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The Latin Liturgy

Implications for Catholic/Jewish Dialogue

Anthony J. Cernera and Eugene Korn

A Bishop Remembers • *Emil A. Wcela*



The Nobel Women's Initiative
Interview by *George M. Anderson*

Readers respond to the
Catholic faculty 'problem'

FATHER, I DON'T KNOW what happened to our children." That's how a woman I had only just met at a wedding reception opened the conversation. She and her husband had a large family, she explained, but only two children remained practicing Catholics. Of the others, a couple have followed their spouses to Protestant churches; one is a searcher who never quite settles down; the rest seem not to care. It is a pattern we all know well. Figuring out how to respond to it, whether in organizing holiday gatherings, in parish work or in evangelizing the unchurched, is another matter.

The Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor, the winner of this year's Templeton Prize, has written an 800-page book, *A Secular Age* (Harvard Univ. Press), explaining our present religious situation. His thesis is that secularity consists in having multiple options to express the religious impulse. A few, like the

Stoics of old, may choose "an exclusive humanism" that rejects issues of

ultimacy. But most people will choose some available option to explore and express their religious sensibilities or assemble their own religion in a bricolage of symbols and practices.

Taylor's theory only reflects the communities and families we live in. I think of another family I know and love. For me they have been part of "the hundredfold." Over the years I have celebrated marriages, baptisms and funerals for one family member or another. Of several grown children, one is leader of a charismatic community, another is active in a progressive parish, another has become an Episcopalian, others are Christmas and Easter Catholics, one has become a Jew, and other siblings have no religious practice I know of. More than once, moreover, I have witnessed parents follow their adult children into lax observance.

I must confess, as a priest I have muddled along with all this diversity, doing my best to provide pastoral care in limited ways, give spiritual guidance and bear witness to Jesus Christ as good news for humanity. Reading Taylor, however, brought me a moment of recognition. Ministry in this context is an entirely new challenge. How will the church carry out its work where the options are so many,

and people are free to decide for themselves how to embrace the holy?

Taylor has some thoughts. He worries about what he terms "excarnation," the increasing tendency of western Christianity to be a faith of the head only, neglecting the body's role in apprehending the divine. He would be inclined to encourage a sacramental faith, in which prayer and liturgy involve the body. With impressive knowledge of the history of Christian spirituality, Taylor would appreciate the demands of discipline in prayer, but he wouldn't be too concerned about rubrical niceties either.

What would be important is what St. Ignatius called "the progress of souls," that is, greater savor of the holy on the part of those who are already naturally receptive to the divine through sensate experience; and for us heady types, greater experimentation with embodied ways of apprehending God. I think of the Australian feminist Germaine Greer, a onetime Catholic, who found herself

drenched in tears after listening to the chant at a Russian

Orthodox Mass. The music brought her back to the faith—though not to the church.

Taylor praises large religious gatherings and movements that are opportunities for seekers to experience the community of faith in a relatively undemanding way, like the annual treks of young people to the ecumenical monastery of Taizé, France. He includes World Youth Day in this class of activities, overlooking the catechetical sessions that punctuate the program. Ask the young people, though, and it is the collective experience of faith, not the words of instruction, they remember. We must rediscover, Taylor insists, "festivity" as part of religious practice.

Pope Benedict XVI might approve of these moves. "Perhaps the church has forgotten," he wrote in *Without Roots*, "that the tree of the kingdom of God reaches beyond the branches of the visible church, but that is precisely why it must be a hospitable place in whose branches many guests find a place." If Benedict's vision of the kingdom/church as the mustard tree is put into practice, then the church will have no problem adapting to this secular age.

Drew Christiansen, S.J.

Of Many Things

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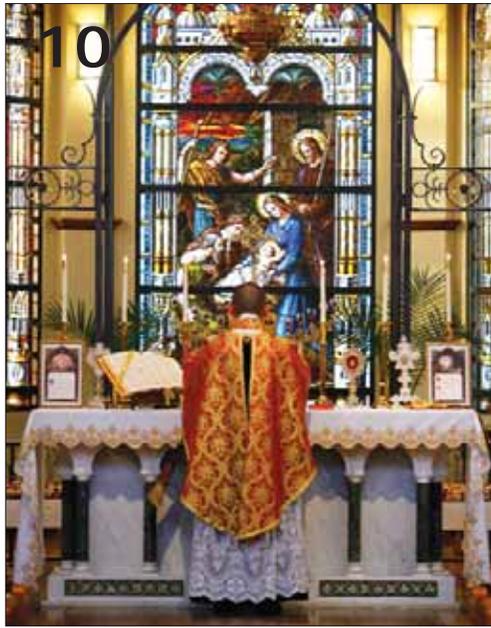
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Cover The beginning of the Canon of the Mass in the *Missale Romanum*, editio septima; Benziger Brothers, 1949.



Articles

The Latin Liturgy and the Jews 10
Anthony J. Cernera and Eugene Korn

What does the pope's recent letter permitting wider use of the Tridentine Mass mean for the church's elders in the faith?

The Nobel Women's Initiative 14
George M. Anderson

An interview with Elizabeth Bernstein about efforts in support of peace and women's rights worldwide by women recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize

Current Comment 4

Editorial A Diplomatic Surge 5

Signs of the Times 6

Reflection Place 8

The Great Divide *Margaret Silf*

Faith in Focus 17

A Dinosaur Ponders the Latin Mass *Emil A. Wcela*

State of the Question 21

Preserving Catholic Identity

Book Reviews 25

Jesus Our Redeemer; A Russian Diary;
Aimee Semple McPherson and the Resurrection of
Christian America

Letters 30

The Word 31

Thanksgiving as Public Witness to God's Action
Daniel J. Harrington



**This week @
 America Connects**

The editors on "The Jews and Vatican II," from November 1963. On our podcast, Jim Keane, S.J., and Tim Reidy consider Andrew O'Hagan's novel *Be Near Me*. All this, plus our blog on Scripture and preaching, at www.americamagazine.org.

‘Racist Dictator’

Daily life in Zimbabwe, a country blessed with natural resources and an energetic population, goes from bad to worse. The average life expectancy for women is 34; for men 37. Inflation is at 8,000 percent. As the people suffer and as African neighbor states seem disinclined to intervene, pressure has come upon the British government to act. The Anglican Archbishop of York, John Sentamu, has urged the prime minister to impose sanctions and mount campaigns to remove President Robert Mugabe and end the humanitarian disaster. Archbishop Sentamu, born in Uganda, likened Mugabe to the late Idi Amin Dada: “Enemies are tortured, the press is censored, the people are starving and meanwhile the world waits. Mugabe is the worst kind of racist dictator. Having targeted the whites for their apparent riches, Mugabe has enacted an awful Orwellian vision, with the once oppressed taking on the role of the oppressor and glorying in their totalitarian abilities.”

The Catholic Church has long deplored and called attention to the worsening human rights situation in the country. The Anglican Church in Zimbabwe, led by a Mugabe supporter, has come under criticism for being silent. So it is all the more significant that Sentamu has added his powerful voice to those of fellow churchmen who have called for strong and immediate action. It is to be hoped that their cries will not fall on deaf ears.

Getting Higher Marks

With a presidential election approaching, the church’s role in U.S. society will be on many bishops’ minds and may well appear on the agenda of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ meeting in November. A less predictable agenda item, however, is the role of women in the church, which the Women’s Justice Coalition suggested to them last spring.

The left-of-center coalition (Call to Action USA; Catholics Speak Out, Quixote Center; the Ecumenical Catholic Communion; Future Church; Rapport for Women Ordained; Southeastern Pennsylvania Women’s Ordination Conference; Women-Church Convergence; and Women’s Ordination Conference), using volunteers from its own members, surveyed 23 of the 193 U.S. dioceses—the dioceses in which the volunteers lived. From the results of this sampling, the coalition drew up a report and a report card, which it sent to all the bishops.

The “report card,” a convenient device for public relations purposes, gave them three A’s (for diocesan subsidies for educating lay ministers, the percentage of women

directing existing offices, and the inclusion of women and men as eucharistic ministers and lectors at cathedral liturgies) and four B’s (for the existence of employee grievance procedures, the percentage of women on diocesan pastoral councils, inclusion of women in the footwashing on Holy Thursday and participation of girl altar servers at cathedrals).

Lower marks underlie the report’s recommendations that bishops work to end gender discrimination on seminary faculties, teach seminarians the history of women in Christianity, incorporate the biblical and historic roles of women into all Catholic education, encourage equitable representation of women on diocesan advisory boards, ensure just employee and conflict-resolution practices, and sponsor future studies on justice for women in the church.

Politics aside, church leaders exert their strongest influence by example.

Eco-Benedictines

Last spring, Portsmouth Abbey School in Rhode Island held a major conference on wind energy just one year after installing a sleek, Danish-made, 164-foot, 660 kilowatt wind-powered generator on its property. The school, run by Benedictine monks, collaborated with the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation, which promotes wind power throughout the state as a non-fossil fuel source and pitched in \$450,000 for the project. The turbine project exemplifies how church and state can cooperate for the common good.

The Benedictines have been “going green” for a long time. In 1997 the sisters at Sacred Heart Monastery in Richardton, N.D., learned that their state has the greatest wind-energy potential of all the contiguous states. The sisters, who operated a nursing home, a retirement home and a llama farm on their 50 acres, paid high utility bills. So they installed two small wind turbines and realized immediate savings: 39 percent the first year and 47 percent the second (saving \$15,800 that year). But saving money was only part of what motivated the sisters. They respected the environment as God’s gift and quickly acted as good stewards.

Currently, the semi-cloistered Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration of Clyde Monastery in rural Missouri are erecting a 289-foot wind turbine on their property to help an energy cooperative. Though by law the monastery must use electricity from a public utility, not the energy generated by their wind power, they are demonstrating what can be done ecologically. This is just their latest eco-friendly move. The sisters own two hybrid cars, recycle everything from printing paper to wood to scrap metal and have replaced their 500-plus windows with thermal glass.

A Diplomatic Surge

THE UNITED STATES is in danger of losing the war in Iraq. The risk of defeat is real, despite the modest military successes described to Congress last month by U.S. General David H. Petraeus. For the war primarily requires a political resolution, not a military one, and in this area even the Bush administration admits that there has been little progress.

The most important question is therefore not when or how the troops will leave Iraq, but what kind of Iraq we hope to leave behind when they do. Iraq will not be the ideal democracy originally envisioned by the Bush administration, but a political settlement is still possible; and in helping the Iraqi people to reach such a settlement, national reconciliation must be our first concern.

The work of reconciliation has been sluggish at best under the government of Prime Minister Nuri Al-Malaki, yet it is the obvious precondition for any meaningful progress. The United States has also failed to help the Iraqis move toward reconciliation: non-sectarian governance; amnesty for former enemies (especially members of Saddam's Baath party); and, perhaps most important, a meaningful oil revenue-sharing law that would give all the principals an investment in one state. None of these actions are easy, but all of them are necessary. The disarmament of Iraq's sectarian militias and therefore the peace and stability of the country depend on them.

The United States, accordingly, must admit its failure to help effect reconciliation and ask the world for renewed support. We must undertake the diplomatic offensive called for by the Iraq Study Group in 2006. This diplomatic initiative should involve Iraq's neighbors. They must be persuaded to exert their influence with Iraq's various sectarian groups. We should also ensure that the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Arab League have the resources on the ground in Baghdad to provide their good offices to bring the parties together. Religious peace is a precondition of civil peace.

The United States will need to be most attentive to Iraq's immediate neighbors, including Syria and especially Iran. Like it or not, because of geography and the growing and frequently nefarious influence of these states within

Iraq, there will be no lasting peace without some form of cooperation from both of them. This will require that the Bush administration back away from its bellicose rhetoric toward Iran in the near term and move toward détente in the long term. If we can talk to North Korea, we can talk to Iran and Syria.

