thought of the 1950's May processions, when the church seemed powerful even though it was, in some places, glacial and remote. And I decided that I like this incarnation more, with thanks to Tom, Charlie and all like them who labor tirelessly in the vineyard to hand on our faith.

Dennis M. Linehan, S.J.

America

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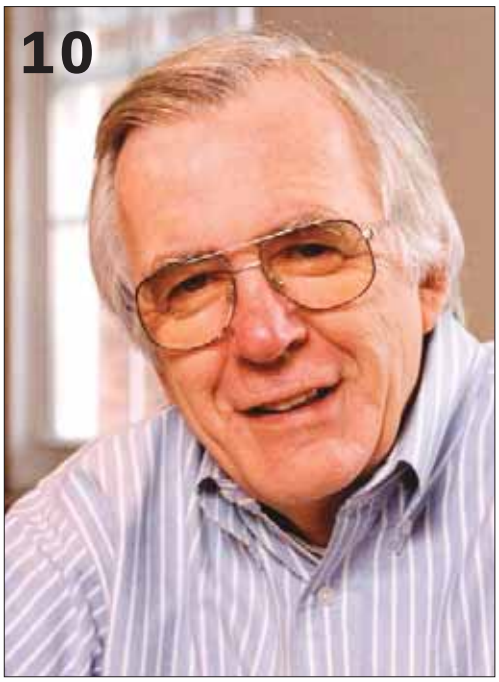
Cover photo Luke Petersen of Virginia prays the rosary in St. Peter's Square with the U.S. flag on April 19, 2005, awaiting results of the papal election. CNS photo by Nancy Wiechec.



Articles

The Pope and the President

The first meeting between President George W. Bush and Pope Benedict XVI on June 9 in Vatican City was one of many photo opportunities on the president's quick trip to Europe on the occasion of the G-8 meeting in Germany. Predictably, the president sought to highlight the issues on which his administration supports Catholic positions on life and family matters, as well as the important initiatives the Bush administration has taken to address the H.I.V./AIDS epidemic in Africa. In a private meeting, the pope and the president also discussed issues of international concern, including the continuing conflicts in the Middle East, the fighting in Lebanon and the prospect of genocide in Darfur.

It is understandable that the president would want to emphasize those issues on which his administration appears to be supportive of Catholic positions on marriage and abortion, although these discussions never touch on the fact that the steady decline in the rate of abortions during the pro-choice Clinton administration seems to have reached a plateau under the pro-life Bush. But the people of the United States, as well as the international community, would be well served if the president listened more carefully to the Vatican's concerns about the present violence in Iraq and the dangers of future war-making in Iran. The world would be a much safer place today if the United States had heeded the warnings of the Vatican before the pre-emptive invasion of Iraq in 2003, an unnecessary war of choice that threatens to leave Iraq a failed state and a breeding ground for Islamic terrorism. The unforeseen consequences of war, as the Vatican has frequently warned, are far worse than our imaginations can conceive when proposing war as a remedy for the world's ills.

Deforesting the Amazon

Destruction of the Amazon rain forest has accelerated as new highways have provided illegally operating loggers, ranchers and growers easy access to previously untouched areas that are home to many indigenous people. Ironically, although the Brazilian government has condemned the deforestation, at the same time it has encouraged the growing of sugar cane there for the production of ethanol as a gasoline substitute. Brazilian Bishop Erwin Krautler, C.Pp.S., warned at a mid-May press conference that the Amazon is at risk of becoming a huge sugar cane field. Other crops being cultivated there include soya, which has become increasingly popular in Europe, where genetically modified soya has caused concerns.

Paulo Adario, director of Greenpeace's Amazon campaign, has pointed to agribusiness and illegal logging as mainly responsible for the ongoing deforestation. He contends that the government should restrict soya plantations to areas already deforested, combat illegal logging more aggressively and "implement its own anti-deforestation plan." Like Dorothy Stang, the American-born member of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur who, as a defender of the indigenous people of the Amazon, was murdered in 2005 at the instigation of a rancher, Mr. Adario has also received death threats. Bishop Krautler made his comments at the press conference just a week after the sentencing of the rancher to 30 years in prison for Sister Stang's murder. The bishop noted that on his arrival in the area 42 years ago, the Amazon rain forest was still relatively intact. But now, he emphasized, "it's five minutes to midnight," meaning that without strong intervention, the rain forest is doomed.

Injustice to Workers

In quick succession, the Supreme Court has delivered two harsh blows to American workers, and in both cases the weight of the decisions fell heavily on women. First, in a 5-to-4 decision, the court ruled that suits against pay discrimination must be brought within 180 days of the first payment, not 180 days from suspicion of discrimination. Then, in a unanimous decision it upheld a Labor Department ruling that home health care aides hired through home care agencies were exempt from minimum wage and overtime laws. In so doing, the high court overturned the decision of an appeals court that would have allowed overtime protection to the aides.

It is hard to argue with a unanimous decision, even when it rests on the subtleties of labor law, but the court's silence on the stark injustice of the regulation toward those who do some of the most basic and at times undignified work, and incidentally save the nation of billions of dollars in fees for institutional care, is painful. Congress should correct this glaring injustice in this session. Furthermore, the bar and our law schools should examine themselves on what assumptions in their professional education and training led the justices to refrain from comment on this legalized injustice under administrative law. In the pay-discrimination case, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg and the liberal minority weighed in on behalf of affected women professionals, but in the matter of home health aides they held their peace. Is the court's jurisprudence tainted with class bias?

Independence Day

FOR MORE THAN 200 YEARS, the United States of America has been a beacon to the world, and American citizenship has been highly prized. That a government should be "of the people, by the people, for the people" was an ideal that inspired men and women all over the world. Generations of immigrants proudly took the oath of allegiance, making them citizens. In 2005, more than 600,000 immigrants became naturalized Americans. This Independence Day thousands more will take the oath. Around the world, however, the appeal of the American ideal has declined dramatically. Where a few years ago foreigners distinguished between their dislike for the policies of the current administration and their admiration for our country, today they hold American-style democracy in low esteem. "Once a model to emulate," as Michael Ignatieff has written, "it has become an example to avoid."

In their recent book, *America Against the World: How We Are Different and Why We Are Disliked*, the pollsters Andrew Kohut and Bruce Stokes report that between 2000 and 2005 there was a significant decline in foreigners' admiration for the United States. In 2000, 83 percent of Britons expressed a favorable attitude toward the United States; in 2005 the figure had dropped to 55 percent. In Germany, long a beneficiary of U.S. outreach, the numbers dropped from 78 percent to 41 percent. In Turkey, another cold war ally, the figures were 52 percent and 23 percent respectively. The invasion of Iraq, the war against terror and U.S. unilateralism were certainly occasions for this widespread disfavor, but these developments disclosed deeper antipathy about U.S. institutions and the American character. One of the most surprising is skepticism about American democracy itself.

For many, the effort to impose democracy by force in the Middle East quite properly awakened suspicions of hypocrisy. But according to the two researchers, criticism of American democracy goes deeper. Respondents question the role of money in American politics; they look down on attack advertisements, and they are perplexed by the court-refereed outcome of the 2000 elections. Clearly even countries with longstanding democratic traditions, like Britain and France, have different democratic styles, so they may not be best situated to judge the American performance. Still, when criticism is so widespread, only an unrepentant chauvinist will deny that self-examination is necessary. As Donald W. Shriver contends in *Honest Patriots: Loving a Country Enough to Remember Its Misdeeds*, genuine love of country requires a critical spirit that is honest about our country's faults and, when necessary, ready to confess its sins.

Critics do well to point out the power of money in our political system. We are currently engaged in the longest and, at current estimates, the most expensive presidential campaign ever waged. Even though some argue that the Internet may diminish the need for costly television ads, the leading candidates are raising money at an alarming rate. The accelerated primary election calendar demands large campaign staffs, making the candidates less responsive to regional and local issues and generally more scripted. The press continues to do "gotcha" reporting, focusing on trivial issues like haircuts and old stories like "a vast right-wing conspiracy." It builds up candidates for their celebrity appeal and then delights in bringing them down. The basic issue of the election, everyone knows, is the war in Iraq. Yet the choice is simplistically defined: withdraw U.S. troops or not. The complexities go unexplored.

THE FORCES MARSHALED TODAY against democratic revival in the United States are enormous: big money to feed campaigns and a Supreme Court that opposes campaign finance reform by equating money with free speech, a conflation of news and entertainment enforced by mammoth corporations and the diminishment of hard news in a culture compulsively amusing itself to death. But there is reason to think these obstacles can be overcome, that the people can do better than their institutions.

In the 2004 election, 60 percent of eligible voters went to the polls, the highest number in years; and on many other indicators of democratic participation—signing petitions, joining boycotts and demonstrations—Americans score higher than Europeans. Vigorous citizen participation in the current campaign would go a long way to revive democratic government and regain the world's respect. Of course, that will depend, as in the old days, on getting greater access to the candidates, or at least to their state and local campaign chiefs, their major backers and endorsers. Independence Day 2007 should be an occasion for citizens to begin to reclaim "government of the people, by the people, for the people" from the forces that threaten to capture and corrupt it.

At Assisi, Pope Appeals for Mideast Peace

Pope Benedict XVI greets children during a pilgrimage to Assisi, Italy.

On a pilgrimage to the birthplace of St. Francis of Assisi, Pope Benedict XVI appealed for peace in the Middle East and a return to "responsible and sincere dialogue" to end armed conflicts. The pope's one-day trip June 17 marked the 800th anniversary of the conversion of St. Francis, a figure the pope described as a one-time "king of partying" who learned to make space for God.

The pope made a point of praising the 1986 interreligious gathering in Assisi, an initiative of Pope John Paul II, as "a prophetic intuition and a moment of grace." Such dialogue is an essential part of Christianity, but must be carried out without weakening the Christian duty to spread the Gospel, he said. The papal visit to the central Italian hill town of Assisi came during heightened tension and violence in the Middle East, especially in the Palestinian territory of Gaza, which was taken over by Hamas militia forces in mid-June.

Count of Murdered Iraqi Christians Rises Dramatically

The number of Christians murdered in Iraq since 2003 has greatly increased compared with the numbers during the period 1995 to 2002, said a comprehensive report based on public accounts from Iraqi Christian sources. The report described in detail the deaths of Christian children—including babies—laypeople, priests and nuns who were burned, beaten or blown up by car bombs over the past few years. From May 2003 to early June, 268 Iraqi Christians were murdered; from 1995 to 2002, 19 Iraqi Christians were murdered, said the report, titled Incipient Genocide: The Ethnic Cleansing of the Assyrians of Iraq. The report, released June 12, was written by Peter BetBasoo, a founder of the Assyrian International News Agency. The agency was founded in 1995 to report on news and analysis of issues regarding Iraqi Christians. The report detailed attacks on Iraqi Christian women and students. "Young Christian women are abducted and raped," it said, adding that female students are also targets of ridicule and discrimination.

Nuncio in Poland Criticizes Political Homilies

The Vatican's ambassador to Poland has called on Catholic clergy to stop preaching politicized homilies. "I wish liturgical services in Poland would not turn into public rallies and just dispose people to be more human and more Catholic," said Archbishop Jozef Kowalczyk, the Vatican's ambassador, or nuncio. "We need priests, not politicians—and if politicians, then politicians of God's word," said the archbishop, whose sermon was carried by Poland's Catholic information agency, KAI. "We also need evangelists, not economists—we have enough of those already in Poland to do the job. Let's work on their spirit and conscience so they'll become true professionals in serving all society. This is the mission of a priest." Preaching June 11 in Czuma, near Lublin, the nuncio said: "The times are over when people went to priests on every occasion, to arrange plumbing or telephones for their villages, and they elected priests as council chairmen hoping they'd organize such things. This epoch has ended."

Amnesty International 'Betrayed Its Mission'

With its new stance supporting the legalization of abortion around the world, Amnesty International "has betrayed its mission," said Cardinal Renato Martino, president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, in an interview with the National Catholic Register conducted by e-mail. The Register, based in North Haven, Conn., also quoted Daniel Berrigan, S.J., an iconic figure in pacifist and human rights circles, repudiating the new Amnesty position. "One cannot support an organization financially or even individually that is contravening something very serious in our ethic," the priest said. Cardinal Martino said, "I believe that if, in fact, Amnesty International persists in this course of action, individuals and Catholic organizations must withdraw their support, because in deciding to promote abortion rights, A.I. has betrayed its mission." Amnesty International, a widely respected human rights organization, had been officially neutral on abortion until

this April, when its executive committee adopted a new position.

