America

THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC WEEKLY

AUG. 16-23, 2010 $3.50

Turmoil in Mexico

ANDREW SELEE

Stem Cell Breakthrough

W. MALCOLM BYRNES

OF MANY THINGS

It happened less than halfway through our hike in the foothills of the Italian Alps, as we trudged up an increasingly steep trail. "The lens won't close," my sister Elizabeth said, panic creeping into her voice as she handed her digital camera to me. I turned it over in my hand and tried to sound reassuring. "I'm sure it's fine," I said, hoping the fix would be one I could handle, like replacing the batteries. I stabbed at a few buttons; we tried new batteries. Nothing.

The problem, we realized eventually, was that the camera's memory card had crashed, freezing the camera and providing a double blow to our morale: not only were we unable to take photos in the midst of the mountains, but hundreds of shots from the previous week—a pilgrimage through Rome, Turin and Assisi—were gone. Only one day of our trip remained, and we were left with little documentation of our travels.

We wrapped my extra T-shirt like a death shroud around the camera, placed it carefully in my backpack and kept walking. I attempted to keep my mind on the images in front of me—a field of cows, an occasional waterfall—and tried to avoid making a mental list of the images we had lost: Elizabeth looking half terrified, half thrilled standing inside the dome of St. Peter's Basilica; me kneeling by the tomb of St. Ignatius in the Gesù; Elizabeth standing outside the fifth-century walls of Santa Sabina; the two of us in the streets of Assisi in tribute to our brother who couldn't make the trip, but whose birthday falls on the feast of St. Francis.

A part of me longed for the old, analog camera I used while studying abroad in England during my junior year of college. Back then I often worried about running out of film and/or the money needed to develop it, so I rationed my shots carefully, studying my surroundings to ensure a proper angle and worthwhile subject matter. Even so, I took a couple of hundred photographs over the course of the year. And my careful procedure had the unexpected benefit of making me observant, patient, fully present to my surroundings. After I developed the film, I sorted through the pictures and often found it easy to remember the exact moment I took each one.

A few years later, I finally bought a digital camera and no longer had to worry about conserving film or costs. I could point and click happily, at anything, and soon I was taking twice as many photos in a week or two of traveling as I did during my entire year in England. I realized, however, that I also spent significantly more time looking at the world in miniature on a tiny screen. All of a sudden, it seemed, I had greater difficulty connecting each photo with a specific moment.

But on the day of my camera-less hike in the Alps, I found myself fully absorbed in the shaded trail on which we walked, the views of green hills lit up in the afternoon sun. And, then, over those hills a rainbow, larger and closer than any I had ever seen before. As others scrambled for their cameras, Elizabeth and I stood still. We didn't have a chance to photograph the view, but we had a chance simply to enjoy it together.

As we made our way out of the hills, my sister and I laughed and joked about the blessings, surprises and absurdities of our trip: the feeling of climbing more than 300 steps and arriving, breathless, at the top of St. Peter's Basilica; the peace felt when praying with our friend, a Dominican priest, in the very cell where St. Dominic once lived; the kindness of the man who let us into the rooms of St. Ignatius Loyola at a time when they were closed to visitors; the patience of the waiter who translated into English an entire dinner menu for us.

A part of me still mourns the loss of our photos, but I also realize that on any journey, no camera can capture everything worth remembering.

KERRY WEBER

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.
Kevin Clarke
Kerry Weber
Raymond A. Schroth, S.J.

ART DIRECTOR
Stephanie Ratcliffe

ASSISTANT EDITOR
Francis W. Turnbull, S.J.

ASSISTANT LITERARY EDITOR
Regina Nigro

BUSINESS DEPARTMENT

PUBLISHER
Jan Attridge

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER
Lisa Pope

ADVERTISING
Julia Sosa

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

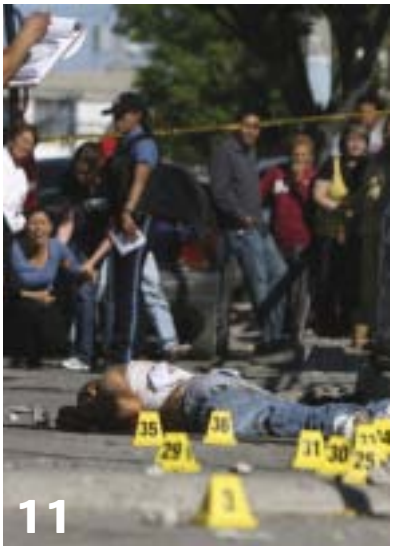
Ph: 212-581-4640; Fax: 212-399-3596

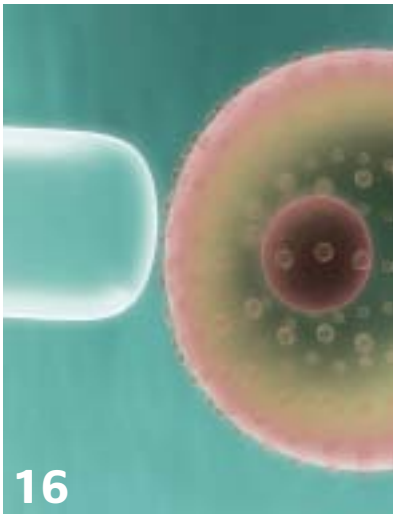
E-mail: america@americamagazine.org;
letters@americamagazine.org
Web site: www.americamagazine.org.
Customer Service: 1-800-627-9533

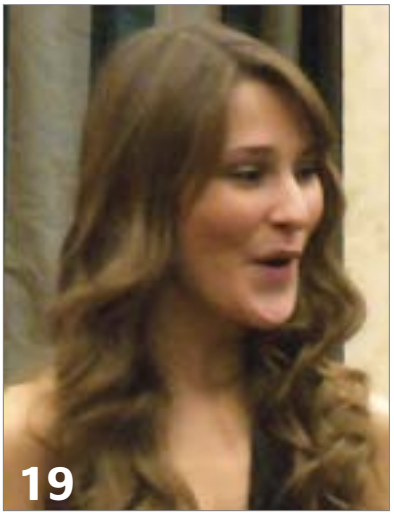
Cover: Mexican police stand outside a hotel where Mexico's President Felipe Calderón was holding a meeting in Ciudad Juárez on Feb. 17, 2010. Photo: Reuters/Alejandro Bringa

Contents

www.americamagazine.org VOL. 203 NO. 4, WHOLE NO. 4902 AUGUST 16-23, 2010







ARTICLES

COLUMNS & DEPARTMENTS

BOOKS & CULTURE

ON THE WEB

W. Malcolm Byrnes, right, discusses a breakthrough in **stem cell research** on our podcast. Plus, John P. McCarthy reviews the film **"Lebanon,"** and Tim Reidy introduces our online partnership with **Mirada Global.**
All at americamagazine.org.

Addicted Nation

Afghanistan, the world's largest opium producer, now finds its own population to be a major consumer of narcotics, with widespread addiction among all age groups. Both production and drug use have greatly increased over the past five years. The trauma of three decades of war-related strife has led many to turn to opium-based drugs as a way to dull the pain of their difficult existence. The typical addict, according to a U.N. report in June, is a 28-year-old male, married with children but separated from his wife. Women too become addicted, especially those who are widowed or divorced. Half of opium-using parents who cannot afford medicine give the drug to their children to assuage pain. Complicating the situation is that there are few treatment facilities for those who seek help. Over half a million people have no access to addiction treatment.

Poppy cultivation has increased in the southern provinces partly because of greater access to irrigation and fertilizers. Efforts to reduce the overall number of poppy fields have met with limited success because the crops bolster families' incomes, and farmers are reluctant to switch to food crops that would earn them much less. Moreover, Taliban militants fund their insurgency partly by taxing farmers on their poppy crops. There are no easy answers for a problem that threatens the well-being of an increasing number of Afghanistan's addicted inhabitants. More resources are needed to address this crisis, but corruption and fallout from the nine-year coalition war cast doubt on that possibility.

Climate Failure

Forget the steaming, record heat along the East Coast or the hundreds of peat fires in Russia. It is easy to attribute summer's soaring mercury to El Niño weather patterns or long-term weather cycles. (We can't blame sunspots because they have practically disappeared.) Across the northern Rockies, however, signs of long-term global warming have been fast accumulating. Northern pine beetles have destroyed vast tracts of white bark pine, greatly reducing the mountains' capacity to control snowmelt and prevent spring flooding downstream. At the same time, the golden marmot population in the same ranges has been exploding, and growing fatter too, because of the longer warm seasons in the high country. Nonetheless, Congress failed last month to produce a climate bill before its summer recess.

The House once again did its part, but the Senate, as usual, decided against bringing a bill to the floor. House members are fuming. They took a brave vote in a difficult political season, only to be abandoned by the upper house and by the White House. They worry that constituents, fearful that gasoline taxes and utility bills will rise under a climate bill, will take it out on them at the polls. The administration, with a go-ahead decision from the Supreme Court in 2007, may attempt to meet its international commitments by allowing the Environmental Protection Agency to curtail carbon emissions through regulation. While regulation may provide the hoped-for reductions in the short and medium term, it is not likely to build the national consensus that outspoken leadership on behalf of a climate bill might have begun to create. In addition, unlike a law, agency regulation can be easily overturned by another administration.

Profit and Loss

Liberal and conservative economists agree: Actions taken by the Bush and Obama administrations and the Federal Reserve saved the world economy from a depression. Nonetheless, people and pundits are restive. Public anxiety over the slow economic recovery is real. It is also projected onto President Obama. Do we need a second stimulus? Should the president renew the Bush tax cuts for upper-income earners? Ease up on the big banks? In keeping with the pattern of the last two recoveries, business activity in our stratified economy is anemic. There are six job-seekers available for every opening. Measures of household wealth are in decline, not just because of the collapse in the housing market, but because of the long-term decline in wages and the rise in inequality.

Few seem to hold the banks that brought on the economic collapse accountable for the lack of lending or lay criticism on major corporations for their lack of hiring. The financial sector has recovered. In some cases, banking profits are close to record highs and so are salaries and bonuses. Still, banks hesitate to extend loans for fear, they say, of sluggish consumer spending. Yet consumer spending will not rise unless more workers have more to spend. Corporate profits are growing because of greater productivity—that is, companies are getting more work out of employees for the same or lower pay. In the meantime, according to Bloomberg BusinessWeek, corporations are sitting on nearly $2 trillion in cash—enough for two new stimulus bills, with some to spare. The federal government has done its part to save the economy and protect workers. It is time for businesses, especially the banks, to do their fair share to invest in the future of the country and the well-being of their fellow Americans.

Turning Point?

As the U.S. military draws down its troops in Iraq toward a complete pullout in 2011, the transition represents a strategic shift in focus from Iraq to Afghanistan. For the public, though, this transition year ought to prompt an assessment of our engagement in Iraq, which started with the U.S. invasion in March 2003. What are the results? At what cost? What have we learned?

Mixed Results: *On some counts Al Qaeda has been weakened.* Although Osama bin Laden has not been killed or captured, many high-ranking Al Qaeda leaders have been; some of the organization's funding sources have been curtailed; and Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia has been partially cut off from its leaders in Pakistan.

Still, even a weakened Al Qaeda remains a serious threat. In July the group killed 47 members of the Sunni Awakening, and three key Al Qaeda leaders escaped from an Iraqi prison.