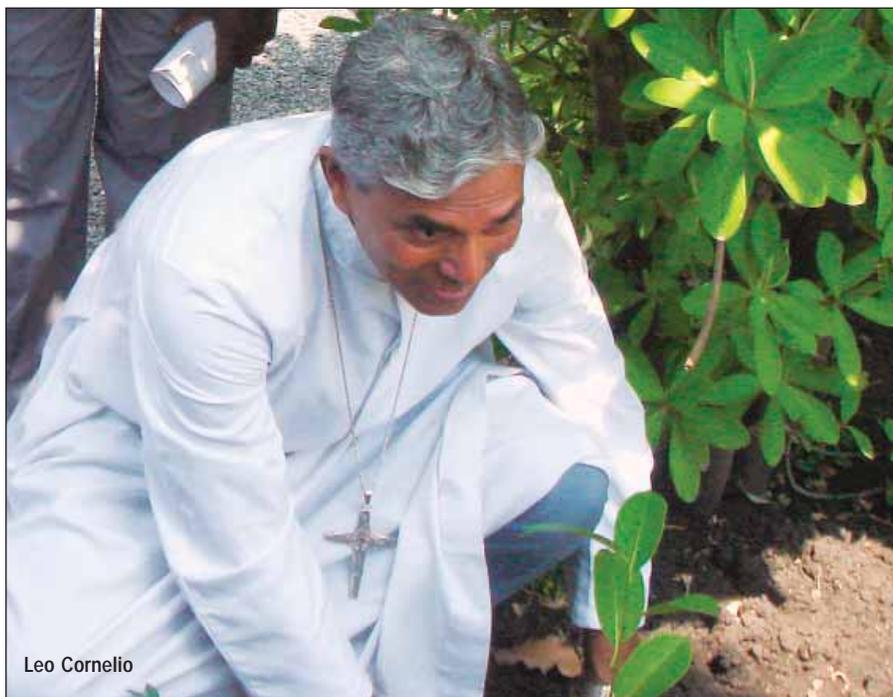
The United States should also not hesitate to enlist the help of the United Nations and the world beyond the Middle East. The new French president, Nicolas Sarkozy, has hinted recently that France may have a constructive role to play in resolving the conflict. This proposal should be pursued along with the possibility of an increased peacemaking role for the European Union, an organization with enormous influence with Turkey, one of Iraq's nervous and volatile neighbors.

These steps toward a political settlement will need to be accompanied by a rethinking of our military presence in Iraq. A precipitous and immediate withdrawal is clearly neither wise nor practical, but neither is the president's seemingly open-ended commitment. The U.S. military presence in Iraq is the principal remaining source of our influence. For this reason, the Iraq Study Group concluded, "the question of the future U.S. force presence must be on the table for discussion as the national reconciliation dialogue takes place. Its inclusion will increase the possibilities of success."

THE LONG-TERM POLITICAL OBJECTIVES of both the United States and the Iraqi government, as well as the need to thwart Al Qaeda in Iraq, will require some U.S. military presence in the area for the foreseeable future. But because this administration has until recently refused even to consider redeployment or withdrawal of significant numbers of U.S. troops, the continued U.S. military presence in Iraq has been neither a stick nor a carrot. In order to provide an additional incentive for the various parties to reach a political settlement, the United States must articulate a clear plan for serious troop reductions and the redeployment of U.S. forces within Iraq away from primarily policing activities to more support and training of Iraqi forces.

It is not unpatriotic to admit that we are not succeeding. As Ken Burns has shown in his film "The War," now being shown on PBS, realism and strategic adaptability were vital components of the Allied victory in World War II. If the United States is able to face the facts and marshal the resources to support a lasting political settlement, it may still be possible to achieve an outcome in Iraq worthy of the dignity of the Iraqi people and the sacrifice of American lives.

Indian Bishop Requests Tree Saplings as Gift



Leo Cornelio

A newly installed archbishop in a central Indian state made an unusual demand of those wanting to congratulate him on his appointment. He said he welcomed gifts, but they had to be tree saplings. Archbishop Leo Cornelio of Bhopal told UCA News, an Asian church news agency, that he wanted to highlight the church's concern for the environment amid rising pollution levels and increased news of environmental destruction around the globe. He said the more than 10,000 saplings he received would be planted in Christian

institutions and other public places, where he feels sure they will be nurtured. Several officials of Madhya Pradesh State said Archbishop Cornelio's decision had a powerful symbolic meaning and environmental impact, as love for trees is part of Indian culture and mythology. The archbishop's message was purely "an inspiration to live for others," said Kunwar Vijay Shah, state minister for forest and tribal welfare, who attended a congratulatory function for the archbishop after his Sept. 16 installation ceremony.

Israeli Authorities Deny Priest Re-entry Into Israel

A Jordanian Catholic priest who works at a West Bank parish was denied entry into Israel en route from Jordan to the Palestinian territories. The Rev. Faris Khaleifat of Annunciation Church, a Melkite Catholic parish in Ramallah, was returning to his parish on Sept. 14 when Israeli authorities at the Al Sheik Hussein Bridge crossing canceled his multiple-entry visa without explanation. According to a statement released to the press Sept. 19 by the Campaign for the Right of Entry/Re-entry to the Occupied

Palestinian Territory, a week earlier Father Khaleifat, who holds Jordanian and Vatican passports, had traveled to Jordan for several days and had returned without incident. "For the past six years, I have been traveling regularly between the West Bank and Jordan on church affairs without any problems whatsoever," Father Khaleifat said in the statement, which explained that the priest was one among thousands of foreign passport-holders who have been denied entry by Israeli authorities over the past several years.

Fordham Panel: U.S. Has Moral Obligation to Iraqis

The United States has a moral obligation to the people of Iraq that must be met regardless of when U.S. troops ultimately withdraw from that country. That was the conclusion of the panelists at a forum titled "Exit or No Exit? Morality and Withdrawal from Iraq," held in New York Sept. 18 on the Lincoln Center campus of Jesuit-run Fordham University. It was attended by 450 people. "We must distinguish between the ethics of intervention and the ethics of exit," said Gerard F. Powers, director of policy studies at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame and former director of the U.S. bishops' Office of International Justice and Peace. "The U.S. intervention may have been an optional, immoral war, but the post-intervention U.S. involvement is not an optional moral commitment," he said. Quoting the U.S. Catholic bishops, Powers said that the U.S. intervention "has brought with it a new set of moral responsibilities to help Iraqis secure and rebuild their country and to address the consequences of war for the region and the world."

U.S. Will Admit More Iraqi Refugees Next Year

The United States should have the capacity to admit around 1,000 Iraqi refugees a month next fiscal year—a number "substantially higher" than this year's, said a senior U.S. Department of State official. The United States has "a moral obligation" to protect Iraqi refugees, "particularly those who belong to persecuted religious minorities, as well as those who have worked closely with the United States government," said Ellen Sauerbrey, assistant secretary of the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration. She told the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom at a hearing on Capitol Hill Sept. 19 that the U.S. has been slow to admit the thousands of Iraqis referred by the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees because the system was not in

place. The United States has admitted less than 1 percent of the more than 10,000 refugees that the U.N. referred for admission this year. "We had to start building an infrastructure that didn't exist," but operationally things are moving along, Sauerbrey said. She noted the work of faith groups, in particular the U.S. bishops' overseas relief and development agency, Catholic Relief Services, and the Geneva-based International Catholic Migration Commission, for their work providing humanitarian assistance for Iraqi refugees.

Lebanese Bishops Plead for Timely Elections

Lebanon's Catholic bishops said the country "is on the verge of [an] abyss" and warned that if a new president is not elected within the constitutional schedule "the fate of the nation would be grim." In a statement, the country's Maronite bishops called for "cooperation between parliament and the [feuding] factions so that Lebanon can regain its status among nations." The statement was issued fol-

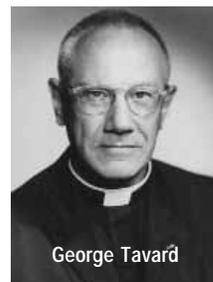
lowing the Maronite bishops' monthly meeting, presided over by Cardinal Nasrallah P. Sfeir, patriarch of the Maronite Catholic Church. Lebanon's parliament was scheduled to convene Sept. 25 to choose a president. In addition to an ongoing political impasse and threats by some factions to boycott the election, the makeup of parliament was further disrupted by the assassination of a Christian lawmaker just hours after the bishops concluded their meeting Sept. 19. Lebanon's parliament must choose a successor to President Emile Lahoud before his extended mandate ends in November. Some Lebanese fear that if the lawmakers cannot agree on a candidate, parallel governments could result.

U.S. Resembles Poland as Rampart of Christianity

The head of Poland's military diocese has accused Islamic militants of seeking revenge for a Polish-led victory over the Ottoman Empire in the 17th century and urged Christians to prevent Europe from being turned into "Euro-Arabia." "The

military defense against Islamic terrorism is being led today by the United States, which is playing a very similar role to that played centuries ago by Poland, when it was the rampart of Christianity," said Bishop Tadeusz Ploski, head of Poland's military diocese. "Today, alongside the American soldiers and those of several dozen states in the anti-terrorist coalition, there are also soldiers of the Polish army," he said. Poland is among the 21 nations contributing to the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq. Polish military forces are also deployed in Afghanistan. During a homily at Mass in Warsaw Sept. 11, Bishop Ploski said the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the United States had been planned with "criminal precision" by Osama bin Laden to mark the anniversary of the Battle of Vienna, in September 1683, when an Ottoman Empire invasion force was defeated by Christian armies under King John Sobieski of Poland.

George Tavard Dies; an 'Ecumenical Saint'



The late George Tavard, an Assumptionist priest and noted ecumenist, was remembered as "an ecumenical saint" and "one of the great pioneers in Catholic ecumenical work" at a memorial Mass celebrated in the chapel at Assumption College in Worcester, Mass. Tributes at the Sept. 16 Mass came from church leaders near and far, including ecumenical representatives and his brother Assumptionists.

The French-born Father Tavard, 86, who had lived at his order's residence in the Boston suburb of Brighton for the past 15 years, was vacationing in France with family members. He died Aug. 13 at Charles de Gaulle International Airport in Paris shortly before he was to return to Boston. He was buried at the Assumptionist plot in Montparnasse Cemetery in Paris following a funeral Mass Aug. 21 at St. Dominic Church in Paris.

From CNS and other sources. CNS photos.

Ordinations of Chinese Bishops Raise Hopes



Chinese pray during the Sept. 21 installation Mass of Bishop Joseph Li Shan as the new head of the Diocese of Beijing.

The Vatican said the recent ordination of two Chinese bishops in communion with Rome was a positive sign for the church and raised hopes of further appointments. The comment came in an article in the Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*, which reported on the Sept. 21 ordination of Bishop Joseph Li Shan as head of the Diocese of Beijing, the Chinese capital. The two-

hour ordination liturgy, attended by hundreds of local Catholics and a number of government officials, followed the ordination of Coadjutor Bishop Paul Xiao Zejiang of the Province of Guizhou, China, earlier in September. The Vatican newspaper indicated that both ordinations had been carried out with the approval of Pope

Benedict XVI. The local Catholic communities, who elected the bishops, had indicated to the Vatican that they were worthy candidates, the newspaper said. "The Catholic communities of Guiyang and Beijing, having received news of the communion granted by the pope to Bishop Xiao and Bishop Li, gathered in celebration around the new pastors," the newspaper said.



The Great Divide

‘It was not difficult to identify with that little raindrop.’

IF YOU EVER FIND YOURSELF in Johannesburg, South Africa, be sure to make your way to a little *koppie*, or small hillock, in the heart of the University of Witwatersrand campus. The city is built on hills, but this hill is special. It is home to the Origins Centre, where you can explore the fascinating story of the beginnings of our human family through palaeontology, genetic tracing and ancient rock art, and you will quite possibly come away wondering why it is that those of us in the sophisticated West continue to be blind to the obvious fact that Africa is the first world, and that it is we in the West, the teenagers of the human family, who should rightly be called the third world.