Pope, Bush Discuss Christians in Iraq

Meeting for the first time, Pope Benedict XVI and U.S. President George W. Bush spoke about the precarious situation of Christians in Iraq and a wide range of other foreign policy and moral issues. The pope and president looked relaxed as they greeted each other and spoke briefly in front of reporters before their 35-minute private encounter June 9. Bush later held a separate 40-minute meeting with the Vatican's top foreign policy officials. A Vatican statement described the meetings as "cordial" and said they had focused in part on "the worrisome situation in Iraq and the critical conditions in which the Christian community finds itself." Tens of thousands of Christians have fled Iraq over the last four years to escape violence and discrimination. The talks also touched on the overall situation in the Middle East, including the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and developments in Lebanon. "The Holy See again expressed the hope for a 'regional' and 'negotiated' solution to the conflicts and crises that are tormenting the region," the Vatican statement said.

Franciscan Initiative in Bethlehem

Joey Canavati, a Palestinian, teaches local children basketball in Bethlehem, West Bank, June 7.

Palestinians now can enjoy a new, one-of-a-kind sports center, where they can work out, practice on regulation-sized courts and play safely. "It's something good to bring to Bethlehem, such a place. There is no place like this where women and also men can practice sports," said Sylvia Ghattas, 21, as she finished her workout in the gym of the Catholic Action-run sports center. The building, financed by the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land, boasts the only regulation-sized and equipped basketball court in the Palestinian territories, as well as a gym and two multipurpose halls. Together with Catholic Action's already existing outdoor pool, family center, children's hall and playground, the new sports center forms a 2.5-acre sports and recreational complex. Before, Catholic Action's sports teams practiced in a haphazard way at various venues throughout the city, said Issa Hazbon, director of the new center. "This is a dream come true, and it has come true better than we imagined it could," said Hazbon. "Children are frustrated here. We direct them to sports to release their anger. They have nowhere else to go."

Theologians Cautioned: No Public Criticism

Daniel K. Finn

In his presidential address to the Catholic Theological Society of America, Daniel K. Finn warned the society against issuing public statements critical of church policies or church authorities. "The problem is that these statements become the public face of the C.T.S.A. for nearly everyone who doesn't attend our conventions," he said. "Taken together, they present us as individuals who come together as a group primarily to defend ourselves against hierarchical authority. We insiders know this is only a small part of what we are up to," he added. "But no group can control its public image completely, and in my opinion we have done too little thinking about this." Finn, who teaches theology and economics at St. John's University in Collegeville, Minn., spoke on the final day of the society's annual convention in Los Angeles from June 7 to 10.

Volunteer Experience Influences Public Policy

As a college graduate in the early '80s, Senator Bob Casey Jr., Democrat of Pennsylvania, served as a volunteer teacher and witnessed the challenges faced by children in Philadelphia's inner city. His students' efforts to make good choices for their lives, despite what they encountered at home and on the streets, has inspired his career as a public official and his approach to public policies, he told Catholic businessmen and volunteers. "I think it's had a transformative impact on

my life," Casey said, reflecting on his experience. He gave the keynote address at a breakfast hosted by the Catholic Network of Volunteer Service on June 6 to honor the Catholic Business Network of Prince George's County, Md., for its service to the local community. During the address, Casey, a Catholic, shared stories of his yearlong service as a fifth-grade teacher and an eighth-grade basketball coach at Gesu School in North Philadelphia.

Jerry Filteau Retires From Catholic News Service

Jerry Filteau

Jerry Filteau, whose byline has become associated with in-depth and authoritative reporting on the Catholic Church, is retiring from Catholic News Service July 1 after 37 years. Major stories he has covered include the 1973 Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion; the 1978 inauguration of Pope John Paul II; and the 1981 assassination attempt against the pope. For more than 25 years, he has been the main CNS staff member reporting on the semiannual meetings of the U.S. bishops. He also has written extensively on theological, ecumenical, liturgical, interreligious, canon law and social justice issues. In 2003 he won the Catholic Press Association's St. Francis de Sales Award for outstanding contributions to journalism.

Massachusetts Legislature and Bishops

The Massachusetts Legislature's June 14 vote to reaffirm same-sex marriage thwarts the will of the citizens and undermines efforts to protect children, families and society, the four Catholic bishops of Massachusetts said. The bishops made their statement shortly after the General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, as the legislature is formally named, voted 151 to 45 to reject a proposed constitutional amendment defining marriage as a union between a man and a woman. At least one-fourth—or 50—of the legislators had to affirm the proposed amendment for it to be placed before voters on the 2008 ballot. "Today, the common good has been sacrificed by the extreme individualism that subordinates what is best for children, families and society," said Cardinal Sean P. O'Malley of Boston and Bishops George W. Coleman of Fall River, Timothy A. McDonnell of Springfield and Robert J. McManus of Worcester.

Iraqis Living in Jordan Desperate

The thousands of impoverished Iraqis spilling into Jordan each year are in desperate need of humanitarian aid, said the head of Caritas Jordan. However, Jordanian government officials are reluctant to let international nongovernmental organizations offer assistance to Iraqis "because they don't want to have a repeat of what happened with the Palestinians," when the Palestinians, fleeing violence from the war of 1948, stayed, said Wael Suleiman, executive director of Caritas Jordan. Suleiman noted that Jordan had allowed the permanent resettlement of Palestinian refugees, 1.5 million of whom currently live in refugee camps in the country. While today the Jordanian government "accepts the Iraqis as guests," it is hesitant to give them legal or refugee status, he said. Through two projects Caritas Jordan conducts with the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, Caritas Jordan recently succeeded in helping 27,000 Iraqis become approved as registered refugees, Suleiman said. He added that Caritas Jordan hopes to have 65,000 Iraqis registered by the end of the year. Only a few humanitarian organizations can assist the approximately 1.5 million Iraqis living—often illegally—in Jordan, he said.

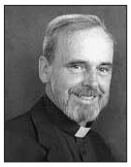
Orthodox Archbishop Chrysostomos II of Cyprus exchanges gifts with Pope Benedict XVI during their meeting at the Vatican June 16. Archbishop Chrysosotomos called for improved relations between the Vatican and the Russian Orthodox Church and offered to be a mediator in this regard.

Catholic Relief Services Work in Lebanon

Amid destabilizing political tensions that sometimes turn violent, Catholic Relief Services reconstruction projects have been rebuilding Lebanese communities and bringing hope, said the C.R.S. country representative in Beirut, Lebanon. Lebanese society is experiencing a "kind of schizophrenic existence," said Melinda Burrell, the C.R.S. official, who visited Washington in late May to meet with U.S. government donors. "Every three or four weeks, something could trigger a civil war" but again and again, the Lebanese do not fight each other, she said. After decades of on-again, off-again violence, many Lebanese have an attitude of "been there, done that," she said.

Lebanon, a small Middle Eastern country, has made headlines for its uncomfortable relationship with Syria, political assassinations, power struggles among political factions and recent military action against Palestinian terrorists. Last summer, a monthlong conflict between Israeli military forces and Hezbollah militants "destroyed or at least damaged" most of southern Lebanon's infrastructure, Burrell said. The conflict left hidden cluster bombs in 70 percent of southern Lebanon's agricultural fields.

From CNS and other sources. CNS photos.



Three Amigos

'A conspiracy of magnanimity'

No one would choose to live without friends, even if he had all other goods. Rich people and holders of powerful positions seem to need friends…. In poverty also, and in other misfortunes, people think friends are the only refuge.

—Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book VII

HAVING HEARD so much about the movie "Pan's Labyrinth," I rented the DVD the first day it was available. As promised by friends, it was a stunning, frightening, sad and memorable film. With its horrific violence and imagery, I would not generally recommend it. But I do recommend one of its "special features."

In an hour of conversation with Charlie Rose on PBS, the film's director, Guillermo del Toro, joins two friends who discuss their lives, their labors and their friendship. The two friends are Alfonso Cuarón (director of the film, "Children of Men") and Alejandro González Iñárritu (director of "Babel") These three 40-something men from Mexico, somehow marvelously commanding center stage in the world of cinema, have collaborated with, criticized and inspired each other, even on their masterpieces honored at Cannes, Hollywood and in Mexico over the past two years. All three won Oscar nominations this year.

Iñárritu's "Babel" is a complex interweaving of four narratives from the United States and Mexico to North Africa and Japan, each story probing the relationships among parents and children. Complex and heart-wrenching, "Babel" leaves you exhausted but awed. Iñárritu was named best director at Cannes, and his film won best motion picture at the Golden Globes.

After Cuarón directed the third Harry Potter film, he created last year's "Children of Men," a haunting dystopia of universal infertility, political paranoia and hope set in the third decade of our present century. In its evocative atmospheric tone, its economy in pictorially presenting chaos and its seamless cinematography, the work is astonishing.

In "Pan's Labyrinth," the third of the trio, del Toro, mounts a realistic fantasy of terrible anguish and redemption. Set in early 1940's Spain, his film imaginatively presents the young heroine as an Alice-and-Dorothy-like traveller of mythic and contemporary worlds as a martyr, both redeemed and glorified. Del Toro is fond of the saying: "The tyrant's reign ends when he dies; and the martyr's reign begins when he dies." "Pan's Labyrinth" lets you feel that truth.

These are three great films by three great friends. I do not think such a splendid trilogy has been made since "The Godfather" series or the days of Antonioni, Fellini and Bergman. But this is not a film review: it's a reflection on friendship.

The textures of friendship are marvelously woven in the Charlie Rose interview, which is available not only on the DVD but also free on the Internet.

The three film directors celebrate and cherish one another's families. They challenge and confirm one another's strengths. They would rather not compete for recognition, but if they must, they seem to relish the success of their brothers more than their own. Cuarón says of del Toro's triumphant 22-minute ovation at Cannes, "That's the happiest moment I have had in film." They all agree that in their creativity, their achievements and their families, "The core of the process is friendship."

The Charlie Rose conversation is fascinating as a chance to enter into the doubts and joys of the creative process. But it is most engaging as a dynamic picture of relationship. In their discussion, when one of them is addressed, he seems to think immediately of the others. At those rare times when someone interrupts, it is only to confirm what another has said. They each have a palpable gratitude for the writers, actors, editors and cinematographers who make their work possible. They praise their collaborators, not as if they were cranking out some acceptance speech, but with authentic admiration. More than on any tawdry reality show, these men are real; more than the countless shouting heads on talk shows, they listen to one another. More than on any sitcom, with its canned laughter, they have spontaneous joy.

Theirs is a conspiracy of magnanimity. Iñárritu, the realist, admires the fantasy style of del Toro. Del Toro says that after he saw Cuarón's "Children of Men," he wanted to call everyone he knew and ask forgiveness. Cuarón spilled the beans: "When you switch envy into admiration, it is a liberation." Del Toro concurred: "The sign of a true friendship is when you forgive success. When he won at Cannes, I felt fully happy." Such is the quality of large souls, three amigos.

It seems to me that "amigo" is a better word than "friend"—perhaps because it is closer to the Latin *amo*, "love." Love is not only eros, although it can accompany eros. At its highest and deepest, love is *caritas*, *agape*, the will for the beloved to be fully realized and fruitful. It is at the heart of any great friendship and every romance that is not mere narcissism, projection or escape. It reminds me that for those I love, I do indeed wish success. I wish that they may show their gifts to the world. I pray they may not be in want. But most of all, in loving them, I hope they will be blest by friendship. I say "blest" because friendship is not easily found. We may long for it, work at it, but there is an element of being blessed with it, a sheer gift.

May friendships be given to us, not only with the persons closest to us in this life, but with God revealed in Jesus. Such are the gifts without which all other gifts will inevitably seem empty.

As Aristotle wrote: "Those who wish good to their friend for their friend's own sake are friends most of all."

John F. Kavanaugh

JOHN F. KAVANAUGH, S.J., is a professor of philosophy at St. Louis University in St. Louis, Mo.