Democratic structures have been erected. Iraq has a constitution, a parliament, a judiciary and an electoral process. Shiite, Sunni and Kurdish parties have fielded candidates; voters have freely cast ballots. U.S. forces have fostered ethnic cooperation to help the people form a national identity. In the Awakening movement, the United States put former Sunni insurgents on its payroll and integrated them into the security forces. With Shiite leaders, the United States has explored giving the Kurds a stake in Iraq's government.

But Iraq's democracy is weak, corrupt, inept and paralyzed by ethnic rivalry. Leaders cannot even agree on a fair distribution of Iraq's oil revenues. And since the March elections, no government has taken leadership. Democracy requires more than structures; it must develop from among a free people and their chosen representatives.

U.S. military leaders have adapted to a new kind of enemy. While not a stated goal, adaptation is a major accomplishment. Fighting terrorists is radically unlike the "Star Wars" scenario the military had long prepared itself to fight. In Iraq, leaders adapted military strategies and weapons to confront a new enemy: transnational, amorphous cells of Muslim extremists that communicate, raise funds and recruit online, while they infiltrate states and failed states. Gen. David H. Petraeus has reduced sectarian violence with a complex strategy: it insists that U.S. troops fight Al Qaeda, protect local civilians and create zones of stability.

Yet the U.S. volunteer military has been overstretched across two wars, without a military draft to refresh its troops or enough coalition forces to back them up.

Costs: *Human.* Some 4,404 U.S. soldiers have been killed, another 31,874 seriously wounded. The figures do not include the deaths of tens of thousands of Iraqi civilians. Nor does it include losses by the coalition and the Iraqi military.

Financial. The Congressional Research Service puts U.S. expenditures in Iraq at $900 billion: $390,000 per soldier per year. That does not include future payments for veterans' education, health care or disability. Joseph Stiglitz, a Nobel-prize winning economist, projects the total cost of the Iraq war will be $3 trillion.

Political. The dishonest pretext for the invasion has bred cynicism. President George W. Bush's "emergency" case for a pre-emptive strike against Iraq, before Saddam Hussein could use his weapons of mass destruction against the United States, cowed Congress after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, to appropriate the funds. When no such weapons were uncovered, and the official U.S. 9/11 Commission found no operational link between Al Qaeda and Mr. Hussein, political cynicism soared. The United States has also paid for its mistakes—the abuse and torture of prisoners at Abu Ghraib and the suspension of the rights of "enemy combatants," like those at Guantánamo base in Cuba and elsewhere—even though most U.S. soldiers have served honorably. Now the public, weary of the war and its expense, wants closure.

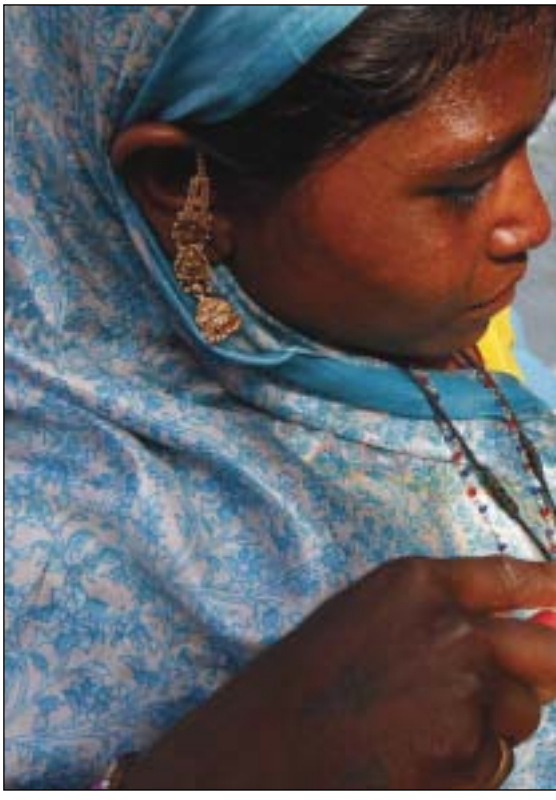
Lessons: The political hawks who urged the invasion of Iraq expected a quick, cheap victory. But they were wrong. After seven years of fighting and nearly $1 trillion spent, what might victory mean? Better to end this mission, as President Obama said on Aug. 2: "as promised, on schedule."

The exportation of U.S.-style democracy has turned out to be an irrational neocon fantasy, especially among peoples locked in ethnic rivalries, with no national identity, sense of minority rights or representative government.

The United States is ending a long, costly, unnecessary war. Two of its hard-won accomplishments—a weakened Al Qaeda and democratic structures in Iraq—are fragile and may be short-lived. What good the United States might have done, with virtually no loss of life and limb, had it dedicated the energy of its young people and trillions of dollars to fight disease, illiteracy or oil dependency!

PEACE-BUILDING

Global Initiative Builds New Priorities on Arms Reduction



A generation after the end of the cold war and a decade after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, the Global Priorities Initiative proposes to redirect resources saved by nuclear arms reductions toward international peace-building, connecting cuts in nuclear weaponry to the well-being of the world's children. The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace offered its "full support" for the initiative in a letter on July 15 to **America**'s editor in chief, Drew Christiansen, S.J., and the initiative has generated widespread support from Christian churches globally. In the letter the council's president, Cardinal Peter K. A. Turkson, commended the initiative's interest in reducing expenditures on nuclear armaments and channeling the savings to humanitarian aid.

In a parallel move on July 26, the Lutheran World Federation, in its 11th assembly, called upon its member churches "to co-sponsor and otherwise assist the Global Priorities Campaign." The campaign's international coordinator, Arnold Kohen, said: "This is a real breakthrough. It helps pave the way toward concrete success in the not-too-distant future."

A bipartisan U.S. Congressional measure (H.R. 278), the Global Security Priorities Resolution, intends to provide legislative support to the initiative here in the United States. The bill, introduced by Representative Jim McGovern, a Democrat, and Representative Dan Lungren, a Republican, now has 34 co-sponsors and is likely to be the subject of action in the U.S. House of Representatives before adjournment in October. Proponents hope that a similar measure will also be taken up by the U.S. Senate.

The resolution seeks an intermediate reduction in U.S. and Russian arsenals to 1,000 deployed nuclear warheads and a total of no more than 3,000 weapons on each side. The resolution predicts that those reductions will lead to savings of at least $13 billion annually and directs $3.5 billion of the savings toward increased nuclear security efforts and $2.5 billion per year toward the Millennium Development Goals of enhancing child survival, alleviating hunger and improving education around the world.

The resolution is supported by an array of experts, including retired Maj. Gen. William F. Burns, a consultant to the U.S. Catholic Bishops' Committee on International Justice and Peace. General Burns headed the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency under President Reagan and was a key negotiator on the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and other treaties, such as the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Agreement. In a letter to legislative supporters of the resolution, Burns called for sensible reductions in both the Russian and the U.S. arsenals. He said the resolution sets "clear benchmarks for the period ahead, both on nuclear and child survival questions."

He wrote that H.R. 278 "helps create a path for a redoubling of global efforts to address child hunger, health and education—critical components in the struggle against international terrorism and implicitly a potent weapon against nuclear proliferation."

The legislation is also supported by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. In a letter to Congress, Howard J. Hubbard, bishop of Albany and chairman of the U.S.C.C.B.'s Committee on International Justice and Peace, noted improvements in both global child welfare and international security that resource diversions from nuclear weapons could support. Bishop Hubbard wrote: "The Marshall Plan long ago demonstrated that greater political and economic security comes from addressing human needs and poverty. The Global Security Priorities Resolution provides the tools to enhance human security and reduce the threat of international terrorism."

In Uttar Pradesh, India, 18-month-old Urmila suffers from severe malnutrition. More than 40 percent of India's children are underweight.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Empty Seats And Rising Costs Take a Toll

Catholic dioceses and parishes around the country continue to report mounting problems keeping their schools afloat amid a lackluster economy, rising costs, increasing competition for students and financing arrangements that no longer work. Judging from a spate of news reports from older metropolitan areas of the country, where Catholic populations are concentrated, the problems of sustaining parochial schools are approaching the breaking point in many cities.

This past spring, in the Archdiocese of Baltimore, where the first Catholic schools were established in the United States, 10,000 school seats sat empty, while more than $10 million in tuition aid and operational support was paid out by the church there to keep its urban schools going. According to Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien in a letter to his diocese last March, Catholic schools owed the archdiocese some $11 million for unpaid insurance, pension contributions and payroll advances. In addition, Catholic schools in Baltimore have at least $20 million in deferred maintenance of school buildings. The archbishop has taken bold steps to consolidate 13 schools in the archdiocese and has adopted a more hands-on approach to design a vibrant school system for the future.

Meanwhile, archdioceses across the country report similar difficulties keeping their schools solvent. The Archdiocese of Boston, for example, continues to reconfigure and consolidate Catholic schools there. Facing continued school closings, the archdiocese is spending time and money on new curricula, renovated buildings and better teacher salaries. It is offering a new model of regional schools that will lead to fewer schools in the future. Other changes include new methods of governance, with stronger lay participation on boards, substantial improvements in academic and faith formation curricula, the integration of technology at all grade levels, better professional development and renewed facilities and infrastructure. The archdiocese has also introduced a new approach to the patchwork of parish taxes and fees to help equalize participation in archdiocesan ministries by its 291 parishes.

According to the National Catholic Educational Association, between 2000 and 2010, the number of students enrolled in Catholic schools nationwide declined by 533,697, or 20 percent. Despite that decline, scattered dioceses are beating national trends by taking a more enterprising approach to their Catholic schools. These diocesan systems are experimenting with new governance and financial models, turning over more responsibility to lay leaders and little by little changing the school culture toward a more socially enterprising one.

A kindergarten graduation ceremony at Christ the King School in Irondequoit, N.Y.

Yet for the moment, the majority of the 6,000 Catholic elementary schools across the nation are left to their own devices in the face of increased competition for students, aging facilities, uncompetitive teacher salaries and ad hoc financial operations that continue to come up short. While local initiative has been the hallmark of Catholic education in the past, the size of the problem facing Catholic schools right now

has set the principle of subsidiarity on its head.

What is needed is a fresh and inspiring discussion on the mission of the Catholic schools today, a deeper appreciation of their intimate connection to the well-being of the church itself and a fuller commitment to the apostolic role these institutions play in today's urban centers. Without a significant expansion of the pool of capital available for Catholic schools, an inspiring and realistic articulation of where Catholic schools need to be right now and a corresponding effort across the country to lead, measure and reward innovative change in Catholic schooling, it may well be that history will point to the present era as one of lost opportunity.

FRANCIS J. BUTLER *is president of Foundations and Donors interested in Catholic Activities.*

NEWS BRIEFS

Flooding in Pakistan

Catholic aid organizations are responding in Pakistan after the most intense monsoon rains in the past 30 years caused **landslides and floods** in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Kashmir. More than 1,500 people have perished. ✦ **Round-the-clock protests** continue at several Boston churches, despite a Vatican decision denying the appeals of nine parishes shuttered by the archdiocese in 2004. ✦ In a vote on July 21, the board of trustees of St. Margaret Mary Parish on Staten Island, N.Y., backed the pastor's decision to withdraw support for the **sale of the parish convent** to the Muslim American Society, which wanted to use it as a mosque. ✦ Fearing an outbreak of violence in his diocese, Archbishop **Hieronymus Herculanus Bumbun** of Pontianak, Indonesia, has called on the U.S. government to prevent the Dove World Outreach Center in Gainesville, Fla., from conducting an International Burn-a-Koran Day on Sept. 11 to commemorate victims of the 2001 terrorist attacks. ✦ The British scientist **Neil Scolding** received a grant of £25,000 from Catholic parishioners of the Clifton Diocese in England to continue his "ethical stem cell research" on the use of adult stem cells in the treatment of multiple sclerosis.