While you ponder these things, and wonder what difference such a shift in attitude might make to our relationship with Africa and her agonizing problems and deep-rooted wisdom, consider one more thing. If a raindrop falls upon this little *koppie* in the teeming city of Johannesburg, with all its vitality and its violence, that raindrop will join the flow of water either into the Orange River, and thence to the South Atlantic, or into the Limpopo River, and thence into the Indian Ocean. Because this hillock is the boundary between two watersheds and marks the great divide between the flow of South Africa’s waters, either east or west, depending on.... Depending on what? The random chance of how the raindrop “chooses” to flow, and in which direction its energy becomes invested.

North American readers, of course, will be familiar with much more spectacu-

lar great divides that separate the watersheds flowing west to the Pacific, east to the North Atlantic, or north to the Arctic oceans. I had the pleasure of standing astride one of these divides on the Alberta-British Columbia border in western Canada, and was duly impressed by the signs and celebrations of this significant bit of geography. Johannesburg is much more reticent about its great divide. I only got to hear the raindrop story from a friend who took me to the hilltop for a better view of the city.

Somehow it was not difficult to identify with that little raindrop, carrying such a responsibility in its choice about which way to go. Of course, if you are a raindrop, it probably does not much matter which way you go, since all rivers eventually flow into an ocean, and all oceans are good news. It would not make much difference, ultimately, to the destination, though it would make a huge difference to the journey and the landscape and human situations through which you would pass.

But what about our own choices? Some of them switch the points on our life’s journey and change its course forever. Some barely cause a ripple. But all of them make a difference. In so many ways we shed our little raindrops of choice over and over again with every passing day. Some drops are quiet and small, like the one that fell on the *koppie* in Johannesburg. We choose how to react to a call for help, or to some unwanted criticism. We choose a word of encouragement or disparagement, a kind or angry gesture. And some of them are big and compelling, like the North American divides. We choose where to invest our life’s energy. We choose whether or not to resist or collude with injustice, and sometimes the choice is costly. Each drop, each choice, has power at a personal level, but it will also flow into bigger and bigger rivers—the rivers of our

community choices, our national choices and our global choices. Without the personal choices for peace and justice, there will be no peace or justice in our nations and our world. A choice that betrays a personal trust will also pollute the rivers of all human interaction.

Whether they appear to be important or slight, our choices are all raindrops that fall steadily upon the great divide of life, which separates what is life-giving from what is life-denying. In everything we do or say, or even think, we are weighing in, however slightly, either with the creative or with the destructive movements that are shaping the future of humanity. Unlike the raindrop falling on the Origins Centre, these choices are not random. They are in our control and they are our responsibility; and it does matter which way they flow, because they are making us who we shall become. Every individual choice for the more loving, more Christ-like way, the more truly human course to take, makes us all more human and more Christ-like. Every self-focused choice, for retaliation over reconciliation, for the benefit of me or my group over the needs of all creation, makes us all less human, and impedes the fulfilling of God’s dream for humanity.

I have a hunch that the most destructive elements in our world today are not the weapons of mass destruction, real or imagined, but the millions of petty diminishments and spiteful hurts that we inflict on each other every day. And the most creative elements of human life are not the space probes or the heart transplants, but rather the countless quiet words of kindness, the small acts of courage or generosity, the friendly smiles that warm another’s heart. These raindrops are well within the range of every human person. John of the Cross says that at the end of the day what matters is love. Every choice that adds to the store of love, hope and trust in the world is a choice for the ocean of God’s love.

In every choice we make, we stand astride this Great Divide. It matters, which way each raindrop chooses to flow. Together we are shaping humanity’s future on earth. Every raindrop either nourishes or harms that future. Every choice decides.

Margaret Silf

MARGARET SILF lives in Staffordshire, England. Her latest books are *Companions of Christ: Ignatian Spirituality for Everyday Living* and the Catholic Press Association award-winning *The Gift of Prayer*.



What the pope's letter means for the church's 'elders in the faith'

The Latin Liturgy and the Jews

– BY ANTHONY J. CERNERA AND EUGENE KORN –

P OPE BENEDICT XVI'S RECENT LETTER to bishops authorizing wider use of the 1962 Roman Missal, commonly referred to as the Latin Mass, has provoked strong reactions from Jews and Catholics worldwide who are committed to furthering the historic work of reconciliation begun at the Second Vatican Council with the "Declaration on the Relation of the

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RABBI EUGENE KORN is executive director of the Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding at Sacred Heart University.

Church to Non-Christian Religions” (*Nostra Aetate*, 1965). Many are concerned that some language in the missal harkens back to the *Adversus Judaeos* tradition within Christianity, which for some 18 centuries saw Jews as a threat to Christian society. This tradition was forthrightly and courageously rejected at Vatican II. Yet we and many others in the interfaith community believe these issues can be addressed while still honoring the pope’s laudable desire to reach out to those Catholics who feel a special connection to the Latin rite. There is much to learn from the present controversy. Indeed, it is a crucial moment in the history of Jewish-Catholic dialogue, a test of how far our relations have progressed.

Nostra Aetate was one of the most dramatic developments in Catholic teaching to emerge from Vatican II. The declaration initiated a new phase of Catholic understanding of Jews and Judaism, creating a historic possibility for Catholics and Jews to begin reversing their age-old relationship of hostility and denigration in favor of a relationship of “fraternal bonds” and “shared spiritual patrimony.” Later on Pope John Paul II personally sought to quicken the pace of this reconciliation. His papacy embraced the spirit of *Nostra Aetate* like no other, and he left a stunning legacy of teachings, documents and public gestures that fostered renewed hope and understanding among Catholics and Jews.

One contemporary Catholic theologian, Mary C. Boys, S.N.J.M., has summed up post-Vatican II Catholic teachings on Catholic-Jewish relations as “the six R’s”: (1) repudiation of anti-Semitism; (2) refutation of deicide—the charge that the Jews killed God by killing his son, Jesus; (3) repentance after the *Shoah* (Holocaust); (4) recognition of Israel; (5) review of the teaching about Jews and Judaism and (6) rethinking efforts to convert Jews. *Nostra Aetate* started a journey from which there appeared to be no return.

A Step Backward?

Many Catholics and Jews fear that the official document authorizing wider use of the Latin Mass, *Summorum Pontificum*, signals a reversal of the salutary developments of the council. Their concerns are warranted. Since it was composed before Vatican II, the 1962 Roman Missal was not informed by *Nostra Aetate* and later church teachings on Catholic-Jewish relations. That missal (sometimes called

the Missal of John XXIII) contains a prayer for use on Good Friday that singles out Jews for conversion, attributes to them a particular blindness and asks God to lift the “veil from their hearts.” This inches perilously close to a view of Judaism as a fossilized and invalid faith and draws explicitly on *Adversus Judaeos* language to characterize Jews. Meanwhile, the Missal of Paul VI in wide use today strikes a categorically different tone, instructing Catholics to pray that the Jewish people “will grow in the love of God’s name and in faithfulness to his covenant.”

The words of the 1962 Good Friday prayer are inconsistent with the church’s binding commitments undertaken in *Nostra Aetate* to deplore anti-Semitism, eschew negative depictions of Jews and “foster and recommend mutual understanding and respect.” John Paul II taught repeatedly

that the church’s “attitude to the Jewish religion should be one of the greatest respect, since the Catholic faith is rooted in the eternal truths contained in the Hebrew Scriptures and in the irrevocable covenant made with Abraham” (Sydney, Australia, Nov. 26, 1986). *Guidelines on Religious Relations With the Jews* (1974) states that the witness of Catholics to Jesus Christ should not give offense to Jews. Numerous

Catholic documents have expanded upon the language of *Nostra Aetate* to stress that a thoughtful and respectful understanding of Judaism is crucial for Catholic self-understanding, and that Catholics should strive to understand Jews not by means of stereotypes but by “the essential traits that Jews [use to] define themselves in light of their own religious experience” (Prologue to *Guidelines*). It is difficult to see how any honest parsing of the 1962 Good Friday text could be harmonized with these directives.

How are Catholics to understand these disparate postures and theologies? It is a commonplace of logic that from false premises, any conclusion—no matter how absurd—validly follows. Yet one need not be a logician to know that inconsistent church statements and incoherent theologies only weaken belief and undermine credibility. Nor does it matter that “only a few” Catholics will likely use the 1962 rite. Once authorized by the church, the text becomes an official expression of Catholic belief. *Lex orandi, lex credendi* (our prayer is our faith). Theological validity is not a matter of counting heads.

Reviving the demeaning descriptions of Jews threatens to undermine the decades of trust and fraternal relations

Many are concerned that some language in the 1962 missal harkens back to the tradition that for some 18 centuries saw Jews as a threat.



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with the Jewish people that the church has labored to achieve. Many Catholics see this not merely as a social setback but a spiritual one as well. Surely the dialogue between Catholics and their “elders in the faith” has reaped spiritual rewards and insights for both groups.

For Jews, the 1962 Good Friday prayer causes deep pain. Jews around the world remain proudly committed to the faith of their ancestors and the biblical covenant between the children of Abraham and the creator of heaven and earth. After centuries of anti-Semitism and misunderstanding fostered by negative religious stereotypes, Jews are still learning to trust and to hope that the future can indeed be different. Few things have helped strengthen this budding trust more than the church’s new respect for Jews and Judaism. Unfortunately, the 1962 Good Friday prayer weakens the Jewish hope that when Catholics want to dialogue, conversion will not be an important motive and that the old anti-Jewish prejudices will no longer be at work.

Lessons From the Controversy

We can glean important lessons from the present controversy. For faithful Jews, the call to conversion is an existential issue. No matter how much Jews wish to learn from and appreciate Catholics, when the specter of conversion lurks in the background of dialogue, no Jew with theological integrity can participate. When Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, an observer at Vatican II and the most important Jewish theologian there, saw that the penultimate version of *Nostra Aetate* contained an allusion to conversion, on the eve of Yom Kippur he flew to Rome to speak to Pope Paul VI and the council’s bishops. He emotionally professed: “If faced with the choice of baptism or the crematoria of Auschwitz, I would choose Auschwitz.” The bishops deleted the reference.

Forty years have passed since *Nostra Aetate* was proclaimed, and genuine progress has been made. The dialogue between Catholics and Jews matured under the teachings and legacy of John Paul II. From the earliest days of the implementation of *Nostra Aetate*, Catholic colleges and universities were called to do their share in continuing the theological dialogue that would deepen understanding and reconciliation between the two religions. There are now 28 academic centers in the United States committed to the mission of dialogue. Our work has taught us to understand our religious differences more clearly, and in doing so we become better Catholics and better Jews. Our communities have achieved much progress, and both have too much invested to permit stasis or regression. Pope Benedict XVI understands this and has made it clear in speech and gesture that nurturing Catholic-Jewish relations is as much a priority for him as it was for the church during the council.

The issues raised by permitting the older prayer sharp-

en theological questions that Jews and Catholics need to ask themselves: What are the limits of our recognition and respect for each other's faith? Can our traditions overcome past problems? Can we see the image of God in the face of the other, or does the other's faith threaten my convictions? As recently as 60 years ago the answers to these questions precluded positive Catholic-Jewish relations and made our practical differences seem unbridgeable. But the fruits of 40 years of Catholic-Jewish dialogue are obvious.

A Solution at Hand

A pastoral solution could be at hand. The pope's letter confirms that modifications to the Latin rite are possible, and the Vatican secretary of state, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, stated on July 19 that substituting the text of the 1970 prayer in the Roman Missal for the 1962 text could resolve the problems without sacrificing any principle. We are awaiting further word from the Vatican on this possibility.

The statements issued by Jewish and Catholic organizations resonate with a respectful tone and a balanced understanding of the intricacies that any modifications to an approved text of the church require. It is a conversation not only between faiths but between friends. When our Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding considered its options for addressing the Latin Mass, we chose to work directly

with Cardinal Walter Kasper of the Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews to encourage further theological reflection on the 1962 Good Friday prayers. Our strategy was to follow the rules of the new dialogue, which call for an earnest desire to seek solutions and not sensationalize the issue in headlines. Within a week, the response from Cardinal Kasper indicated the commission was committed to the search for an appropriate solution consistent with the teachings of *Nostra Aetate*.