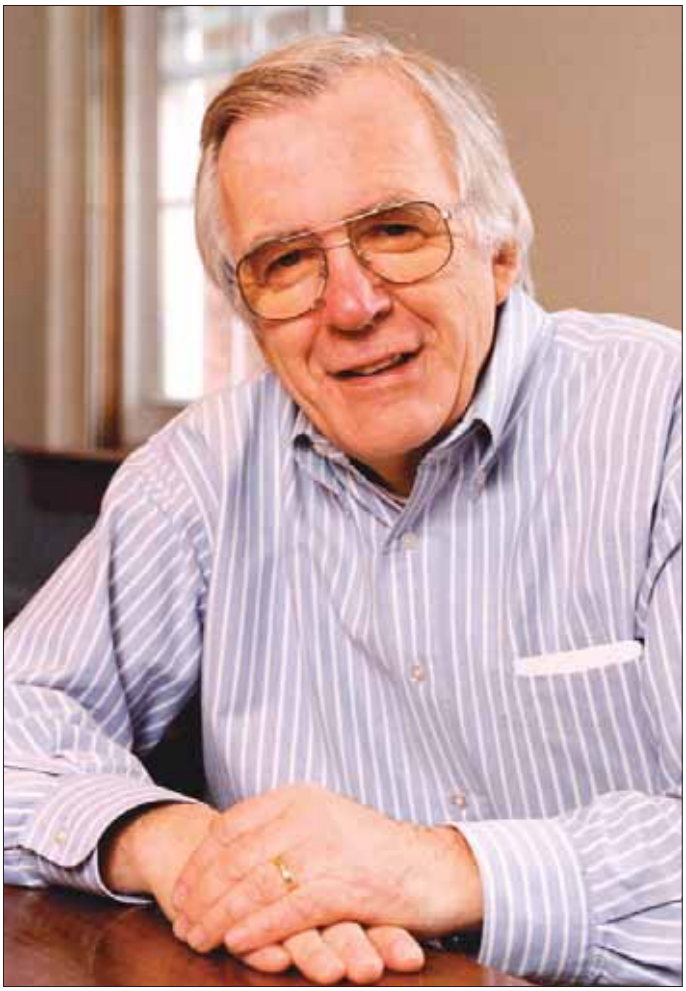


PHOTO COURTESY HOLY CROSS COLLEGE

David O'Brien, Catholic historian and social analyst, retires.

American and Catholic

– BY WILLIAM BOLE –

A FEW CLICKS INTO A GOOGLE SEARCH of "Professor David J. O'Brien," someone not entirely in the know could wonder just how many contemporary American intellectuals there are by that name, surfacing in venues within and beyond the academic world. There is David J. O'Brien the Catholic Church historian, who has written relatively obscure works like a history of the Diocese of Syracuse, N.Y. There is David J. O'Brien the political commentator, who writes op-ed pieces for papers like The Boston Globe, and who plugged a candidate for lieutenant governor of Massachusetts in a column last summer. There is David J. O'Brien the liberal, who chides Democrats for acting like Republican clones,

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and there is one who assails "mindless liberal orthodoxies" on issues like abortion. And there is David J. O'Brien (the sociologist?), who turns up in connection with the founding of peace-studies institutes at several colleges and universities.

Behind these and other appearances in the public square, there is actually just one David J. O'Brien, a "simple American historian," as he calls himself. Others call him one of the foremost American Catholic historians and social analysts of the past four decades, during which he has served as a professor of both history and Catholic studies at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Mass. If his interests have taken him down sundry paths, it is not because he suffers from a scholarly form of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, although his friends speak of his youthful enthusiasm, and he seems generally unable to sit still. When O'Brien turns from one subject or concern to another, he usually winds back to questions he has asked throughout his career, having to do with how Catholics feel about this political community we call America.

O'Brien admits he has not quite clarified the Americanist idea.

In May, O'Brien taught the last of his classes ("American Social Gospel" and "American Themes: War and Conscience") at the Jesuit-sponsored College of the Holy Cross, his academic home since 1969. It seems retirement, however, will only free up his time for the pursuit of scholarly projects (such as another diocesan history, of Richmond, Va.) and a particular conversation he has tried to stir up on a number of Catholic campuses around the United States. O'Brien has been telling his story of America and Catholicism, a story that has taken some turns with him over the years but has become more pointed and passionate since the atrocities of Sept. 11, 2001. He begins by speaking of penniless Catholic immigrants who came to share fully in the blessings of America and who, as a result, were granted responsibility with other Americans for their country's future. That is a familiar tale, but O'Brien believes it is being supplanted today by a rueful narrative of how Catholics in this country came to share tragically in the moral corruptions of America.

O'Brien's finger does not point in just one direction. He is referring to Catholics of differing stripes who style themselves as countercultural, distancing themselves from America (whether because of war, materialism, moral permissiveness or all of the above) and from "the American part of ourselves," as he puts it. He quotes, as representative, Cardinal Francis George of Chicago, who speaks of an internal threat to the faith posed by "Catholics shaped by their culture more than by their faith."

Lecturing at the University of Dayton in September 2005, O'Brien said: "I guess I would frame the argument, if I could, as one between those who care first for the integrity of the church, and want to emphasize what makes Catholics different, and those who, as Catholics, care passionately about America and its romantic promise, care most about its people, Catholics among them." That particular frame could give the impression that O'Brien thinks there are two bustling sides of this debate over Catholic distinctiveness versus Catholic Americanism; he does not. He says the "Americanists"—a name usually reserved for 19th-century Catholic assimilationists—have been drubbed by the assorted ranks of "counter-cultural Catholic separatists." When I caught up with him in a student pub at Holy Cross in April, O'Brien good-naturedly spoke of lectures like the one at Dayton as his "last Americanist" talks, referring namely to himself.

On the page, O'Brien can indeed sound at times like the last champion of a hopeful Catholic encounter with America. That could strike a separatist note of its own, maybe a pose of self-righteousness, and yet it is extremely unlikely that many students have filed out of O'Brien's classroom with those impressions. Friendly and affable, he does not need to speak for long until an audience or an interlocutor gets a feeling that this is someone who really likes people and would no sooner set himself apart than he would set himself on fire.

At a recent symposium in his honor, O'Brien was variously saluted as a joiner, a community builder, an academic warrior, a Christian humanist and (with a bow to Yiddish speakers) a mensch for all seasons. The renowned Catholic historian Jay Dolan recalled, "Wherever you went, if you went to a conference, there would be O'Brien, talking to students, surrounded by students." Another distinguished historian, Notre Dame's John McGreevy, joked, "If you catch me praying at [this] conference, it's because I'm praying that David O'Brien doesn't ask me to join another committee."

The mid-April gathering in Worcester, titled "Shaping American Catholicism: An Exploration of Major Themes in the Life and Work of David J. O'Brien," drew a professionally diverse crowd of roughly 150 people and was co-sponsored by Notre Dame's Cushwa Center for the Study of

American Catholicism and Holy Cross's Center for Religion, Ethics and Culture, which O'Brien created in 2000 and led for four years. In just 15 minutes before the formal kickoff, I met a Worcester antiwar activist, an archivist from Washington, D.C., a theologian from Ohio and a youth minister from Chicago, along with O'Brien's son-in-law, who is married to his nutrition-policy-analyst daughter. (O'Brien and his wife, Joanne, also have three sons, two of whom are involved in local Massachusetts politics and the other in business—along with four grandchildren.)

The theologian from Ohio was William Portier, of the University of Dayton, whom O'Brien has affably counted among the "counter-cultural Catholic separatists." As a symposium speaker, Portier related those words in good humor, but he told me later that ever since the Dayton lecture nearly two years ago, he has been struggling with O'Brien's call on Catholics to love America. Portier says that is not easy when he considers, among other tragic flaws, "the chronic systemic pattern" of war in American history.

'Our War'

O'Brien's thoughts about the current war are as impassioned as they are inevitably ambiguous. "What I'm saying about Iraq is that it's our war, not George Bush's war," he told me in the pub interview, during which he alternately waved his eyeglasses and his Dasani bottle to highlight points, frequently lifting his tall frame out of the banquette when his argument needed more room. Asked what he means by "our war," he replied, "The kids over there are not fighting for George Bush. They're fighting for us, for our freedom and security."

Still, O'Brien is a peace activist, and a candid one. "I hold up the signs saying 'Out Now,' but I'm not sure if it's the responsible thing to do," he said of the calls for immediate withdrawal from Iraq, which he notes could conceivably bring greater instability to the region. Basically, O'Brien is saying all Americans share responsibility for getting us into and finding a way out of "our war." Some would counter that the country was more or less dragged into this war by a driven administration, but O'Brien the historian is talking partly about the unilateralist tradition of American foreign policy, which, he says, habitually leaves us with few (political) choices in times of international crisis. Surely that is not just George W. Bush's tradition.

Having grown up in western Massachusetts, at home in what he once called "kill-the-commies Catholicism," O'Brien remained a happy liberal cold warrior through college at Notre Dame (class of 1960) and graduate school at the University of Rochester. But he became exposed to other notions as a young professor in Montreal between 1964 and 1969; and there came a time when war, racism and poverty made O'Brien groan like a subcultural resister. During the Vietnam era, when he wrote his book *The Renewal of American Catholicism* (1972), O'Brien lamented that the United States was no longer "fit for Christian inhabitation," as he recalled in a 2005 retrospective of the book published in U.S. Catholic Historian (which, in April 2007, put out a superb issue dedicated to his life and work).

There were turning points along the way back to O'Brien's stout belief in America, and more particularly the American people. He took a year's leave of absence from Holy Cross to help the U.S. bishops mark America's bicentennial in 1976 with a historic conference in Detroit, where hundreds of Catholic lay organizations resolved to take part in the renewal of American democracy. As a traveling board member of the now-defunct Catholic Committee on Urban

Ministry during the 1970's, O'Brien saw Catholics making good on such pledges in local communities. Scholarly work, too (notably his acclaimed 1992 biography Isaac Hecker: *An American Catholic*, about the founder of the Paulist Fathers), helped reground his Americanism.

More recently, while on the treadmill at Worcester's Y.M.C.A., he read the heart-stirring portraits of 9/11's victims by the brilliant New York Times writer Jim Dwyer. O'Brien says 9/11, with its illuminations of love, sacrifice and solidarity, convinced him that the much-scolded American individualism was a myth, and reminded him that he is an Americanist. On that day "the Americans, my people, were tested and...found worthy," O'Brien reflected. After further reflection, the stories of 9/11 "left me determined to contest the ground against countercultural and sectarian Catholicism, a Catholicism that thinks we could define ourselves by our difference and distance from our country and our fellow Americans," O'Brien explained this past March in a speech at St. Edward's University in Austin, Tex. "Such views are sometimes challenging, but often hypocritical, and almost always irresponsible."

The 'Last Americanist'?

In the late 19th century, Americanists in the church were devoted to their country's ideals of freedom and democracy, and they favored rapid assimilation of Catholic immigrants. Their days were more or less numbered in 1899, when Pope Leo XIII formally rebuked Americanism and what he saw as its undertones of ecclesiastical reform. Today the Americanist sensibility leads O'Brien to consort with organizations like Voice of the Faithful, which favors greater openness and transparency in the institutional church, and Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good, which counters a trend toward narrowing Catholic political engagement to abortion and related concerns. But O'Brien readily admits he has not "quite clarified the Americanist idea," especially the breaking points between this idea or sensibility and a simple celebration of America. His assessment of countercultural Catholic separatism raises questions of its own, like where separatism breaks off from necessary Catholic identity, an issue O'Brien himself has explored in the context of Jesuit higher education.

And could there really be a "last Americanist," even metaphorically speaking? Consciously or not, Catholics are regularly setting the dial between their Catholicism and their Americanism, and O'Brien would be among the first to say the signals could change with one turn of the generational frequency. In the shift he would like to see, Catholics would reflect more seriously on how this American culture that often repels us has also formed us in many profound, worthwhile, distressing, complicated and blessed ways, and how it is, altogether, our culture. A

ART BY MICHAEL ALTMAN

Honest Patriotism

A distinguished Protestant theologian reflects on the spirit of liberty.

BY DONALD W. SHRIVER JR.