Traditionalist Anglicans Split on Next Move

A group of 15 traditionalist Anglican bishops, members of Forward in Faith, the largest Anglo-Catholic group in the Church of England, said that Anglo-Catholic clergy are sharply divided over how to respond to the ordination of women as bishops. They said members faced a range of options in response to the mid-July vote by the Anglican general synod to create women bishops by 2014. In a letter on July 31 to more than 1,300 Anglo-Catholic priests and deacons who had previously registered their opposition to women bishops, the bishops described themselves "united in our belief that the Church of England is mistaken in its actions." The bishops said it was inevitable that many traditionalists, including some bishops, would take up Pope Benedict XVI's offer of a personal ordinariate within the Catholic Church. The arrangement will allow Anglicans to be received into the Catholic Church as a group while retaining their distinctive patrimony and liturgical practices, including married priests.

Pope Praises Ban On Cluster Munitions

Pope Benedict XVI praised the 108 nations that have adopted a treaty banning the stockpiling and use of cluster bombs and encouraged other nations to follow suit "for the defense of human dignity and human life." Speaking on Aug. 1 at the papal summer villa in Castel Gandolfo, the day the Convention on Cluster Munitions went into effect, the pope said the weapons, which release hundreds of small "bomblets" over a wide area, "provoke unacceptable damage on civilians." The pope expressed his personal concern for "the numerous victims who have suffered and continue to suffer" serious damage "because of these insidious weapons." The pope said he hoped nations that did not adopt the treaty—including the United States, Russia and China—would nevertheless adhere to it and that the entire international community "would continue on this path with increasing energy…to establish a peaceful international order and to achieve the common good of all persons and all peoples."

From CNS and other sources.

JOHN J. DiIULIO JR.

America's Hungry Children

Pope Benedict XVI called hunger "the most cruel and concrete sign of poverty" and promised that the church will always strive "to defeat hunger" in his address in November 2009 to the United Nations-sponsored Summit on Food Security. The church is practicing what the pope preached about feeding the hungry. Catholic international hunger relief missions save lives all around the globe. And what Catholic nonprofit organizations are doing to alleviate hunger in the United States is equally impressive and, sadly, no less needed.

This summer, for instance, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, led by its Nutritional Development Services, will provide over a million meals to Philadelphia's most disadvantaged children. During the coming academic year, it will supply over nine million more meals to poor children.

The organization receives most of its bare-bones funding from government and so must cope with rules, regulations and red tape. Yet the remarkable women who lead N.D.S., the agency's other staff and volunteers and the Catholics who work for kindred programs in other cities somehow manage year in and year out to help feed hungry children with Christ-like care and compassion.

That is the good news. The bad news, however, is that despite the church's antihunger efforts, despite similar efforts by many other major religious bodies and despite the federal government's decades-old food assistance programs—the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as Food Stamps, and the National School Breakfast and National School Lunch programs—the United States is losing ground in the war against domestic hunger.

In the latest U.S. Department of Agriculture household food security survey, it is reported that 49.1 million Americans in 2008 were without enough to eat at some point in the previous year, up from 35.5 million in 2006.

> Too many poor children 'eat a meal seasoned with shame.'

Worse, severe and recurrent food deprivation, or what the U.S.D.A. terms "food insecurity with hunger," has been growing at an alarming rate among the young. Between 2006 and 2008 the number of children in that category more than doubled from about 430,000 to 1,077,000. That's over a million children who, in U.S.D.A.-speak, were "subject to reduced food intake and disrupted eating patterns" because their "household lacked money and other resources for food."

Some doubt that there is real human hardship behind the U.S.D.A.'s hard data on mass hunger among America's children. They would do well to read a new book by Janet Poppendieck, *Free for All: Fixing School Food in America* (Univ. of California Press, 2010).

Poppendieck, a sociologist at Hunter College, notes that while the federal government tries to avoid the term *hunger*, just talk "to any school cafeteria manager in a low-income neighborhood about the rush of children for breakfast on Monday mornings after a long weekend," and he or she "will convince you that hunger by any other name hurts just as much."

Poppendieck says that too many poor children "eat a meal seasoned with shame"; and in school cafeterias and stores flanked by vending machines, too many kids favor junk food fare that politically powerful corporations peddle alongside the federal programs' nutritionally regulated meals.

"It is time," Poppendieck counsels, "to eliminate the means test" and "to move to universal free school meals." This would also "benefit middle-income children for whom healthy meals would become the norm."

Amen. In the early 1990s, the U.S.D.A. experimented with universal free school meals in Philadelphia's schools. The U.S. General Accounting Office analyzed the results: participation increased dramatically and, with streamlined administration, money was actually saved.

Poppendieck estimates that it would cost an additional $12 billion a year to implement universal free school meals. Even if it cost double that amount, including additional funding for summer meal programs, it would be a wise and worthy public investment. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops should champion Poppendieck's proposal, and we all should pray that a million hungry children get their daily bread.

JOHN J. DiIULIO JR. *is the author of* Godly Republic: A Centrist Blueprint for America's Faith-Based Future *(Univ. of California Press, 2007).*

A woman is comforted near the body of a dead man in Ciudad Juárez on April 8, 2010. Five young men between 18 and 25 years of age were shot. Two died at the crime scene, police said.

PHOTO: REUTERS / ALEJANDRO BRINGAS

The United States and the Drug War in Mexico

Crossing The Line

BY ANDREW SELEE

It is hard to overlook the deadly storm of violence that has recently engulfed several cities and states in Mexico. According to Mexican government estimates, more than 22,000 people have died in drug-related violence since December 2006. In many cases the killings are particularly gruesome, with severed heads thrown into nightclubs or displayed on stakes in public places as a warning to rival drug gangs. Equally alarming is the rising toll of journalists killed by organized crime in order to silence the press and civic leaders who have sought to document the raging war among different crime groups with the complicity of some local authorities.

The violence is not universal. Mexico registers fewer than half as many homicides per capita as Brazil and a third as many as El Salvador. While Mexico's murder rate is twice that of the United States today, it is very similar to what the U.S. rate was just 15 years ago. Mexico is hardly coming apart at the seams, even if news reports often suggest as much.

But while most parts of Mexico remain at peace, several cities and towns are living through an inferno of drug-related killings. No place has been harder hit than Ciudad Juárez, which saw more than 2,000 drug-related homicides last year and more than 1,000 so far this year, including the brutal massacre of 15 teenagers in January and three people tied to the U.S. consulate in March.

Ciudad Juárez, across the border from El Paso, Tex., is a crucial point for shipment of narcotics, one of several such cities being contested by rival trafficking organizations. Reynosa, near MacAllen, Tex., and Tijuana, across from San Diego, Calif., have also become hotspots. So too have several seaports, like Acapulco, and areas in Mexico's interior

ANDREW SELEE *is director of the Mexico Institute of the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington, D.C.*

along major highways now used in the movement of narcotics from the south to the north. Perhaps equally worrying are the many places with limited violence, where a growing number of signs indicate that organized crime is operating, slowly making its presence felt through pressure on public authorities and citizens alike.

A Circular Trade

A recent Associated Press report noted that the four safest cities in the United States are El Paso, Austin, Phoenix and San Diego. Two of them, El Paso and San Diego, lie right across from the two most dangerous cities in Mexico, Ciudad Juárez and Tijuana, while the other two are closely linked to Mexico by important highways. The apparent calm on the U.S. side of the border belies the degree to which illegal drugs are actually a very binational and highly circular trade.

Since the late 1990s, Mexico has become the center of the Western hemisphere's illegal narcotics trade. Mexican drug trafficking organizations control most of the region's cocaine and heroin trade and much of the methamphetamine and marijuana trade as well. The rise of Mexican drug trafficking appears to be linked to the atomization of the major drug cartels in Colombia and the increasing U.S. efforts to block Caribbean narcotics transshipment routes. The rise of competitive democracy in Mexico toward the end of the 1990s (for decades the government had been controlled by one party) has also, paradoxically, favored drug traffickers, who have learned to co-opt local government authorities in some areas of the country to do their bidding.

But while Mexico has become the region's major transshipment point for illegal narcotics, the United States remains the major market for them. There are no trustworthy estimates of the value of this trade, but the U.S. government claims that at least $19 billion to $39 billion of profits flow south from U.S. consumers to Mexican and Colombian drug trafficking organizations each year. Much of the money is moved as bulk cash, with smaller amounts laundered through the financial system or invested in the purchase of high caliber weapons used in the violence. While there is much less

A Christian in Violent Times

"I received a phone call at about 4:30 in the afternoon, as I was getting ready to go visit a few people at the hospital," the bishop told a group of priests, lay leaders and deacons he had invited to a sunlit room in his house in Mexico for a last-minute meeting. They had come to hear about an unusual experience of their bishop—negotiating the surrender of a local drug trafficker.

The phone call came from a woman who knew the bishop through a parish prayer group he used to facilitate. Her husband was a drug trafficker and was, at the moment she called for help, holding the woman and their two children hostage as he hunkered down in their house and prepared firearms to "defend" himself from the authorities who were coming to get him. After the woman's distress call, the bishop called the authorities to let them know he was on his way to the house. He asked them to allow him to usher the wife and children to a safe place before they intervened. When he arrived, the bishop talked the man into surrendering to the police.

At the meeting, the bishop asked the clergy and lay leaders together to begin a diocesan-wide process to address the increasing violence in their area, much of it due to drugs but much of it also related to human trafficking, migration and poverty. The meeting took place in late June four years ago, but for security reasons the bishop and his diocese must still remain anonymous.

Since then, not only have the bishops of Mexico gathered to address the issue of drugs and the violence in their country, but many, like the bishop described here, have personally experienced some aspect of the circle of violence that illegal drug trafficking has brought. As a result, new ways of being Christian are arising in the Mexican church.

Parish youth programs in Tijuana and in Aguascalientes, for example, educate children about the problem of gang violence and drug addiction. Some programs in Puebla and Saltillo also address human trafficking. In the Archdioceses of Guadalajara and Hermosillo and the Diocese of Ciudad Juárez, therapy and support groups care for the victims of violence—both adults and children. Some of these groups acquire a missionary spirit and go on to organize neighborhood watch groups to prevent violence. All of these new programs demand a different kind of Christian faithful, ready to address the new, more challenging circumstances.

REV. JUAN MOLINA, *a priest of the Order of the Most Holy Trinity, is the policy advisor for Latin America and global trade in the Office of International Justice and Peace of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington, D.C.*

violence on the U.S. side of the border, the two countries are deeply linked by the trade in drugs and weapons.

In recent years the two governments have become much more adept at squeezing the trafficking organizations, making it harder for them to cross the border and move illicit goods through Mexico, but these very efforts may well have ignited the violence. As it has become harder to move narcotics through Mexico and into the United States, traffickers have begun to fight with one another over the increasingly valuable transshipment routes and access points along the U.S.-Mexico border.

