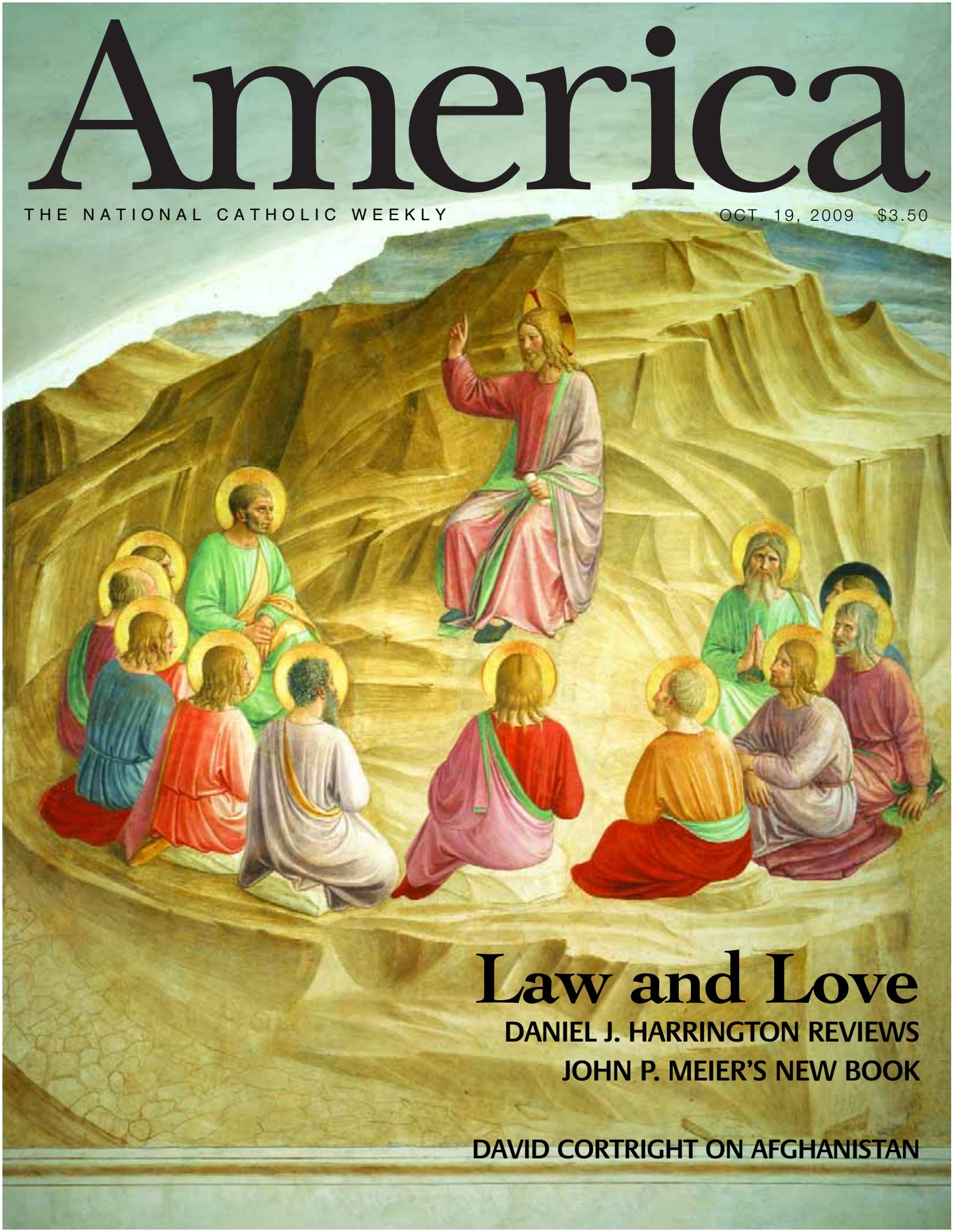
America

THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC WEEKLY

OCT. 19, 2009 $3.50



Law and Love

DANIEL J. HARRINGTON REVIEWS
JOHN P. MEIER'S NEW BOOK

DAVID CORTRIGHT ON AFGHANISTAN

OF MANY THINGS

Over the last few years, I have conducted something of an unplanned survey on parish life around the country. Since 2006 I have visited around 50 parishes—mainly in New York, Connecticut, New Jersey and Pennsylvania—but also in Maryland, Massachusetts, California and Illinois. So let me share some good news from my entirely unscientific survey.

The occasions for these visits are invitations to speak at parishes, usually in the evening, on a topic like the saints or joy in the spiritual life. Normally the schedule proceeds as follows: I am picked up at a train station by the pastor, driven to the rectory, where I dine with the resident priests (sometimes with deacons, sisters or pastoral associates) and shown around the church before the talk. Afterward the pastor or a parishioner drives me back to the station. In the process, everyone is eager to talk about what is going on in their parish.

Mind you, these data are rather random, and I do not aspire to the sociological standards of the Center for Applied Research on the Apostolate. Nonetheless, here is what I've learned (no confidences will be broken).

1. *Pastors are astonishingly busy*. Normally, it is the frazzled pastor, with his clerical collar askew, who meets me at the train station. "Sorry I'm late," he'll say. "It's been a crazy day!" Now everyone seems busy these days, especially parents of young children and those working multiple jobs, but I wonder how many Catholics know how hard their pastors work. In between the sacramental services there is balancing the books, managing the school, visiting the sick and lonely, counseling and on and on. Typically, the pastor works with a small clerical staff. So the first finding: the hard-working, dog-tired pastor is the norm.

2. *Sisters and lay pastoral associates are the lifeblood of the church*. Last year I spoke at the jubilee Mass of a woman religious. When I arrived, I was deluged with stories about how much people loved her and with detailed descriptions of the dazzling array of activities she had founded. Even sisters in their 70s and 80s who have had several careers are full of zeal for the people of God. One night, following news about the Vatican's apostolic visitation of American women religious, I met a sister who ran the parish adult initiation program, oversaw other adult education activities and saw a dozen people for spiritual direction. I thought, I wish the Vatican could meet her!

Working just as hard—and taking care of a family on top of it—are lay pastoral associates, who are usually highly educated and experienced but low paid. Without these two groups, sisters and lay associates, our church would grind to a halt.

3. *People love their parishes*. Before these lectures, I am usually guided through the church. It is always fascinating to take in the architecture (neo-Gothic 1900s, Art Deco 1930s, A-frame 1950s, airy 1980s), examine the statues of the saints and hear the pastor explain any mysterious stained-glass window images. And no matter what the diocese, the easiest conversation starter is, "You have a lovely church." The response is invariably, "Oh, we love it here!" Then comes the best part of the evening: They tell me how much they treasure their parish, pastor, deacons, sisters and pastoral staff. Most Catholics just love, love, love their parish.

True, not all is well in Catholic Land. I also hear tales of rigid priests and grumpy sisters. And believe me, when people know you are not part of the local diocese and are not going to report them to anyone, the floodgates of complaint open up. But overall, the life of the Catholic parish is flourishing, and I have seen the proof.

JAMES MARTIN, S.J.

America

Published by Jesuits of the United States

Editor in Chief
Drew Christiansen, S.J.

EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT

Managing Editor
Robert C. Collins, S.J.

Editorial Director
Karen Sue Smith

Online Editor
Maurice Timothy Reidy

Culture Editor
James Martin, S.J.

Literary Editor
Patricia A. Kossmann

Poetry Editor
James S. Torrens, S.J.

Associate Editors
George M. Anderson, S.J.
Peter Schineller, S.J.
Kevin Clarke

Visiting Editor
Thomas Massaro, S.J.

Assistant Editors
Francis W. Turnbull, S.J.
Kerry Weber

Assistant Literary Editor
Regina Nigro

Design and Production
Stephanie Ratcliffe

BUSINESS DEPARTMENT

Publisher
Jan Attridge

Chief Financial Officer
Lisa Pope

Marketing
Eryk Krysztofiak

Advertising
Julia Sosa

106 West 56th Street
New York, NY 10019-3803

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

E-mail: america@americamagazine.org;
letters@americamagazine.org
Web site: www.americamagazine.org.
Customer Service: 1-800-627-9533

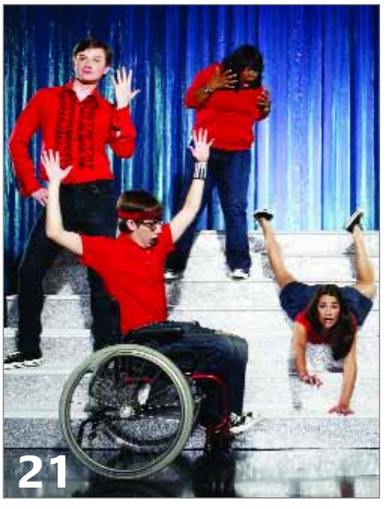
Cover: "The Sermon on the Mount," circa 1440-45, fresco by Fra Angelico. Photo: © Scala/Art Resource

Contents

www.americamagazine.org VOL. 201 NO. 10, WHOLE NO. 4869 OCTOBER 19, 2009


11


14


21

ARTICLES

COLUMNS & DEPARTMENTS

BOOKS & CULTURE

ON THE WEB

Peter Steele, S.J., (right) reads selections from his poetry, and Rev. Robert E. Lauder reviews two new **films on the Jewish experience**. Plus, from the archives, Rev. J. Bryan Hehir on the proper response to the **9/11 attacks**.
All at americamagazine.org

Finding a Way Out

The reappearance of Manuel Zelaya, the deposed president of Honduras, from within the Brazilian embassy in Tegucigalpa, the capital of Honduras, provoked street demonstrations and an emergency powers decree from the de facto government. Since his return the city has witnessed marches and confrontations in the streets, military raids on media outlets, a death threat to a Catholic priest and a baseball stadium converted into a holding pen for detainees—all images that evoke unpleasant memories not just in Honduras but throughout Latin America.

The Obama administration seemed off its game in the final days of September, perhaps because of the accelerating pace of events in Tegucigalpa or perhaps because of genuine frustration with both sides of this standoff. But one thing it may have gotten right in its efforts to restore Zelaya was the suspension of visas allowing travel to the United States. The restrictions seem to have motivated members of Honduras' business class to step into the civil fray with their own proposal for a way out: Briefly, Zelaya can be restored with limited powers but must defend himself against allegations of corruption.

The plan is not perfect. One wonders, after three months of crisis and with positions hardening on both sides, if Zelaya can count on a truly fair trial. But the business leaders' proposal comes closer to what Costa Rica's President Oscar Arias has proposed: to return Zelaya to the president's office (with immunity offered all around). That could be the basis for dialogue that both sides could accept without much political shame. If Zelaya is true to his word and confident of his innocence, he should accept this plan. The increasingly embattled de facto president, Roberto Micheletti, would be wise, for his part, to embrace the proposal as a face- and life-saving way out of what could otherwise deteriorate into a terrible civil conflict.

Sudan's Crucified Christians

Gangs affiliated with the Lord's Resistance Army in Northern Uganda have been crossing the border into Sudan, "crucifying" Christians during raids. Near the town of Nazra, seven recently died. On discovering the bodies, villagers described what they found as a "grotesque crucifixion scene." The guerillas nailed the victims to pieces of wood on the ground before killing them. Bishop Eduardo Hiiboro Kussala of Tombura-Yambio blames the government in Khartoum for not increasing security in that area and has called upon the international community for help.

In one attack, guerillas rushed into Our Lady Queen of Peace in Enzo during novena prayers on the Feast of the Assumption. After desecrating the host they abducted 17 young people. One captive was tied to a tree and killed, according to Aid to the Church in Need, a charity assisting persecuted Christians. The bishop said "the attackers clearly wanted to harm the people because they knew they were at prayer." Bishop Hiiboro ordered three days of prayer, and 20,000 people walked in silent protest against the government's inaction. The Khartoum government is failing Christians within its population, ignoring its responsibility to safeguard some of its most vulnerable citizens. Such events underscore the importance of the doctrine of the responsibility to protect, whereby a sovereign state like Sudan should be held responsible for protecting its citizens from atrocities like these.

The Grand Master Visits

America's editors do not normally host people who are formally addressed as "Your Most Eminent Highness," which made the visit of the Grand Master of the Order of Malta, Fra Matthew Festing, all the more delightful. Fra Matthew's trip from Rome to the United States was part of his charge to care for the members and works of his order. During his visit to the magazine, he outlined the international network of charitable works that fulfill the order's motto: *Tuitio fidei et obsequium pauperum*. When one editor remarked that the defense of faith and service to the poor are connected, Fra Matthew, whose friendly manner belies his august title, readily agreed.

The Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta began ministering to the crusaders in Jerusalem in 1099 and was formally approved as a religious order in 1113. Today, though the order is a sovereign entity, its nonpartisan status enables the members to work in a variety of political hot spots. They provided humanitarian relief during the crisis in the Balkans in the late 1990s, for example, when they transported blankets all the way from Scotland to internally displaced people. Efforts among the war-torn recently led to the death of three members working in Afghanistan.

Fra Matthew, an Englishman descended from a Catholic recusant family, also boasts an unusual connection to **America.** During a tour of our offices he paused before an icon of St. Edmund Campion, the English priest martyred not only for his ministry to Elizabethan-era Catholics, but also for his provocative pamphlets. Fra Matthew remarked that his family once owned the house where Campion's printing press was located, which published the writings "which caused all the bother."

EDITORIAL

What Should Count

The high-profile economists Amartya Sen and Joseph E. Stiglitz are back in the news. When a pair of Nobel laureates speak up, it is usually worth listening.

Sen and Stiglitz recently released a joint study, just in time for the G-20 summit in Pittsburgh, in which they recommend a drastic revision of the way economists assess societal well-being. The data we routinely collect and analyze provide a seriously inadequate measurement of the full range of human activity, they contend. To continue to focus exclusively on growth in the production of goods and services, as measured by the standard assessment statistics, is to risk overlooking and discounting many dimensions of progress as well as of human hardship.

We did not really need this new report, commissioned by President Nicolas Sarkozy of France, to know that numbers often mislead. Traditional economic indicators are increasingly exposed as unreliable measures of social well-being. Maximizing only quantifiable economic output masks many physical costs of production, such as pollution and resource depletion. It also turns a blind eye to numerous social costs that are difficult to measure, such as the dislocation of families and disruption of neighborhoods and cultures in our rapidly globalizing economy.

The perverse logic of current national accounting procedures has effects on both sides of the ledger. Costs are discounted and contributions are concealed. When an oil tanker spills toxic cargo, the expenses associated with the cleanup actually provide a boost to the national accounts. Nobody wants a hurricane or earthquake to devastate their region, but the way rebuilding efforts temporarily stimulate local economies may cause natural disasters to appear in the account books as blessings. Conversely, many vital and life-serving activities are undervalued or invisible in production statistics. The services of stay-at-home parents or other family caregivers count for nothing in Labor Department statistics. It is only when these same services are outsourced to professionals and pass through a cash nexus that they show up as contributions to the economy.

Albert Einstein reportedly displayed these words on the wall of his office at Princeton: "Not everything that counts can be counted, and not everything that can be counted counts"—a pearl of wisdom for scientists back then and for economists nowadays.

A growing consciousness of how numbers may deceive has prompted many proposals for greater attention to the wider social ecology. One step in the right direction would be the adoption of a more inclusive "genuine progress indicator" to supplement such measures as gross national product or per capita gross domestic product. The government of Bhutan employs an intriguing standard called gross national happiness, which other nations might want to emulate. Social scientists have long advocated a "physical quality-of-life index" that factors into economic calculations items that truly matter to ordinary people: infant mortality rates, literacy achievement and health attainments, measured in objective as well as subjective terms. We are unlikely to muster the willpower to support initiatives that enhance human welfare until we come up with more accurate and thorough social indicators to measure quality of life and describe positive outcomes in detail.

Admittedly, measuring human progress is a dicey proposition, whatever scale is used. No one is likely to come up with a universally acceptable assessment tool for such a subjective thing as personal happiness, much less for a slippery notion like national well-being. **America**'s columnist John DiIulio Jr. made a similar point in our Sept. 28 issue, when he recounted the perennial difficulties of measuring the complex phenomenon of poverty. Nevertheless, aggregate measures, even if partial fictions, are still essential for setting and evaluating public policies. Since lawmakers and economists will be crunching numbers for the foreseeable future, we all have a stake in insuring that the statistics they analyze relate as closely as possible to lived human experience.

Economics is not the only area of human life where artificial and inadequate goal-setting threatens to warp social priorities and frustrate those who attempt to be good stewards of public trust. Teachers nowadays find themselves under pressure to tailor their instruction to batteries of arbitrary standardized tests. Many instructors have discovered a gap between the knowledge and skills measured by such examinations and what they know to really benefit their students. "Teaching to the test" is often as futile as working to maximize an arbitrary number like the G.D.P. Until there is greater clarity on economic priorities that are truly good for people, as Stiglitz and Sen recommend, we will persist in placing the cart before the horse. Economic growth may be a good servant, but it is surely a bad master.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Supreme Court Opens Term With New Justice

The status of a cross on federal land, a challenge to U.S. deportation procedures and the treatment of immigrants in federal detention will be among the cases reviewed by the U.S. Supreme Court in its first term with its new justice, Sonia Sotomayor.

Sotomayor was confirmed to the court this summer, replacing the retired Justice David Souter. The native of New York is the sixth Catholic sitting on the nine-member court. She is also the first Hispanic person and only the third woman justice in the history of the high court. The court began its new term on Oct. 5, a day after Sotomayor and Chief Justice John Roberts, among others, attended the annual Red Mass in Washington, D.C.

One case the new justice will not hear, because it was declined by the court, is an appeal brought by the Diocese of Bridgeport, Conn., aimed at reversing a lower court order to release documents from sex-abuse lawsuits to local media. That means newspapers are one step closer to gaining access to more than 12,000 pages of documents from 23 lawsuits involving six Bridgeport priests.

Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor greets clergy following the annual Red Mass in Washington.

A public cross. In the first week of the new term, the court heard Salazar v. Buono, which challenges a decision by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, in San Francisco, ordering the federal government to no longer permit a cross to be displayed on public land. In 1934 the Veterans of Foreign Wars set up a cross on a rock in an isolated part of the Mojave National Preserve in San Bernardino County, Calif., as a memorial to those killed in World War I. The remote monument is visible only from a little-used side road; but a retired National Park Service employee, Frank Buono, challenged the placement of the cross on federal land. Lower courts agreed that its presence in the preserve gives the

HEALTH CARE

Bishops Critique Senate Plan

As the Senate prepares to debate the health care reform bill proposed by its Finance Committee, representatives of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops expressed concern about the plan's affordability and its failure to address questions about abortion coverage, conscience rights and the health of immigrants.

The Finance Committee completed its markup of a plan proposed by Max Baucus, Democrat of Montana, on Oct. 2 and was expected to vote on the plan the following week. The committee rejected amendments that would have written into the bill the federal government's longstanding policy not to fund benefits packages that cover abortions, with rare exceptions. The amendments would have also forbidden government agencies' receiving federal funds under the bill to discriminate against health care providers that decline to perform, refer for or pay for abortions.

"The bill remains deeply flawed on these issues and must be corrected," said Richard Doerflinger of the U.S.C.C.B. Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities.

On the inclusion of immigrants, the committee defeated amendments opposed by the U.S.C.C.B. that would have placed additional restrictions on legal immigrants seeking health care. But a representative of the bishops' conference said that the proposed bill still did not do enough to improve accessibility. "Legal immigrants, who work hard and pay taxes, should be treated equally with U.S. citizens," said Kevin Appleby, director of migration policy for the U.S.C.C.B. "It is counterproductive to the general public health to leave them outside of the system, unable to access preventive treatment and dependent on emergency care."

Kathy Saile, director of domestic social development for the U.S.C.C.B., said the bill took some

inappropriate impression of government endorsement of a single religion. The cross remains on the rock but has been covered since the court ruling.

Juvenile sentencing. Another pending case concerns prison sentences for juveniles. In different trials, Joe Harris Sullivan and Terrance Jamar Graham were both sentenced by Florida courts to life imprisonment without possibility of parole for crimes committed when they were 13 and 17, respectively. In 2005 the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the death penalty for juveniles, finding in part that for young people, with more limited judgment than adults, the practice constitutes cruel and unusual punishment. On Nov. 9 Sullivan and Graham will likewise challenge their sentences as cruel and unusual punishment. The American Catholic Correctional Chaplains Association is among the groups that have submitted briefs calling for the prohibition of life sentences for juveniles.

Immigration cases. A case being followed by advocates for immigrants argues that federal medical workers are liable for a detainee's untreated cancer. Despite complaints of pain, Francisco Castaneda, a Salvadoran immigrant, was ignored so long in a California prison and then in federal immigration detention that he died at age 36, shortly after his release, when a doctor finally diagnosed penile cancer. His case challenges the Federal Tort Claims Act, which bars suits for damages against federal employees and otherwise limits claims against the government for negligence.

Another immigration-related case, Padilla v. Kentucky, revolves around a Honduran immigrant's criminal charges for drug-related crimes and his subsequent deportation proceedings. On the advice of his attorney, José Padilla, a legal immigrant and a military veteran, pleaded guilty to criminal charges. The plea triggered deportation proceedings, something his attorney had told him would not happen. The court will be asked to consider the obligations of legal counsel in such cases and whether the faulty advice of Padilla's attorney constitutes grounds for setting aside his guilty plea.

Rulings in all the cases are expected before the court adjourns next summer.

steps toward improved affordability, but leaves "many families still vulnerable to high health care costs." Saile urged Congress to find further ways to reduce the cost of health care, suggesting, for example, the "expansion of access to programs such as Medicaid."

In a Sept. 30 letter, bishops representing three U.S.C.C.B. committees called on senators to insist that any final health reform bill exclude mandated coverage of abortion, protect conscience rights and safeguard the health of immigrants. They also said affordability should be a major consideration. The letter was signed by Bishop William F. Murphy of Rockville Centre, N.Y., Cardinal Justin Rigali of Philadelphia and Bishop John C. Wester of Salt Lake City.

The bishops' letter suggested several ways to improve health care for immigrants:

- Elimination of the five-year waiting period before legal immigrants can enroll in Medicaid;
- An end to barriers, such as waiting periods to obtain subsidies, when immigrants seek to obtain private health insurance;
- Health coverage of women giving birth to U.S.-citizen children, irrespective of the women's legal status.

The bishops wrote that health coverage should not be dependent on an individual's "stage of life, where or whether they or their parents work, how much they earn, where they live or where they were born." For lower-income families, the bishops said, "significant premiums and cost-sharing charges can serve as barriers to obtaining coverage or seeing a doctor."

The full Senate is expected to begin deliberations on the Finance Committee bill this month.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid with U.S. bishops in September

Bishops Mark Fall of Berlin Wall

Europe's Catholic bishops commemorated the end of the continent's division between East and West with warnings of a new crisis of values. The Council of European Bishops' Conferences called the dismantling of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 "a great stepping stone in the European adventure" but expressed concern that later developments in the European Union went "against the authentic good." Citing poor turnout in the latest European parliamentary elections, the council said, "The hopes placed on building Europe have not, so far, been fulfilled." In a message at the close of the council's assembly, held from Oct. 1 to 4 in Paris, the bishops said Catholics should remember "the many battles fought for solidarity and respect for human dignity" in Central and Eastern Europe as well as the "fundamental role" of Pope John Paul II in supporting a Europe based on faith, the common good and peace.

Vatican Urges Nuclear-Free Zone

The Vatican's foreign affairs minister has called for the establishment of a "nuclear-free zone" in the Middle East and urged all countries to work toward the elimination of their nuclear arsenals. In a statement released on Sept. 24, Archbishop Dominique Mamberti said, "Nuclear-weapons-free zones are the best example of trust, confidence and affirmation that peace and security are possible without nuclear weapons." The U.N. Security Council held a summit meeting the same day to discuss nuclear disarmament. Under nuclear-free treaties, nations agree to ban the development and use of nuclear weapons in a defined area. The United States has not signed such a treaty, though it has signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which aims at limiting the spread of nuclear weapons. The Security Council summit adopted a resolution calling for tighter controls on nuclear materials and encouraging the enforcement of international treaties dealing with nuclear nonproliferation.