The precedent of Catholic sensitivity to Jewish integrity set at Vatican II is a good one to follow in 2007. Such sensitivity has deepened since the council, enriched by our growing understanding of each other and the recognition that God has intertwined Catholic and Jewish destinies. Such a seemingly small editorial change in the 1962 missal would express the sea change in that new relationship and demonstrate our ability to resolve our differences amicably without loss of integrity on either side. In the words of Pope Benedict XVI on the 40th anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*, we must "overcome past prejudices...indifference and the language of contempt to continue the Jewish-Christian dialogue...to deepen the bonds of friendship." **A**

From **America's** archives: "The Jews and Vatican II,"
Nov. 30, 1963, at www.americamagazine.org

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The Nobel Women's Initiative

An interview with Elizabeth Bernstein



Five members of the Nobel Women's Initiative, left to right: Wangari Maathai, Betty Williams, Shirin Ebadi, Mairead Corrigan Maguire and Jody Williams.

WHAT LED YOU TO *the Nobel Women's Initiative*?

Issues of peace and violence have long been a part of my life, even from my days as an activist student at the University of Wisconsin. During the 1980s and '90s, I worked in refugee camps on the Thai-Cambodian border teaching English and French, and I co-founded with Bob Maat the Coalition for Peace and Reconciliation in Cambodia. In our work we also helped

found the Cambodia Campaign to Ban Landmines, which led to my involvement in the international landmine campaign with Jody Williams. She won the Nobel Peace Prize jointly with the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, in 1997, the year the Ottawa treaty banning their use was signed. Jody stepped down as coordinator in 1998, and I took over her position until I became executive director of the Nobel Women's Initiative in 2006.

How was the initiative founded?

At a meeting in Nairobi in 2004, government representatives and members of the I.C.B.L. and other organizations met for the first five-year review of the Ottawa treaty. Shirin Ebadi, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2003 for her work defending the rights of women and children in Iran, was there. We'd asked her to the conference after she start-

ELIZABETH BERNSTEIN is executive director of the Nobel Women's Initiative, based in Ottawa, Canada. Established in 2006 by a group of women recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize, the organization supports efforts for peace and women's rights worldwide. The interviewer was GEORGE M. ANDERSON, S.J., an associate editor of *America*.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE NOBEL WOMEN'S INITIATIVE

ed a new nongovernmental organization in Iran to address landmines; the ones laid during the Iran-Iraq war continue to pose a major problem in her part of the world. Around the same time, Wangari Maathai had just been announced as the 2004 recipient of the peace prize—the first African woman to receive the award.

During this Nairobi summit, we invited Wangari Maathai and Shirin Ebadi to participate in a public panel, “Linking Humanitarian, Development and Disarmament Responses to War.” Over tea beforehand, it was Shirin Ebadi’s idea to work together with the other women laureates to do something to support peace and women’s rights activists, now that there are women laureates on nearly every continent. Of the 12 women who have received the award since it was established in 1900, seven are still living. So the idea was born at that small tea in December 2004. The following year, Jody Williams took on the responsibility to speak with the other women laureates about joining together in what has become the Nobel Women’s Initiative. We began to raise seed money; and since then various foundations, individuals and governments have contributed funding, including the laureates themselves.

With Shirin Ebadi so closely connected with the initiative’s beginnings, is Iran a special focus of the work?

Yes, especially because of the way the Bush administration and Iran’s president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, were ratcheting up the rhetoric last year about a possible military conflict over Iran’s nuclear program. In June 2006 we brought six women from Iran and six from the United States for a gathering in Vienna. There we exchanged experiences and then met with some of the International Atomic Energy Agency’s board of directors to encourage a nonviolent solution to the crisis. Most of us are isolated from the day-to-day lives of Iranians, especially the women. The women who met with us in Vienna went back to Iran and took part in demonstrations for an end to laws that discriminate against women. Many, including those at our meeting at the I.A.E.A., were beaten and arrested.

Later that summer Shirin Ebadi’s organization, the Center for the Defense of Human Rights, was threatened with closure because of her work for peace and women’s rights. But she and other women went on to organize a petition drive to collect a million signatures, calling for an end to discriminatory laws. (Iranian men have also taken part in the campaign.) These women are very determined and courageous. Since the campaign began, about 50 activists have been arrested, including people who only collected signatures. They insist that defending women’s rights is not a crime, nor is collecting signatures. At our first international laureates’ conference in Galway, Ireland, in May 2007, seven women came from Iran; we were able to learn

from their experiences of repression.

Is the work of the initiative divided into geographic regions?

We don’t really divide our work in that way. Jody Williams is from the United States; Rigoberta Menchú Tum, the 1992 winner, is from Guatemala; Wangari Maathai is from Kenya; in Iran there is Shirin Ebadi, the first Muslim woman to be awarded the prize; and there are Betty Williams and Mairead Corrigan Maguire in Northern Ireland, the 1996 recipients. These women—representing North and South America, Europe, the Middle East and Africa—have decided to bring together their extraordinary experiences in a united effort for peace with justice and equality.

One of the initial ideas was that the women laureates might convene conferences and take turns choosing themes and issues to focus on for discussion and action. Shirin Ebadi suggested the laureates look at women redefining peace in the Middle East and the whole continuum of violence there, from domestic violence to armed conflict and the occupations, and how these various kinds of violence are affecting women in the region, as well as women’s creative responses in challenging them.

We decided to host the meeting in Ireland, a safe, neutral location where women could speak freely and where we could learn from the women’s involvement in the Northern Ireland peace process. About 100 women attended the event in Galway in May 2007, with half coming from the Middle East. Presentations focused on issues that included human security—people-centered rather than state-centered security—and disarmament, from abolishing nuclear weapons to banning cluster bombs.

The cluster bomb campaign has gained a lot of momentum since summer 2006, when Israel dropped four million of them on Lebanon. An estimated one million cluster bombs still lie there unexploded. Now there is a new international process to conclude a treaty that will ban these unacceptable weapons and assist communities affected by them. Similarly, there is a new international campaign to abolish nuclear weapons. We also heard from women fighting for equality in Iran and from women from Israel and Palestine, members of the Parents Circle–Families Forum, an organization of over 500 bereaved Israeli and Palestinian families who have lost close relatives to the violence in the Middle East. They devote their energy to promoting dialogue, tolerance and reconciliation.

Will the Nobel Women’s Initiative address human rights abuses in China?

Yes. In addition to denying its own citizens the right to mobilize and speak freely, China supports governments currently engaged in crimes against humanity and ethnic

cleansing: the governments of Sudan and Burma. In Sudan, China continues to finance the activities of the Khartoum government, which is waging a war against the people of Darfur. Thousands of villages have been razed, with rape used as a weapon of war. China, through the state-owned company China National Petroleum Corporation, owns the largest share in Sudan's two major oil groups. At least 70 percent of Sudan's oil revenues have been used to purchase attack helicopters and weapons used to destroy the population of Darfur. China has the power to show real leadership on Darfur, but so far it has refused.

Another issue is China's relationship with the military junta in Burma, similarly engaged in crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing. Aung San Suu Kyi, the only imprisoned laureate, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991 in recognition of her work in the nonviolent struggle for democracy and human rights in Burma. For 11 of the past 16 years, Suu Kyi has been held under house arrest by the Burmese junta after her political party, the National League for Democracy, won the 1990 general election in a landslide victory. The junta refused to recognize the results and placed Suu Kyi, along with other pro-democracy activists, under house arrest.

As in Sudan, China's relationship with Burma is based on its own economic interests; it continues to willfully ignore the health and security of the Burmese people and hinders international efforts toward peace and reconciliation. China is Burma's largest source of weapons. What is the Burmese military junta doing with Chinese investment? Since 1996 its army has destroyed over 3,000 villages and recruited an estimated 70,000 children as soldiers. And the targeting of ethnic minorities by the military junta produces the largest number of refugees in the region. There are currently over 1.5 million Burmese refugees belonging to ethnic minority groups living in Burma and neighboring countries.

Have you been in touch with Suu Kyi?

Jody Williams and I were able to visit Suu Kyi in 2003, when she had a short period of freedom. She could receive visitors and travel around the country. But she was arrested in May of that year, imprisoned again and denied communication of any sort. We used to get letters to her through colleagues, but that is no longer possible. We advocate not only for her release, but for the release of other political prisoners too, and freedom for the Burmese people.

One action we carried out in support of Suu Kyi and the Burmese people in January 2007 was to have 13 laureates, both men and women, apply for visas to travel to Burma to visit her. But when Jody Williams and Shirin Ebadi went to the embassy in Washington, D.C., they were not even allowed to enter the building to submit an application for visas. The former president of South Korea, Kim Dae Jung,

who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2000, was denied a visa on the spot. The others received no response at all.

Among our goals was keeping the plight of the Burmese people in the public eye and encouraging the U.N. Security Council to give unanimous support to a U.S. draft resolution condemning political repression in Burma. The first-ever resolution on Burma urged the military government there to release all political prisoners, including Aung San Suu Kyi, and to address government attacks against civilians. On Jan. 12, however, China joined Russia in using the veto in the U.N. Security Council to stop the resolution. China seems to prefer to remain complicit in grave abuses against the people of Burma and Darfur, rather than use its leadership to help move toward justice.

Do you work with other human rights groups?

Yes, particularly with regard to the situation in Iran. We work closely with Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and others, because there has been a crackdown on Iranian dissidents. Tension between Iran and the United States has resulted in a number of arrests of scholars and dual-citizen Iranian-Americans who have gone back to visit their parents. One case involves an Iranian-American woman, Haleh Esfandiari, who is director of the Middle East Program at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C. In May 2007, she flew to Tehran to visit her 92-year-old mother. As she was leaving to fly back to Washington, a staged robbery took place. All her documents were taken, including her passport. When she tried to get the documents replaced, she was questioned and arrested, charged with espionage. We issued a letter of support for her in July. She was finally released and allowed to return to the United States in early September. Besides the large human rights groups, we work with women's rights groups, like the Association for Women's Rights in Development and smaller groups worldwide.

What are your hopes for the Nobel Women's Initiative?

The laureates want to see how they can best use the prestige and responsibility of the Nobel Peace Prize to advance the cause of peace and women's rights throughout the world. Some of our hopes involve showing that one person really can make a difference internationally.

Women's activities in building a peaceful, just world are largely unacknowledged, but so many dedicated women are creating change in their lives and communities every day. Sharing their successes and lessons learned inspires others. We intend to back their efforts for change and support them in advocating greater roles for women in achieving peace and combating violence. We want to emphasize the many ways in which women prevent, combat and survive violence. We are extremely hopeful. 

A Dinosaur Ponders The Latin Mass

BY EMIL A. WCELA

WE ARE FAST BECOMING extinct, we dinosaur Catholics who passed through childhood, adolescence and into adult years with the Latin Mass. Now men and women in the generations after us are talking a lot about the Latin Mass. Perhaps my personal recollections of the journey from Latin to English, surely not unlike those of others from my era, can add to the conversation.

The Way It Was

As an altar boy—only boys then—I struggled to learn the Latin prayers and not to mumble unintelligibly as I responded to the priest celebrant. Depending on how careful Father was with his Latin enunciation, Mass without a sermon could last

THE MOST REV. EMIL A. WCELA retired recently (June 2007) as auxiliary bishop of the Diocese of Rockville Centre, N.Y.

anywhere from 15 minutes to a half-hour.

In the seminary, each day began with Latin Mass, which on special feasts was sung. Two hundred male voices at 6:30 a.m., still early-morning raspy and rough, did not exactly challenge the angelic choirs, but the Sunday solemn Mass at 10 a.m. was splendid. First came the entrance procession, with all the seminarians, the subdeacon, the deacon and at the end the celebrant; then the polyphonic entrance antiphon sung by the choir; then the Kyrie and Gloria, and the other parts of the Mass in chant or polyphony. There was, however, a peculiarity in liturgical practice. We did not receive Holy Communion, because this was our second Mass of the day. We had already received at the 6:30 a.m. silent Mass.