THE CONGREGATIONAL council of Detroit's Bethel Evangelical Church appropriated $5 in the spring of 1918 for the purchase of an American flag to be displayed in the church sanctuary. Meanwhile, its young pastor encouraged the German immigrant church to adopt English as its language for worship. That pastor was Reinhold Niebuhr. Readers of his books, written between 1930 and 1970, are often surprised when they discover that in the midst of World War I, Niebuhr praised patriotism and urged his congregants to love America enough to fight for its democratic ideals. In his essay "Love of Country" (published in April 1918), he concedes "nations have often misused the loyal services of their citizens," but writes that "patriotism is something sublime and noble. A man must be dead of soul indeed if he has no love for the land of his birth or adoption."

Niebuhr was about to be disillusioned, however, by the uses to which Allied politicians put their victory over Germany. A few years later he would become America's preeminent modern theological critic of citizens who "mix the God of love and the God of battles." For the next 50 years,

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until his death in 1971, Niebuhr would tilt against nationalistic self-righteousness in all its guises. I think he would have agreed with the late William Sloane Coffin Jr.'s succinct analysis in *Credo* (2004): "There are three kinds of patriots, two bad, one good. The bad are the uncritical lovers and the loveless critics. Good patriots carry on a lover's quarrel with their country, a reflection of God's lover's quarrel with all the world."

We Americans have never found such distinctions easy to observe. Back in the 1830's, Alexis de Tocqueville complained that Americans stiffen at all foreign criticisms. He accused us of "irritable patriotism," as though we were not secure enough in our new nationhood to admit that some features of our culture deserved criticism.

In that tradition our president rushed to remind us after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, that a "good" America was under attack. Our secretary of defense soon dismissed the resistance of an "old Europe" to American preparation for war. Floods of flags covered our land. Journalists, academics and religious leaders were asked to defend freedom by closing ranks against a hostile world. We ended up with the U.S.A. Patriot Act, which defends freedom by restricting it.

A German Perspective on Flag Waving

As we celebrate Independence Day on July 4 this year, two memories shadow my citizen-concern for these events. The first relates to the native country of Niebuhr's parents. In early 1999 I was invited to a high school history class in an upper-class suburb of Berlin. I asked the class about their study of the Nazi era and whether they felt well informed about the Holocaust. "Of course!" they replied. "We study it three times, in grades 4, 8 and 12. We study it so much that some of us have had it up to here with the Holocaust!" I asked them if they still felt that they could be patriotic Germans. Some replied that they preferred to identify themselves as Europeans. Two told stories of summers spent in the United States. "Our high school peers in America asked us questions like, 'Do you know what a swastika is?' It took us a while to realize that what they call a swastika we call a Hackenkreuz. It really annoyed us. Know what it is! Do you think our schools have not drummed into us the history of Nazism? Our trouble with the American students we met is that they don't seem worried at all those flags on July 4, all those marching bands and speeches! It reminded us of the Nazis." In other words, German high school students are better educated than American students about the dangers of supernationalism and its symbols. Mass display of American flags on July 4 worries them.

An American instinct rose in me at this point in the conversation. I wanted to say to them, "Oh, you know it is much more innocent than that. We just cheer the veterans marching down main street and then we go off to a picnic in the park." But I held my tongue, just listening. Afterward I thought of German friends who visit our summertime church in upstate New York. They come into the sanctuary of that 200-year-old building, see the American flag there, and ask, "Why?" I try to answer by telling them about Niebuhr's move in 1918 to buy that flag. I say that these particular flags were gifts to our church in memory of one of its deceased members. Then I say, "As an ecumenical Christian, I have protested against having that flag here. But most folk in this Presbyterian congregation feel little tension between their patriotism and their faith." My German visitors reply, "Yes, that was how it was with us in the 1930's." I am glad now to tell such visitors that the church decided to move that flag from the front to the back of the sanctuary.

A second, post-9/11 memory still haunts me. It was May 2004. We were in the lecture hall of Manhattan's Riverside Church and had just viewed Martin Doblmeier's superb documentary film on the life and death of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. A panel of us discussed the question: Are American Christians faced now with a "Bonhoeffer moment"? Does our faith now require us to defend our country's democracy against its current government? The panel discussed the question pro and con, distinguishing and relating Germany in the thirties and America post-9/11. Then, as the meeting was about to close, a tall elderly man in the audience stood up and said, "I am a survivor of Auschwitz. I do not believe that the United States is yet at a Bonhoeffer moment. I believe that we are at 1932." It was a testimony so worth respecting that we did not discuss it. We just let it shadow our thoughts on our way home.

Soon after this sobering event, I referred to it in another conversation in Berlin, this time in a living-room gathering of Protestant church leaders. They replied, "We Germans know how fragile democracy can be, but we have enough confidence in American political institutions to believe that your country will curb excesses of governmental power." I had to smile at the irony of modern day Germans encouraging Americans to have more confidence in their democratic system. Reinhold Niebuhr would have loved that moment.

Rightly or wrongly, in post-9/11 America, lots of us are wondering whether critical love is losing out to uncritical love in current public talk about patriotism. We so easily forget the Alien and Sedition Act of 1798, the illegal and aggressive Mexican War of 1846, Lincoln's abrogation of habeas corpus during the Civil War, the Palmer Raids of 1919 and the internment of 120,000 Japanese Americans in 1942—all under presidents famous for democratic patriotism but responsive to popular public willingness to stretch law, constitution and ethics to "protect the nation."

Irritable Patriotism Today?

Not long ago a Syrian said to Lawrence Wright, the author of *The Looming Tower: A History of Al Qaeda* (2006): "I live in a police state. Now you do too." Such an anecdote inclines me to feel as defensive as I felt in that Berlin high school class—we're not yet that bad! July 4 is not a Nuremburg rally. We still have our democratic freedoms! Who are foreigners to think otherwise? Yet suddenly I come up short. Shades, in me, of "irritable patriotism"?

Recently I had a sobering parallel conversation with a naturalized American citizen born in Eastern Europe. He had fled a real police state 20 years ago and mentioned his experience of Americans as being not very understanding of other people's viewpoints. "I used to comment to American friends about it, but since 9/11 I have kept quiet about any criticisms I may have about this country. I am proud to be a citizen here, but I look like an Eastern European. I can easily be mistaken for a foreigner. Frankly, since 9/11, I am afraid to speak my mind to most people here."

I wanted to say to him, "If we don't use our freedoms in this country, we may find them likely to be disappear. You must join the rest of us in speaking our minds." It would have been my patriotic reply. But these days, who am I to quiet his fears of being accused of being a disloyal American?

Last year, another friend went to the airport, tried to check his bags at the curb, was refused, then tried to use the automatic ticket machine, and was refused again. At the counter he asked why. "I don't know," says the clerk. "Maybe someone with your name is on a computer list. Maybe it's because your birthday, I see, is July 4." Baffled by that speculation, my friend said sadly, "It's so irrational. It doesn't seem to be the country in which I was born."

Leadership for Liberty

The country into which I was born had a president who, in his 1933 inaugural address, said, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." It is time to apply his words to the fears our own politicians use in order to put us on alert. In human collectives, fear can morph into paranoia and abandonment of citizen protections against uses of government power unwarranted by a democratic constitution. When that happens, some branch of government had better reassert democracy against its internal enemies.

One of those branches is the courts. Most of us think of Lincoln as the greatest of our presidents, but his abrogations of habeas corpus during the Civil War were struck down by the 1866 Supreme Court, which commented:

> When peace prevails, and the authority of government is undisputed, there is no difficulty in preserving the safeguards of

> liberty....but if society is disturbed by civil commotion—if the passions of men are aroused and the restraints of law are weakened, if not disregarded—these safeguards need, and should receive, the watchful care of those entrusted with the guardianship of the Constitution and laws. In no other way can we transmit to posterity unimpaired the blessings of liberty.

Happy the republic whose leaders remember and repeat such words to a fearful electorate. One of America's troubles this July 4 is that the sober wisdom of such words does not often grace either religious or political speech. But there are exceptions. When we Protestants are widely imagined as being under the tent of supernationalistic evangelicals, it is heartening to note that in the summer of 2005, the editor of the conservative journal Christianity Today published the following crucial theological distinctions between the Christian faith and faith in America:

> George W. Bush is not Lord. The Declaration of Independence is not an infallible guide to Christian faith and practice.... The American flag is not the Cross. The Pledge of Allegiance is not the Creed. "God Bless America" is not the Doxology. Sometimes one needs to state the obvious—especially at times when it's less and less obvious.

Americans need politicians and religious leaders willing to recall publicly the misuses of power in American history and also the present danger of defending against our enemies at the cost of imitating them. We can be proud of much in our history, but we will always need public leaders capable of mixing pride with humility, celebration with repentance.

That combination of virtues, I believe, is one we Christians should try to inject into our culture. Isn't Independence Day supposed to be an occasion of rededication to liberty and justice for all? Perhaps by promoting humility and repentance in the face of claims of national goodness, we can begin to become what Jesus called us, "the salt of the earth."

In 1944 the U.S. Court of Appeals judge Learned Hand described "the spirit of liberty" as "the spirit that is not too sure it is right." In saying that, he was not far from a Christian vision of a kingdom in which God alone is unambiguously good. Only in that certainty ought Christians to wish their neighbors a happy Fourth of July. A

A man gestures at the scene of a car-bomb attack in the mainly Shiite neighborhood of Sadriya in Baghdad in April.

The Role of International Moral Authority in Iraq

Suggestions for a way out of the impasse

BY CORNELIUS F. MURPHY JR.

IN WRESTLING WITH THE MORAL CHALLENGE presented by the conflict in Iraq, those who invoke the principles of just-war theory should also consider the landmark encyclical of John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris*, with its recognition of international moral responsibility.

Judging the Occupation: Before, During, After

Since the beginning of the war in Iraq in 2003, Christian moralists have sought to judge the invasion and its consequences according to the traditional principles of just-war theory. They have relied upon *jus ad bellum* criteria to assess the morality of the pre-emptive invasion itself and *jus in bello* precepts to make a moral judgment on the conduct of the war following the invasion. As a result of the continued insurgency and increased sectarian violence, however, the U.S.-led coalition forces have remained in Iraq long after the overthrow of Saddam Hussein and the defeat of his military. A third category of just-war principles, *jus post bellum*, must now be employed to judge the morality of a military occupation that continues after the original military objective has been achieved.

Moral judgments in the light of these three sets of criteria ought to be pursued even if they do not readily lead to a consensus among just-war moralists. Since the continuing

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presence of U.S. troops and their allies has become so controversial, greater attention should be paid to the *jus post bellum* principles. Complicating the judgment, however, is this fact: an international organization has now taken on responsibility for the occupation, and its role cannot be evaluated by conventional just-war criteria.

An International Moral Authority?

The U.N. Security Council, in its Resolution 1546 (2004), formally sanctioned the occupation of the U.S.-led coalition on the grounds that its continued presence was necessary to train Iraqi troops and police and establish conditions for an enduring peace.

Those voting for the resolution assumed that the Iraqi government could take on full sovereignty within a year. When that did not occur, the council (by Resolution 1723 in November 2006) extended its mandate to the end of the 2007 calendar year, while calling for a review of actual conditions in Iraq sometime in the summer of 2007. The resolution also reserved the right of the Baghdad government to call for the termination of the mandate at any time.

Since the council's responsibility has become an integral part of the situation in Iraq, the application of traditional just-war principles has become problematic. The meaning of "proper authority," for example, is more complex. One can, of course, argue that the general ineffectiveness of the council means that the United States, acting with the consent of the Iraqi government, is itself morally entitled to determine how long the occupation should last. But such an argument makes assumptions about the council that are not necessarily true. More significantly, such assumptions do not take into account the full range of Catholic teaching that is relevant to international issues.

John XXIII's Prophetic Voice

Once the role of the United Nations is recognized as legitimate, our moral calculus must consider international relations in a manner that includes, but also transcends, conventional forms of state-centered analysis. Such a broader moral perspective can be drawn from the 1963 encyclical letter *Pacem in Terris*. The encyclical explores various levels of social order, going beyond the rights and duties that must be observed within states and the obligations that arise in relations between them. Pope John XXIII recognized that each state, while independent, is part of a larger community composed of the whole human race; he also held that this inclusive community should have its own public authority. The establishment of such broader authority was demanded by the universal common good.