Report Spotlights Pregnancy Centers

A new report on pregnancy resource centers has found that these organizations serve an estimated 1.9 million people each year and rely heavily on volunteer support. The report, *A Passion to Serve, A Vision for Life*, surveyed the activities of some 2,300 pregnancy resource centers in the United States that do not offer, recommend or refer for abortions. "Twenty-nine of every 30 people engaged in pregnancy center work are volunteers," the report said. "The centers raise at least $200 million in income each year, with more than 90 percent of these funds coming from private charitable giving." Chuck Donovan of the Heritage Foundation, the co-author of the study, said that the centers have "reduced abortions by tens of thousands." In addition to pregnancy assistance, these centers offer abstinence counseling and education and community outreach. Some also offer medical services such as ultrasounds and H.I.V. and AIDS testing. The centers surveyed operate under three major networks: Care Net, Heartbeat International and the National Institute of Family & Life Advocates.

From CNS and other sources.

NEWS BRIEFS

While the United States has made tremendous progress in moving from a history of slavery toward racial justice, there is still much left to do, Archbishop **Wilton D. Gregory** of Atlanta said during the Synod of Bishops for Africa. ✦ More than 1,000 students from the District of Columbia assembled in Washington on Sept. 30 to urge members of Congress to support an endangered **federal voucher program.** ✦ Two American couples, Frank and Julie LaBoda of Cross Plain, Wis., and John S. and Claire Grabowski of Maryland, were named to the **Pontifical Council for the Family.** ✦ National leaders of the Catholic Church and Lutheran World Federation gathered in Chicago to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the **Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification.** ✦ Pope Benedict XVI has named **J. Russell Hittinger**, a professor of Catholic studies at the University of Tulsa, to the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences. ✦ **Eustachius Kugler**, a member of the Brothers of the Hospitaller Order of St. John of God, was beatified on Oct. 4 at a Mass in Regensburg, Germany.

KYLE T. KRAMER

The Magic of the Market

As an organic vegetable farmer, I find early autumn a bittersweet time. I am tired from the relentless labor this vocation entails alongside my other responsibilities, and I am eager for winter's reprieve. In the off season, however, I will miss the farmers' markets where my family and I sell much of our produce.

Early on Saturday mornings, my wife and I pile our three children into my tired old Ford pickup, whose tendency to conk out unexpectedly has vexed five different mechanics. When on one trip the truck stalled en route and I silently cursed it and the mechanics, 5-year-old Eva helped us keep things in perspective when she asked excitedly, "Are we having an adventure, Papa?" After helping us set up at the market, our children would discover or invent their own adventures, playing and milling around while Cyndi and I chatted with our customers, weighed produce and made change.

Farmers' markets have shown me that food can be a powerful and equalizing social force. Much of Jesus' ministry involved meals, and the source and summit of Catholic faith is the Eucharist, which can draw together and transform worshipers of every stripe to share the fruits of the earth and the work of human hands. Similarly I have experienced farmers' markets as a public arena where a wonderfully rag-tag mixture of people can encounter one another as neighbors on common ground. We have sold produce to hard-working Hispanic immigrants who labor on local poultry farms and to earnest doctoral-degreed professionals with their progressive political views and those environmentally responsible cloth shopping bags I keep forgetting to buy.

The common ground of the market depends upon a whole chorus of fidelities. To bring produce to market, my family and I have to be faithful to the possibilities and limits of our land, skill, time and stamina. We must be faithful to each other, as we work together harvesting and selling, and to our customers, providing them with a product they can trust. They show up faithfully, and when cash and cabbages change hands, money does not create separation and abstraction, as is the general rule in the larger economy. Instead, the exchange helps to stitch together the fabric of our rural community a few dollars at a time.

> Farmers' markets offer a glimpse of a gentler, more generous economy.

Lest I paint too bucolic a picture, I would be remiss not to mention how little money we and other farmers actually end up making at these small markets. With a customer base of cost-conscious rural Midwesterners and with many growers selling as a sideline business or hobby, the prices stay very low. Cyndi wisely reminds me that our farming is more important as a ministry than as a moneymaker, but I sometimes find this a cold comfort. You have to sell a lot of potatoes to cover a $500 tractor repair bill. Happily, though, I can report that more savvy and industrious farmers than I am, like Eliot Coleman in Maine or Joel Salatin in Virginia, have found ways to make a good full-time living from small-scale agriculture.

Americans have placed much naïve faith in market forces and other large-scale financial abstractions. We believed that the rising tide would lift all boats, that the invisible hand was benevolent and would by some magic inevitability make everyone's life better. The magic of the market was largely an illusion, of course, and the Great Recession has been a startling reminder of our economy's fallibility and failures.

Farmers' markets, on the other hand, offer a glimpse of the gentler, more generous economy we would have if we began to insist that it generate real wealth, which is the faithful stewardship of community and creation. The real magic of the market, in my view, is that even as commerce becomes increasingly globalized, such small islands of neighborly, covenantal connection and right livelihood still find a way to exist. With care and patience, these islands can be bridged one to another into an ever-larger web of true belonging, an archipelago of economic, ecological and social health.

For in God's economy, every last bit of creation is drawn toward a belonging in which by some great, paradoxical mystery, our neighborhood becomes both our immediate locale and the cosmos at large, where everyone and everything, at every time and in every place, is our neighbor.

Meanwhile, as we work and wait for a new economy to take root, fresh vegetables are their own reward.

KYLE T. KRAMER, *director of lay degree programs at Saint Meinrad School of Theology in Saint Meinrad, Ind., is an organic farmer.*

PHOTO: CNS/AHMAD MASOOD, REUTERS

Reassessing U.S. engagement in Afghanistan

No Easy Way Out

BY DAVID CORTRIGHT

The initial United States military operation in Afghanistan after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, was widely considered a just war, a classic case of self-defense. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a pastoral message in November 2001 acknowledging the "right and duty of a nation and the international community to use military force if necessary to defend the common good by protecting the innocent against mass terrorism." Today's mission is more complex and uncertain, however, and demands a new ethical assessment. Its fundamental goals are the same, defeating Al Qaeda and preventing global terrorist attacks, and are certainly just. The related objective is also just: helping to build capable governments in Afghanistan and Pakistan that can meet the needs of their people and protect against violent extremism. The question about both objectives is not whether they are just, but whether they can be achieved through the application of military force. It is a question of means rather than ends.

U.S. military involvement in the region is based on three fundamental strategic assumptions: first, war is a necessary and appropriate means of defeating Al Qaeda and preventing global terrorist strikes; second, the Taliban is equivalent to Al Qaeda and thus a legitimate target of military attack; and third, NATO must fight and win a counterinsurgency war against the Taliban and related jihadist groups. The first two assumptions determined policy decisions in the weeks after 9/11, and they have remained at the heart of U.S./NATO strategy ever since. The third assumption evolved over time and drives the current long-term military commitment. In recent years a fourth strategic dimension has entered the equation—the extension of military operations to Pakistan. Each of these assumptions is highly questionable strategically and poses serious ethical dilemmas.

DAVID CORTRIGHT *is director of policy studies at the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame.*

The Strategy

War is an inappropriate instrument for countering a nonstate terrorist network like Al Qaeda. The Rev. J. Bryan Hehir, now at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard, wrote in these pages shortly after 9/11: "Containing and capturing terrorists is by definition a function of police and legal networks. War is an indiscriminate tool for this highly discriminating task." By declaring the campaign against Al Qaeda a "war on terror," the Bush administration gave military status to a criminal organization. It transformed mass murderers into soldiers, inadvertently raising their credibility and moral stature in some Muslim communities. The Obama administration has abandoned the phrase "war on terror," but U.S. policies remain heavily militarized.

Empirical evidence confirms that war is not an effective means of countering terrorist organizations. A RAND Corporation study released in 2008 shows that terrorist groups usually disband through political processes and effective law enforcement, not the use of military force. An examination of 268 terrorist organizations that ended during a period of nearly 40 years found that the primary factors accounting for their demise were participation in political processes (43 percent) and effective policing (40 percent). Military force accounted for the end of terrorist groups in only 7 percent of the cases examined.

War policies are not only inappropriate, they are counterproductive. The presence of foreign troops is the principal factor motivating armed resistance and insurgency in the region. A recent report of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace cited opposition to external forces as "the most important factor in mobilizing support for the Taliban." In Pakistan, U.S. military policies and air strikes are "driving more and more Pashtuns into the arms of Al Qaeda and its jihadi allies," according to Selig Harrison, a former Washington Post reporter. When the United States invades and occupies Muslim countries, this tends to validate Osama bin Laden's false claim that America is waging war on Islam. Polls in Muslim countries have shown 80 percent of respondents agreeing that American policy seeks to weaken and divide the Islamic world. As long as these attitudes prevail there will be no end of recruits willing to blow themselves up to kill Americans and their supporters.

ON THE WEB
Rev. J. Bryan Hehir
on responding to 9/11.
americamagazine.org/pages

Al Qaeda, Not the Taliban

The U.S. military mission in Afghanistan and Pakistan is primarily a war against the Taliban, not Al Qaeda. Only a few hundred Al Qaeda militants are estimated to be active in the region, and they play only a minor role in armed attacks against NATO forces. Some counterterrorism experts assert that Al Qaeda is weakening and finding it more difficult to attract recruits. This alters the moral calculus of the war and casts doubt on the self-defense justification. It was Al Qaeda, not the Taliban, that attacked the United States and that has launched global terrorist strikes. The two movements are indeed closely intertwined and are both rooted in an extremist jihadi ideology. But there are important differences. The Taliban is a diverse network of Pashtun militia groups. Al Qaeda, by contrast, is an Arab-based network focused on a global agenda of attacking Western interests. Taliban groups do not have a transnational agenda. The various Taliban elements are divided by ideology and purpose, but they are united by opposition to the Afghan government and a determination to rid their region of foreign forces.

Success Unlikely

The probability-of-success criterion for a just war requires that military force not be used in a futile cause or in circumstances where disproportionate force is needed to assure success. The prospects that the United States will prevail in a prolonged counterinsurgency campaign against the Taliban are highly uncertain. Afghanistan's reputation as the graveyard of empires is well earned, derived from a long history of fierce resistance to foreign intervention. The British writer and former diplomat Rory Stewart doubts that the United States and Britain can defeat the Taliban, and he questions why this is considered necessary. The Taliban is very unlikely to take over Afghanistan, Stewart writes. Their brutality, incompetence and primitive policies have alienated many Afghans. The Hazara, Tajik, and Uzbek populations are more powerful now than they were when the Taliban took power in 1996, and these groups would "strongly resist any attempt by the Taliban to occupy their areas."

The distinguished military historian Martin van Creveld has noted that attempts to suppress insurgency often end in failure. When guerrilla forces are able to sustain armed struggle, often for decades, they are able to prevail over stronger and more technologically advanced adversaries. The occupying forces may win every battle and destroy much of the insurgent capability, yet in the long run the guerrilla forces usually win. The rare examples of counterinsurgency success, van Creveld argues, come when intervening forces are willing to wage war with unrestrained cruelty and destructiveness, as exemplified by Nazi suppression of partisan resistance in much of occupied Europe in the 1940s. Fortunately the U.S. military does not fight in that manner. On the contrary, U.S. and NATO forces are subject to democratic constraint and as a result are unlikely to be able to sustain the

prolonged large-scale militarily destructive effort that would be required for success. Already several NATO countries have developed plans to reduce their military presence in Afghanistan.

Rules of Combat

Doubts about military viability raise related ethical concerns about proportionality and discrimination. The suffering caused by warfare may not be disproportionate to the intended good. Soldiers are required to discriminate between combatants and civilians and to avoid harming the innocent. Under the principle of double effect, the harm that might result may neither be intended nor serve as a means to an end. According to Michael Walzer's interpretation of this principle, the soldier must take positive action to minimize the evil effect and be prepared to accept costs for doing so.

Upholding these standards is extremely difficult in counterinsurgency, since irregular combatants do not wear uniforms and often mix with or are part of the civilian population. In Afghanistan civilian casualties have risen in the last two years to a level of approximately 1,000 per year, according to the Afghanistan Body Count compiled by Marc Herold at the University of New Hampshire. These numbers are not high in comparison to horrendous civilian death tolls in other conflicts, but any loss of innocent life is significant and affects the moral calculus of the use of force.

Of particular concern is the use of unmanned aerial vehicles, known as drones. The U.S. government has employed Predator and Reaper drones with increasing frequency for remote-controlled bombing strikes in Pakistan. According to the Congressional testimony of former Pentagon adviser David Kilcullen, drone strikes in Pakistan from 2006 through early 2009 killed 14 alleged senior Al Qaeda leaders. During the same period, such strikes killed nearly 700 Pakistani civilians. These attacks "are deeply aggravating to the population" and have "given rise to a feeling of anger that coalesces the population around extremists and leads to spikes in extremism" in other parts of the country. Mary Ellen O'Connell, a law professor at the University of Notre Dame, notes that these drone attacks lack legal justification and violate fundamental moral principles. "Fifty civilians killed for one suspected combatant killed is a textbook example of a violation of the proportionality principle," she writes.