During the first years of my priesthood (I was ordained in 1956), I knew and celebrated only the Latin Mass. Since the congregational singing was not especially

notable and since the priest had his back to the people, the only way to gauge how deeply they were involved was to listen for the rustle of missal pages being turned. One accepted the self-contradictory ritual of proclaiming the Epistle and Gospel in Latin toward the back wall and then going to the pulpit to read the Gospel again, this time in English. The same readings were repeated each year, instead of following today's three-year cycle that presents so much more of the Bible. The quality of music, some Gregorian chant, some English hymns with different degrees of theological and aesthetic value, varied from parish to parish. In some, the experience was inspiring, in others, just plain awful. A good test for music directors was the *Dies Irae*, the long lament at funeral Masses. Too often, the standard that really counted was how quickly it could be sung, especially if another funeral was to follow.



A typical group gathers for Mass in 1940. "Now men and women in the new generation...are talking a lot about the Latin Mass," says Bishop Wcela.

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'New Life'

For many years, there had been agitation for reform of the liturgy. Some called for Mass in the vernacular, but more attention was usually directed to encouraging choirs and parishes to participate more fully by improving the singing of Gregorian chant. The Benedictine monasteries at Solesmes in France and St. Benoit du Lac in Canada were the models to be imitated. A monk named Pius Parsch was writing about his efforts to give new life to the liturgy in his small chapel in Austria.

From 1961 to 1963, during my studies in Washington, D.C., and from 1963 to 1965 in Rome, we student priests celebrated Mass without a congregation, with a priest partner. We served each other in turn at one altar in a long row of altars separated from one another by flimsy partitions. Having a concelebrated Mass when a number of priests were present, instead of individual Masses, was just becoming a possibility (bolstered by a doctoral dissertation on the practice written by a nun at The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C.). On Sundays in Rome, a small group of us chose to concelebrate. But the rector of the residence for priests in graduate studies thought concelebration was an aberration. We had the unusual experience of moving our Mass from room to room each Sunday to elude the one searching for us—not a Communist persecutor but a defender of what he believed to be proper liturgy.

I returned to teach at our seminary in 1965 and stepped into the stream of gradual liturgical change. I admit it seemed to me incongruous when I first saw seminarians vested in cassocks and surplices playing guitars in our magnificent, soaring chapel.

When Mass in English arrived (in hindsight, perhaps with insufficient preparation), reports of liturgical abuse followed—that, for example, some of the “new breed” of priests were celebrating with Pepsi and pizza instead of bread and wine. Despite all the talk, I never met anyone who had actually been at such a “mass.” No doubt there were abuses; but most priests and congregations were doing their best to learn how to celebrate, how to write music for a different kind of liturgy, how to help people to be active participants in the action taking place, not just at the altar but in their lives, through the Eucharist.

In 1967, the same year that the Beatles brought us “Sgt. Pepper,” another priest and I, along with three seminarians, spent a summer conducting a renewal program in one of our parishes. We visited homes and organized study groups; and for the first time, our bishop permitted home Masses, which we celebrated every evening. These simple liturgies, each with a few families, were another eye-opening experience of how people could be touched by the Eucharist when it was brought closer to them.

By the time I became pastor of a large suburban parish in 1979, Latin had pretty much disappeared, except for some hymns. Our parish, however, had the custom of a Latin Mass one Sunday a month. Because it was prime time, the 10:30 a.m. Mass was designated, with the full parish choir assisting. During the summer, because of vacations and other priests filling in, we suspended the Latin Mass. After one of those breaks, I suggested to the other priests an experiment: in the fall, we would not reintroduce it unless people asked for it. The months came and went without a word of interest. So the Latin Mass simply stopped.

Getting It Right

As we weigh the Mass in English, my experience is that the vast majority of people find that it enriches their understanding and participation.

The first translation of the Latin Mass prayers, the ones we use now, was put together very quickly. It surely needed revision to recover in some places dignity of language and depth of meaning. The International Commission on English in the Liturgy is working on this, along with the national bishops’ conferences. The process has not been easy. Some translations proposed by ICEL, preserving very literally the grammatical structure of Latin with its luxuriant growth of complex clauses and modifiers, sound more like attempts to teach Latin grammar in English dress rather than prayers that people could actually use to worship God. ICEL is open to comments, however, and as the revision process goes on, some prayers have become more “prayable.”

It must be acknowledged that there are still priests who look upon the Mass as a showplace for their dubious creative talents rather than as the shared worship of



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Theology for Life

the community of which they are a part. I find such do-it-yourself liturgies very off-putting. There are still music directors who believe that their own compositions are exactly and only what is needed for good worship. Trying to participate in those parishes calls for special dedication, because one encounters music known only to the local parishioners and to God. It has never been and never will be the case that all music used in churches makes the theological and musical grade.

As for the Latin Mass today, two pertinent articles, both by young women, struck me. One author, writing in *Time* magazine (7/30), seemed to be disturbed mainly by some sermons she had heard. The thrust was that if the Mass is celebrated in a language nobody understands and the priest has his back to people, then she won't have to listen to sermons on social issues with which she disagrees or the presentation of which bothers her. The Mass itself would be a kind of mantra, a reassuring background for her personal thoughts about God and other things. Not much of a reason for the Latin Mass, especially since not every bishop, priest or deacon will always be an inspiring preacher—

regardless of the language spoken.

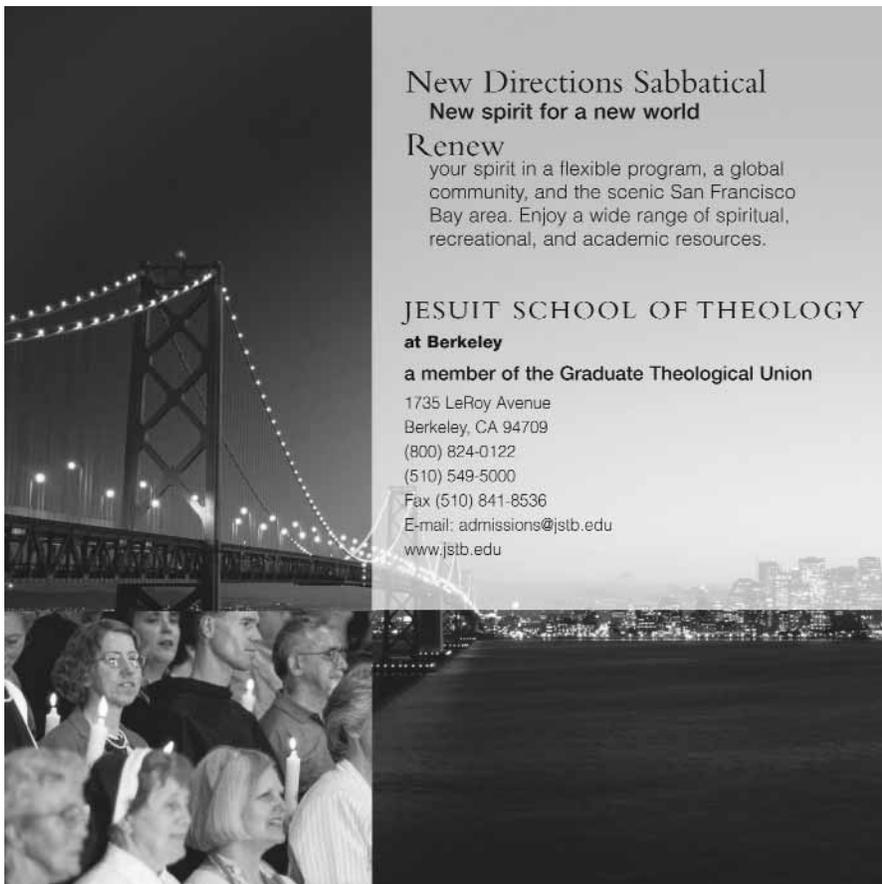
The other author, in the Brooklyn diocesan weekly, *The Tablet* (7/21), seems to favor Latin because of, quoting Pope Benedict XVI, "arbitrary deformations of the liturgy." One gets the impression that to her every Mass in English is by definition a "deformation." She also loves to have the priest with his back to the congregation, facing the east, the direction from which Christ will some day return. Does it count for nothing that at the Mass Christ is with us then and there? When I imagine celebrating again toward the back wall, even an eastern wall, I remember how deeply moved I was the first time I was able to celebrate facing the congregation, whose faith and life I shared.

The same author loves the Mass in Latin, even though she understands little of it. As she writes, "That's what the missal is for." I certainly cannot dictate for anyone what brings them more deeply into the Eucharist. But I can only shake my head in puzzlement when I hear people talk of how good it is to celebrate Mass in a language they do not understand, while I continue my struggle to learn Spanish so that members of a different congregation

can celebrate Mass in a language they do understand.

I appreciate Pope Benedict's deep pastoral concern to invite back into unity with Rome groups of people who have separated themselves and have made the issue of the Latin Mass the centerpiece of their dissatisfaction. May God make the initiative fruitful. The pope knows the people he is trying to reach. Over the years, though, my experience with a few members of these splinter groups has convinced me that the Latin Mass is at most a rallying point, a handy focus. The real issues go much deeper, into faith, the meaning of church and God's salvific will.

For those who want Latin because of its sense of mystery or the feeling of stepping away from the mundane, it seems to me that pondering the mystery of God in one's own thought structures and vocabulary provides enough mystery without celebrating our most precious liturgical act in a language not understood by most. And the mundane? God thought enough of it that he sent his only Son to enter its realm to the fullest, even to using the language of his time and place. **A**



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Preserving Catholic Identity

In "The Faculty 'Problem,'" (9/10), Wilson D. Miscamble, C.S.C., addressed the importance of hiring Catholic faculty members in order to maintain the distinctive character of a Catholic university. The article elicited impassioned responses from many of our readers. A sampling of their letters follows.

Heal Thyself

Bravo to **America** for publishing the article by Wilson D. Miscamble, C.S.C., on the state of the Catholic identity of U.S. Catholic colleges and universities. In the past some journals have published attacks on Catholic institutions of higher education that lacked nuance or were mean-spirited. A balanced article like this one in a mainstream Catholic publication has been long in the coming.

I hope that in the future, **America** runs other pieces that continue this discussion, especially focusing on Jesuit colleges and the other apostolic works of the Society of Jesus, like high schools. While the journal does a great job reporting on the good work the Society is doing (e.g., Cristo Rey and Nativity schools), I would like to see more hard-nosed analysis of the challenges facing Jesuit institutions. Possible topics include the corporatization of higher ed, big money and college sports or, again, how well Jesuit colleges have preserved a distinctly Catholic identity.

*Anthony D. Andreassi, C.O.
Brooklyn, N.Y.*

Intellectual Vitality

The essay by Wilson D. Miscamble, C.S.C., misrepresents the Department of English at Notre Dame. Like the university of which it is proudly a part, the department pursues its intellectual vocation by committing itself to the highest scholarly excellence. Fully 60 percent of faculty in the department are Roman Catholic, and the department



affirms the distinctive Catholic mission of the university. Our demonstrated record of hiring Catholics, women and members of minorities has enabled the department to embrace mission and diversity simultaneously. It is hardly surprising that an excellent department committed to the pursuit of knowledge and truth would seek and encourage a diversity of views among its faculty. Such intellectual vitality represents Notre Dame at its best.

*Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe
Chair, Department of English
University of Notre Dame
South Bend, Ind.*

By the Numbers

"The Faculty 'Problem'" that Wilson D. Miscamble argues exists in Catholic higher education is, at best, only one component of the issue of Catholic identity in Catholic colleges and universities. Behind his argument is an assumption that Catholic identity is primarily a function of the religious affiliation of the faculty, but this oversimplifies the issue. If Catholic universities and colleges instituted a policy that two-thirds of the faculty be Catholic, the result would not necessarily increase the Catholic identity of these institutions. The fact is, qualified applicants for faculty positions who happen to be Catholic do not necessarily know more about Catholicism than your average Catholic. There is a fairly high probability that they have never read

the documents of the Second Vatican Council, know very little about the Bible or the history of the church's interpretation of it, do not really understand the concept of infallibility (papal or ecclesiastical) and could not articulate a basic understanding of sacramentality.