How, then, should we understand the authority of the United Nations in relation to Iraq? Strictly speaking, the United Nations does not constitute an international public

authority, because humanity itself cannot be considered a political society. The United Nations labors under many constraints, not least its lack of effective coercive power. But Pope John recognized the value of its existence and expressed his desire that the United Nations would gradually become "more equal to the magnitude and nobility of its tasks." His papal successors have also encouraged the proper growth and increased stature of the organization.

An Unavoidable Question

In discussing the tragedy that Iraq has become, the legitimacy of international moral authority is not merely an academic question. The fact that the Security Council, by its initiatives, has asserted its jurisdiction over the Iraq conflict requires moralists to consider the implications of this assumption of responsibility by an international body. The principles enunciated in *Pacem in Terris* encourage such reflection as well.

When the Security Council mandate comes up for review, its members will be required to examine all of the circumstances of the situation on the ground and assess, as objectively as possible, the likely consequences of a continuing foreign presence in Iraq. Are there grounds for believing that the continued presence of foreign troops in Iraq will further the achievement of a peaceful, stable society there? The council members must make an honest judgment, with all the courage and imagination that this complex crisis demands. Two of the permanent members (the United States and the United Kingdom) are directly involved in the conflict, and Article 27 of the U.N. Charter may require both to abstain from voting. Still, much can be done to move the situation beyond the present impasse, given sufficient goodwill on the part of all.

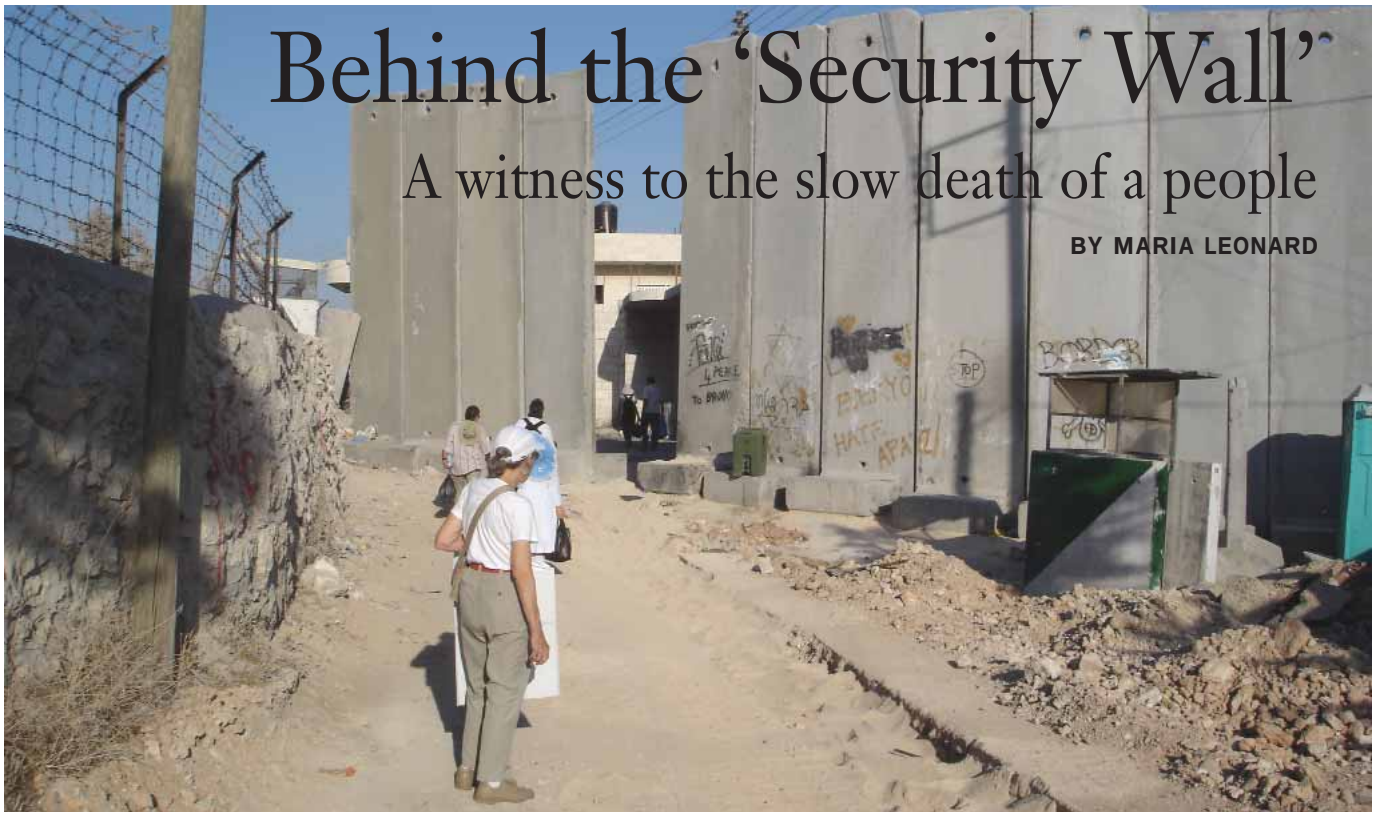
The Promise of a New Perspective

All the parties involved would benefit from a fresh new approach, which might develop within a broader global context. Currently, public debate in the United States is caught between the polarities of "staying the course" and "setting a timetable for withdrawal." A third alternative must be developed that would allow for an honorable redeployment of our forces without leaving the Iraqis to face a civil war. The vacuum could be filled by troops directly authorized by the council. One member state, India, has already indicated an interest in such a project. The task of national reconciliation, which the United States has been unable to advance, also needs attention. The U.N. Security Council is empowered under Chapter VI to exercise its conciliatory authority to help opposing parties overcome fundamental differences and reach a resolution in their common interest. Here, too, the role of an international moral authority may prove to be a vital resource. A

Behind the 'Security Wall'

A witness to the slow death of a people

BY MARIA LEONARD



People approach a temporary check point in the security wall near Bethany, West Bank.

PHOTO COURTESY OF AUTHOR

FOR 33 DAYS in September/October 2006, I lived behind the "security wall" in Bethany, a small village in the West Bank just a few miles from the Old City on the edge of the expanded municipal border of Jerusalem. Al-Azariya is its Arab name. It was the home of Mary, Martha and their brother, Lazarus, whom Jesus released from the bondage of death. After calling Lazarus from the tomb, Jesus instructed the bystanders: "Unbind him, and let him go." Today I feel called to witness to the slow death that is coming upon the Palestinian people. I want to help "unbind" the people of Al-Azariya and the entire Palestinian community from the "great wall" that is choking their land and their lives.

From the window of my room, I watched as a 30-foot high barrier wall was erected around me. My daily alarm clock was the sound of Israeli bulldozers, cranes, trucks and pile drivers competing with the call to prayer from surrounding mosques. I saw the grove of ancient olive trees and the garden crushed by the heavy equipment. Old stone walls marking the property line were smashed. Armed soldiers slept on the floodlit property at night. During the day they briskly patrolled the grounds to prevent anyone from skirting the checkpoint. Occasionally I heard gunshots or caught the odor of tear gas as the soldiers stopped "trespassers."

A temporary checkpoint made of tall slabs of concrete and razor wire blocked access to the street leading to Jericho Road and into Jerusalem. At least three young Israeli soldiers armed with M-16 weapons guarded a narrow, two-foot break in the wall. In order to pass, one had to show an I.D. card or a passport, which was carefully examined by one or more of the guards.

For several days after I arrived I was unable to leave the property. It seemed that the soldiers could not distinguish between a 75-year-old female tourist with a U.S. passport and a potential terrorist. Even after I obtained a letter written in Hebrew from a colonel in the tourist bureau attesting to my status, the soldiers might decide to prevent me from passing. Once when I returned on foot, I was refused entry and instructed to go to the official checkpoint several miles away. Only after standing my ground for some time was I finally permitted to enter.

On another occasion, a group of Palestinians was seated on the ground at the base of the wall, having been refused passage. As I was about to walk through the checkpoint, the Palestinians loudly protested that Americans could enter, but they, native landowners, could not. They wanted their message to be told to our president and the American people. I was embarrassed that I was privileged and that their human rights were being denied.

One Friday morning during Ramadan I saw several older women dressed in head scarves and hijabs and well-groomed men in suits engaged in lively conversation with the soldiers, indicating that they wished to attend noon prayers at the Al Aqsa Mosque, a tradition for many Muslims during the festival time. Ultimately they were turned away. Daily I saw many other men and women who were denied passage.

Several buildings near the checkpoint housed small businesses that were cut off from customers in East Jerusalem and beyond. What effect will the dividing wall

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have on the ability of these men to provide for their families? Down the street, in a Catholic home for the aged, the frail elderly are isolated from relatives and friends on the other side of the segregation wall. What pain and sadness this causes in a culture where the extended family is the center of life.

Uniformed young children with their backpacks were allowed through the checkpoint to catch a school bus and happily returned through the narrow entry in the afternoon to be met by their mothers or fathers. When the wall is completed, the children will have to transfer to poorer schools behind the wall. For families fortunate enough to own a car, it may be possible for parents to drive to the new checkpoint and hope that they will be allowed to pass. The barrier wall will restrict not only students but also teachers. Even now churches, schools and hospitals are being cut off from those they formerly served.

The wall separates people from relatives, property, schools, holy sites and worship communities, hospitals and clinics, businesses, places of employment and even cemeteries. The arbitrariness regarding who is allowed through checkpoints breeds insecurity, fear and anger. Even persons with proper I.D. cards may be detained. Long lines, hours of waiting in the sun and the demeaning behavior of soldiers stirs up feelings of anger and resentment. I watched a small boy at the checkpoint as his father was questioned and searched. I wondered what that child would remember of the experience. Will he grow up hating those who abused his father? How does a parent maintain dignity and authority in the family when children daily see that parent humiliated? Will resentment one day explode into aggression? We already witness some of that behavior.

Jesus called the dead and walled-in Lazarus by name, called him to life and to freedom. The bystanders were not without a task. Jesus commanded them, "Unbind him." We are those bystanders today as we watch the living death of the Palestinians. How can we follow the command of Jesus to "unbind" the Palestinians from this dividing wall that is slowly choking the people?

First, we can pray for justice and peace among the Israelis and Palestinians, so that no one will be deprived of basic human rights. No need to tell God how to accomplish this; just pray. Second, we can learn the facts about Palestinian life in Israel and the West Bank, and be skeptical about information in the media. Delve below the surface of the reports, research other sources such as The Electronic Intifada (www.electronicintifada.net), which publishes news, commentary and analysis from a Palestinian perspective; Americans for Peace Now (www.peacenow.org), a leading advocate for peace in the Middle East; and Churches for Middle East Peace (www.cmep.org), a coalition of 21 public policy offices of national churches and agencies—Orthodox, Protestant and Catholic. Finally, we can tell others what we have learned, speaking without bitterness, anger or harsh words to family, friends and especially those who represent us in government. We cannot remain silent and unmoved. We must follow Jesus' command and begin to "unbind" Lazarus—our Palestinian sisters and brothers. A

without guile

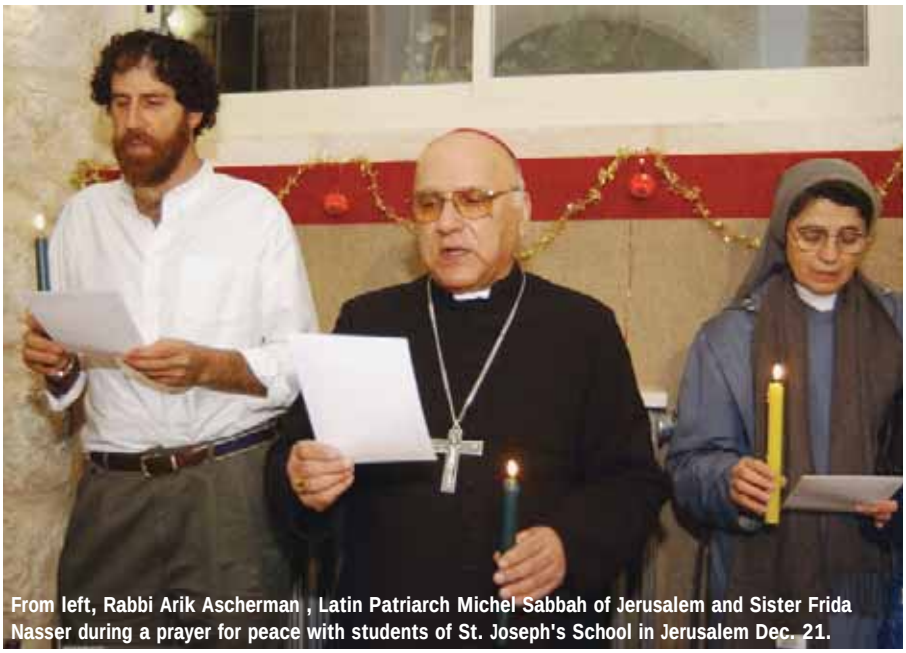
It's mostly intelligent design. I did sort of goof up on one planet.