The principle of discrimination includes an obligation for military actors to adopt special precautions to avoid the killing of civilians. Walzer argues that "a soldier must take careful aim *at* [the] military target and *away from* nonmilitary targets" (my emphasis). Lethal force can be used only if there is a "reasonably clear shot." Air strikes from drone aircraft are not capable of such discrimination. A report in 2001 from the Pentagon's Office of Testing and Evaluation found that the "Predator's infrared camera could detect targets, but could classify [between wheeled versus tracked targets] only 21 per cent of the time." Detection technology has improved since then but not sufficiently to avoid the killing of civilians. If drone cameras cannot distinguish between a truck and a tank, how can they differentiate between humans who are civilians and those who may be Al Qaeda militants? To speak of discrimination under these circumstances is meaningless.

A Demilitarized Strategy

Commanding General Stanley McChrystal and other senior military officials have acknowledged the harm resulting from civilian casualties and have ordered a reduction in the number of U.S. air strikes in support of combat missions. These measures have resulted in fewer civilian deaths, even as U.S. military operations have intensified, but horrific incidents continue to occur—witness the killing of dozens of civilians in the bombing of hijacked tanker trucks in Kanduz in early September. While constraints have been placed on airstrikes, the use of drone attacks has increased. In this kind of counterinsurgency war, noncombatant casualties are likely to continue, despite NATO efforts to avoid them. This is "war amongst the people," as former British General Rupert Smith described it, and ordinary people inevitably suffer in such a conflict. U.S. and NATO officials have not fully addressed the moral and strategic consequences of that persisting dilemma.

This analysis suggests the need for a thorough reorientation of U.S./NATO policy in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Obama administration has responded to requests for more troops in Afghanistan by calling first for the development of a new strategy. This is a sound approach, but the contours of a new strategy have yet to appear. U.S. commanders remain wedded to a policy of counterinsurgency and the maintenance of a large and expanding military footprint in the country. Stewart and other analysts have advocated an alternative approach of reducing the number of foreign troops and demilitarizing Western strategy. A smaller number of foreign troops would be enough, they argue, to assure that the Taliban does not return to power. Special operations forces would be sufficient to maintain pressure on Al Qaeda and disrupt any attempts to re-establish terrorist bases. These more limited objectives would fulfill the primary objective of Western policy without the enormous costs and risks of prolonged counterinsurgency. These approaches would be combined with an increased international commitment to development, responsible governance and the promotion of human rights in the region. By demilitarizing its involvement and increasing its commitment to diplomacy, democracy and development, the United States and its allies could achieve their purposes more effectively and with greater justice. A

A Man of Restless Delight

The poet Peter Steele's territory of joy

BY JIM McDERMOTT

On vacation in spring 2008, I happened upon a short collection of poems, "A Mass for Anglesea," by Peter Steele, S.J., a longtime professor of literature at the University of Melbourne in Australia. There are 11 poems, each taking as a subject a different moment in the liturgy (the Gloria, the Creed, Communion…), and all of them set at Anglesea, a small community on the Southern Ocean.

Opening at random, I read this, the first stanza of Father Steele's "Kyrie Eleison":

Father of each, as of all, remember those
Who are folded between our hills, in a little town
Stiller, so far (we are grateful) than Bethlehem:
As, Mr. Stabb the butcher; and the tousled boy
Who sees you into and out of the video store;
And keepers and pilers of cans in the supermarket;
And the ancient sweetheart who sold me nineteen volumes
Of knowledge pruned and compacted, for a song;
And the moulder of surfboards; the framer of estates
As things sublime and beautiful; and the girl
Refreshed in her uncertainty by the boasts
In gleaming journals; the tugger at lolloping dogs;
The blethering wiseacre making his point at the pub—
Same point, same pub, same audience once more;
And the watchers, reluctant, absorbed, of white nights
To no imaginable good; and the fishers.
Be as you must the Lord of living and dead,
And school us afresh, afresh, in the ways of mercy,
Who remember a little, and confess that we forget.

It was the list of Anglesea's inhabitants that caught my attention—the "tousled boy" at the video store, the girl with her diary, the "blethering wiseacre" at the pub. I was struck by the way Father Steele, with just a few words, could conjure and relish each one. I could see them all immediately and the place, too, a New England-like ocean town on a chilly, overcast, fall afternoon.

This poem went on for two more stanzas, one addressed to the Son and one to the Spirit, "Firebird, flambeau, haunter of all that is." Each poem was crafted with a loving eye for detail and a wise humanity. And the set as a whole

was like a walk through the streets of Rome, every turn offering something new to savor, no alley ever a dead end. One could wander the same passages over and over with delight for many days.

At some point I began to wonder, who is this Peter Steele?

The Child the Books Made

By December 2008, when I meet Father Steele in Washington, D.C., "A Mass for Anglesea" has been published as part of his latest book, a collection of new and selected poems entitled *White Knight With Beebox: New and Selected Poems*. In a Melbourne newspaper, The Age,

JIM McDERMOTT, S.J., *is a former associate editor of* ***America****.*

the poet Chris Wallace-Crabbe writes of Father Steele's "hopscotch mind…the poems have as much dazzle as the strange title might hint at." Martin Duwell, in The Australian Poetry Review, calls it "wonderful poetry."

Father Steele, now Distinguished Scholar in Residence at Georgetown University, is working on another book. Four cold, gray days before Christmas we meet. Father Steele wears a dark turtleneck; he has thick white hair and a soft-spoken affability. He grew up on the western coast of Australia in Perth, the oldest of three boys. As a child he was a good student, a "greedy, hungry reader" with an early desire to be a priest. In 1957 at age 17 he entered the Society of Jesus, moved to Melbourne and has remained there for most of his life.

> The list of Anglesea's inhabitants caught my attention—the 'tousled boy' at the video store, the girl with her diary, the 'blethering wiseacre' at the pub.

At the back of a nondescript two-story building, Father Steele's office at Georgetown is a small space with a desk, some bookshelves and a couple of chairs. An enormous picture of Pope John Paul II hangs on one wall; photos of other popes around it form a giant cross—a remnant of some former tenant. Other than the few books on one shelf and a small stack of his latest poems, there are no signs that Father Steele has been working here each day for the last six months, nor any touchstones that one might imagine a writer uses to help inspire his work. His office has less the feeling of a writer's den than of a storage closet.

That is instructive, because as we speak it quickly becomes obvious that Father Steele's mind is itself the treasure trove to which he turns for sustenance and stimulation. Stories, quotations, theories and references pour out of him on everything ranging from Anglo-Saxon language or the latest work by Seamus Heaney to the identity of Jimmy Durante's Mrs. Calabash, the extraordinary number of first five moves possible in chess, the image of the fool in Scripture and literature, the challenge posed by the presence of the cross in every Christian celebration and the extraordinary pathos of Marcel Marceau. Father Steele moves from Ogden Nash to literary critic William Empson to Billy Collins to the Mona Lisa within minutes of one another; from the American bank robber Willie Sutton to Daniel Berrigan, S.J., to Samuel Coleridge to the poet Amy Clampitt; from Miss Piggy to Bernard Lonergan, S.J., to Gerard Manley Hopkins, S.J., to Paul Muldoon.

He summons the image of a boy eager to take you to see all of his favorite places and best friends. There is that same restless delight.

God's Fool

Father Steele was not much of a poet when he arrived at the University of Melbourne in the early 1960s to begin his humanities studies. As a Jesuit he had written some humorous verses, but nothing serious. The university, though, brought him into contact with Prof. Vincent Buckley, a scholar of literature and a poet himself. He was a short man, Father Steele remembers, "with a slightly excessive dignity," "big, swept-back hair" and a strong sense for the dramatic. In a lecture he could hold the attention of hundreds. Part of a group of Catholics at the university who met to imagine their apostolate to the university, Buckley became a model for Father Steele, a mentor and a friend.

Verse, Father Steele believes, is often understood by society at large "in the mode of nonseriousness"; it is a playful, circus-like act, he says, in which elements like meter and rhyme constitute one's "jugglery." The reader pays attention to see what amusing feats might be attempted, how close to defeat the poet comes, whether in the end he or she succeeds (or surprises).

In his own work Father Steele embraces such playfulness, but with an eye toward uncovering the foolishness inherent in being human. We "boast a repertoire of finesse," he writes in "Phantom Pleasures," "but know that it peters out miles this side/ of omnicompetence, leaving/ a paper-chase of good intentions, a drizzle/ instead of Danaean showers."

ART: FREDERICK H. CARLSON

Time and again for Father Steele, what makes us so delightful and also so damaging is our fundamental inadequacy. We are essentially "double," he says; as creatures we ultimately cannot survive on our own, yet we run desperately from this reality. So, hearing of the discovery of ancient Scandinavian molds that allowed silversmiths to make either a Christian cross or an image of the hammer of Thor, or both, Father Steele posits, "It's not hard to imagine him selling one of each to the same chap…just in case…." He laughs. "We're all like that, all partly Christian believers and partly atheists. We all have double hearts."

ON THE WEB
Peter Steele, S.J., reads selections from his poetry.
americamagazine.org/podcast

The sometime terrible consequences of that doubleness demand attention. In our conversations, it strikes me how often Father Steele returns to the topics of gulags, prison camps, the Holocaust (for him the starkest revelations of the horrors humanity is capable of) and demands that we not be naïve. "In the end one can never be too grateful about or too rejoicing in life," he says. He calls himself "an applauder," a "yes man"; he believes in the possibility of a heaven where "everyone will be saved, including the monsters." But he reminds me, "You've got to make room for heartbreak in poetry that matters." "Ice and snow/ bless the Lord,'" he writes in "Eschewals"; "but how give over/ the daily glazing of anger, the drifts of fear?"

A Rich Menagerie

But to read Father Steele is less to be haunted by inhumanity, though, than to be dazzled by his delight with the English language. Unusual, often melodious words abound—*ascopia, lolloping, melaleuca, messmate, trunnions, faience*. Father Steele likes to read science books for new words, and when he finds one, he speaks of trying to "give it a home" in his work.

Often the richest menageries occur amid lists, as at the end of "Snowballs":

Wide-eyed he dreams
Groats, the bollard, an oubliette, brioche,
Sedan chairs, kir, the stirrup, farthingales.

Hot on the trail, and chilled in all that fall,
He grows more wieldy in the darkened years,
Visited now by the zenith, now by polo,

Toothpaste, soires, guitars, the subjunctive mood,
Batik, a mazurka, pretzels. In the end,
Old and childish, he lobs a perfect sphere.

A list like this is "taking the animals on parade," Father Steele tells me. "It's not so much I know all these words (although it's a bit of that), but look at all the interesting words that there are."

At other times, Father Steele seems intrigued by the zany momentum that can be built out of widely disparate sounds and ideas placed beside one another. "Blessed are you who fit us all for naming" he writes in "Offerings," "telling the arrow's nock, the gladdie's/ corm, the Bellarmine jug, the Milky Way,/ spinnaker, follicle, Nome, Alaska:/ catfish, deckchairs, the age to fall in love,/ gaspers and megrims and the Taj Mahal,/ derricks, and El Dorado, and peach Melba." Always what underlies is delight. "Making lists," he says, "is as often as not an act of love. It is a love of the items, it's a love of the words, and I flatter myself to think it's a part of a love of God. I make lists because I'm in love with the plentifulness of things."

On the Road

Father Steele has spent most of his priestly life teaching literature at the University of Melbourne, where he is now an emeritus professor with his own chair. But he has also held visiting chairs at Georgetown, the University of Alberta in Canada and Loyola University in Chicago; has given the Martin D'Arcy Lectures in Arts and Sciences at the University of Oxford; and has become a fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities.

White Knight has brought him more attention than any of his previous books. He laughingly acknowledges that when he first began to write seriously, "publication" meant photocopying his poems. "I'd give copies to about 20 friends, and sort of psychologically I'd feel, well, they've been published now, you know?" Today the University of Melbourne hails him as "one of the most remarkable figures in Australian writing," a man of "darting imagination."