Shared Responsibility

Over the past three years, the U.S. and Mexican governments have engaged in an ambitious partnership to limit the reach of organized crime groups that move illegal narcotics from Mexico to the United States. Part of this effort has been the Merida Initiative, a $1.3 billion U.S. aid package to Mexico to provide equipment and training for law enforcement agencies, courts and the military to combat drug traffickers and strengthen the rule of law.

A more important factor, however, has been the recognition in each country that it cannot face the challenge presented by organized crime groups without cooperation from the other side of the border. Government officials in each country increasingly talk about "shared responsibility" in dealing with organized crime, a term invoked by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on a trip to Mexico in 2009 and reinforced by President Obama on his two trips to Mexico that year.

One tangible impact of the cooperation has been greater intelligence-sharing between the two countries, which has enabled the Mexican government to capture a few leaders of organized crime groups. Renewed efforts to arrest some of the traffickers who operate on U.S. soil have focused on members of the violent Barrio Azteca gang, an El Paso-based group that does much of the contract killing for the dominant cartel in Ciudad Juárez. Efforts to disrupt the finances and weapons flows that feed the trafficking organizations remain in their early stages and need to be significantly increased if they are to be meaningful.

Strengthening Institutions

The difference in murder rates on the two sides of the border points to an important underlying truth about the ability of the two countries to deal with organized crime. While the trafficking organizations operate equally on both sides, they are careful not to call attention to themselves in the United States because they fear arrest. In Mexico, by contrast, arrest is less common, and only 2 percent of major crimes result in a conviction with jail time, according to a study by the Mexican criminologist Guillermo Zepeda.

That figure may be changing. Mexico's Congress passed a

major constitutional reform of the court system in 2008 that will require a transition to oral trials (from the current system, which involves mostly written arguments), guarantee the presumption of innocence, limit the use of (often forced) confessions and ensure more transparent judicial record-keeping. Even prior to that change, judicial reforms at the state level were already underway in several states, but progress at the national level has been quite slow.

There have been substantial advances in the professionalization of the Mexican police over the past few years. This is perhaps most noticeable in the federal police, which has been built up practically from scratch in the past three years to become a force of 33,000 members that includes more than 5,000 criminal investigators. The federal police increasingly work with state and municipal governments to train local law enforcement as well.

Mexico's government has also created a new national crime database known as Platform Mexico (Plataforma México), which includes up-to-date records of crimes committed throughout the country, along with key crime data like license plate numbers and fingerprints, that allow police to link crimes across jurisdictions. The database is designed to keep records of the fingerprints DNA and voice recordings of all of the country's police officers. This should make it increasingly difficult for law enforcement personnel who leave the service to become involved in criminal activity, which happened frequently in the past. Still, progress on all these fronts is slow.

ON THE WEB
From the archives, Tim Padgett on Mexico and immigration reform.
americamagazine.org/pages

With billions of dollars in their pockets, traffickers can subvert justice by simply buying off police officers and judges. And with their increasing willingness to corrupt politicians and silence journalists and civic leaders, it is hard to see who will champion these reforms in the parts of the country that most need them.

Perhaps the greatest investment the Mexican government could make is to protect the leading advocates for change while making an example of the most egregiously corrupt politicians. But such efforts have lagged so far.

Rethinking U.S. Policy

While Mexico could do much to strengthen its institutions against the threat posed by drug trafficking organizations, the threat will continue as long as there is high demand for illegal narcotics in the United States. Although cocaine use may be dropping, progress has been slow, and methamphetamines and other synthetic drugs command a high price from U.S. consumers.

For the first time in many years in the United States, there appears to be a serious debate on drug policy. The Obama administration is taking the first cautious steps toward investing in the prevention and treatment of addictions, reorienting U.S. drug policy slightly toward lowering the demand for illegal narcotics. Even a slight drop in U.S. consumption rates would undermine the profits of drug trafficking organizations more significantly than any amount of interdiction.

In some U.S. states a healthy debate is underway about whether marijuana should even be considered an illegal drug. Some argue that legalizing marijuana might allow for concentrated attention on narcotics like cocaine, heroin and methamphetamines, which pose far greater risk to society, while taking profits out of the hands of drug traffickers.

Yet no single policy shift could do more to reorient priorities at the U.S.-Mexico border than comprehensive immigration reform. Today the United States spends most of its resources for border control on apprehending immigrants seeking to come into the United States to find work. Creating legal channels for people from Mexico and Central America would allow the U.S. government to work more concertedly with Mexico to secure the border against the serious threats that drug traffickers pose and to reinforce efforts to help Mexico develop its own law enforcement and judicial capabilities. A

Thomas Kinkade's Narrative Santa Figurine with Nativity and Illumination

The True Meaning of Christmas

Listen! As Thomas Kinkade Narrates The Greatest Story Ever Told

Tree, painting and fireplace illuminate!

THOMAS KINKADE
Painter of Light™

Shown smaller than actual size of about 10½" inches high x 10" long x 9" wide (26.7 x 25.4 x 22.9 cm). Requires 3 "AA" batteries, not included.

The True Meaning of Christmas

The *Painter of Light*™ invites you to celebrate the miracles of the season and beloved holiday traditions with the all-new *Thomas Kinkade's The True Meaning of Christmas Narrative Santa Figurine*, available only from The Bradford Exchange.

- Hand-crafted in artist's resin and hand-painted
- Features a lifelike Santa carving a Nativity inspired by the art of Thomas Kinkade
- Simply push the button to hear the voice of Thomas Kinkade narrate the Christmas Story
- The tree and a faithful recreation of Thomas Kinkade's acclaimed painting "Victorian Christmas II" illuminate with the simple flip of a switch

Exceptional value; satisfaction guaranteed

Act now to acquire *Thomas Kinkade's The True Meaning of Christmas* at the $99.99* issue price, payable in three installments of $33.33 each. Your purchase is backed by an unconditional 365-day guarantee. There is no risk to order! Send no money now.

www.bradfordexchange.com/talkingsanta

Fireplace lights up behind Santa carving a Nativity inspired by the artwork of Thomas Kinkade

01-09333-001-BI

RESERVATION APPLICATION **SEND NO MONEY NOW**

THE BRADFORD EXCHANGE
HOLIDAYS

9345 Milwaukee Avenue · Niles, IL 60714-1393

YES. Please reserve *Thomas Kinkade's The True Meaning of Christmas* Narrative Santa Figurine for me as described in this announcement.
Limit: one per order. Please Respond Promptly

Signature _____

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

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

01-09333-001-E39411

*Plus $14.99 shipping and service. Limited-edition presentation restricted to 120 crafting days. Please allow 4-8 weeks after initial payment for shipment. Sales subject to product availability and order acceptance.

A Biomedical Revolution

The pro-life promise of a new stem cell technology

BY W. MALCOLM BYRNES

In 2006, Shinya Yamanaka of Kyoto University made a startling discovery. He found that when he introduced the genes for a set of four proteins into mouse skin cells, the cells became reprogrammed into ones that closely resembled embryonic stem cells. One year later, Dr. Yamanaka showed that the same four factors also worked to reprogram human skin cells. Known as induced pluripotent stem cells, these new cells have revolutionized the field of stem cell biology.

Indeed, in early 2010, the journal Nature Methods dubbed the process by which induced pluripotent stem cells are produced its "method of the year," citing the promise the cells hold for regenerative medicine and drug discovery and development. Recognizing their biomedical potential, many research laboratories have jumped on the "induced pluripotent stem cell" bandwagon. But induced pluripotent stem cells offer more than just a biomedical breakthrough. As a substitute for embryonic stem cells, they neatly sidestep ethical dilemmas that have threatened to hold back this important area of research. Because of these ethical advantages, not only scientists but also leaders of the Catholic Church have embraced the possibilities they offer. Thus, both sides of a historically contentious stem cell debate appear to be on board with the new pluripotent stem cell technology.

Unfortunately one residual ethical problem remains: Induced pluripotent stem cells still have to be tested and validated using embryonic stem cells, at least in these early stages of their experimental development. During this critical juncture, constructive dialogue between the two sides of the debate is vital to ensure a quick and ethical transition to a new era in which embryonic stem cells are no longer needed for research.

The Ethical Advantage

There are at least three strong ethical advantages to pursuing induced pluripotent stem cell technology. First and foremost, the production of such stem cells does not involve the destruction of human embryos. Rather, the reprogramming process by which induced pluripotent stem cells are made involves the conversion of a somatic (body) cell—that is, a cell that has already developed into a specific part of the body, like a skin cell—back into a malleable stem cell that can grow into any part of the body. This is in contrast to the situation involving the isolation of embryonic stem cells, which are extracted from the inner cell mass of embryos produced through in vitro fertilization in a process that inevitably destroys the embryos.

That leads to a second ethical advantage of induced pluripotent stem cells. Since in vitro fertilization is not involved, women's eggs are not used, and all the ethical issues associated with the production and use of eggs for stem cell research, as well as with in vitro fertilization itself, are avoided. A third advantage relates to so-called therapeutic cloning, the transfer of the nucleus of a somatic cell into an egg from which the nucleus has been removed. The original rationale for therapeutic cloning was that it made possible the production of stem cells that are genetically (and immunologically) matched to the person who contributed the somatic cell nucleus. Such matching was not possible with embryonic stem cells because they came from a different individual—the embryo that contained them. But induced pluripotent stem cells are already matched because they come from the patients themselves—for instance, from skin cells obtained through biopsy. This renders therapeutic cloning unnecessary.

The use of induced pluripotent stem cells thus dodges the ethical dilemmas associated with embryonic stem cells. Embryos are not destroyed; in vitro fertilization is not required; and therapeutic cloning no longer offers any apparent advantage.

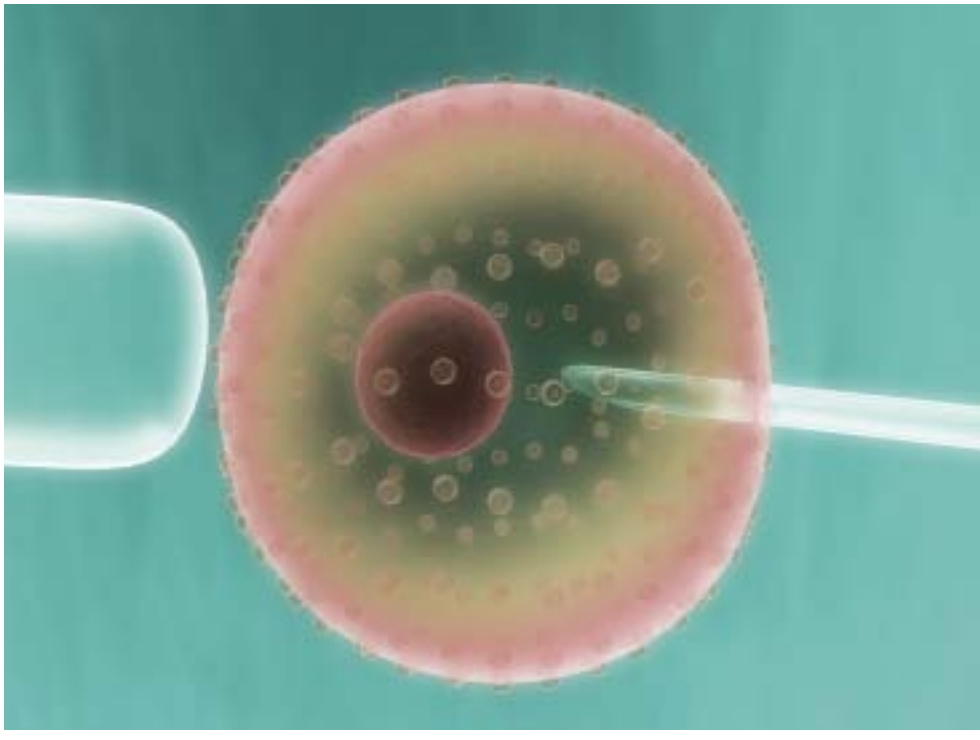
The Medical Promise

What is it that makes embryonic stem cells and the induced pluripotent stem cells that resemble them so compelling as tools in biomedical research? Unlike the cells of the adult body, embryonic stem cells and induced pluripotent stem cells have the ability both to continue to grow indefinitely in culture (self-renewal) and, when given the right signals, to morph into any of the cell types of the body (pluripotency). That means that embryonic stem cells or induced pluripotent stem cells grown in culture can be stimulated to change

W. MALCOLM BYRNES *is an associate professor at Howard University College of Medicine in Washington, D.C.*

into specialized cell types outside the body, amplified in culture and then transplanted back to treat, for instance, spinal cord injury, Alzheimer's disease or juvenile diabetes.