CARTOON BY PAT BYRNES

Israel's Rebel Rabbi

Invoking the Torah, a rabbi defends the rights of Palestinians to preserve their homes.

BY ROBERT HIRSCHFIELD



From left, Rabbi Arik Ascherman , Latin Patriarch Michel Sabbah of Jerusalem and Sister Frida Nasser during a prayer for peace with students of St. Joseph's School in Jerusalem Dec. 21.

CNS PHOTO BY DEBBIE HILL

WHEN HE RESORTS to civil disobedience, his long body hugging the earth of a Palestinian olive orchard or a home slated for demolition, Rabbi Arik Ascherman sets loose upon the Holy Land the ghost of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Like King, Ascherman lets the prophets' hard-bitten calls for justice speak through his resisting body.

Rabbi Ascherman's humanitarian Judaism, a gift from his parents in Erie, Pa., has saddled the executive director of Rabbis for Human Rights with many arrests, death threats and a long trial in a Jerusalem court. Lecturing once in a Manhattan synagogue, the Reform rabbi mentioned: "My big shock when I came to Israel [in 1994, at age 32] was discovering that the values I grew up with were not necessarily shared by many Israelis." At least these values did not seem to be shared by religious Israelis. On the other hand, the Israelis who refuse to do military service in the occupied territories of Palestine, who protest the occupation and its abuses, are overwhelmingly secular Jews.

Rabbi Ascherman, arriving in a war-torn, bitterly polarized country, harbored no illusions that things would be easy. When Rabbis for Human Rights was founded in Israel in 1988, it was in response to what some perceived as the moral slumber of the rabbinical community concerning the abuses suffered by Palestinians in the occupied territories. "The religious community," Rabbi Ascherman said, "has been socialized into a very dangerous mixture of extreme nationalism and extreme particularism." The activist rabbis were usually activists on the right; that is to say, they were supporters of the settler movement.

Rabbi Ascherman, whose conscience and passion catapults him across the Green Line to aid Palestinians menaced by Israeli bulldozers, nonetheless can examine the conflict with Talmudic objectivity. "When we get back to peace negotiations, there will be the same majority of Israelis and Palestinians who favor a bilateral peace agreement. There will also be a majority of Palestinians who, as the polls show, favor some level of violence in the belief that such threats are necessary to maintain Israel's interest in the peace process. Palestinians will have to learn that violence does not promote, but destroys that process. Israelis must learn that there is no equality, no symmetry here. We are the dominant economic and military power. We control what happens on the ground in the occupied territories. You cannot negotiate peace on the one hand and violate human rights on the other."

A particularly neuralgic issue is the demolition of Palestinian homes that lack legal permits. In Rabbi Ascherman's words, "If you are a Palestinian living in East Jerusalem or in the West Bank, you can have a clean security record and title to your land. But in most cases, unless you pay a bribe or agree to be an informer, you cannot get a legal building permit. As a result, there are many people living in houses that are illegal, and then thousands of them are made homeless by demolition orders."

At a recent Rabbis for Human Rights conference in New York City, Rabbi Ascherman learned that one of the homes he had tried to save from the bulldozer without success, a home that had been rebuilt with financial contributions from rabbis like himself, was bulldozed a second time. Within hours, the rabbis attending the conference had raised the money nec-

ROBERT HIRSCHFIELD, a freelance journalist based in New York, specializes in human rights.

essary to rebuild the house. But for Rabbi Ascherman, this was not enough. He said:

> We have launched a court appeal challenging this policy. Even at my trial, which attempted to put this policy on trial, the judge was able to avoid the issue. All he was interested in was did you, or did you not, stand in front of the bulldozer. Now, that same judge has demanded that the municipality explain how it can manipulate building and zoning laws to make it impossible for someone to build legally. In the judge's words, "Putting a stumbling block before the blind" is how the Jewish tradition puts it. This is what you do when you make it impossible for the Palestinians to succeed, and then destroy their homes.

In January 2004, Rabbi Ascherman was put on trial in Israel for his human shield activities in front of Palestinian homes in Isawiyah and Beit Hanina in March and April of the previous year. Why he was tried then for doing what he had been doing for years still mystifies him. Perhaps the Israeli establishment's patience with him had finally been exhausted. Or perhaps it was a question of the tactics he chose: he went limp and made the police drag him away, not only when he was arrested but also later at the police station, which infuriated the arresting officers. "Back there, you did it for the cameras. But why are doing it here?"

In any case, the rabbi made the most of his ordeal. At one point, he reminded the court that the trial had opened at the time of the death and birth anniversaries of the great rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel. "He often said that 'in a democracy a few are guilty but all are responsible.' I am very deeply affected when the Torah, which I am sworn as a rabbi to uphold, is being trampled on. In a piece which I wrote immediately after the demolition of the Da'ari home (in Isawiyah), I noted that my *kippah* was lost in the rubble. I wondered whether this symbolized what was being done to Jewish values and whether someday the *kippah* would be found as a reminder that someone had stood against this evil in the name of Torah." A

Poem

Writing on Air

The first time I entered his empty room
I stood in the silence

of the hospital bed, his white cup
still on the tray, remembering the day

I found him, my older brother,
in the front room on Canal Street,

his back to me, writing
with his finger on the air,

unaware I was watching him move
from left to right down an invisible page,

pausing, striking out a line, revising,
until he turned and asked me what

was I staring at, was I catching flies
with my open mouth, then rushing

past me into his hidden life, leaving
me in that quiet room, dust

rising through slanted light, all those words
hanging heavily in the air.

Paul Martin

PAUL MARTIN is author of three poetry collections: *Green Tomatoes*, *Walking Away Waving* and *Morning on Canal Street*. He was awarded two poetry fellowships from the Pennsylvania Council of the Arts.

Two Sides of the Same Coin

Echoing Silence

Thomas Merton on the Vocation of Writing

Edited by Robert Inchausti

New Seeds. 224p $14 (paperback)
ISBN 9781590303481

As the samplings in this anthology suggest, putting things down in words was as urgent for Thomas Merton as breathing. His youthful comment about Proust's attitude towards the past, for example, gives a clue to Merton himself: "writing was the one 'present' he could put up with."

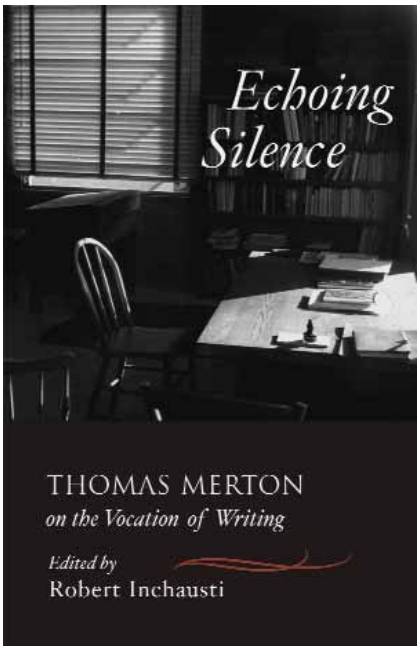
Echoing Silence is culled from 28 of Merton's more than 60 published works, all of which seem to cry out: *I write, therefore I am.* But at the same time: *I write, therefore God is.* Compiled and edited by Robert Inchausti, a professor of English at California Polytechnic State University, the anthology also includes journal passages and excerpts from letters on the subject of writing, some to fans, others to authors like Czeslaw Milosz and Boris Pasternak, Henry Miller and Walker Percy.

Merton fully intended to abandon writing once he was accepted as a novice at Gethsemani Abbey in Kentucky. But his abbot decided otherwise. Over six years he published several books of poetry. "Perhaps I shall continue writing on my deathbed," he told his journal, "and even take some asbestos paper with me in order to go on writing in purgatory." But neither Merton, nor his abbot nor his publisher was prepared for the success of *The Seven Storey Mountain.*

He worked hard to reconcile fame and his spiritual life: "Disconcerting and disedifying as it is, this seems to be my lot and my vocation. It is what God has given me in order that I might give it back to Him." But when the high price of celebrity began to dawn on him, with ramifications that would continue for the rest of his days, Merton wrote of asking the Holy Spirit for help, "losing myself entirely by becoming public property just as Jesus is public property in the Mass."

As his writing skill grows, he despairs over the difficulties of writing honestly about the spiritual life: "...the language of Christianity has been so used and so misused that sometimes you distrust it: you do not know whether or not behind the word 'Cross' there stands the experience of mercy and salvation, or only the threat of punishment."

Other spiritual writers present particular difficulties: "...it is depressing that



those who serve God and love Him sometimes write so badly, when those who do not believe in Him take pains to write so well." He opens his heart to Milosz: "The lamentable, pitiable emptiness of so much Catholic writing, including much of my own, is only too evident." By 1966 he complains that speaking of spiritual things is bringing on a sort of nausea. (He also confesses to Milosz that "five years after a book has appeared I wish I had never been such a fool as to write it. But when I am writing it I think it is good. If we were not all fools, we would never accomplish anything at all.")

Three years after attaining worldwide renown, Merton is confiding to his journal that he no longer knows the central figure in *The Seven Storey Mountain*. And when the 1960's arrive, he is fretting about the way the people who know him from that book want him to continue to correspond with the identity they imagined for him on reading it. "They demand that I remain forever the superficially pious, rather rigid, and somewhat narrow-minded young monk I was twenty years ago.... "

Happily, he was able to use his growing embarrassment over the pronouncements and pieties of his early works to deepen his later thinking. In a 1967 letter to a fellow monk, Merton writes, "When I first became a monk, yes, I was more sure of 'answers.' But as I grow old in the monastic life and advance further into solitude, I become aware that I have only begun to seek the questions."

He became particularly interested in the struggles of American blacks for civil rights. (Responding to James Baldwin's sometimes bitter writings on Christianity at that time, Merton says, "I think your view is fundamentally religious, genuinely religious, and therefore has to be against conventional religiosity.") He also plunged into the conflict over Vietnam, alienating many Catholics. Daniel Berrigan, S.J., called him "the conscience of the peace movement."

At the same time, he was growing increasingly absorbed in Eastern thought, very much reflected in his superlative *Contemplative Prayer*, a reworking of an earlier book on the subject. In his fine recasting of *The Way of Chuang Tzu*, we get a hint of his conflicted feelings about his own literary efforts:

> Achievement is the beginning of failure.
> Fame is the beginning of disgrace.

It was his interest in East-West dialogue that resulted in the journey to the Far East in 1968 that ended in his death, in Bangkok, by accidental electrocution. True to form, he faithfully recorded every facet of that trip (collected in *The Asian Journals of Thomas Merton*).

Yet one curious truth that surfaces in

The Reviewers

Robert Reilly is a novelist, teacher and freelance writer. His last article for **America** was "Writing as Contemplation."

Doris Donnelly is a professor of theology at John Carroll University, Cleveland, Ohio, and the director of The Cardinal Suenens Center there.

Tom Deignan, the books columnist for Irish America magazine, is the author of *Coming to America: Irish Americans*.

Echoing Silence's many observations on writing is that despite Merton's fixation on the art, he also managed to remain detached from it. Shortly before his death he noted, "No writing on the solitary, meditative dimensions of life can say anything that has not already been said better by the wind in the pine trees."