So how would one judge these potential faculty members with regard to their effects on the Catholic life of a Catholic university or college? And who would determine the extent of one's knowledge about Catholicism or judge what kind of Catholic is appropriate for the institution? Is a Catholic economist who is ignorant about the church's teachings on

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the economy or the church's teachings on social justice any better than a non-Catholic economist? I would argue that the ignorant Catholic is worse because of the high potential for misrepresenting Catholic teachings or stressing Catholic teachings that may only scratch the surface of what it means to be Catholic.

Yes, to a certain extent, Catholic universities and colleges must have certain Catholic practices and viewpoints that reflect their name, but what it means to be a Catholic university transcends essentialist categories and is partially determined by the particular social circumstances of the university. How a Catholic institution interacts with other groups (based on the principles of Catholic social teaching) is just as important in forming its Catholic identity as the Catholicity of its faculty. Thinking that hiring more Catholic faculty members will shore up the Catholic identity of the institution is simplistic at best, and reductionist and distorting of Catholicism at worst.

*Stephen P. Aheame-Kroll
Delaware, Ohio*

Returns on Investment

Wilson D. Miscamble, C.S.C., misses the forest (what has become of higher education today) for the trees (his concerns about faculty hires). At selective institutions, Notre Dame included, higher education has become an investment. A four-year undergraduate degree can easily cost \$160,000. Americans who can afford it consider this a wise investment, because the returns—admission to “top” graduate programs, high paying jobs, connections—exceed the outlay. Returns like these are possible only when a school has nationally recognized faculty members. What they are recognized for hardly matters. The investment model of higher education is encouraged by our obsession with rankings of the “best” colleges and by the expectation that schools will offer their student-clients a campus filled with amenities. No doubt an interest in a Catholic worldview plays a role when parents decide to send their child to a Catholic college, but I fear for most this interest must be secondary to the expectation that this education will be “worth it” in a very tangible sense. I do not know if anything can reverse this trend, but

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wringing hands over the number of Catholic faculty members at a school like Notre Dame seems a futile response to a much bigger problem.

Daniel Burr
Covington, Ky.

Starting Over

Father Miscamble's article is a concise and trenchant analysis of what has metastasized from a "problem" to a crisis at many of the best known Catholic institutions. As a graduate of Notre Dame (B.A. '60) and a long-term observer of Catholic higher education, I have come to the conclusion that for all but a few institutions the retention of authentic Catholic identity is no longer possible. Once a majority of the tenured faculty members are either non-Catholic or, if nominally Catholic, hostile to a Catholic mission as prescribed by *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, the game is pretty well up. The only chance at that point is to have an administration (fully supported by the board of trustees and the controlling religious order) willing and able to impose faculty hiring decisions so as to assure a majority of the faculty will be seriously Catholic. There is no evidence that any institution has the stomach for the kind of protracted and bitter struggle such a course of conduct would precipitate.

A number of new Catholic colleges and universities have sprung up in reaction to all this. Their sponsors and supporters have concluded that, daunting as it is to start a new institution from scratch, it is nevertheless easier than trying to reform one whose secularization is well past the "tipping point."

Nicholas J. Healy Jr.
President, Ave Maria University
Naples, Fla.

Out of the Ghetto

Father Miscamble's article is a splendid example of "déjà vu all over again." Putting it bluntly, most of his complaints have little to do with his principal concern. They are found in all academic institutions.

In the process of changing to meet new challenges, Catholic higher education moved from an inner-directed view of intellectualism toward an integrated view of knowledge. The result has been messy—inevitably so. But it was and remains necessary to the creation of the

"new" Catholic intellectual, one whose vision of the world is not that of the critic on the sidelines but of the participant sharing in the process of developing some aspect of knowledge. Recruiting a "Catholic" faculty could be an adventurous search for those whose contributions to their fields are of importance whether or not they touch on religion or religious issues. Or it could be a replication of those who see their role as defenders of the church against an alien world and whose contributions focus on that alone. Of course there is room for both, but as Father Miscamble's article demonstrates, both are already there.

Should Catholic institutions of higher education try to appoint Catholic faculty? Certainly, the religious affiliation of candidates may well be taken into consideration. But the number one consideration should be the potential contribution to the academic mission of the institution and society at large sought for in the candidates.

Isolation of Catholics creates the image of a church and religion unable to deal with the challenges presented by the societies in which they exist. The task of universities, including Catholic universities, is the preparation of the next generation of intellectual leaders. Catholic schools can do this only if they are giving an education that is fully integrated into the world of learning. The emphasis should be on the students more than on the faculty. That is where the future lies.

James M. Powell
Syracuse, N.Y.

Tipping Point

Thank you for publishing "The Faculty 'Problem,'" by Wilson D. Miscamble, C.S.C. The university's president, John I. Jenkins, C.S.C., has pledged to reverse course; but he faces the obstacles Father Miscamble describes. The school's mission statement declares that the university's Catholic identity "depends on" the "continuing presence" of a Catholic majority on the faculty. Thus, if those in governance permit this majority to disappear, they will have surrendered the university's claim to Catholic identity.

William H. Dempsey
Arlington, Va.

Where Credit Is Due

The article by Wilson D. Miscamble, C.S.C., expresses a valid concern, that more Catholic professors in a Catholic institution are desirable—all things being equal in scholarship, of course. On the other hand, his identification with *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* may indicate he is more into propaganda and polemics than scholarship.

Despite the direction Father Miscamble recommends that Notre Dame take, he might acknowledge that N.D. is doing pretty well—to no small degree because Ted Hesburgh, C.S.C., demanded that truth and engagement be preferred to dictatorial documents like *Ex Corde*. In fact, whenever an intrusive Curial official began harassing Notre Dame and Catholic universities, Ted Hesburgh knew whom to call to keep such intruders away from a solid university. Prophets of doom notwithstanding, he did a heck of a job.

Bill Mazella
Yonkers, N.Y.

Hiring for Mission

Father Miscamble's glass-nearly-empty portrayal of Catholic mission and identity on our campuses is as misleading as it is simplistic. He uses one data point—53 percent Catholic faculty—and several anecdotes from the University of Notre Dame to make the point that unless we all hire more Catholic professors at Catholic universities, we will "merely replicate...secular institutions and...surrender what remains of their distinctiveness."

Father Miscamble ignores the exciting work that has been done throughout Catholic higher education for nearly 25 years to preserve and advance our distinctive missions.

The preservation of our missions and identities as Catholic institutions of higher education is a complex, multi-layered, exciting endeavor that has involved thousands of faculty members and staff in the United States for nearly a generation. To reduce this important work to counting Catholics is demeaning to us all. Even the author admits that his one data point may be inaccurate when he reports regarding Notre Dame faculty: "The figure as of 2006 was 53 percent, which is somewhat inflated by those who

answered 'Catholic' on the faculty questionnaire but for whom the practice of the faith appears to be nominal at best." Ah, and here's the rub, too. Who is the best judge of whether a Catholic is "nominal" or "committed?" I say let's continue our important work of hiring for mission and ensuring the distinctiveness of each of our institutions as places where faith and reason intersect. I am proud to be associated with this important project, and I look forward to my continued participation in it.

Noreen M. Carrocci
President, Newman University
Wichita, Kans.

Intellectual Curiosity

Father Miscamble's article is fascinating, but I wonder whether, whatever the results of the Rev. Andrew Greeley's research, the supply problem is quite so easily dealt with.

Of course we should be wary if Catholic institutions (or indeed any others) get caught up too much in the U.S. News & World Report rat race. But—here's a radical suggestion!—while we get upset about the secularizing culture that

may appear to be gaining the upper hand in such institutions, should we be equally upset about the non- (anti-?) intellectual culture that seems to pervade those charged with the direction of the American Catholic Church? Perhaps that culture even more urgently demands to be changed.

Nicholas Clifford
New Haven, Vt.

Maybe Next Year

In "The Faculty 'Problem,'" Father Miscamble appears to be suggesting some kind of frustration that Catholics are not given extra consideration in the employment process at Notre Dame, even though over half of the faculty identify themselves as Catholic. Last time I checked, the University of Notre Dame was an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer. While I appreciate the author's concern for potential bias in the hiring process, Notre Dame is a top-tier institution and has had much success in the modern academic world. Whether it is ground-breaking faculty research or having a winning football team, a good part of Notre

Dame's success lies in not obsessing over the number of Catholic linebackers on the field or professors in the classroom. True success for a Catholic university is measured in scholarly contributions, excellence in teaching and, one hopes, a winning football season.

Curt G. Friehs III
Wichita, Kan.

Crux of the Problem

Catholic universities have a major decision facing them with respect to the faculty "problem." Do they: (1) recruit a committed Catholic faculty and retain such or (2) seek to recruit faculty members who will bring "prestige" and "popularity" to the university, even though such person(s) do not bring a traditional, true and viable Catholic educational pedigree?

This is the crux of the "problem" facing the Catholic universities today; and this dilemma must be resolved sooner, much sooner, rather than later. Otherwise the demise of a traditional Catholic education at a Catholic university will be a *fait accompli*.

David L. Carpenter
Salt Lake City, Utah

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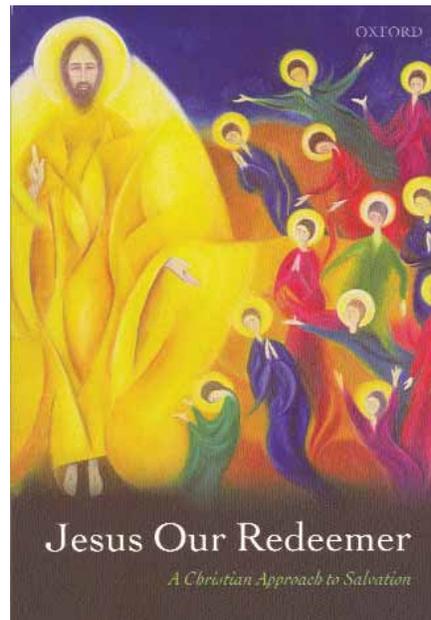
What a debt of gratitude all students of theology owe Gerald O'Collins! In book after book he has shown himself a sure guide to the most fundamental issues of theology. His works on the resurrection, on Christology and on the Trinity combine deep knowledge of the tradition with extensive and informed presentations of contemporary approaches and positions. And he always does so non-polemically, only occasionally manifesting the literary equivalent of a raised eyebrow. This genial emeritus professor at Rome's Pontifical Gregorian University and current research professor at St. Mary's College continues to improve with age, like a fine Shiraz of his native Australia.

His most recent book, *Jesus Our Redeemer: A Christian Approach to Salvation*, is one of his richest offerings, perhaps because the theme is so central and has close bearing on every other area of theology. Thus O'Collins welds the link with the theology of creation by accenting a "New Adam" Christology; and his adventurous last chapter, "Bodily Resurrection and the Transformation of the World," shows the bearing of the theology of salvation upon eschatology, the final destiny of humankind and the material universe itself.

A significant and welcome feature of the present work is the author's sensitivity to the aesthetic. References to poetry and painting, music and film permeate the book. Clearly, they do not represent mere embellishments, but reflect the author's immersion in art as a mode of theology, as worthy of respect and attention as any of the conceptual *Summae Theologiae* of the tradition. Even Mel Gibson and the Italian film director Pier Paolo Pasolini make cameo appearances, with the latter being awarded the theological Palme d'Or.

Facile categorizations and contrasts, happily, find no place in O'Collins's catholic vision. Thus, for example, both Anselm and Abelard receive an apprecia-

tive hearing. "Anselm," O'Collins writes, "laid fresh stress on the humanity and human freedom of Christ, who spontaneously acts as our representative and in no way is to be construed as a penal sub-



stitute who passively endured sufferings to appease the anger of a 'vindictive' God." Abelard's insistence upon love as the key to redemption "shows how salvation is not primarily a 'process,' and even less a 'formula,' but a person, or rather three persons acting with boundless love." Both Anselm's sense of the depth of sin's dysfunction and Abelard's sensitivity to the height of redeeming Love provide irreplaceable elements of a comprehensive approach to salvation.