Currently Father Steele is working on a set of short poetic studies of scriptural characters. Many take place in a still point before dramatic change: the rich man Lazarus near death; St. Paul moments before his ship is destroyed at sea; St. Joseph contemplating the flight to Egypt and seeing ahead not possibility but "long nights of exile," where "stand/ the palms of yearning for a promised land" ("Flight").

Yet for Father Steele himself, being intellectually "on the road" is a natural and welcome state. On our last day together I ask him, having accomplished so much, what more did he wants to do. "I want to go somewhere I haven't gone before, at least as a poet," he tells me. "Bad books," he says, quoting Carlos Fuentes, "are about things the writer already knew before he wrote them." Good poets write to take a journey, "to see what will happen." Father Steele has spent most of his life in one place, yet the sojourns of his mind have been numerous and the discoveries rewarding—"glimpses of the spacious," he calls them, "the territory of joy." And his readers are the richer for it. A

"With God, All Things Are Possible"

The Trinity
SAPPHIRE AND DIAMOND CROSS RING

Solid sterling silver, plated with 24K gold

•

4 genuine sapphires

•

3 brilliant diamonds

•

Beautifully engraved band.

The Holy Trinity Will Embrace You...

Discover a beautiful new way to embrace your faith with *"The Trinity Sapphire and Diamond Cross Ring"*—only from The Bradford Exchange.

Hand-crafted in an Exclusive Design

Exquisitely hand-crafted of solid sterling silver with 24K-gold plating, this ring features a "double band" infinity symbol look. Four stunning sapphires form a cross in its center, and three genuine diamonds symbolize the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. On the inside, the sentiment *"With God, All Things Are Possible"* is engraved as a constant reminder of the joy of true faith.

Remarkable Value ... For a Limited Time

This exclusive ring is available at just $119, payable in 4 easy installments of $29.75 and comes with a Certificate of Authenticity. To reserve yours, backed by our 120-day guarantee, send no money now; just mail the Reservation Application. But hurry... this is a *limited-time offer*!

Beautifully presented in a custom-crafted case with Certificate of Authenticity

www.bradfordexchange.com/9011

LIMITED-TIME OFFER

*Reservations will be accepted on a **first-come, first-served basis**. Respond as soon as possible to reserve "The Trinity Sapphire and Diamond Cross RIng."*

Shown actual size

*Plus a total of $8.98 for shipping and service. Allow 4-6 weeks for delivery of your ring after we receive your initial deposit. All sales subject to product availability and order acceptance.

To assure a proper fit, a ring sizer will be sent to you after your reservation has been accepted.

RESERVATION APPLICATION

THE BRADFORD EXCHANGE JEWELRY

P.O. Box 806, Morton Grove, IL 60053-0806

YES. Please reserve **"The Trinity Sapphire and Diamond Cross Ring"** for me as described in this announcement.

Signature _____

Mrs. Mr. Ms. _____
Name (Please Print Clearly)

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

01-09011-001-E39411

Call of the Wild

Finding God in majestic places

BY RUTH ANNE OLSON

As a child I was fascinated by the tiny tornadoes that scurried across the western Oregon landscape where I grew up. Sometimes called "dust devils," these small funnels of air skipped over the earth picking up twigs and dry grass, tossed them in swirling twists of playfulness and then disappeared in bursts of upward energy as the dirt and leaves fluttered to the ground. Where did such power come from? I wondered. Where did it go? Always I was left with the unsettling realization that I was lucky to have seen it at all, to have been looking in the right place at the right time. What mysteries happen behind my back? I wondered. What surprises would the world hold for me if I could look in all directions at once?

One limitation of our humanity is that we can look in only one direction at a time. I have come to feel deeply the expressions of God's love in Bible stories, ancient prayers and meditation; in the love of family, friends and total strangers; and in human creations of sculpture, poetry, liturgy and music. Yet the direction in which I look most often, the experience to which I most faithfully turn to ponder the unimaginable miracle of God, is experience of the wild. The awesome immensity of nature has shown me the divine: God before the beginning, through time unimaginable—indivisible, inseparable, indestructible.

Beautiful Blooms, Bright Skies

I invite you to share briefly my experience of God and to go beyond liturgical habits and Scripture, beyond the sound, color, light and beauty of churches, mosques and synagogues. Go instead to the shore of a mighty Midwestern lake, to the constancy and complexity of changing seasons, to the tenacity of delicate harebells clinging to tiny granules of dirt trapped in the cracks of billion-year-old rocks and splashed with the weight of waves leaping out of a vast basin created millions of years ago. Yes, tiny bell-shaped lavender flowers grow out of hairline cracks in rocks, having lain in the same place for billions of years, flowers thrown flat by water that leaps out of an ancient basin we call Lake Superior. As each wave drains slowly away, the harebells bob upright, absorb the earthy smells, and are cast down by the next pounding wave, over and over again. This is God's joy, God's unfathomable joy, love and wisdom at my very feet.

Since my childhood, people have used the Psalms, Gospels and other Bible stories to teach me about faith. But none of those stories has the power to guide me toward love and my place in the world as strongly as a night when Venus, a bright dot 25 million miles away, shines so bright as to cast a stream of light upon the lake. Or as fireflies flickering in a darkness that suddenly lies deepest-black after massive sheets of lightning have brought noontime clarity to the midnight sky. The parables of Jesus teach a right life; so too do the song sparrow, swarms of biting mosquitoes, waves threatening to swamp our canoe and a Milky Way that extends deeper into the heavens than my imagination can follow.

Each Sunday I step into the sanctuary of my church, eager to surround myself with symbols of the divine. But the ability of liturgy and hymns to lift me out of myself pales when compared with the sensual strength of seeing a first flock of snow buntings when cold November winds move south from the Canadian plains. The power of altars and stained-glass windows is dwarfed by the magnificent stars of Orion spread wide across the cold bright winter sky. The soft bathing of Easter incense on my cheeks becomes unfathomably weak compared with a spring breeze as the lake gives up its winter ice to earth's lengthening days.

God's Creation Speaks

Within my community of worship, three and even four gen-

ART: STEFANIE AUGUSTINE

RUTH ANNE OLSON *is retired from a career in education. She divides her time between Minneapolis and the north shore of Lake Superior.*

erations of us set aside our self-absorptions to reflect and serve something bigger than ourselves. There I have grown to understand the importance of God's mystery. Our shared exploration and openness to each person's life and yearning has allowed me to see that God flows fundamentally from the creation I am privileged to know. This realization gives me confidence that the earth itself holds the hope for unity and the future of humankind.

Through my own fear and loneliness in years of illness and when those I love in my widespread family have struggled with depression, drug dependency and sickness, I have prayed for acceptance and wisdom. God's answer comes most clearly each time I stand in the woods and hear the sound of water filtering through the trees. Grounded on that small hilltop, I learn constancy amid adversity from the destructiveness of tons of wind-blown ice, from waves that toss car-size boulders onto the shore, from rain that topples trees and drowns mice in their nests and from the steady persistence of fire moving through the rich fuel of the soil. There too I find comfort in moss-covered trees decaying into the earth, snakelike trails of a vole scurrying beneath fresh snow and the playful dignity of gulls hitching rides on drifting ice floes.

From it all, my confidence that creation comes together in ways beyond my understanding grows deeper, and I learn to know my place in the circle of humankind. Who am I in this world of love and anger, of intimacy and despair? How do I respect and love the old people with whom I live, the children and adolescents who are part of my life and the stranger on the street who asks for money? My answers come from the generosity of the pileated woodpecker who beats her territorial marks on the trees around our campsite; from the constancy of the seasons and the straight-line trot of the coyote over snow-covered rocks; from the persistence of the deer who returns safely to shore after swimming out of sight to escape a hungry wolf. I learn from the joyful surge of the gull flying into a gusting wind and from the timelessness of a loon who shares his ancient call with the surrounding world.

The Bible has taught me that humankind has a unique and special relationship with God, but I suspect that so too does all creation. My ears are too feeble to hear, my brain too small to comprehend, but I believe that creation tells its story of unlimited unique relationships with God. Vast expanses of space, orange and gray lichen that find life on the cold dark surfaces of ancient rocks, moss beds that light the forest floor with iridescent green, tiny pond creatures that look like swimming twigs. Each talks with God in a language different from but no less special than my own. I like it that humanity has its own unique qualities. But I am confident that so too has every cell of the many billion years of history before us, so too the incomprehensible future beyond.

Lessons to Learn

Eve and the apple, Moses in the bull rushes and on the mountain, Joseph walking wearily alongside the donkey, Jesus in the garden, stories of parting waters and pillars of salt—in these we treat humankind as the center of creation. All else are supporting props to our self-centered dramas. But creation itself reminds us that we are an infinitesimal speck in a rich and infinite vastness. We are urged to see the Psalmist's love of God as sun, rock, spring, shield, thundering torrent and devouring fire. We nudge ourselves to step outside the smallness of our altars and processions to learn celebration from the rising moon; trust, wisdom and forgiveness from the grass that grows in sidewalk cracks; constancy, generosity and joy from the migrating birds; humility and love from the unseen creatures in the nearby creek and in backyard puddles on a rainy day. Surrounded by a totality that makes us—and all the holy stories we know—mewling infants in God's vast creation, we learn who we are and who we can be.

I still carry my childish wish to be able to see in every direction at once, but I grow every day by seeing what is always straight ahead. Creation is an unfolding story seeking to find the spaces within me that yearn to see, to hear and to love. A

TELEVISION | JAKE MARTIN

THE KIDS ARE ALL RIGHT

'Gossip Girl' and 'Glee' portray Generation Next

Kathleen's hand shot up like a bullet. I was afraid that the story of St. Ignatius' conversion would not play well with my class of glassy-eyed ninth graders, yet there she was, hand waving excitedly, a radiant smile in the midst of a fog of teenage apathy. "Ignatius' story is like Serena's from 'Gossip Girl,'" she began, her words tumbling out as quickly as the smile fell from my face. I didn't hear her finish because I was trying to wrap my mind around the dynamic duo of St. Ignatius Loyola and Serena van der Woodsen. As I composed myself, Sean piped up, "It's like Finn from 'Glee.'" And so it went.

Gossip Girl is a CW television series focusing on Serena (Blake Lively) and her coterie of teenage friends who live in the rarified air of New York's Upper East Side. Based on a series of popular young-adult novels, the series is narrated by an omniscient blogger, the titular Gossip Girl, who intersperses plot developments with cutting remarks about the protagonists. While the show's glossy packaging and wink-wink advertising would have you believe it is poised at the cutting edge of youth culture, in reality the show is all gums, no teeth. "Gossip Girl" is nothing more than an old-fashioned soap opera, complete with good girls, bad boys and ludicrous plot twists.

The moral compass of the show is Ms. van der Woodsen, a likable yet flawed heroine, equal parts Julie Andrews and Paris Hilton. Serena, like most of her young television audience, is attempting to negotiate the precarious transition from adolescence to adulthood. She lives in a claustrophobic world devoid of values other

The cast of Fox television's new series, "Glee"

than money, power and sex. The show's primary tension stems from her frustration over her inability to detach herself from the seductive universe she inhabits. Serena's problems, though covered in the gloss of prestige and privilege, are real; the writers do an excellent job of peeling away the veneer of excess to show that Serena is not your average spoiled little rich girl. Her continual attempts to better herself, to will herself to meet the standards she has set and, likewise, her failures to do so, give the show its legitimacy. Serena's frailty and authentic brokenness make for fascinating, if at times heartbreaking, television.

But one character does not a television series make, and the wheels are falling off quickly for "Gossip Girl." The show's flaws have less to do with the decadence of its content than with the quality of the writing, acting and directing. Now entering its third season, when most series reach their creative apex, the writers at "Gossip Girl" seem at a loss about where to go. Aside from Serena and the spectacularly caustic Chuck Bass (played with heavy-lidded surety by Ed Westwick), most of the characters are not interesting or multidimensional.

ON THE WEB
Rev. Robert E. Lauder on two new movies on the Jewish experience.
americamagazine.org/culture

While "Gossip Girl" trudges to its inevitable ending, Fox TV's **Glee** is a bright shiny possibility. Currently "Glee" is just good, but it could become a show that changes television. The plot is simple enough: a high-school Spanish teacher (Matthew Morrison) tries to save his school's once-celebrated glee club, which now consists primarily of a ragtag group of misfits. The episodes move along swiftly, sliding easily from one musical number to the next, which is where the show's strength lies. Using a diverse catalogue of songs, ranging from those of Amy Winehouse to selections from "Guys and Dolls," the people behind "Glee" whip up compositions that are surprisingly catchy without ever going over the top.