Any pluripotent cell, regardless of type, has this potential to be used in cell transplantation therapy. Like their embryonic counterparts, induced pluripotent stem cells have been shown to be capable of differentiating into a variety of cell types. Having an abundant supply of cells of various types (liver, kidney, heart) from different genetic backgrounds not only makes cell transplantation therapy possible, but it also facilitates the screening and development of new drugs. Moreover, unlike embryonic stem cells, induced pluripotent stem cells also can be used for "disease in a dish" studies—that is, they can be used in the laboratory to study disease progression. In these studies, the induced pluripotent stem cells originate from body cells of a patient who suffers from a particular disease. Several diseases—Lou Gehrig's, Parkinson's, spinal muscular atrophy, thalassemia and familial dysautonomia—already have been studied in this way.



Much of what we know about induced pluripotent stem cells has come from parallel studies done using mice. One of the most stringent tests for pluripotency involves the generation of mice through a process known as tetraploid complementation. Here, the fetus that is generated is derived entirely from the induced pluripotent stem cells. If the resulting mouse is viable and fertile, this demonstrates that the cells from which the mouse was formed were fully pluripotent. Recently, induced pluripotent stem cells from mice were shown to pass this most stringent test, indicating that induced pluripotent stem cells are equivalent to embryonic stem cells, at least in the mouse.

But tetraploid complementation cannot be done in humans since the individual produced would be a human clone, an ethical nonstarter. In its place, in human research, pluripotency can be tested by making detailed molecular comparisons that probe the functional equivalency between the induced pluripotent stem cells and their embryonic counterparts. It is this use of embryonic stem cells in such comparisons, of course, that accounts for the residual ethical problems that must be faced in the use of induced pluripotent stem cells.

Such final comparisons, however, are critical to biomedical progress. So far they have revealed that the induced pluripotent stem cells currently available are not exactly the same as embryonic stem cells, a result that, though disappointing, is not unexpected. Indeed, how likely is it that Dr. Yamanaka would have hit on exactly the right cocktail of reprogramming factors from the start? One would expect that some refinement of the original procedure would be necessary. Through intense and focused work, researchers now are gaining clues as to what those refinements will be. Fortunately there may be a way out of the ethical trap such laboratory comparisons appear to represent.

An Ethical Vaccination

In its instruction "Dignitas Personae" ("The Dignity of a Person"), issued in December 2008, the Vatican weighed in on a number of bioethical issues: in vitro fertilization, preimplantation genetic diagnosis, gene therapy, cloning and stem cells, among others. One issue it did not speak to was induced pluripotent stem cell technology. Despite this silence, "Dignitas Personae" does contain a framework for an ethical solution to the use of embryonic stem cells to validate induced pluripotent stem cells. In the section titled "The Use of Human 'Biological Material' of Illicit Origin," which is concerned with the use of vaccines derived from cell lines obtained from past abortions, the Vatican document says that "danger to the health of children could permit parents to use a vaccine which was developed using cell lines of illicit origin, while keeping in mind that everyone has the duty to make known their disagreement and to ask that their health care system make other types of vaccines available."

Applying this same logic, it may be ethically acceptable

ART: SHUTTERSTOCK/SEBASTIAN KAULITZKI

for someone to benefit from therapies or treatments derived from induced pluripotent stem cell lines that were validated by comparison with embryonic stem cells as long as that person makes known his disapproval of embryonic stem cell research. The person in this case would not be morally complicit in the original act of destroying the human embryo from which the embryonic stem cell line was obtained. A key component of this rationale, however, is the assumption that there is no continuing program of embryo destruction.

It is an unfortunate fact that if induced pluripotent stem cell technology succeeds, it will have done so in part at the expense of human embryos. There are as many as 700 human embryonic stem cell lines in existence worldwide. Each of these lines is associated with the death of a human embryo, a human individual. James Thomson, the University of Wisconsin biologist who not only helped pioneer the creation of induced pluripotent stem cells but also in 1998 was the first researcher to isolate embryonic stem cells from human embryos, has said that "if human embryonic stem cell research does not make you at least a little bit uncomfortable, you have not thought about it enough." We should be uncomfortable, and we should do everything in our power to minimize human embryo destruction.

ON THE WEB
A conversation with W. Malcolm Byrnes.
americamagazine.org/podcast

Building Constructive Dialogue

Historically, the embryonic stem cell debate has been cast in terms of a conflict between pro-life advocates on one side and scientists and medical researchers on the other. With the advent of induced pluripotent stem cell technology, however, the debate has entered a new phase. Both sides now want this technology to succeed. Most pro-life advocates see induced pluripotent stem cell technology as an ethically acceptable alternative, and they want to encourage it. Medical researchers also want the technology to succeed because induced pluripotent stem cells not only are free of the ethical baggage of embryonic stem cells, they are also much easier to generate in the laboratory. This shared desire for success offers an unprecedented opportunity for constructive dialogue.

For that dialogue to succeed, concessions must be made on both sides. Scientists will need to assess whether additional embryonic stem cell lines are actually needed for the induced pluripotent stem cell validation and improvement process or whether the hundreds of lines now available are sufficient (as I would argue). As they go about answering this question, they should bear in mind that for many people each human embryo is a unique individual. By accommodating that viewpoint, scientists will begin to gain the respect of those who value embryonic human life. Showing this kind of good will toward the other side is important for making progress in the debate.

For their part, pro-life advocates will have to face the possibility that additional testing using embryonic stem cells may be necessary at this point in order to perfect the cellular reprogramming procedure at the heart of induced pluripotent stem cell research. But the disappointment this requirement brings is attenuated by the fact that embryonic stem cells from lines already derived can be used. Finally, Catholic leaders, in their desire to promote this ethical, more favorable stem cell technology, sometimes have made statements that are inaccurate—implying, for instance, that induced pluripotent stem cells are a type of adult stem cell. While induced pluripotent stem cells are *derived* from adult cells, it is not accurate to say that they are a *type* of adult stem cell. Unfortunately, misleading statements of this nature confuse a person not trained in the relevant sciences and undermine meaningful dialogue with scientists. Our leaders may want to be more careful in this regard.

Research by means of induced pluripotent stem cell technology already is transforming the medical and bioethical landscape. It holds great promise in the areas of regenerative medicine, the study of disease progression and the development and testing of drugs. The key to a rapid and successful transition to a new era in which embryonic stem cells are no longer needed will be clear-headed and honest dialogue among all participants in this previously intractable debate. A

MUSIC | ANTHONY R. DELDONNA

THE MUSIC OF NAPOLI

In search of a lost Jesuit oratorio

I looked out on the city of Naples from the steps of the Church of San Antonio a Posillipo, where my parents were wed and I was christened, and contemplated a likely dead-end in my current research project. It was spring 2008, and I had returned to Naples, as I did every year, to work. A historical musicologist, I specialize in the music, musicians and artistic culture of Naples.

This time I was researching the history of the Society of Jesus in Naples and its use of music in the 18th century. The Jesuits have had a long tradition of cultivating the arts, but I had a few basic questions: Had any music-making occurred in Jesuit institutions in Naples, and did any of this music survive? More important, what was the purpose of the surviving music, and what might it tell me about the Jesuits and their fostering of the arts? As my gaze lingered on the city, my mind replayed events of the past year, the clues and surprises, though at one point the whole effort had seemed in jeopardy.

Nicola Ceva and the Collegio

My interest in Jesuit patronage of the arts in Naples started in 2007, when a colleague, Anna Celenza (chair of the department of performing arts at Georgetown University), and I organized a conference on Jesuits and music to be held the following summer. I hoped to speak on how the Society of Jesus, ever since its arrival in Naples in 1552, had developed a connection to the city's renowned musical culture. So I read the Gazzetta di Napoli, the official periodical of the Kingdom of Naples at the time, a treasure-trove of names, places and cultural events. Accounts there revealed that the Jesuits were patrons of music, theater and even dance in their local schools. The Collegio dei Nobili, a Jesuit boarding school so named because of the number of children from noble families educated there, had special status. Its students organized and performed musical works to

PHOTO: JACQUELINE GREFF, TONAL VISION

Georgetown University performed the long-lost "Trionfo per l'Assunzione della Santissima Vergine" on Dec. 3, 2009. The event marked the first full performance of the oratorio since its debut in Naples in 1705.

celebrate days of religious importance or to coincide with the conclusion of the academic year. By the mid-18th century, the Collegio dei Nobili had even constructed a school theater.

In the early part of the 18th century, the name of Nicola Ceva appeared often in connection with works performed at the Collegio, and I was cautiously optimistic that more information about him could be found. Ceva was a native of Naples, trained in one of its famed musical conservatories, who became a priest (most likely not a Jesuit) as well as a highly skilled musician. According to the Gazzetta, Ceva was the maestro di cappella of the local music school, the Conservatorio dei Poveri di Gesù Cristo, a position of considerable prestige in Naples at the time. Given this status in musical circles, Ceva's association with the Jesuit Collegio dei Nobili is proof that the Society had attracted the best musicians in Naples, a city of entertainment. But had any music by Ceva survived? The answers could come from only one institution: the Library of the Conservatory of Naples, San Pietro a Majella.

Located in a former monastery, the library was established in the 19th century as the official repository for the musical patrimony of Naples. Its two floors are lined from floor to ceiling with thousands of precious manuscripts. Though I spent weeks sleuthing around, nothing turned up until a chance conversation with a friend and longtime assistant at the conservatory, Dr. Antonio Caroccia. He mentioned that many uncatalogued manuscripts had been taken out of storage, and he was certain they were sacred works. As I walked upstairs, my hopes soared.

I was not disappointed. After several hours of work, I recovered a previously unknown oratorio by Ceva, entitled "Trionfo per l'Assunzione della Santissima Vergine."

"Trionfo" was composed in 1705 to celebrate the feast of the Assumption (Aug. 15), which marks the ascension of the Virgin Mary into heaven. "Trionfo" moved me with the humanity of its poetry, presented not in Latin, the language of the liturgy, but in the vernacular Italian, which was then preferred for opera.