Though alert to criticisms launched against the concept of "sacrifice," O'Collins rightly underscores its centrality in both Scripture and tradition. He concedes that sacrificial language can be and has been abused; and he affirms, with Aquinas, that suffering as such need not be meritorious. What ultimately counts is Christ's total self-gift "for our sake." "Christ made himself vulnerable, and his loving self-sacrifice produced life and growth; this sacrifice brought a renewed communion between human beings and the tripersonal God." These words call to mind the magnificent 12th-century mosaic of the cross as tree of life in the Church of San Clemente in Rome. Springs of living water flow from the cross and irrigate a flowering acanthus plant. In its branches

human beings, birds and beasts all find nourishment: the new creation, fruit of Christ's loving sacrifice.

Salvation, as Christians distinctively experience and express it, is a Trinitarian mystery. Appropriating Irenaeus's bold metaphor of Son and Spirit as the "two hands" of God, O'Collins expounds on their inseparable salvific action. In the church's eucharistic celebration, we represent the once and for all sacrifice of Christ and invoke the Spirit that we too may be transformed and become Christ's body. *Jesus Our Redeemer* manages the difficult task of being Christocentric without slighting the indispensable role of the Holy Spirit in realizing our salvation. Even the vexing issue of the *proprium* of the Spirit receives suggestive treatment by the association of Spirit with *koinonia*, communion. "The invisible Spirit works to make the visible Church *the* place which manifests the divine love, the community which on behalf of all humanity (and the whole cosmos) voices praise and thanksgiving to the Trinity, and which reaches out in loving prayer to all humankind."

O'Collins offers a considered discussion of an ever more crucial topic: the salvation of non-Christians. On the one hand, he stresses the New Testament's conviction of the universal salvific significance of Jesus Messiah. On the other hand, he holds that the former covenants, with Noah, Abraham and Moses, are not abrogated. Nevertheless, the Christ event represents a true *novum*; his resurrection opens to humanity a new and definitive possibility. The paschal mystery brings to full realization what being sons and daughters of God entails: in Christ we are called to become "*fili in Filio*."

The Reviewers

Robert P. Imbelli, a priest of the Archdiocese of New York, teaches systematic theology at Boston College, Chestnut Hill, Mass.

Olga Bonfiglio is a professor at Kalamazoo College, Mich., and the author of *Heroes of a Different Stripe: How One Town Responded to the War in Iraq*.

Michael P. Orsi is Research Fellow in Law and Religion at Ave Maria School of Law, Ann Arbor, Mich.

All grace, abundantly bestowed, bears this paschal imprint. In contrast to some contemporary theologians, but firmly in line with the theology of Karl Rahner, O'Collins teaches that all grace is the grace of Christ, "Any and every acceptance of saving grace and the Holy Spirit, whenever and wherever it takes place, is an acceptance of Christ. There is no zone 'outside Christ,' since there is no zone 'outside' grace and the Holy Spirit. All experience of salvation is Christological."

Inspired by the generous "Wisdom theology" of Rahner, O'Collins takes a further systematic step. He closely relates salvation and grace with revelation. In a speculative "coda," transcribing a theme from the Second Vatican Council, he writes: "the history of revelation is the history of salvation and vice versa." Symbolically, he associates the two realities with "life" and "light" and sees them as "the two inseparable dimensions of the one divine self-communication."

While finding much that is stimulating in this view, I would further differentiate the two dimensions of grace and revelation. Thus I take "grace" to be the more ample and inclusive theological category, restricting "revelation" to the explicit articulation of saving grace's paschal pattern and scope. To put the matter succinctly: while acknowledging that "the history of revelation is the history of salvation," I am less persuaded of the "vice versa."

Whatever these reservations with regard to the "coda," the concerto O'Collins has provided is a splendid performance. **Robert P. Imbelli**

Slain for Telling the Awful Truth

A Russian Diary

A Journalist's Final Account of Life, Corruption, and Death in Putin's Russia

By Anna Politkovskaya
Random House. 400p \$25.95
ISBN 9781400066827

Oct. 7 is the first anniversary of the murder of the Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaya. It is a notable day for her fellow journalists, who admire her courage

and commitment to the cause of free speech. It is also a sad day, because it brings to the surface the haunting truth that journalists have become targets for murder in Russia—and all over the world—because transparency and truth have been set aside in favor of security against terrorists and favorable government public relations. In Russia during 2005 alone, 6 journalists were murdered, 63 assaulted, 47 arrested and 42 prosecuted, according to a report by the Glasnost Defense Foundation. Since 2000, when Vladimir Putin came to power, 13 journalists have been killed in Russia.

Politkovskaya was a journalist with *Novaya Gazeta* (New Newspaper), which was founded as perestroika was emerging. She covered the first and the second wars in Chechnya and was just finishing a story about torture there when Russian-supported Chechen security forces gunned her down in the elevator of her apartment in Moscow.

From Politkovskaya's viewpoint, Russia is a country in chaos. She illustrates this in the pages of her diary, which bleed with horrible scenes of death, the escalating stink of corruption and the people's utter resignation to the fact that they cannot do anything, while they pine for the good old days of the U.S.S.R.

Democracy is dead in Russia, says Politkovskaya, and the people did it to themselves because they failed to challenge government policies, put up opposition candidates, support an independent media or finance independent sources for significant public projects. Although she admits that political opposition lost its steam in 1996, when Yeltsin beat the Communists, she also puts democracy's demise squarely on the shoulders of Russian Federation President Vladimir Putin, who masterminded the monstrous

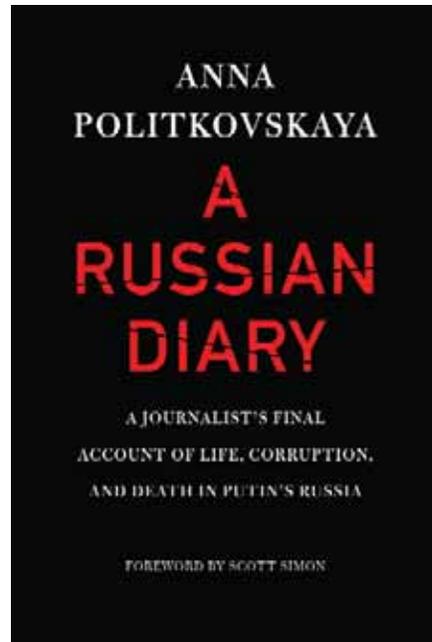
system that manipulates information, avoids responsibility and restricts human freedom. For example, Putin holds inane and scripted press conferences. He makes promises he does not keep. He does not respond to criticism and is unmoved by human tragedy, like the deaths of 300-plus

children who were killed by Chechen terrorists in a Beslan school. He is equally unconcerned about soldiers who are bullied by the older "grandfather soldiers" and are being put in harm's way without proper protection, decent food or even shoes to wear. He forgets about veterans, too, especially disabled veterans. He even abolished the right of the Duma (legislature) to vote—and got the people to support him.

A few citizens' groups attempt to challenge the government, like the Soldiers' Mothers, who valiantly and passionately appeal to Putin to change the awful conditions their sons must endure, but there are not enough citizens who involve themselves in these movements for change. Politkovskaya believes this silence and resignation comes from the Russians' "serf-like psychology":

Our society isn't a society anymore. It is a collection of windowless, isolated concrete cells.... The authorities do everything they can to make the cells even more impermeable, sowing dissent, inciting some against others, dividing and ruling. And the people fall for it. That is the real problem. That is why revolution in Russia, when it comes, is always so extreme. The barrier between the cells collapses only when the negative emotions within them are ungovernable.

Liberals and democrats tried to appeal



to Putin. But they are locked in an insidious Catch-22: they cannot seek to work with him when they are simultaneously calling for his resignation.

Perhaps most disturbing is Politkovskaya's warning about the government's eerie and surreal return to Stalinism as revisionist historians and public relations people laud the former dictator's brilliance in helping to win World War II. The truth, according to Politkovskaya, is that Putin is using some of the same Stalinist tactics, by which dissenters are abducted, tortured, drugged with truth serum or killed. Elections are rigged, and there is an aura of secrecy and suspicion surrounding the abject lawlessness of those who hold powerful and influential positions.

Without a free press reporting on such activities, says Politkovskaya, democracy has no chance, so she takes it upon herself to report the bad news and then dearly pays for it with her life.

A Russian Diary is imbued with an edgy and tense tone, yet Politkovskaya does not come off as shrill because her passion for truth is so forthright. Nevertheless, readers may need to take frequent breaks from the book, because it is utterly depressing to read about the government's deliberate cruelty to its people and to see the people so complicit in the process.

Though Politkovskaya is a strong-willed woman, as her picture on the back book jacket suggests, sometimes the situation in Russia is so dire that even she is consumed with deep bitterness and disappointment. "The main problem," she writes, "is that while collapse [of the government] is inevitable, we will not see it in our lifetime. That's a pity, because we would like to." A profound sense of hopelessness pervades the book, and readers come to know someone who loves her country yet grieves over its inability to overcome its abuses and predicaments.

Russians will probably never read this book because of government censorship—and because of citizens' support for the restriction of freedom of speech and of the press, which is at 82 percent, according to a 2005 poll by the All-Russian Public Opinion Research Center. Politkovskaya surmises that such sentiment stems from the blatant sex and violence on television, which people abhor. Censorship of the

press, however, prevents citizens from obtaining information and understanding the nation's politics, including its dealing with Russia's current nemesis, Chechnya.

Ms. Politkovskaya provides a sobering view of what an ebbing and unchecked social contract between government and its citizens looks like.

In his foreword to the book, Scott Simon, host of National Public Radio's "Weekend Edition Saturday," honors Politkovskaya by recognizing that she did not do her journalistic work for "money, notoriety, or advancement, but the struggle for the survival of her country...." In fact, she stayed in Russia even though she could have left quite easily. This makes the book all the more compelling. She expresses her attitude in a postscript:

The more I think about it, the more I would be betraying these people if I walked away. The only thing to do is to take this to the bitter end, so that no one can say that when things became difficult, I ran away.

Olga Bonfiglio

Sister of the Foursquare Gospel

Aimee Semple McPherson and the Resurrection of Christian America

By Matthew Avery Sutton
Harvard Univ. Press. 416p \$26.95
ISBN 0674025318

The term "American exceptionalism" means that the United States plays a unique role in history—that, in fact, God has specifically designated our nation to fulfill his purposes.

This idea has provided a rationale for American public policy, both foreign and domestic, ever since the Mayflower Compact. It has been used to justify our wars, our immigration policies and much more. And it has been central to the messages of various religious leaders who have

gained prominence throughout our history—from Jonathan Edwards in the 18th century and Henry Ward Beecher in the 19th right down to Jerry Falwell in the current era.

One leading exponent of this "exceptionalist" notion was Aimee Semple McPherson (1890-1944), a Protestant evangelist who became particularly important in American religious life during the first part of the 20th century. She is the subject of Matthew Avery Sutton's new book, *Aimee Semple McPherson and the Resurrection of Christian America*.

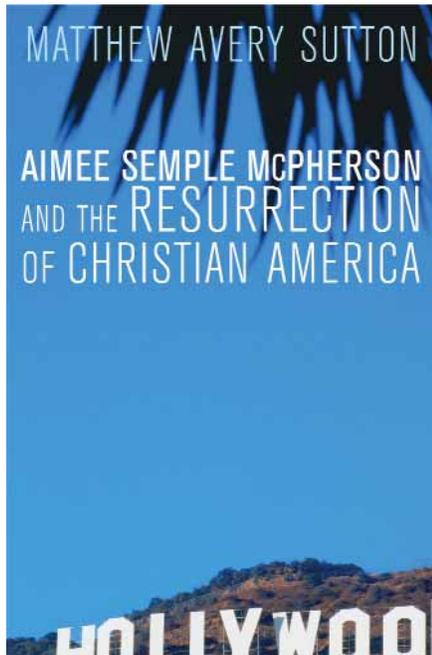
Sutton, assistant professor of history at Oakland University, Rochester, Mich., offers a panoramic view of McPherson's life, and contends that her legacy is nothing less than the revival of Christian fundamentalism as a major force in American politics. McPherson joined Pentecostal enthusiasm with the traditional tenets of creedal Christianity, creating a juggernaut that continues to command the attention of politicians. Contemporary Americans will be familiar with its more recent incarnations, the Moral Majority and the Christian Coalition.