The show bills itself as a musical comedy. But except for the always-brilliant Jane Lynch in the role of a tyrannical cheerleading coach, the show has not hit its comedic stride. (Only Lynch's rotten-ripe delivery can do justice to lines like, "Your resentment is delicious.") It seems to aspire to the

CULTURE IN BRIEF | THOMAS MASSARO

CAPITAL CRIMES

Michael Moore's repeated drumbeats defending the "little guy" against threatening social forces may not be as satisfying a remedy as Catholic social teaching's call to make an "option for the poor." But Moore's approach makes for lively, feature-length documentaries, like his new release, **Capitalism: A Love Story**.

For 20 years, Moore has been exposing the harm inflicted upon average Americans by heartless corporations, including those that peddle guns, pollute the environment, downsize workers and deny reliable health care coverage to millions. His new offering targets not just one industry or policy but the entire market system. The financial crisis provides stark new material for anyone intent on lambasting our misplaced trust in self-serving chief executive officers, corrupt government officials, greedy lobbyists and a host of other villains.

But Moore is not a humorless ideologue caviling from the left. While a verb like *denounce* applies to his work, *expose* and *lampoon* are even more descriptive. Michael Moore is one part class clown and one part prophet of doom. Sometimes he makes his points seriously, as with his footage of crumbling rustbelt devastation or chilling homemade videos of frightened families being evicted from their freshly foreclosed homes. Just as often, he stages zany publicity stunts to embarrass greedy parties caught with their hand in the cookie jar. Recent taxpayer bailouts of banks and other firms deemed "too big to fail" also provide him with rich fodder.

Each of his films includes one indisputable accomplishment: the use of lively video montage that keeps viewers off balance. We never know where we will be taken next, whom we will encounter or what emotions will be evoked. Detractors accuse Moore of manipulating facts, indulging in inexcusable simplification and engaging in lazy thinking. On this last count, they have a point. Nowhere does the film seriously address the key distinction between the basic principles of capitalism and real-world abuses. Does social betterment require scrapping the entire market system or merely reforming a few practices and replacing the worst culprits?

If we want a serious ethical analysis of economic systems and their shortcomings, we will be better off reading the latest papal social encyclical. But anyone wanting a vivid illustration of the principles found in such documents would do well to see Michael Moore's exposé of the ways of greed and his defense of the little guy in our contemporary economy.

THOMAS MASSARO, S.J., *is a professor of social ethics at Boston College and a visiting editor of* ***America****.*

satirical humor of such films as "Waiting for Guffman." While it offers the occasional chuckle, too many jokes do not play, primarily because it is hard to laugh at nice people who are good at what they do.

In its best moments "Glee" is reminiscent of the low-budget Judy Garland/Mickey Rooney musicals that MGM ground out regularly in the 1930s and 40s. These films exceeded their material because of the earnest talent of the performers. The suits in Hollywood should take note of "Glee," as well as of the phenomenal success of the "High School Musical" franchise. Instead of attempting to make musicals epic in scale, like "Chicago," in the hope of recreating the overblown, overdone musicals of the 1950s and 60s, they might return to the low-key, less expansive (and less expensive) musical of the 1930s and 40s. More "Babes in Arms," less "My Fair Lady."

Because of its relative youth and the inherent parameters imposed upon it by the musical-comedy genre, "Glee" cannot explore the teenage experience the way "Gossip Girl" can. Yet because the show centers on a group of marginalized high school students, certain existential reverberations are inevitable. The teenagers of "Glee" fashion their identities through their vocation as singers and through the in-school communities they have created. As glee-club members, they have their first taste of autonomy and self-respect. Soon the club becomes their sanctuary. All the characters are stereotypes: the jock, the sassy black girl, the effeminate boy. All are faced with their own set of obstacles imposed from outside, yet all manage to flourish in spite of the alienation they feel, firmly entrenched as they are in both their love for music and their commitment to one another. The jock is harassed by his cronies for taking part in the group, yet he refuses to back down. Like every other aspect of

the show, the potential for offering a more sophisticated account of the high school experience lies within reach of the talented writers of "Glee."

When the gimmickry, lacquered sheen and musical numbers are stripped away, both "Gossip Girl" and "Glee," though flawed, provide startlingly authentic accounts of the most primitive needs of contemporary adolescents. Both shows examine the oft-tread territory of teens' almost pathological desire to belong. Yet neither stops there; instead both dig deeper to find out what fuels that urgent need. The answer both shows provide is rooted in the adolescent desire to be in relationship, to be part of a community and to be heard outside the constraints of the family model, which leads to the first signs of an adult identity.

JAKE MARTIN, S.J., *is a Jesuit scholastic teaching theology and theater at Loyola Academy, in Wilmette, Ill.*

BOOKINGS | DANIEL J. HARRINGTON

LAW AND THE GIVER OF LIFE

John P. Meier revisits the historical Jesus.

Over the past 30 years there has been a lively renewal of interest in the quest of the historical Jesus on both scholarly and popular levels. What had been mainly the preserve of liberal German Protestant scholars has become an international and interconfessional enterprise. Among the very best results of this development has been the multivolume investigation by the Rev. John P. Meier entitled *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*.

Meier, a priest of the archdiocese of New York, is professor of New Testament at the University of Notre Dame. What began as a projected two-volume effort at rethinking the quest of the historical Jesus now includes a fourth volume, with a fifth volume in preparation. The first volume, *The Roots of the Problem and the Person* (1991), treated sources and methodology and began the discussion of Jesus' life. The second volume, *Mentor, Message, and Miracles* (1994), dealt with John the Baptist, Jesus' proclamation of God's kingdom and his miracles. The third volume, *Companions and Competitors* (2001), considered Jesus in his relationships with other Jews and situated him in the context of first-century Palestinian Judaism. The fifth volume will concern Jesus' parables, his self-designations or titles, and what led to his death.

Rules and Prohibitions

In this fourth volume—*Law and Love* (Anchor/Yale Univ. Press; 752p $55)—on the Jewish Law and Jesus' love commands, Meier argues that Jesus' approach to the Torah seems to have been neither total rejection of the Law, nor a dialectic that embraces yet in effect rejects the Law, nor a total affirmation of the Law that simply involved legitimate (though debatable) interpretations of individual practices. After a 25-page introduction, he considers the flexible and evolving concept of Law (Torah) around the time of Jesus.

Next he discusses Jesus' sweeping prohibition of divorce and his total prohibition of any and all oaths. Then he takes up Sabbath observance as one of the most prominent identity badges of Jews in the ancient Greco-Roman world. Next he deals with the purity rules as one of the most difficult, sprawling and contentious areas of legal debate and development in ancient Judaism. Finally, he explores whether the historical Jesus ever addressed the question of the Law as a whole, giving some indication of how he thought its various parts related to the totality of the Torah; and he considers which, if any, of the love commands in the Gospels come from the historical Jesus, and what precisely are their range and meaning.

Meier defines his task as history rather than theology. In this volume his primary goal is "to reconstruct as best we can what a first-century Jewish prophet and teacher named Jesus of Nazareth said about divorce" and the other topics pertaining to the Jewish Law that he treats. The qualification "as best we can" recognizes the limits of any historical investigation. The terms "prophet" and "teacher" represent how at the very least his first-century Jewish contemporaries would have perceived Jesus. While the major sources are the Synoptic Gospels, Meier's primary concern as a historian is to get behind them and try to determine what can be discovered about the person and teaching of Jesus during his public ministry.

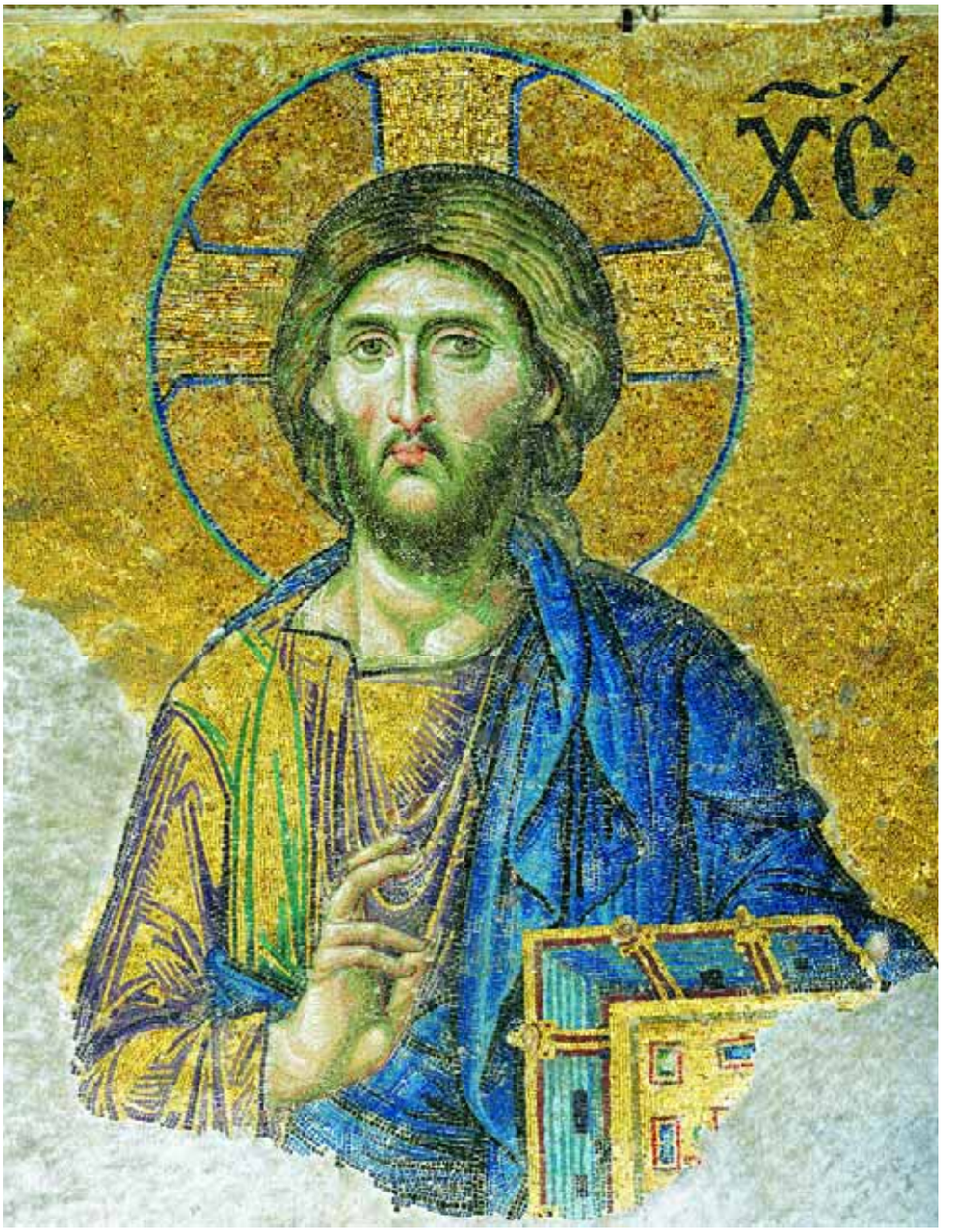
Important Criteria

Central to Meier's undertaking in this and other volumes are the criteria of historicity developed by New Testament scholars in the mid-20th century. The five primary criteria are embarrassment (what created difficulty for the early church), discontinuity (with regard to Judaism and early Christianity), multiple attestation (material found in several independent traditions), coherence (what best fits with the first three criteria) and rejection and execution (what led to Jesus' death). The secondary (or more dubious) criteria include traces of Aramaic, Palestinian environment, vivid narration and the supposed tendencies of the developing tradition. Meier's project involves applying these criteria to practically everything in the Synoptic

Gospels (and occasionally to John) and discerning what may be attributed with confidence to the historical Jesus. While some scholars have questioned the validity of applying these criteria to Jesus, at the very least they do tell us some valuable things about Jesus' life and teaching.