Robert Reilly

Getting Personal

The View From Castle Rock

Stories

By Alice Munro

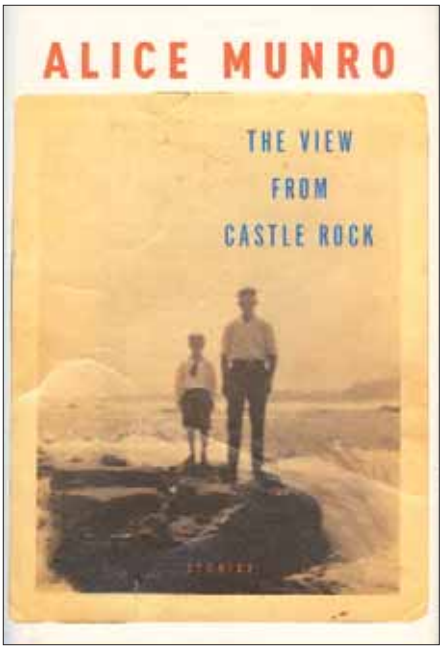
Alfred A. Knopf. 368p $25.95

ISBN 9781400042821

Instead of writing this review, I wish I could send readers a copy of *The View From Castle Rock*. If that seems like an over-the-top endorsement, it is fully warranted. Alice Munro is at the height of her powers as a short story writer in this collection, navigating with extraordinary agility the border between memoir and fiction. The book left me under a spell I have been unable to shake. I would wish and expect nothing less for you.

Munro's starting point is the Ettrick Valley in Scotland, where she found the gravestone of her direct Laidlaw ancestor and pieced together the family's mesmerizing, funny, sexy, heartbreaking story as immigrants who struggled, settled and survived in Canada. She reminds us that "these are stories" and that some of the characters "took on their own life and color and did things they had not done in reality," but we are keenly aware that her fiction is of a special genus that discloses the truth more completely than literal facts and figures.

Munro is at the center of these stories, and she summons from the past the mind and feeling of a girl who imagines her parents, before they became her parents, as "not only touching and helpless, marvelously deceived, but more attractive than at any later time." Their nine-acre fox farm—"no farm at all" as her grandmother saw things—was financially doomed until her mother hatched a plan to design and sell silver fox scarves to American tourists who had money to burn. When the girl traveled with her father in their jalopy to the Pine Tree resort to see how things were going at her mother's boutique, they arrived looking like "tramps" or "scarecrows." In contrast, her mother was elegantly dressed and coiffed and unrecognizable at first to the father-daughter duo. She "had crossed effortlessly, it seemed, into the world of



the hotel," and with her unerring instinct for creating a business for a discriminating clientele, had saved the family from bankruptcy.

The family's reprieve was short-lived, when the war softened tourism and her mother turned invalid. Her father took on a job as a night-watchman at the Foundry, where the girl found him content and in good humor among men who knew and accepted that they would die of "the foundry disease," the dust in their lungs. Her father, as it turned out, did not die, at least not yet, but had another occupation waiting for him. He became a writer.

The girl flourished in high school, with a private passion for lines of poetry that had her "rampaging through…school texts to uncover them before they could be read and despised in class," and as a "ringleader and a loudmouth," with enough self-awareness to see that these dissimilar personalities were either a disguise (one being her genuine persona) or part of an entirely disjointed psychological make-up. Her first teen romance with the son of a Salvation Army preacher who spoke about God in a tone that was "firm and factual, as if God were a superior officer," ended abruptly after their rendezvous in a barn was interrupted by a shotgun fired by the owner. More serious romances and marriages followed, one to a man "too shiney-shoed" for her father and brother's approval, but accepted by the family as someone she should hang on to.

When she was 17, Munro went into service as a hired girl during her summer holiday. She worked for a wealthy family whose snobby matriarch relegated any hired girl to a status beneath all the other family members and their guests. She constructed a barrier, "Not for you," early and clearly, but Munro never internalized the role of servant. Still, while she never felt humbled or lonely, she was fully conscious when guests—girls of her own age—stepped politely around her as they passed with their wet bathing suits "making way for my body without a glance at my face." "They were the sort of girls," she noted with an appropriate measure of irony, "who would have squealed and made a fuss over me, if I had been a dog or a cat." But she *is* noticed and duly acknowledged after all, not by teenage girls awkwardly clinging to their social position, but by the host and homeowner himself, who gives her a book that he once found her reading. To be remembered this way, to be thought of, to be "truly understood" by a stranger was a startling and embarrassing experience that would be repeated only rarely in the future, and when repeated, it was able to stun all over again.

Readers may be surprised to find that Munro has titled the first series of her stories "No Advantages," in tribute to the description of her ancestral home, the Ettrick Valley in Scotland, as found in official documents: "This parish possesses no advantages. Upon the hills the soil is in many places mossy and fit for nothing." But we need to set the record straight. The seven generations of the Laidlaws, Munro's ancestors and their descendants, have the remarkable advantage of having their stories revealed and composed by a woman with a fertile imagination. "We can't resist this rifling around in the past," she writes in closing, "sifting the untrustworthy evidence, linking stray names and questionable dates and anecdotes together, hanging on to threads, insisting on

being joined to dead people and therefore to life."

The Laidlaws live, thanks to Alice Munro. ***Doris Donnelly***

Gypsy Poet, Exiled

Zoli

A Novel

By Colum McCann

Random House. 352p $24.95
ISBN 9781400063727

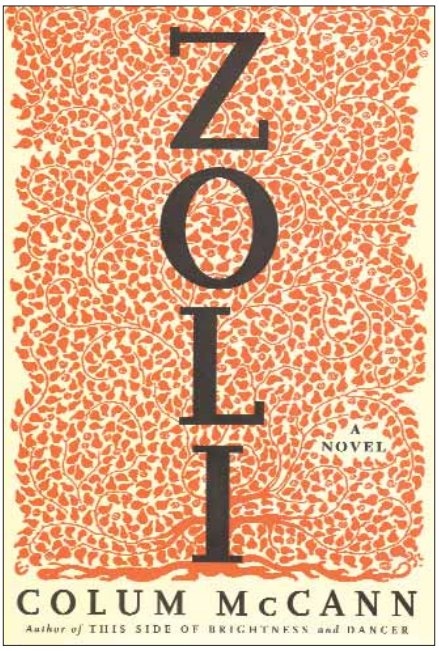
Several years ago I was in Rocky Sullivan's pub on Lexington Avenue in New York City for one of their famed literary readings. The Irish-born writer Colum McCann was said to be unveiling an excerpt from a work in progress. By then McCann—in such novels as *Songdogs* and *This Side of Brightness* and story collections like *Fishing the Sloe-Black River*—had established himself as a writer to watch. Central to all of his work, up to that point, were his native Ireland and his adopted home of New York City.

Hence the shock and awe when McCann began his reading with a cinematic portrait of war-ravaged Soviet Russia, before zooming in for a close-up: a child, who would become the world famous dancer Rudolf Nureyev. *Dancer*, McCann's fictionalized life of Nureyev, turned out to be one of the most memorable novels of 2004.

McCann's latest, *Zoli*, can be seen as a companion volume of sorts to *Dancer*. Both are fictional explorations of real people. (The Polish poet Papusza, who died in 1987, was the basis for McCann's titular Romani poetess.) Both novels begin with child protagonists who overcome adversity to become troubled, monumental artists.

Perhaps most important, Nureyev and Zoli come of age during the rise and spread of Communism. The political is so personal in both *Dancer* and *Zoli* that it is both utterly pervasive and seemingly invisible. Initially viewed as a cultural hero, Zoli is eventually deemed a criminal by the Communist authorities. "They sentenced her to Pollution for Life in the category of Infamy for the Betrayal of Romani Affairs to the Outsiders," McCann writes. Thus begins Zoli's banishment from her not-so Edenic homeland. She wanders Europe, crossing essentially meaningless borders.

"Gusts of wind carried me along," Zoli says at one point, and indeed, a central image from both *Dancer* and *Zoli* is that of history as a powerful force of nature, one that can be overcome or at least endured, but never ignored. Zoli and



Nureyev are both forced to adapt, flee or evolve not only because of the people in their lives but because of events far beyond their control. To call Zoli a pawn would be to ignore her powers as an artist and human being, which McCann renders excellently, often in stunning prose. In the end, McCann seems fascinated by humanity's persistence, how the sometimes mad desire to express ourselves is shaped or altered, but never crushed, by overwhelming forces of repression.

McCann introduces Zoli as a little girl, alongside her humorous and shrewd grandfather. He and his granddaughter are the only survivors from a spasm of violence aimed at Romani (as Gypsies are now preferably called). "[M]y mother was gone, my father, my brother, my sisters and cousins, too," Zoli says. "They had been driven out on the ice by the Hlinka guards. Fires were lit in a ring around the shore, and guns were pointed so they could not escape. The caravans were forced to the middle of the lake as the day grew warmer. The ice racked, the wheels sank, and the rest followed."

The most important thing Zoli learns from her grandfather is the power of expression, whatever form it takes: song, poetry, a radio program, the written word or even silence. After all, given the historical treatment of the Romani, just because Zoli can read and write does not mean it is always wise to do so.

The opening of *Zoli* has a lushness and immediacy not quite present in the remainder of the book. McCann has chosen to tell the story through multiple perspectives while zipping back and forth across time and landscapes. This decision certainly gives the reader a broader sense of Zoli's life and times. She becomes an object of fascination to an Irish-Slovakian scholar named Stephen Swann, who not only falls in love with Zoli but seeks to bring her work to a wide audience. This seemingly benevolent effort sets up Zoli's fall, allowing the authorities to manipulate her work while also creating suspicion in the eyes of her own people.

Thus, McCann is not merely critiquing oppressive forms of political rule but also what we might call the soft cultural imperialism of those, like Swann, who are so seduced by the unfamiliar and exotic that they are compelled to export it rather than merely bask in it. This leaves Zoli angry and crushed. "I have sold my voice, she thinks, to the arguments of power."

And yet, McCann may very well be going for something even more disturbing. At one point he writes: "You can make them swallow any lie with enough sugar and tears." You might say this about artists as well as politicians.

In the end, *Zoli* is a melancholy novel. McCann conveys horror, betrayal and yes, joy, but it all serves to illustrate just how sad it is that a character such as Zoli must endure all that she does. *Zoli* is not the bravura performance *Dancer* was, but it is another compelling effort by McCann, whose own evolution as an artist has indeed been a joy to witness.

Tom Deignan

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AGING...OUR PERSONAL JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM. Fall retreat at Bethany Spirituality Center, Highland Mills, N.Y., Nov. 11-15, Director: Ann Billard, O.L.M., Ph.D. For information, call (845) 460-3061; www.bethanyspiritualitycenter.org.

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Letters

Speak Up

I have now received many positive responses to my article, "How Accessible Are the New Mass Translations?" (5/21). I am truly edified by these letter writers who have had to look up my address or locate my e-mail to communicate with me. There are obviously strong feelings among your readership about liturgical issues.

Most, however, who have contacted me asked to whom they should write so they may "speak up." Since the U.S. bishops vote to approve liturgical texts, your local bishop(s) would be a logical choice. In addition, the bishops who serve on Vox Clara and advise the Holy See on ICEL translations would be an appropriate reference:

H.E. Cardinal Justin Rigali
Archbishop of Philadelphia
222 North 17th Street, Suite 1207
Philadelphia, PA 19103-1299

Most Rev. Oscar H. Lipscomb
Archbishop of Mobile
P.O. Box 1966
Mobile, AL 36633-1966

Most Rev. Alfred C. Hughes
Archbishop of New Orleans
7887 Walmsley Avenue
New Orleans, LA 70125-3496

Also, the American bishop who serves on the ICEL board would be an appropriate person to hear such views:

Most Rev. Arthur J. Serratelli
Bishop of Paterson
777 Valley Road
Clifton, NJ 07013

America magazine is a true blessing. You are providing the forum to raise up contemporary church issues.

(Most Rev.) Donald W. Trautman
Erie, Pa.

Thick, Coarse and Rustic

I appreciate Bishop Donald Trautman's recent article "How Accessible Are the New Mass Translations?" (5/21). Some of the most atrocious examples he cites from the "new" liturgy texts remind me of the very worst literal translations in the Latin-English Missals we used in the 1940's and 50's.