McPherson began her career as a revival-tent preacher, but soon solidified her movement in the Church of the Foursquare Gospel. The locus of her ministry was the 5,000-seat Angelus Temple she built in Los Angeles. Her religious teaching was often in the context of a theatrical presentation, with herself as the prima donna in a cast worthy of a Broadway production. Her charismatic personality energized the social and political outreach of her organization, which began as an ecumenical ministry but eventually became a denomination in its own right. Active in California politics, and later in the war effort, she tirelessly promoted a type of spiritual populism often referred to as the "religion of America."

Central to this understanding of faith is the philosophy of pragmatism, whose goal is to assure Americans psychologically of their essential righteousness and their special closeness to the heart of God. Hence, the "exceptionalist" idea of America as the New Jerusalem—the shining City on a Hill. The premise rests on dubious biblical exegesis, but it finds a prominent place in the religio-political discourse of those who adhere to it.

McPherson drew on such ideas and on the imagery suggested by them. She was constantly pairing America's primary civic icon, the flag, with the pre-eminent religious symbol, the cross (a combination of visual elements that decades later would become a fixture of Jerry Falwell's "Old Time Gospel Hour"). She also anointed some politicians with virtual "messianic" status, as exemplified in her support of Herbert Hoover and Franklin D. Roosevelt (later evangelicals would do the same with Ronald Reagan).

History is replete with examples of religious cults joined to state aspirations, from the *pietas* of the ancient Romans, to the claims made on individual conscience



by modern totalitarian regimes. Over and over again, national symbols have been sanctified and leaders deified—all to enable kingdoms and nations to enhance their power over their citizens.

True religion, however, demands a separation of church and state, since no political system can ever be perfect. And herein lies the danger of aligning religion with politicians and national interests. To use St.

Augustine's dichotomy, the City of God must act as a superego for the City of Man. Proclaiming that God's will coincides with civic rule cheapens religion's moral worth and, in the end, sells out to mammon.

The cult of personality that surrounds some religious leaders imposes high

expectations and concomitant pressures. McPherson's experience illustrates, in particular, how the dangers of greed and self-promotion can become great temptations for Christian superstars and often grease the skids for a fall from grace. The scandals with which her name was associated (divorce; financial impropriety; allegations of sexual misconduct, lavish lifestyle and charlatanism in physical healings; and finally, a fatal drug overdose that was ruled accidental) are indications of false—or at least underdeveloped—spirituality.

Numerous challenges were leveled at McPherson's religious integrity, especially by Robert P. Schuler, a Methodist pastor who recognized the self-serving egoism and adventurism in her ministry and became her nemesis. (In our day, Jimmy Swaggart, Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker and Ted Haggard showed similar individualism and materialism that often underlie religious life in America.)

It would be wrong to allege that everything wrought by McPherson and others of her ilk is bad. Her outreach to the poor, for example, (especially her food pantry) was an outstanding example of Social Gospel initiative during the Great Depression. It was, in many ways, a precursor to the work of today's Christian ministries that provide invaluable service to the nation by aiding the poor and giving witness on immigration, health care reform, war and many other critical issues.

Once religion takes on a temporal agenda, however, it opens itself to being coopted by the state, blurring the line between faith and mere partisanship, with true religion the ultimate loser. The life of Aimee Semple McPherson provides abundant examples of the reasons for caution.

Sutton gives somewhat less attention to the core questions about how religion can be manipulated for political expediency than he does to McPherson's impact on the politics of her day, evangelical Christianity, feminism, charity and social service, politics and the media. Nonetheless, this book is a timely warning for modern religious leaders seeking a place at the table as the 2008 election looms.

Michael P. Orsi

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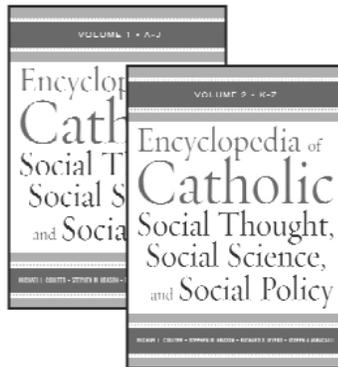
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Fumbling Doctrine

I enjoyed reading Father Jim McDermott's erudite and insightful piece on church doctrine in *Of Many Things* (9/10), despite his animosity toward one of pro sports' most sacred institutions, the Green Bay Packers.

Father Jim's admission that doctrinal issues are slippery and elusive things recalls the numerous fumbles of which Rex Grossman, the Chicago Bears quarterback, has been guilty in the preseason games he and the Bears managed to muddle through. Here's hoping we can all get a firmer grasp of the issue, whether it is interpreting church doctrine or hanging onto a football.

By the way, I'm looking forward to Father Jim's take on the New Orleans Saints and the "dark night of the soul."

*Stan Stoga
 Madison, Wis.*

Training for Lectors

In "Liturgy 40 Years After the Council" (8/27), Cardinal Godfried Danneels writes that prior to the Second Vatican Council, "active participation" was first promoted through the circulation of what were called people's missals, which contained the texts of the Sunday liturgy. Later in the article, he comments, "How can we speak of 'hearing the message' if everyone is sitting with heads bent reading the texts in their missalettes when they should be listening?"

There is a twofold problem here. One book has been replaced by a little booklet. Often the lector has his head bent reading a somewhat bigger book, the Lectionary. Far from proclaiming the Word, the reader often seems intent on reading to the book, oblivious as to whether the congregation is listening or not.

There is need for more intensive training of lectors in proclamation—short of theatrical performance, but a real outspoken rendering of the Scriptures

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arising from an understanding of the texts. When this is accomplished, pastors could cancel orders for missalettes.

*Victor Whelan
 Saraland, Ala.*

Imagining Jesus

Over the years, I've enjoyed articles by William J. O'Malley, S.J., and his recent piece, "Accessible Holiness" (7/30), is among his best. Encouraging us to realize how holiness and humanity can truly belong together, Father O'Malley reminds us that Jesus is as fully grounded in our world as he is gloriously divine in the world that remains for us unseen. The mystery of Jesus' incarnation is impossible for us to fathom entirely, of course, and it seems that we tend to resolve our cognitive tension in favor of Jesus, the true eternal God, significantly more so than in favor of Jesus, our true and fully human friend and companion. It is as if our faith in the truth that he is "like us in all things but sin" diminishes our felt friendship much more than Jesus desires.

I sometimes wonder how many of us ever imagine friendship with a Jesus who is not very tall, is less than fit and whose crooked teeth do nothing to diminish his warm smile and strength. Is it because we think such physical attributes are in some inexpressible way related to "sin"? Or if not so drastic as that, do we recall the familiar phrase that "grace builds on nature," somehow implying that the pinnacle of human nature, Jesus Christ, must embody fine physical stature and attractiveness? Or is it that we know that our male leaders must be tall and lean and photogenic, because of course that's how the world works?

I sometimes wonder if the preacher on the mount was short, balding and soft-bodied, and if the powerful life-changing words of that man, who caused no one to take notice of him ordinarily, were magnified inexplicably by his ordinariness. Who knows?

*Robert B. Murray
 Braintree, Mass.*

To send a letter to the editor, we recommend using the link on America's Web site, www.americamagazine.org.

Thanksgiving as Public Witness to God's Action

Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time (C), Oct. 14, 2007

Readings: 2 Kgs 5:14-17; Ps 98:1-4; 2 Tim 2:8-13; Lk 17:11-19

"And he fell at the feet of Jesus and thanked him" (Lk 17:16)

WE HEAR AND SAY the word thanks fairly often, though perhaps not often enough and usually without much thought. Thanksgiving Day is our most popular national holiday, yet few of us recognize and acknowledge the religious dimension of that day. Last Sunday's master-servant parable reminded us that we are God's servants and have no reason to expect God to thank us for doing what God asks of us. But while God may have no obligation to thank us, we have an obligation to thank God. Today's Scripture readings can help us to understand better the rich biblical concept of thanksgiving.

The Hebrew word *hodah*, generally translated as "give thanks," means "confess, profess or state publicly." In the Bible, to give thanks means to state publicly that at this moment God was at work. That moment could be the creation of the world or ancient Israel's exodus from Egypt. Or it could be my rescue from danger or recovery from illness. Thanksgiving in the Bible is directed to God, involves a public profession and is profoundly religious.

The healing of Naaman the Syrian from leprosy (some form of skin disease regarded as contagious), which is described in 2 Kings 5, is a good example of the biblical approach to thanksgiving. Having been healed of his leprosy, the gentile Naaman recognizes that the God of Israel was at work through Elisha the prophet. Naaman makes a public profession of his conviction ("Now I know that there is no God in all the earth, except in Israel") and promises to offer sacrifice only to Yahweh. Likewise, Psalm 98 is a public celebration of Yahweh's mighty acts in creation and in the exodus from Egypt; it

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

invites God's people to join all creation in giving testimony (thanksgiving) to God.

The biblical concept of thanksgiving as public witness to God's action is prominent in Luke's account of the cleansing of the 10 lepers. Their healing takes place during Jesus' journey from Galilee to Jerusalem. Ten persons suffering from infectious skin conditions and kept separate from the general population approach Jesus, crying out, "Jesus, Master! Have pity on us!" When Jesus tells them to show themselves to the priests (who, according to Leviticus 13-14, would provide the verification of their healing needed before they could return to normal life), they go on their way. That action took great faith, since there had been no explicit healing action or word from Jesus. They believed in Jesus' power to heal, and on their way the 10 found themselves to have been miraculously healed.

All's well that ends well. Not quite. Only one of the healed lepers returns to Jesus to give public witness to God about his healing. And that one was the one least expected by a Jewish audience to do so, since he was a Samaritan, someone whose identity as a Jew was suspect. Thus Jesus asks, "Has none but this foreigner returned to give thanks to God?"

The popular media have reduced the Thanksgiving holiday to football, turkey and sentimental family scenes. These things are fine in themselves, but they tend to obscure the real meaning of thanksgiving as profoundly religious and thoroughly spiritual. In the biblical context thanksgiving begins with an acknowledgement of God's actions in our world and on our behalf. In thanking God we proclaim publicly who God is (our creator, redeemer and sustainer), who we are (God's servants) and what God has done for us individually and collectively. The word "Eucharist" means thanksgiving. When we celebrate the Eucharist, we are



ART BY TAD DUNNE

proclaiming God's mighty acts on our behalf, especially in Jesus' life, death and resurrection.

Today's selection from 2 Timothy 2 depicts Paul as suffering imprisonment for the Gospel. Despite his circumstances, Paul affirms that "the word of God is not chained," and regards his present condition as an apostolic opportunity. He apparently could have contact with visitors and could write letters to the communities that he had founded. Paul was convinced that his experience of the risen Christ had transformed his life and made possible his ministry, which was in effect bearing public witness to what God had done in him through Christ. His good news summarized in the creedal formula as "remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead" was a thanksgiving in the biblical sense of public witness to what God had done in transforming him. The fact that Paul began almost every letter with a thanksgiving was not merely a nod to ancient epistolary convention. Rather, no matter how dire the circumstances in which Paul found himself (see 2 Cor 11:23-30 for a lengthy catalogue of Paul's sufferings for the Gospel), he began nearly every letter with words like those in Rom 1:8: "I give thanks to my God through Jesus Christ for all of you."

Daniel J. Harrington

Praying With Scripture

- For what are you thankful? How do you understand thanksgiving?
- Why might the other nine healed lepers have failed to give thanks to Jesus?
- How could Paul remain thankful to God in his imprisonment and other sufferings? Could you do that?