Mary, the Mother of God, is presented speaking in the first person as she awaits her death, contemplates the afterlife and interacts with three allegorical characters: Gloria (soprano), Amor divino (alto) and Zelo (tenor).

In the Light

Maybe just-born babies cry because tiny eyes hurt in the light.
Previewers say, in the end, we walk a tunnel toward the light.

Trees arch over our city street, dark and hooded.
We cannot see sidewalk cracks. Beware of headlights.

No God stops by in Bergman films, even for a visit.
Stark eyes appear and landscapes, shades of barren light.

I paint rooms in earthtones: caramel, mahogany, coffee.
You zip open blinds, complain, "We need more light!"

You are Yang, I am Ying; or are we a combo, Yingly&Yangly?
A routine, a duo, a slapstick couple tap dancing in cold moonlight.

In a cornstalk maze, we can lose ourselves without a view.
Like old faces puzzling reflections in nursing home window light.

Spaghetti strings overflow gutters, weave shrubs and tree trunks.
So wild and gaudy, who put up those hyperactive holiday lights?

Ladies in the church draped lost rosaries on St. Anthony's fingers.
Without paying a penny, a friend and I set on fire every vigil light.

Let's not do the pale of suffering. And no blazing pyres, please.
Lighten up, little one, you will find your way in the given light.

ANNE M. BRUNER

ANNE M. BRUNER, *a professional writer and former high school English teacher, has written the life stories of numerous hospice patients and been active in poetry-and-spirituality workshops. This poem was the second runner-up in this year's Foley Poetry Contest.*

Individually, and as an ensemble, the four "personages" sing of life, death and the Assumption in utterly human terms: happiness and fear, uncertainty and resolve, understanding and acceptance. Throughout the oratorio there are also subtle references to the Bible. For example, in her first aria Gloria sings, "And with great quantities/ of pure silver/ let the moon form a throne/ to her foot," imparting a subtle catechism lesson to the audience.

The music was equally fascinating, ranging from arias requiring only a moderate level of singing skill to pieces in the highly florid style of contemporary opera. The roles of Maria, Amor and Gloria were probably performed by students in the Collegio dei Nobili, the practice of the time. The role of Zelo, however, is a musical tour-de-force and requires an expertise and vocal dexterity that suggests that a professional singer played the role. Throughout "Trionfo" is highly lyrical music for the accompanying chamber ensemble and brief preludes and postludes that frame the individual pieces. "Trionfo" is a compelling piece of sacred theater that undoubtedly served the Jesuit mission in Naples to educate, enlighten and serve the "greater glory of God."

The Oratorio Revived

"Trionfo" sent my mind racing in new directions. Returning home, I decided to transcribe the score and translate the Italian for a performance at Georgetown. My plan was to recreate the context that spurred the composition of "Trionfo," in particular students and faculty in a Jesuit school working together to present this music. The best way to do so seemed to be within the context of an academic course on Baroque music and culture, whose final project would be the presentation of "Trionfo." Eight students (seven vocalists and a keyboardist) were selected, and I recruited colleagues to help teach the oratorio. We met twice a week (sometimes on weekends, too) and devoted ourselves to studying the 18th century and to rehearsals of "Trionfo."

The first performance was scheduled for Dec. 3, 2009, not the Assumption but close to the date of another Marian feast, the Immaculate Conception. Each week the students grew more confident as they integrated their academic work with the practical study of "Trionfo." As the day neared, we shared a measured excitement.

The concert was held at the Jesuit residence on campus, Wolfington Hall, which was filled to capacity. For the performance, an ensemble of professional musicians had been enlisted to accompany the students.

The students were exceptionally

ON THE WEB
Jake Martin, S.J., reviews the newly remastered "Breathless."
americamagazine.org/culture

well prepared, ready to sing at their very best. More impressive, perhaps, they understood the significance of our recovery of the Ceva oratorio. For the first time since 1705, the voices of Maria, Zelo, Gloria and Amor divino from "Trionfo" were again heard at a Jesuit institution, this time on the banks of the Potomac. At the end, the students received a standing ovation.

What made the project a success was not simply the recovery and performance of the Ceva oratorio. Rather it was the convening of students, faculty and the community at large within a modern-day Jesuit "Collegio" so that we could all better understand the roles and traditions of the Society as it links past to present and looks toward the future.

ANTHONY R. DELDONNA *is assistant professor of musicology at Georgetown University in Washington. He is co-editor of* The Cambridge Companion to Eighteenth-Century Opera *(Cambridge, 2009) and co-editor (with Anna Celenza) of the forthcoming book,* In Pursuit of a Cultural Mission: The Jesuits and Musical Communities.

BOOKS | THOMAS MASSARO

A MORAL FRAMEWORK

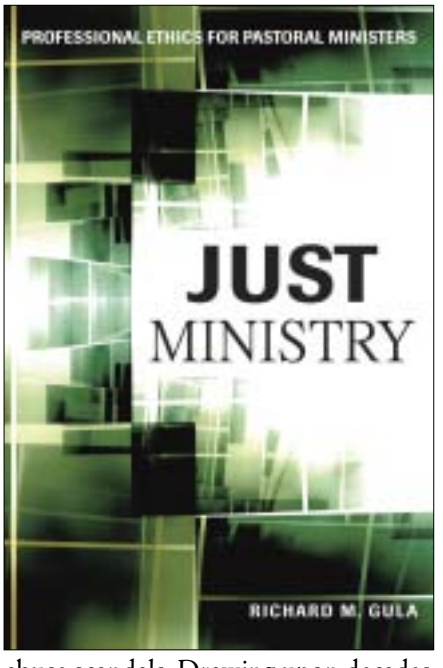
JUST MINISTRY
Professional Ethics For Pastoral Ministers

By Richard M. Gula
Paulist Press. 271p $19.95 (paperback)

It happens in all corners of human life. A practice or endeavor starts up, gains momentum and evolves into an unquestioned feature of the social landscape. This familiar process of routinization displays certain advantages. It allows society to turn its attention to more pressing business, under the assumption that if settled institutions are not broken, they require no fixing. The problem is that self-regulation is rarely sustainable. Taking anything for granted for too long invites corruption and corrosion. When the inevitable crisis arises, it is time for hard thinking and quick action.

Christian ministry provides a particularly poignant case study in this life cycle of social institutions. Even in contexts where ministers appear to deserve unquestioned trust, scandal is just one betrayal away. When abuses involving sex, money and power grow to systemic proportions, thoroughgoing reforms emerge as the only remedy to set things right.

The latest book by Richard Gula, S.S., proposes just the type of reforms we need in the wake of the clergy sex



abuse scandals. Drawing upon decades of experience teaching ethics at the Franciscan School of Theology of the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, Calif., Gula addresses sensitive issues of equal relevance for both ordained and lay ecclesial ministry.

The advice offered is anything but a generic call for better behavior and more consistent attention to moral responsibilities in ministry. Gula makes a strong case for a specific program of improvement, one revolving around the adoption of expanded standardized and explicit codes of ethics for ministers, both clerics and laity.

The key term in this regard is the professionalization of ministry. Any proposal to accomplish this goal meets with predictable opposition on the grounds that qualitative differences exist between ministry and the usual endeavors identified as professions, such as law and medicine. Gula readily acknowledges the distinctive nature of ministry as rooted in a holistic, vocational response to God's initiative and displaying spiritual, indeed transcendent dimensions. He argues that despite such inevitable tensions, resisting such features of professional life as institutionalized codes of conduct will only retard the trust upon which responsible ministry depends.

If ministers are to assume a fully professional identity, changes will have to unfold on two levels. The more obvious is the package of external reforms, including structures to ensure ministerial accountability and uniform standards to protect values such as confidentiality in ministerial relationships. Gula suggests a range of practices, such as peer review and uniform disciplinary procedures and sanctions for controlling deviant behavior. It should be possible to build on existing platforms like the competency-based model of the "National Certification Standards for Lay Ecclesial Ministry." Dioceses will have to cede some of the autonomy they enjoy (even under the Dallas charter) in order to implement national standards and codes of behavior, especially governing priests and deacons. But whatever price is paid will pale in comparison to what is accomplished in strengthening justice in ministry and restoring trust in the church.

The second set of changes involves the attitude of ministers across the entire range of church-based services and activities. Gula's book proceeds explicitly from the framework of virtue ethics, emphasizing the role of pivotal personal qualities (humility, generosity, compassion and gratitude, among others) as key to ministry. The character, emotional maturity, pastoral imagination and motivation of the minister are indispensible elements in any consideration of ministerial ethics. Maintaining a sharp Christocentric focus that holds up Jesus as a model of inclusive love and liberating power, Gula supplies rich analysis of relevant sources in Scripture and theology that both support and challenge all who minister. In an era of slumping morale in lay and ordained ministry alike, the encouragement offered in these pages will be much appreciated.

The final chapters of this volume cover topics that are probably on the minds of even a casual observer of ministry today: the dynamics of power in parish ministry, violations of fiduciary boundaries in ministry and clericalism in the organizational culture of the Roman Catholic Church. Gula deals frankly with the dangers of sexual abuse, exploitation and harassment and offers practical guidelines on such topics as the seal of confession, the significance of cybersex and the appropriateness of touch in public and private ministerial settings.

Some readers will quibble with the fine points of Gula's analysis or his specific recommendations on pastoral practice, but no one would deny that this is a most readable and appealing book. Its clarity and depth make it eminently suitable for a wide range of courses in theological education and ministerial formation. Especially helpful is Gula's technique of opening each chapter with a vividly drawn vignette of a conflict in ministerial practice, and shaping that chapter so that the text sheds light on resources and approaches that resolve that case study.

In these sketches and indeed throughout this splendid book, Gula displays a most judicious balance between sober realism and positive hopefulness. While there are no quick and easy solutions to the present crisis in ministry, progress is possible and indeed quite likely, provided that Christian communities marshal the good will, moral character and hard work necessary to ensure a just ministry for the future.

THOMAS MASSARO, S.J., *is professor of moral theology at the Boston College School of Theology and Ministry in Chestnut Hill, Mass.*

KATARINA SCHUTH

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

ETHICS OF THE WORD
Voices in the Catholic Church Today

By James F. Keenan, S.J.
Sheed & Ward. 198p $19.95

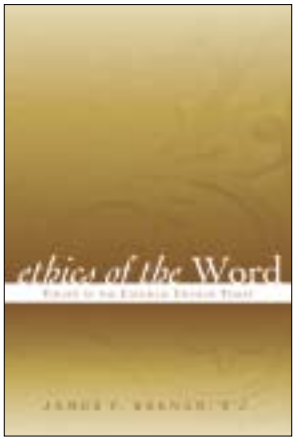
For several decades, church leaders and members who are dedicated to promoting greater unity and respect within the church have been seeking new ways and old to renew the spirit of cooperation and to restore damaged relationships. In *Ethics of the Word*, James Keenan, S.J., professor of theological ethics at Boston College, contributes immeasurably to this endeavor by exploring the power of the word of God and the word of human beings. He weaves together thoughts from a previously published collection of essays under four themes: the human components of discourse, such as conscience, memory and desires; the forms of discourse, including teaching, conversing and apologizing; the effects of words at decisive moments of life; and, finally, words that reflect the language of faith, hope and charity.