Back then, they were most useful sources for jokes, humor and doggerel ridicule and satire in the seminary, as were the anguished English refectory readings from the Roman Martyrology.

If this ICEL draft is approved and implemented for the English-speaking world, I believe it will be adding a new twist to an earlier tradition of macaronic literature, in which several languages and cultures are mixed and thrown together the way flour, cheese and butter are used to make thick, coarse and rustic Italian *maccaroni*. This multilingual literary mélange led to all kinds of gross humor, parody and satire of biblical and liturgical texts, sermons and religious themes (see *Macaronic Sermons*, by Siegfried Wenzel).

The ICEL draft is an unfortunate mix of odd, old English words with more understandable and everyday English usage; the very worst of the awful, old Missal literal-translation English and the more understandable and contemporary ICEL English texts we have been using for the past 40-some years.

It seems this inferior draft will become official, at great expense to parishes, religious communities and individuals and with great profit to copyright owners and book publishers. It may provide some religious humor and satire, as things poorly and/or outrageously done often do. This reform of the reform will also need to be reformed in the future, and most probably will not last as long as the current ICEL liturgical texts have lasted.

I am grateful to Bishop Trautman for his courageous and outspoken leadership as chairman of the U.S. Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy. I am deeply grateful to him for inviting and challenging us to speak up. My only hope is that the ICEL will not contribute to more macaronic (or moronic) literature, but that good, plain-speaking English Catholics will judge what is good and what is bad English in our liturgical prayer.

(Rev.) Paul A. Milanowski
East Grand Rapids, Mich.

Glorious Complex Sentences

Thank you for publishing Bishop Trautman's important observations in "How Accessible Are the New Mass Translations?" (5/21).

Examples the bishop cites of some words and sentences have a resonance with me, because I was an English literature major as an undergraduate. Having analyzed many poems of G. M. Hopkins, Henry Vaughan, George Herbert and John Donne, I love the language in those excerpts.

My major author was Samuel Johnson, and my genre was essay. The essays of Johnson, Addison, Pope and Swift abound in the most glorious complex sentences. I used those sentences teaching high school English to show grace and unravel complexity and to get young people to think.

Bishop Trautman is quite right, I would say, without considering myself elitist, that "John and Mary Catholic" would find Hopkins's vocabulary and Johnson's sentence structure both beyond understanding and at the same time unnerving.

Having done parish work, many people tell me that they wish the church would make up "her" mind and stop fiddling with worship.

The point Bishop Trautman raises about the lack of consultation with the cultures and scholars of a country is very trenchant. The faithful who come to church are 21st-century educated people, with careers and positions. They are accustomed to being treated as adults. Many devoted, older Catholics still feel that opportunities for prayer are not in evidence.

To send a letter to the editor we recommend using the link that appears at the bottom of articles on **America**'s Web site, www.americamagazine.org. This allows us to consider your letter for publication in both print and online versions of the magazine. Letters should be as brief as possible and include the writer's name, postal address and daytime phone number. Letters may also be sent to **America**'s editorial office (address on page 2) or by e-mail to: letters@americamagazine.org. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

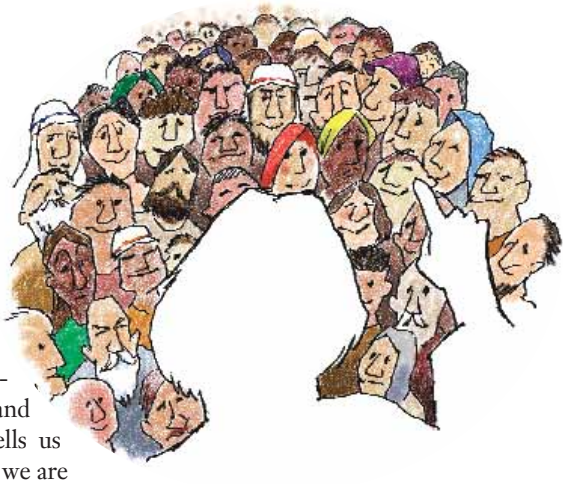
The Word

Follow the Leader

Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (C), July 8, 2007

Readings: Isa 66:10-14; Ps 66:1-7, 16, 20; Gal 6:14-18; Luke 10:1-12, 17-20

"At that time the Lord appointed seventy-two others" (Luke 10:1)



ART BY TAD DUNNE

AT THIS TIME OF YEAR, around Independence Day and with the upcoming presidential campaign in view, public debate is focusing on leadership. Last Sunday we began Luke's journey narrative in which Jesus serves as the leader for his first disciples and for us as well. In today's selection from Luke 10, Jesus shows himself to be an effective leader. He offers a clear and comprehensive vision, enlists the participation of those who accept it and suggests a lifestyle appropriate to implementing that vision.

In its simplest form Jesus' message concerns our origin from God and our destiny with God. Jesus instructs us to look upon God as the creator and lord of all, and as a loving parent who cares for us and guides us along the way of life. This loving parent never gives up on us and even welcomes us back when we stray. And Jesus invites us to share in his own relationship of special intimacy with his heavenly Father. Jesus also looks forward to the future fullness of life with God in the kingdom of heaven. His message is that this kingdom is also something of a present reality among us here and now, made manifest especially in his person, teachings and healing powers. In short, Jesus tells us where we came from (God), where we are going (the kingdom of God) and how we can get there (by following Jesus' wise teachings and good example).

As an effective leader Jesus invites others to participate in his mission. Today's passage is the second missionary discourse in Luke's Gospel. It portrays Jesus as sending forth his followers to do what he does: proclaim God's kingdom and heal the sick. Jesus situates this mission against the background of a cosmic struggle between good and evil, in which the war has been won (the fall of Satan) but the battle continues. As a wise leader, Jesus knows how to engage others in his cause to spread his influence.

Praying With Scripture

- In your experience, what are the characteristics of an effective leader? Who has been such a leader, in your judgment?
- How would you describe the message or vision of Jesus?
- To what extent does your own lifestyle fit with and contribute to your following of the call of Jesus?

For those who are willing to follow him, Jesus proposes a lifestyle appropriate to the mission. In Jesus' time religions and philosophies were spread throughout the Roman empire by traveling missionaries. If we look beyond the concrete 1st-century details in Jesus' instructions, we can discern a principle that has special relevance and challenge for us today. It is simplicity of lifestyle, that is, living with minimal concern for personal pleasure and comfort, subordinating them to carrying forward Jesus' message and mission.

Paul's concluding remarks in his letter to the Galatians provide the testimony of one who thoroughly embraced the leadership of Jesus. Although Paul had not been a disciple of the earthly Jesus, his experience of the risen Christ was so transforming that he achieved a kind of Christ-mysticism. Paul's identification with Christ

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

The bishop ends his article with "Church of God, judge for yourselves. Speak up, speak up." May I request that the bishop or your readers suggest ways I may "speak up"?

I feel that the avenues whereby those members who have not received the sacrament of holy orders may participate in the mission of the church to evangelize "with" and on an "adult" plane together with those in orders are not enough, and are not plumbed for their full potential.

From sharing the Scriptures with adults, I find many people thirsting for depths in their faith, frustrated by exclusion and humiliatingly considered second-rate members at best.

To allow the sacred congregation to "mandate" *the* language to join us to our maker in this our day, when we do not even know who the persons are who make up this congregation, and whether they can feel the nuance of our language, to me is making little of the world in which we live and making little of the faithful. Gently Bishop Trautman says, "It would be pastorally prudent if the laity were involved in the process."

I know that we discuss "pastorally," and that word can be manipulated. The congregation obviously feels the nuance of the Latin.

My religious congregation provided me with the opportunity to study G. M. Hopkins at Catholic University, so I may have the tools to ponder the nuance of "God's Grandeur." From Bishop Trautman's article it is clear that the American bishops do not know, nor were those bishops on the U.S.C.C.B. Committee on Liturgy even consulted.

This is a matter that touches the heart, and one cannot trivialize the human heart. Our prayer and our worship, for all the eternal, overwhelming

was so complete that he believed Christ was living in and through him and that everything else was insignificant in comparison with the effects of Jesus' life, death and resurrection. Jesus' wise and effective leadership can and does continue in and through his followers today.

Who Is Your Neighbor?

Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (C), July 15, 2007

Readings: Deut 30:10-14; Ps 16:14, 17, 30-37 or Ps 19:8-11; Col 1:15-20; Luke 10:25-37

"He answered, 'The one who treated him with mercy.' Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise'" (Luke 10:37)

THE TERM GOOD Samaritan means someone who helps a stranger in need. It derives from the parable contained in today's reading from Luke 10. A man had been beaten, robbed and left for dead on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. Both a priest and a Levite—members of Israel's "clerical" class, perhaps returning from their service at the Temple—pass him by without doing anything. Finally a Samaritan—someone whose credentials as a Jew were suspect—not only tends to the wounded man's physical needs but even offers to pay his expenses. Thus this "foreigner" does more than anyone might have imagined.

Today's Gospel passage features several characters. The first is a scholar of the Law (a scribe, expert in the Jewish Law), who asks Jesus for a concise summary of the Old Testament Law. He answers his own question (and anticipates Jesus' answer) by citing love of God (Deut 6:4-5) and love of neighbor (Lev 19:18) as the great commandment. Then he asks another question ("And who is my neighbor?"), to which he receives an answer from Jesus in parable form that may well have surprised and disturbed him.

Praying With Scripture

- Have you ever been in a dangerous situation and in need of help? How did you feel? Did anyone help you?
- Have you ever acted as a good Samaritan? Why did you do it? What was the result?
- How does Jesus show himself in today's reading to be a wise teacher?

As we enter the parable we note the two "clerics" (the priest and the Levite) who pass by the injured man without trying to help him. It is easy enough for us to identify with them. And just when the scholar of the Law probably expects the third traveler to be a Jewish layman (in a kind of anticlerical joke), we get the heroic and compassionate good Samaritan. The one character who is present in the parable from beginning to end, however, is the wounded man. The priest, the Levite and the Samaritan come and go. The good Samaritan interacts with the wounded man, while the other two fail to do so. When we identify with the wounded man as the central character, we may get the more basic but subtle point of Jesus' parable.

Have you ever found yourself in a bad or dangerous situation when you desperately needed help? Perhaps it was car trouble or a fainting spell on the street or being in a fire. Imagine yourself in such a dangerous situation and ask yourself the scribe's question, "And who is my neighbor?" Your answer would most likely be what the scribe's answer was, "Anyone willing to help me." In a real crisis we are not likely to be discriminating about who might come to our aid. Through Jesus' parable the scribe is led to put aside his prejudices against Samaritans and to admit that in the case of the wounded man his neighbor would be anyone who acts mercifully. When we place ourselves alongside the man left for dead by the road, we too can let our prejudices about religion, race or anything else melt away as we look only for mercy and compassion from whoever might stop to help us. Then (and perhaps only then) are we able to accept the final challenge that Jesus poses to us all: Follow the example of the good Samaritan; "Go and do likewise." ***Daniel J. Harrington***

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revelation of the love of our maker for us, ought to be understandable to the members of that body in which it is celebrated at all ages.

Would there be someone who may suggest ways to "speak up"?

James Loxham, F.S.C.
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Welcome Affiliation

"Nativity-Model Schools Go International," by George M. Anderson, S.J., (5/7) reports that the success of the NativityMiguel Network's middle schools captured the attention of our counterparts in other countries. It rightly points out that each new start-up school undergoes a lengthy study to determine the feasability of the project.

Each NativityMiguel school has a founding story: a team of educators, religious and lay, along with business people who were frustrated by the scores of families who wanted, but could not afford, to have their children attend a faith-based school in their community.

Just as Josef Horehled, S.J., did in the Czech Republic, their feasibility research uncovered other NativityMiguel model schools serving the poor.

The goal of the NativityMiguel Network is to guide member schools as they grow, strengthen their mission, establish best practices, measure outcomes and ensure success both academically and financially.

The network currently serves over 4,400 children within our 27 states nationally. While the network is not actively looking to open schools internationally, we do welcome the affiliation with schools like Usti's Nativity School.

(Msgr.) John W. Jordan
Washington, D.C.