Meier contends that the question of Jesus and the Law cannot be answered by a single neat solution with no loose ends. From his historical analysis, he concludes that Jesus forbade divorce and remarriage as well as the swearing of oaths; that without rejecting Sabbath observance entirely, he staked out distinctive opinions on various halachic (legal) matters; that his studied indifference to ritual impurity reflects his claim to be a charismatic prophet of the end time; and that the double command to love God and the neighbor as well as the command to love enemies very likely go back to the historical Jesus. Meier observes that this volume (and the others) hammers home the basic truth that "Jesus was first, last, and always a product of the Judaism native to the land of Israel." Or as he states repeatedly, "the historical Jesus is the halakic Jesus," however fragmentary our knowledge may be.

While not by academic training a specialist in Second Temple Judaism, Meier has made himself into one, at least in those matters that pertain to Jesus. His ability to work with many difficult Jewish texts and his ample bibliographies attest to his mastery of the Jewish context in which Jesus lived and worked. Moreover, in dealing with the very complex topics that come under his subtitle *Law and Love*, Meier shows himself to be a sober historian who carefully sifts through the relevant texts, constructs forceful arguments and comes to solid and measured conclusions. Rather than setting out with a thesis to be proved, he allows his conclusions to emerge from rigorous scrutiny of the evidence.



ART: CHRIST, FROM THE DEESIS IN THE NORTH GALLERY. BYZANTINE MOSAIC, 12TH C.
PHOTO: ERICH LESSING / ART RESOURCE

Arguing From Evidence

Meier has been criticized by some for his rigidly historicist stance and his unwillingness to delve deeply into theology. But Meier makes abundantly clear the parameters of his undertaking and leaves theology to others. In his very different book, *Jesus of Nazareth* (2007), Pope Benedict XVI describes Meier's work as "a model of historical-critical exegesis, in which the significance and the limits of the method emerge clearly."

A Marginal Jew, Vol. 4: Law and Love (and the other volumes) can be read straight through, and then kept and consulted as a reference work. Yet it is not for the fainthearted. It presupposes a willingness to work through difficult textual material in both Second Temple Jewish literature and the New Testament. Meier makes it possible for nonspecialists to follow his arguments by his clear style, logical presentations and frequent summaries. The notes at the end of each chapter provide supportive evidence from ancient sources, lively discussions of other scholars' views and extensive bibliographies.

Those who persevere will see concretely how a learned biblical exegete

constructs a series of historical arguments that shed new light on ancient texts and on the person of Jesus. The term "monumental" seems fitting for Meier's project, whose completion is eagerly awaited. The four volumes published thus far belong on the bookshelf wedged between Raymond E. Brown's *The Birth of the Messiah* (1977; rev. ed., 1993) and his *The Death of the Messiah* (1994) as classics in American Catholic biblical scholarship.

DANIEL J. HARRINGTON, S.J., *is professor of New Testament at the Boston College School of Theology and Ministry and editor of New Testament Abstracts. He is also author of* Jesus: A Historical Portrait *(2007).*

BOOK BRIEFS

FOOD, FABLE AND MORE

How to Raise a Drug-Free Kid: The Straight Dope for Parents, by Joseph A. Califano Jr. (Simon & Schuster/Fireside, $15), is based on two decades of research at The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, of which Califano is founder and chair. The book is practical, easy to use, packed with valuable information and survey data as well as needed advice and resources for concerned parents. Califano provides, in his own words, "some effective, straightforward substance abuse-prevention techniques that are...'evidence based.'"

Communication and conversation are, as expected, vital in family relationships; the book also advises on incorporating religious and spiritual practices. Media influence and other factors exert a potent influence on youngsters, presenting concerned parents with many worries: Where do teens get drugs? When is my child at increased risk? What are the signs to look for? And what do I do if "siren signals" are present? How can behavioral or conduct problems be overcome? Califano is a wise and reassuring guide, leading parents toward greater and more effective engagement with their children. Parents will also welcome the extensive glossary of commonly used terms.

The Book of the Shepherd: The Story of One Simple Prayer and How It Changed the World, by The Scribe, as discovered by JoAnn Davis (HarperStudio, $19.99), is a fable of the first order. Davis made her discovery in an old farmhouse she purchased. Since the deceased owner/author had no heirs, she inherited the house's contents, which included a book written "in an unusual hybrid of Middle English and Dutch." A team of experts spent a year translating it for today's reader.

The fable itself follows the long journey of a simple shepherd named Joshua and his deeds of mercy. His fellow travelers are an abused, abandoned young boy, David, and the boy's adoptive sister, Elizabeth, who are in search of some new way about which the shepherd had dreamed. "My grandfather spoke of the new way," Elizabeth recounts, "as he lay dying. He predicted," she went on, "that an age of miracles would come when it is discovered." Along the way they meet various characters—the Old Man, the Blind Man, the Storyteller and others, who share tales and parables (and an occasional warning of peril to the travelers). As to the real story here, suffice to say it involves threats and pitfalls, a map, a virtually impenetrable cave, mysterious symbols and a jug containing a parchment scroll, which they called "The Law of Substitution." The first line is, "Make me a channel of your peace." You know the rest (of the prayer, that is); but hang on for the rest of the story and the punch it packs. This timeless tale deserves a wide readership—and it makes an excellent gift for the coming holiday season.

A Taste of Heaven: A Guide to Food and Drink Made by Monks and Nuns, by Madeline Scherb (Tarcher/Penguin, $15.95), is an appealing and well put-together package that just may help transform your holiday meal-making and presentation. The foreword is written by Brother Victor-Antoine d'Avila-Latourrette, author of several books—my favorite being *Twelve Months of Monastery Soups* (Liguori). The present work surveys food and drink products made by monks and nuns from monasteries in both the United States (12) and Europe (9). Interesting historical background information about the monasteries (as well as advice to prospective travelers) accompanies the "heavenly" recipes,

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/SKAZKA GREZ

which span several categories. From the section on spirits, for example, the cook may choose monk's tonic, abbot's elixir or Trappist beer, among others, or a holy cheese dish, like flamiche, as well as tantalizing soups, entrees, side dishes and "sweet temptations." The publisher notes that almost all the products are available either online, by telephone order or at specialty food stores. If you enjoy experimental cooking (as I do), you will grab hold of this book, don your chef's hat and dig in. *Bon Appetit!*

Will I See My Dog in Heaven?: God's Saving Love for the Whole Family of Creation, by Jack Wintz, O.F.M. (Paraclete Press, $14.99), addresses an area of concern that extends well beyond the kindergarten set. A Franciscan friar for more than 50 years and an editor of St. Anthony Messenger magazine, Wintz explores the question raised in the book's title in a broader context: "Does God intend the whole created world to share in God's saving plan?" And while no one can know with certitude what God has planned for his creatures, the author draws compelling insights from Scripture, our Judeo-Christian tradition and of course the example of St. Francis. In 10 chapters, ranging from the creation story in Genesis ("And It Was Very Good") to the stories of Noah and Jonah, the Gospels, the life and teachings of St. Francis and more, Wintz includes personal stories, anecdotes, spiritual reflection and Scriptural commentary that demonstrate God's inclusive love for the whole family of creation, along with images from the Book of Revelation—making "all things new." Smoothly written, well grounded and advancing a compelling case on behalf of God's beloved creatures (while eschewing sentimentality), this book is a satisfying read for the millions of pet owners who care.

Book Briefs is written by **PATRICIA A. KOSSMANN,** *literary editor of* ***America****.*

CLASSIFIED

Education

OBLATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY offers an M.A. degree in spirituality; regular semester and intersession courses. Web: www.ost.edu.

Parish Missions

INSPIRING, DYNAMIC PREACHING: parish missions, retreats, days of recollection; www.sabbathretreats.org.

Positions

VICE PRESIDENT, MISSION INTEGRATION. Carondelet Health, located in Kansas City, Mo., is seeking qualified candidates for the position of Vice President, Mission Integration. The Vice President of Mission Integration serves as a member of C.H.'s senior management team and is responsible for fostering the genuine expression of Catholic, faith-based identity in the health care delivery setting. As a member of Ascension Health, the nation's largest Catholic and nonprofit health system, C.H. is committed to providing "Healthcare that works, healthcare that is safe, and healthcare that leaves no one behind." The Vice President of Mission Integration provides strategic leadership to ensure that the mission, vision and faith-based values of Ascension Health are fully integrated into C.H.'s strategic direction and operations. In addition, the Vice President of Mission Integration develops collaborative partnerships, both internally and externally, to facilitate the mission in the community. Experience in a complex, faith-based health care environment is preferred, but experience outside of the health care field will be considered. Experience as a senior management leader is highly preferred, with at least five years of relevant experience in integrating the mission, vision and values of an organization. A master's degree in theology, ethics or spirituality is preferred. A master's in health care administration, education, organizational development or other related field is acceptable with the willingness to pursue advanced study in theology or ethics. An alternative combination of education, training and/or experience that fulfills the requirements of the position will be considered. Carondelet Health includes St. Joseph Medical Center and St. Mary's Medical Center, three long-term care facilities, a home health and private duty nursing agency and several other entities. The system was founded by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet. Carondelet Health is a member of Ascension Health, the nation's largest Catholic and nonprofit health system, with more than 100,000 associates serving in 66 acute care hospitals and related facilities in 20 states and the District of Columbia. Consistent with its mission of serving all people, with special attention to those who are poor and vulnerable, Ascension Health provides clinically excellent care with an emphasis on innovation and a focus on transforming the health care industry. E.O.E. Fax résumé or C.V. to Dawn Bryant, Vice President, Human Resources, (816) 943-2777. Visit www.carondelethealth.org

Retreats

BETHANY RETREAT HOUSE, East Chicago, Ind., offers private and individually directed silent retreats, including Ignatian 30 days, year-round in a prayerful home setting. Contact Joyce Diltz, P.H.J.C.; (219) 398-5047; bethanyrh@sbcglobal.net; www.bethanyretreathouse.org.

FRANCIS OF ASSISI, A SAINT FOR ALL SEARCHERS, Nov. 2–6, 2009, conference retreat with Michael Crosby, O.F.M.Cap. There will be something that appeals to everyone about the patron saint of the environment. Suggested offering: $315. Visit www.bethanyspirituality center.org, or call (845) 460-3061.

Translator

SPANISH TRANSLATOR. Luis Baudry-Simon, specialized in religion/human sciences, will translate into Spanish any book, article, essay, blog, Web site. E-mail: luisbaudrysimon@gmail.com; Ph: (815) 461-0321.

Vocations

OVER 30? DESIRE PRIESTHOOD? Religious life? Lay ministries? Enriching sabbatical? Vocation-discernment retreat? Ph: (800)645-5347 (24 hours daily). See http://gonzaga.edu/ministryinstitute.

Web Sites

THE EVOLUTION OF SYMBIOSIS is nature's pattern and God's plan. Enrich your faith with the synthesis of science. Free resources at: www.secondenlightenment.org and www.evolution101.org.

Wills

*Please remember **America** in your will. Our legal title is: America Press Inc., 106 West 56th Street, New York, NY 10019.*

*America classified. Classified advertisements are accepted for publication in either the print version of **America** or on our Web site, www.americamagazine.org. Ten-word minimum. Rates are per word per issue. 1-5 times: $1.50; 6-11 times: $1.28; 12-23 times: $1.23; 24-41 times: $1.17; 42 times or more: $1.12. For an additional $30, your print ad will be posted on **America**'s Web site for one week. The flat rate for a Web-only classified ad is $150 for 30 days. Ads may be submitted by e-mail to: ads@americamagazine.org; by fax to (928) 222-2107; by postal mail to: Classified Department, **America**, 106 West 56th St., New York, NY 10019. To post a classified ad online, go to our home page and click on "Advertising" at the top of the page. We do not accept ad copy over the phone. MasterCard and Visa accepted. For more information call: (212) 515-0102.*

LETTERS

The Best and Brightest

Re: "Confessions of a Modern Nun," by Ilia Delio, O.S.F. (10/12/09): Let us applaud the wonderful, faithful, loyal women who entered convent life during the 1950s and 1960s—the best and brightest group of women that the Roman Catholic Church has ever seen.

MARY B. JENNINGS
Monmouth Beach, N.J.

Changing Habits

Thank you, Sister Ilia, for the insightful article. The yin and yang of religious life that emphasizes the "God and I" dimension versus the "Neighbor and I" dimension are indeed complementary parts of the whole. Because few are able to attain a true balance, active and contemplative types of religious life have developed.

Regarding habits: I went to a Catholic grammar school run by the Sisters of Mercy during the time of the Second Vatican Council. As a young child I was frightened of the nuns in full habit, with their rosaries clacking against the rulers in their hands ready to swat any youngster who got out of line.