Written in narrative style, each short chapter contributes to the ultimate goal of increasing understanding and transparency in our interactions. Integrating both memoir and moral instruction, the book draws the reader into profound reflection on appropriate words related to everyday experiences like absorbing the meaning of family relationships, learning to live with loneliness and grieving for the deaths of parents. But exceptional experiences also pervade the book, allowing the author to record fitting responses he made and sometimes regrettable reactions he showed in varied circumstances. Keenan reports on organizing international gatherings of moral theologians to encourage an exchange of ideas across cultures. He often refers to the Catholic Common Ground Initiative of Cardinal Joseph Bernardin as a model of Christian dialogue, which he believed helped promote intellectual and affective solidarity during the meetings of moral theologians.

A common thread spanning the book is teaching and learning. The author conveys the necessity of attentive listening as well as careful speaking. To teach students a model for moral disagreement, he advises respect for those with whom we disagree, "the practice of a hermeneutics of suspicion about our own understanding" and greater attention to our passions and feelings about the matter being debated. In a spirit of self-revelation, Keenan reports on his own failings in this regard, sometimes judging students unfairly and even using hurtful words in argumentation. Always the power of words is central to the story. The word of God stands as a model

and ideal for the word one should offer to another.

Threaded into the engaging personal narrative of each chapter are powerful moral challenges. Among words with the most lasting effect, the chapter "Apologizing" emphasizes the transformation that can take place in the one who apologizes and in the one who receives the apology. Keenan proposes that "though we admit to ourselves when we are wrong, when we admit it to the one we have wronged, the act of admission opens to us far greater understanding about the nature of our fault.... Our admission restores balance, removes harm, and offers hope." Chapters on appreciating the limits of language and lying and the obligation to get the story right present the substance for what might be uncomfortable moments of self-examination of conscience. The author reminds us to be careful how we speak in our personal lives and in our relationships in the church. Sometimes frustration or pain or misunderstanding causes us to use hurtful words, to accuse or judge another because of our limitations and inability to find "good" words. The author suggests simply saying, "I'm at a loss for words," or "I don't know what to say." Speaking the truth when it is hurtful poses an even more challenging ethical dilemma. Hearsay and unnecessary repetition about the questionable behavior of another often result in the diminishment of trust and the loss of community. Failing to get the story right by exaggerating or using harmful words is equally destructive.



In the final chapters, on the theological virtues, Keenan brings into focus how the practice of careful speech relates to faith, hope and charity. The language of faith leads us to overcome darkness with light. Faith is a gift that requires us to speak up, to ask God relentlessly for what we need and then to wait patiently. Hope builds on faith as we face the future. Finally, the language of love helps us to be reconciled with one another as we speak words that engender union with God and unity among people.

Ethics of the Word is a helpful and instructive book, given the many experiences of loss and and suffering, misunderstanding and scandal that characterize much of our everyday lives. Whether among family and friends or church and civic community, Keenan enables the reader to see the impact of his or her words—both comforting and cutting words, the positive and the negative. Our choice of words affects everyone we encounter.

Choosing them conscientiously, consonant with the word of God, the author demonstrates, makes for a world that is whole, sacred and intact.

Regardless of one's background, education or position in the church, this book will appeal to a wide audience, especially as a guide to meditative reflection on one's own moral behavior. It is especially suitable for parish adult education classes and for youth groups. As the story of the word evolves, so does the story of the author, whose fascinating life and engaging style make reading *Ethics* a pleasure.

KATARINA SCHUTH, O.S.F., *holds the Endowed Chair for the Social Scientific Study of Religion at the Saint Paul Seminary, University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minn.*

PETER HEINEGG

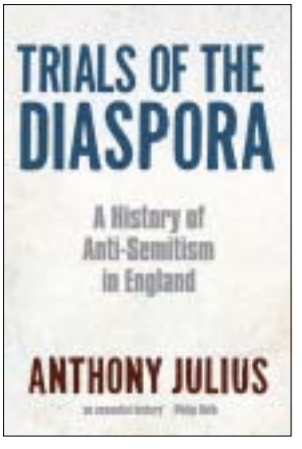
WORSE THAN YOU THINK

TRIALS OF THE DIASPORA
A History of Anti-Semitism In England

By Anthony Julius
Oxford Univ. Press. 864p $45

"It is easy to be a Jew in England," said Chaim Weizmann (d. 1952), who was a professor of chemistry at the University of Manchester before becoming Israel's first president. Well sure—compared with Europe during the Crusades, Tsarist Russia, Nazi Germany or post-1948 North Africa. And haven't British Jews had all sorts of stunning achievements, from David Ricardo to Benjamin D'Israeli to Rosalind Franklin to Harold Pinter to Elizabeth Taylor? Do we really need this nearly 900-page tome, which combines history, philosophy, social psychology and literary analysis into a massive assault on the English versions of a prejudice that, Julius tells us, "has a place in the history of ideas only in the sense that a burglar has a place in a house"?

Yes, we do, and for a number of reasons. England was the first country to expel all its Jews, in 1290 when Edward I, in G. K. Chesterton's words, that "tender father of his people" "flung the alien financiers out of the land." England gave birth to the blood libel, the legend of murderous Jewish plots against gentiles, which was launched in Norwich in 1144 and has spread like blood-spatter all over the world. The nearly four centuries between the expulsion of the Jews and their readmission in 1656 saw a remarkable flourishing of Jew-hatred, proving that, just as in Japan or Poland today, one can have anti-Semitism even without the presence of actual Jews. More ominously, some of that hatred was given shape by geniuses, like Chaucer in "The Prioress's Tale" (1400) and Shakespeare in "The Merchant of Venice" (1594-96), later abetted by Charles Dickens in *Oliver Twist* (1837-38).



And the list of eloquent English anti-Semites is a long one: Marlowe, Carlyle, Cobbett, Thackeray, Belloc, T. S. Eliot, Kingsley Amis, among others. Finally, given the Balfour Declaration and the links between England and the rise of the State of Israel, it is no surprise that Britain has been a major source of contemporary anti-Zionism.

The prosecutor of this enormous case, Anthony Julius, is in fact a lawyer: He is deputy chairman of the British firm Mishcon de Reya (he represented, among others, Diana, Princess of Wales) and a scholar-critic who received a Ph.D. from the University of London (where he occasionally teaches) with a thesis on T. S. Eliot's anti-Semitism. After a long personal introduction, he opens with reflections on the lies and cruelties of the anti-Semites, who in their paranoia demonize a community that, so far from posing any real threat, is "multiply divided and docile." Julius then surveys 1) medieval English anti-Semitism, from the Norman Conquest on, when Jews were literally the property of the crown, which fleeced and persecuted them at will; 2) literary anti-Semitism; 3) modern English anti-Semitism (roughly up to 1960); and 4) contemporary anti-Zionisms, both secular and religious.

For readers patient enough to stick with him, Julius is a lively guide. He writes briskly and unpedantically ("There is very little that may be said in praise of the 1930s"). He provides a prodigious trove of information, not least of all in his 200 pages of notes, which are not the usual tedious forest of *ibid.*'s, but an encyclopedic summary of the field with countless useful cues for further reading. On this most partisan and controversial of topics one needs, and we get here, as much data as possible—for instance on the celebrated St. Hugh of Lincoln, an 8- or 9-year-old boy whose body was found in 1255 and whose death led to the execution, on highly dubious evidence, of 19 Jews and to the death sentence (not carried out) for 73 others.

Julius takes us from there all the way up to the present with a huge array of dismal items such as cries of "Send the Jews to Auschwitz" from Arsenal yahoos at a game with Manchester United, or the recent opinion polls showing that only 22

percent of British Muslims believe the Holocaust happened "as history teaches," and fully 45 percent think that the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, were perpetrated by the Israelis in cahoots with the Americans.

Still, most Westerners probably feel that in their part of the world anti-Semitism is, thank God, a more or less dead issue. Anti-Zionism, though, especially the secular variety, is something else again. Julius admits that there are plenty of nonbigoted arguments to be made against the policies and procedures of various Israeli governments. Just do an Internet search for the word *Gaza*. But, he maintains, the barrage of criticism one hears, especially in academe and in left-wing circles, is peculiarly one-sided and intemperate.

Thus the journalist John Pilger writes in The New Statesman, "No other country has such a record of lawlessness, not one of the world's tyrannies comes close." Huh? What about North Korea? Zimbabwe? Sudan? Some anti-Zionists absurdly put Jews "at the centre of world affairs" (perhaps echoing *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*) and look past the crimes of Arab and Muslim regimes while blasting the sins of Israel as unforgivable. (Julius notes that in the first three years of Yassir Arafat's kleptocracy, more prisoners died in Palestinian Authority jails than in Israeli prisons over 20 years.)

At what point, if any, does anti-Zionism veer into anti-Semitism? That is debatable, of course; but one marker, Julius would insist, is the increasingly frequent (and thoughtless) equation of Israel with Nazi Germany.

Martin Buber was right when he wrote in a letter, "Everything we Jews do takes place on a stage." When it comes to the Jews, everybody is a critic, including—and sometimes most of all—Jews themselves. Julius describes and evaluates the brigade of vocal anti-

Semitic (Otto Weininger) and anti-Zionist (Noam Chomsky) Jews with clarity and fairness. In the end, he wonders whether the problem will ever go away. Many British academics want to boycott Israeli (and only Israeli) universities, and roughly half the British population now think Jews are more loyal to Israel than to the United Kingdom. And, as Julius keeps reminding us, however important the special case of England may be, it has generally been much worse elsewhere.

So it is perfectly understandable that after taking us through a millennium of bias, stupidity and mayhem, after offering a dense and convincing prosecution of anti-Semitism, Julius not only rests his case; he swears he is not going to touch it again. Even the best lawyer can do only so much.

PETER HEINEGG *is professor of English at Union College, Schenectady, N.Y.*

LETTERS

Make Room on the Scrap Heap?

Re "Repeating History" (Current Comment, 7/19): The editors' commentary on the G-20 meeting seems to assume that economic conditions in 1930 and 2010 are similar, that the global economy is in the best interests of everyone and that tax cuts and deficit spending are the keys to solving the current economic problems. Trade mismanagement by the United States and European nations has created enormous trade and current account deficits that threaten their economies and long-term existence.

Since 2000, more than $5 trillion has been lost from the U.S. economy, as the United States buys more goods and services than it sells. Rather than address the problem, the political party in power has consistently produced budget deficits by cutting taxes or increasing spending to stimulate the economy, to prevent a depression and to try to stay in power.

A nation that loses 3 percent to 6 percent of its gross domestic product each year as a current account deficit, while borrowing more than $1 trillion a year from foreign nations, will soon be bankrupt and penniless. Unless the United States changes its investment laws and uses agreements and tariffs to achieve a current account/trade balance, it will end up on the "scrap-heap of history."

JOE D'ANNA
Los Alamos, N.M.

Don't Just Say No

Re "Dream On" (Editorial, 7/19): So because one party is unalterably opposed to any solution proposed by President Obama or even resurrected from the Bush administration, we should abandon all attempts to fix this terrible system? That's like telling people health care can be only for the healthy. Our collective religious leaders, thoughtful political leaders and stakeholder groups, like employers and families of immigrants, can be connected to work together on a sensible solution set to these issues. To do only minimal things, or to do nothing, serves no one and lets the party of "No" control the agenda.

(DEACON) MIKE EVANS
Anderson, Calif.

Debating the Undebatable

"Rules of Engagement," by Thomas Massaro, S.J. (7/19), is an excellent article that provokes several important issues and questions:

1. How can there be debate on moral theology and controversial church teaching when the pope determines such teaching is definitive and cannot be reformed?

2. Does each member of the body of Christ, clerical and lay, have a responsibility, duty or right to question definitive and unreformable church teachings based on their informed consciences?

3. What mechanism should be used to hold accountable bishops of the church who allow two different teachings to exist on the same subject? What is the best way that disagreements over the moral responsibility to teach the full truth by bishops and priests can be brought forward for debate and resolution?

MICHAEL J. BARBERI
Carlsbad, Calif.

No Knee Jerk

The article by Kevin O'Rourke, O.P., "Complications" (8/2), is why I read **America**. It was solidly reasoned and not the knee-jerk reaction that Catholics are so often treated to in this area of moral thought.

JOHN D. FITZMORRIS JR.
New Orleans, La.

The Placenta Is Key

I am following up on a critical issue in the Father O'Rourke's article on whether the procedure in Phoenix was a direct or indirect abortion. The placenta is the diseased tissue that, as part of the uterus, is most commonly believed to promote the underlying induction of the pulmonary hypertension that was putting the mother's life in danger. Hence, as in the analogous case of the cancerous uterus, the

America (ISSN 0002-7049) is published weekly (except for 13 combined issues: Jan. 4-11, 18-25, Feb. 1-8, April 12-19, June 7-14, 21-28, July 5-12, 19-26, Aug. 2-9, 16-23, Aug. 30-Sept. 6, Sept. 13-20, Dec. 20-27) 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.

removal of the placenta would be justified morally even though the procedure would indirectly result in the loss of the pregnancy. I shared this with a prominent priest/moral theologian/bioethicist, who agreed. The bioethics community needs to discuss the detailed medical history in this case to provide guidance for the teaching magisterium.

J. H. KEFFER, M.D.
Murphy, N.C.

Theology Is Not Enough

The insightful moral and canonical analysis by Kevin O'Rourke, O.P., notwithstanding ("Complications," 8/2), this case illustrates the limitations of traditional moral theology. Perhaps it is better to think in terms of the calculus of "approaching limits," since it is hubris—even in the name of faith—to believe that casuistry will solve all cases. Sometimes the best we can do is to know where we choose to allow ourselves to tremble…and trust in the mercy of God. If there had not been a termination of the pregnancy and the fetus inevitably died along with the mother, how would any of us have answered the bereaved husband, now with four motherless children, if asked, "Did you do everything possible to save my wife?" The only life that could be saved was saved. Surely that makes sense even in the admittedly tragic limitation of the loss of life that made it possible.

DAVID E. PASINSKI
Fayetville, N.Y.

But What Did He Really Say?

I suppose the approach of Luke Timothy Johnson in "Reconstructing Christ" (8/2) is fine for those who are already committed Christians, but what about those who are uncertain? Johnson's approach requires a great deal of faith—faith that the early church chose wisely as it established the canon, that the Evangelists correctly interpreted their sources, that those around Jesus understood what he was saying and passed along the tradition without significant distortion. Johnson would have us believe that sharing the faith of those who wrote about Jesus is having faith in Jesus.

What Jesus says about marriage in Mark 10 is more strict than what he says in Matthew 5, and Paul invents a loophole. If you believe the church is guided by the Holy Spirit and cannot be wrong, then you take the church's word that Jesus absolutely prohibited divorce and remarriage. It may be that the search for the historical Jesus is futile, but certainly the historical-critical method can be extremely useful. What followers write about a charismatic leader cannot always be taken at face value.

DAVID NICKOL
New York, N.Y.

Catholics and Guns

Re your editorial "Guns and the Court" (8/2), about the Supreme Court overturning Chicago's handgun ban: It is unfortunate that the court with, I believe, a Catholic majority has taken such an un-Christian view.

PAUL KELLEY
Reading, Mass.

Lighten Up

Margaret Silf's "Faith, Hope and Humpty" (8/2) really speaks to me. The fall of Humpty Dumpty can be added to death and taxes as a universal certainty. Not much else can be. It is amazing what can appear in our lives when we let go of the belief that we can be in total control and we relinquish the need for that. I have seen relationships improve when I've given up the impulse to control other people. When the universe throws something weighty at us and, in faith, we let go of the initial panic, there can be a corresponding "lightness of being." Faith, both child-like and mature, may emerge.

WINIFRID HOLLOWAY
Saratoga Springs, N.Y.

Spiritual Training

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (C), AUG. 22, 2010

Readings: Is 66:18-21; Ps 117:1-2; Heb 12:5-13; Lk 13:22-30

"Strive to enter through the narrow gate" (Lk 13:24)

Jesus often does not give straight answers to questions posed to him. Today's Gospel story, for instance, starts with someone asking him, "Will only a few people be saved?" It seems like a straightforward question about numbers. But Jesus perceives that the questioner and the others whom he was teaching were not really as concerned about the final headcount as they were about whether they themselves would be included among the redeemed.

The first part of Jesus' answer is about what you must do to position yourself for admission into the final gathering of the saved. The person who asked the question rightly recognized that salvation is God's work. The passive voice of the verb "be saved" implies that one does not save oneself; the redeeming action is done by God. However, as Jesus' response makes clear, one must engage in rigorous training in order to be in condition to accept the gift of being saved.

Jesus advises that one must "strive to enter the narrow gate." The verb *agonizomai*, "strive," is used to describe what is required in athletic training (similarly, see 1 Cor 9:25). Just as an athlete must gradually build up strength through daily disciplined exercise, so spiritual fitness takes consistent effort and training. Jesus notes that many who attempt to enter will not be strong enough. The second reading from Hebrews also focuses on the discipline necessary to build up spiritual strength. Five times the author uses words derived from the Greek *paideuo* and *paideia*, which have to do with "discipline." The primary meaning is "instruction, training for responsible living."

The author makes an analogy between the training a child receives from a parent and the guidance God provides us for deepening in the spiritual life. The Greek noun here means not so much punishment for wrongdoing as training for life. Some discipline consists in self-imposed, chosen actions that strengthen the spirit and enable one to follow the path of faithfulness. Other modes of life-shaping experiences are not purposely chosen, but how we deal with them forms us spiritually.

The author of Hebrews focuses on the latter kind of formation. He speaks of how God, like a loving parent, can help us learn from the difficulties that befall us and can guide us in how to become stronger through them. In the author's worldview everything that happens, both for good and for ill, is caused by God, so the writer suggests that God imposes trials as discipline.

His analogy of God as a loving parent, however, leads us also to think of God as never purposely inflicting suffering on us. The end result is that our spiritual "gymnastic" efforts (the verb *gymnazo* in v. 11, is a term for athletic training) lead to peace, joy and right relation, with our drooping hands and weak knees healed and strengthened.

In the Gospel Jesus speaks about what can happen to those who do not put any effort into "working out" spiritually. When the final moment comes, they will be on the outside pleading to get in, thinking that just having been present where Jesus was teaching would be enough. It is like someone who goes to the gym but only watches other people train. Such a person is not considered a member of the company of athletes or prepared to make it to the finish line, the "narrow gate," and it will be too late then to start training. Jesus returns to the original question and, echoing the first reading from Isaiah, envisions masses of people from all directions who will be included among those saved. We may be surprised by who gets there first.

PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

- Of what does your daily spiritual "workout" consist?
- Ask God, the divine trainer, to show you what needs strengthening.
- How has God helped you grow stronger through difficult times?

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.*

Earthy Wisdom

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (C), AUG. 29, 2010

Readings: Sir 3:17-29; Ps 68:4-11; Heb 12:18-24; Lk 14:1-14

"Humble yourself the more, the greater you are, and you will find favor with God" (Sir 3:18)

Every culture has its proverbs—pithy sayings that give wisdom about how to live well. The readings from both Sirach and the Gospel pass on proverbial wisdom about the virtue of humility. This is earthy wisdom. The word *humility* comes from the Latin word *humilis*, which means literally "on the ground," deriving from *humus*, "earth." So when we are advised to "humble yourself," this is an invitation to be "grounded," to be attentive to our connectedness with Earth. This entails as well consciousness of our interconnectedness with all persons and all Earth's creatures and with God. As Ben Sira, who penned the Book of Sirach, avers, in humbling oneself one finds favor with God. In other words, through humility we gain proper consciousness of our place in relation to God.

In the Gospel, Jesus gives concrete examples of how one can go about growing in humility. He is at a dinner hosted by a leading Pharisee, and the invited guests are watching him closely. As the story progresses, there is growing hostility between Jesus and the Pharisees. Yet this is the third time he is reported to be dining with them (see also Lk 7:36-50; 11:37-54).

One way in which Jesus models authentic humility is by not cutting off those whose theology and pastoral approach differ from his own. In Jesus' day, likes ate with likes. Eating together was a way of signifying shared values. By dining with those who opposed him, he signals that their shared common humanity forged a connection that superseded their differences.

Jesus first addresses the invited guests about choosing places at the table. The setting presumes that these are people with a certain measure of power and prestige. Banquets were occasions for people to enhance their social standing, and Jesus describes how guests would compete for honor. The way to gain the most honor, he says, is actually to take the lowest place. Choosing to sit with those whose status would not enhance one's own personal honor could instead lead to growth in humility, that is, to engage in interactions with persons who are more *earthy* and to forge bonds with them. If such a person is then invited by the host to a higher position, he or she would be able to represent the perspectives of those at the other end of the table in the discussions and decisions that take place at the head.

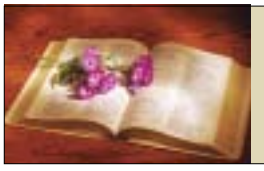
Jesus then turns his attention to the host of the dinner and talks about how to formulate a guest list. From this angle, he again prods his hearers to break out of the strictures of likes eating with likes. The conversations at tables of the like-minded serve only to reinforce their own views, and the circle tightens as they reciprocate invitations to one another. Instead, Jesus proposes to the host, invite those unlike yourself, those with whom no one wants to associate. From a stance of humility, such a host recognizes the bondedness shared through common humanity that is stronger than differences in abilities or social positions.

It is easy to fall prey to false humility, pretending to take a lowly place in the hopes of receiving adulation and an invitation to come up higher. Or false humility can be manifest in persons whose self-esteem has never developed properly. True humility is grounded in earthy wisdom, a knowledge that all persons, no matter their circumstances, and all the created world share in an unbreakable interconnection of life given by God. We are equally loved and esteemed by the Holy One who desires the flourishing of all.

BARBARA E. REID

PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

- Let Earth speak to you of the interconnectedness of all life and your place within the cosmos.
- How does Jesus' practice of inviting the poor to join him speak to you?
- What does today's Gospel prompt us to consider regarding our gatherings at the eucharistic table?



REAL PRESENCE NEEDED!

U.S. AIR FORCE
CHAPLAIN CORPS

Without a Catholic priest's presence, our Catholic Airmen go without the Eucharist. That's where you come in — your presence is needed in the Air Force Chaplain Corps to nurture our Airmen's Catholic identity through the sacraments and continued faith formation. Join us for "Come Be With Us," an Air Force–sponsored, three-day ministry familiarization tour. Experience and see the ministry of the Catholic chaplain. Email us at chaplains@rs.af.mil or call 1-800-803-2452.