As the reforms of the council came into being, the same nuns shed their Darth Vader-like attire to wear a modified habit that looked more like a uniform with a cross or crucifix to let the beholder know that they were Catholic sisters. The change in habit seemed to change their demeanor, and I was able to relate to them as teachers rather than strictly scary disciplinarians.

JOSEPH PAPEIKA
Derby, Conn.

Getting It Right

If you want a good example of authentic incarnation in religious life, look to Blessed Teresa of Calcutta. Like everything else in the world, when you do something you have to get it right. Mother Teresa got it right. As far as I know, the Missionaries of Charity are not suffering a crisis in vocations.

LEONARD NUGENT
Oak Ridge, Tenn.

Cold, Sad, Respectful

Sorry Sister Ilia, but I completely disagree with your opinions. I fear you and many American nuns have tragically made the wrong choice. You have lost today's children, the convents, the schools and the presence in the nation's culture. Much of what you say is quite pleasant and positive, but the truth is that your philosophy has taken that which was stone and made it a temporary impression in the sand.

I say this with sorrow and profound respect for you and all the nuns of our church who have lost their past. I believe the numerical data will soon erase you from our church. Can't you see something is wrong? Today's young women are drawn to your competition in the "traditional" orders. They are creating the foundation of the future, which will one day really resemble what your sisters deserted in the late 20th century.

I admire your faith and service, but the path of so many American orders just leaves me cold and sad. I am grateful I was a young Catholic child taught and loved by the sisters.

GEORGE MUNYON
Thorofare, N.J.

Come Together

When a hungry hand reaches out for bread, it matters not whether the helping hand wears a black robe or a T-shirt. What matters is that the hungry person is fed. The wimple of a habit-wearing nun, or the hoodie of a sister from the Bronx mean just as little to God. But what means everything is love, as in the Beatles' song, "Come Together." That is my advice.

STEVE SPERZAN
Philadelphia, Pa.

Secular Institutes

It seems to me that the religious in the United States should be honest, opt out of the religious life and become members of a secular institute—the way of life they are living. I am not sure that what Sister Ilia is talking about is anything new. It is the way of secular institutes, which the church recognized decades ago and incorporated into canon law. My word to Sister Ilia is sim-

CARTOON BY HARLEY SCHWADRON

ply: Be honest and convince your congregation and other such congregations to become secular institutes. Then there will be no reason for the present visitation.

(REV.) RONAN KILGANNON
Kangaroo Valley, N.S.W.
Australia

Something Special

Sister Delio, your habit, a priest's collar or the robes of a monk have more power and influence than you can know, and were a large part of at least the emotional side of my Catholic conversion. Considering I am a common man, it must be true that this has been the same, on a conscious or unconscious level, for many others. It is simple and true in all human societies that uniforms are like icons, and without them our world is less easy to navigate. Police officers, firefighters, doctors, nurses, military and the like are all there to help and, yes, even "save" us. All are readily recognized by their uniforms. We all feel a little more physically safe and secure because of their visibility.

With religious, there is a certain spiritual safety and security in your presence. This is a visceral, nonintellectual reaction in all of us. While your profession is known to you and can be seen in your work and words, it cannot be seen when you are sitting in a bus station. When a young person like I was sees a sister "in habit" on the street, in a hospital or even at a social event, it sparks the imagination and curiosity. From a nonreligious Protestant family, I simply knew that sisters were something special and were there to help people in some way, like doctors and police officers.

I'm afraid you and other religious undervalue the impact you have by just being there in a recognizable way. Without my childhood exposure to the habit, I seriously doubt that I, my wife, my children and grandchildren would be traveling the Catholic path today.

MICHAEL REED
Osborne, Kan.

Superiority Over God

Re "Looking for Love," by M. M. Hubele (10/5/09): What a challenging reflection! It brought to mind the disconcerting words of Simone Weil: "A victim of misfortune is lying in the road, half-dead with hunger. God pities him but cannot send him bread. But I am here and luckily I am not God. I can give him a piece of bread. It is my one point of superiority over God" (*First and Last Notebooks*). The provocative question is, When will we get it?

(REV.) JOHN PESCE
West Hartford, Conn.

Spreading Responsibility

I certainly agree with the crux of the argument by Donald Moore, S.J. ("When Silence Is Betrayal," 10/12/09) regarding the responsibility of Israel for the current plight of the Palestinians in Gaza. I, too, fault the role of the Zionist political movement in expanding Israeli settlements into Palestinian lands, realizing that such expansions are the death knell for any hopes of a self-sustaining Palestinian economy. Israel's actions here are without a doubt reprehensible.

But I also believe that the role of Hamas in this affair merits more than the five sentences Father Moore dedicates to it. A political organization that dedicates itself to the extermination of a nation, that represses its own population and hides behind the innocent while launching rockets into civilian areas with the sole intent of killing civilians, and ignores the plight of its people while allowing terrorism to flourish within its midst deserves more than five sentences saying that Hamas is by no means innocent. The Palestinian situation in Gaza is critical. But the solution to the problem here goes far beyond nonviolent protests, fasts, sanctions and boycotts. What's next?

Let's start spreading responsibility for this human disaster around a little. Let's devote more than five sentences to those who share responsibility.

JOE DRISCOLL
Chesapeake, Va.

Judge Not

Judging the situation in Israel seems to make for great armchair analysis. How many of us in the United States or Canada can really judge Israel's actions fairly? How many have lived with the fear of rocket attacks and suicide bombers almost daily and in a place where all your immediate neighbors would prefer to see you dead than alive? The only taste we have had of that in recent memory is 9/11, and as a result of that we are in a war in Iraq and Afghanistan.

All this pontification is rich coming from the sons and daughters of European settlers who forcibly moved North America's original people into little ghettos or wiped them out when they became a nuisance. The day the critics of Israel are ready to do a full mea culpa for those sins and then hand back all the land they have stolen (including their own homes), then I'll listen. But for most of those critics those crimes are ancient history.

CHARLES LEWIS
Toronto, Ontario

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

America (ISSN 0002-7049) is published weekly (except for 14 combined issues: Jan. 5-12, 19-26, March 30-April 6, April 20-27, May 25-June 1, June 8-15, 22-29, July 6-13, 20-27, Aug. 3-10, 17-24, Aug. 31-Sept. 7, Sept. 14-21, Dec. 21-28) by America Press, Inc., 106 West 56th Street, New York, NY 10019. Periodicals postage is paid at New York, N.Y., and additional mailing offices. Business Manager: Lisa Pope; Circulation: Judith Palmer, (212) 581-4640. Subscriptions: United States, $56 per year; add U.S. $30 postage and GST (#131870719) for Canada; or add U.S. $54 per year for international priority airmail. Postmaster: Send address changes to: America, 106 West 56th St. New York, NY 10019. Printed in the U.S.A.

Blind Trust

THIRTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (B), OCT. 25, 2009

Readings: Jer 31:7–9; Ps 126:1–6; Heb 5:1–6; Mk 10:46–52

"What do you want me to do for you?" (Mk 10:51)

One of the streets I walk along on my way to work is lined with a string of shops, where a whole cluster of homeless people customarily beg for money from passers-by. Some people walk past more briskly when one of the beggars approaches them. Others smile or nod in acknowledgement. Still others dig into their pockets for loose change. It is particularly unnerving when one of these homeless people shouts loudly or continues to call out after you. Some cities, when hosting special events, try to rid the streets of any such people who might pester visitors.

It is easy to understand why the crowd in today's Gospel tried to hush a beggar who shouted after Jesus as he was leaving Jericho. Because of the crowd, Jesus might not have been able to see the man, who was blind, but Jesus hears his insistent cries for mercy.

There is a masterly interplay of sight and sound in this passage. Having told us that Bartimaeus is unable to see, Mark shifts the emphasis to auditory and vocal exchanges. Bartimaeus hears that Jesus is passing by, so the beggar starts shouting out his request for mercy. The others try to silence Bartimaeus, but he calls out all the more. Jesus hears him and says, "Call him." They summon Bartimaeus, telling him that Jesus is calling him.

With the repetition of the verb "call," Jesus now becomes the insistent one, calling out to Bartimaeus. Jesus' attention is turned completely to this person in need. This is not a curt, "What do you want?" but a deeply interpersonal exchange between Jesus and Bartimaeus as Jesus asks, "What do you want me to do for you?" It is not clear whether Bartimaeus is asking to see for the first time or to see again (the Greek verb can have both senses). As with the woman healed of hemorrhages (5:34), Jesus tells Bartimaeus to go, assuring him that his faith has saved/healed him (the Greek verb used here also can have several senses). And like the fishermen at the shore of the Sea of Galilee (1:16-20), Bartimaeus does not go away, but instead follows Jesus on the way.

In its original literary context within the Gospel of Mark, today's passage is the second in a pair of bookends. The first is the story at the beginning of the central section of teaching on discipleship in which Jesus cures a blind man in Bethsaida (8:22-26).

The two healing stories enclose a section in which Jesus' followers are struggling mightily to understand and follow him. Yet they misunderstand and even oppose him, especially as Jesus begins to teach them about his coming passion. The story of Bartimaeus gives assurance that the disciples can be healed of their inner blindness and enabled to follow Jesus on the way. Like Bartimaeus, who threw aside his cloak to come to Jesus, they may need to cast off whatever shields them from the demands of Jesus' way. Whatever keeps them from being vulnerable to the costly love of Jesus will need to be tossed away. If the disciples were among those in the crowd who were blinded to the needs of the beggar and tried to muffle his cries for mercy, they must learn to attune their ears to such cries and call such persons to Jesus, rather than stand in their way. The disciples must want to see as Jesus sees. And whenever they cannot see or understand what God is doing, as when their beloved teacher cries out in anguish from the cross, seemingly unheard by God (15:34), they will need to learn to follow blindly on the way, trusting the inner sight that assures them of divine love that is stronger than any suffering, stronger even than death.

BARBARA E. REID

PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

- Pray for inner vision and blind trust.
- How would you respond to Jesus' question, "What do you want me to do for you?"
- Ask Jesus to help you see what you would rather not see.

ART: TAD DUNNE

BARBARA E. REID, O.P., *a member of the Dominican Sisters of Grand Rapids, Mich., is a professor of New Testament studies at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, Ill., where she is vice president and academic dean.*

Discover your patrons and companions in the spiritual life.

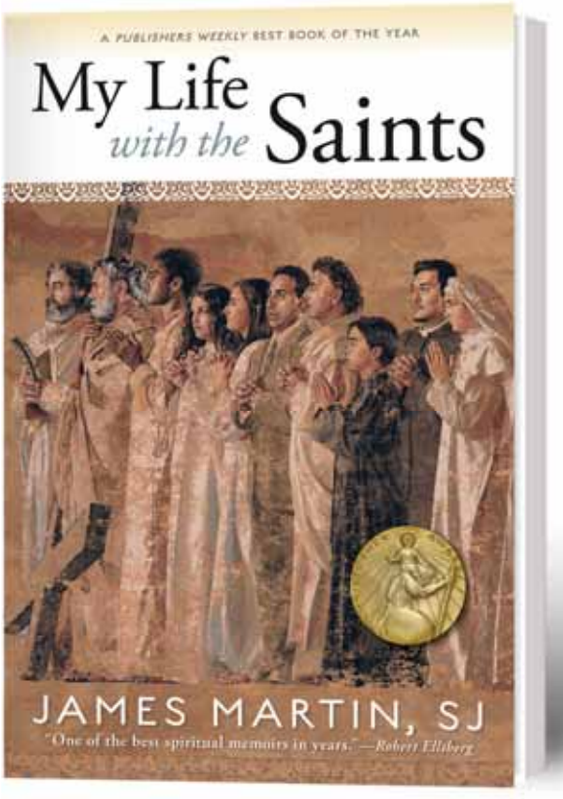
WINNER
of a Christopher Award

One of *Publishers Weekly*'s
"BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR"

WINNER
of a First Prize Award
from the Catholic Press
Association

WINNER
of the Loyola Institute
of Spirituality Writer's Award

$15.95 • PB • 424 PAGES • 2644-1



Over 85,000 sold!

Perfect for personal reflection, high school and college students, adult education classes, and parish reading groups

LOYOLAPRESS.
A JESUIT MINISTRY

ORDER YOUR COPY TODAY!
VISIT LOYOLAPRESS.COM OR CALL 800-621-1008