America

THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC WEEKLY

OCT. 18, 2010 $3.50

Is Now the Time to Cut the Deficit?

CHARLES K. WILBER

The Road to Nonviolence

HANSULI JOHN GERBER

OF MANY THINGS

As I write this I am staring at a screen. On my way home, I will check my phone for text messages, maybe browse Facebook. Tonight I will pay my bills online and scroll through my digital video recorder. I am tempted to buy an iPad.

There is little in my life that is not mediated by the ones and zeroes of computer code. Only on the subway can I read The New York Times without digital distraction. This is not meant as a complaint. I am not about to retire my computer or drop my phone contract. My life is simply exemplary of the digitized world in which we all live.

What does concern me are the habits of mind that digital attachment can foster. Here again I write from experience. What has surprised me is that the digital realm has recently afforded me a kind of deliverance.

But first, the signs of my attachment: a job that calls for attention to detail, quick turnaround and follow-up, all facilitated by the near constant use of e-mail. The Internet is ever present, signaled by the multiple windows open in my browser: our Web site, of course, but also Facebook, Twitter and Catholic News Service. At home I make a habit of checking our finances online, and for fun I scan my Netflix queue or peruse Amazon.com.

All of these resources enable me to do my work efficiently. But distractions abound. I have already checked my e-mail multiple times while writing these words. None of it is urgent, yet the compulsion persists. Surely, too, I could wait until the end of the month to read our financial statements. But why not take a quick peek?

These habits have quickened my mind, but they have also tested my patience. It has become more difficult for me to write for long stretches at a time. I grow frustrated when I do not have ready access to the Web. Lately, I have tried to abide by certain disciplines. While on vacation recently, I shut off my phone's e-mail alerts so I wouldn't rush to check my inbox every time it beeped. (Junk mail, usually.) At home, I try to spend more time playing with my infant daughter and less time seated at my computer.

And I read more. In fact, books have become a remarkably effective remedy for my digital malaise. Reading forces me to sit still for long periods. I lose track of time and forget about the tasks that await me. Sometimes I encounter a sentence or sentiment that forces me to examine my life in a new way. I am transported.

This may seem like a simple solution, but it was not immediately clear to me. A few years ago, I developed a case of vertigo that impaired my reading ability. Over time I discovered that while I could read newspapers and magazines, books were a distinct trial. To fill the time I spent more time online dealing with business and family matters. Looking back I can see that my affliction was as much spiritual as physical. The life of prayer, after all, requires precisely the kind of patience that I was finding more and more elusive. Curiously, my reprieve came from the very world that initially seemed to threaten my peace of mind.

Reader, I bought a Kindle, an electronic reading device that is both a product of the digital revolution and a refutation of it. Books can be downloaded in minutes, and the text is easy to manipulate. (Changing the font size and column width has helped diminish my symptoms.) Yet like its principal competitors, the Kindle is simply a mechanism for reading. You can't browse the Internet, check your e-mail or watch movies. It is a modern improvement on an ancient pursuit.

Digital readers may someday lose their market share to the iPad, but I hope not. There should be room in our digital world for devices that favor less over more.

MAURICE TIMOTHY REIDY

America
Published by Jesuits of the United States

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: Shutterstock/i9370

Contents

www.americamagazine.org VOL. 203 NO. 10, WHOLE NO. 4908 OCTOBER 18, 2010

ARTICLES

COLUMNS & DEPARTMENTS

BOOKS & CULTURE

ON THE WEB

Charles K. Wilber, right, answers readers' questions on the economy, and Tom Price reports on **Haiti** on our podcast. Plus, Kerry Weber reviews **"The Social Network."** All at americamagazine.org.

Halfway to Heaven

If ignorance is bliss, then respondents to the U.S. Religious Knowledge Survey are halfway there. For they answered correctly, on average, only half the 32 questions posed in interviews during May and June 2010 for the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life. An average of 50 percent, however, would mean in most schools that the class failed the exam. That is the real outcome in this case. Reporters have noted that atheists/agnostics, Jews and Mormons, in that order, outscored Christians. But the three top groups correctly answered only 65 percent, 64 percent and 63 percent respectively of the questions—nothing to brag about.

Most respondents (two-thirds or more) knew that public school teachers cannot lead the class in prayer, that an atheist is one who does not believe in God, that Mother Teresa was Catholic, that Moses led the Exodus, that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, that the Constitution says government shall not establish nor interfere with religion and that most people in Pakistan are Muslim. But only half knew that the Koran is the Islamic holy book, that the Jewish Sabbath begins on Friday, that Joseph Smith was Mormon, that the Dalai Lama is Buddhist, that Martin Luther inspired the Reformation and that the four Gospel writers are Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

Catholics, with 14.7 correct answers, scored below average. And nearly half (45 percent) did not know the church teaches that the consecrated bread and wine in holy Communion are not merely symbols, but "actually become the body and blood of Christ."

While college graduates scored highest overall, lack of education alone does not explain why Catholics fared so poorly. Religious ignorance, however, does explain why many adult Catholics have difficulty in two areas: teaching the faith to their children and understanding how Catholic belief and practice fit in an increasingly pluralistic society.

The Right to Breastfeed

Last July the manager of a Johnny Rockets restaurant in Kentucky told a mother who was nursing her 6-month-old daughter that she would have to go outside to a public bench, or else nurse her baby in a bathroom stall. The incident led to protests with signs like "Johnny Rockets is not a family restaurant" and "No, I will not feed my baby in your bathroom."

Kentucky is one of 44 states that permit breastfeeding in public. California's enlightened civil code states that a mother may breastfeed her child in any location; on receiving a jury summons, a nursing mother can request a year's deferral.

Although breastfeeding provides an infant with essential nutrients to protect against illnesses like diarrhea and pneumonia, the number of women who nurse their babies is declining. The higher the mother's educational level, the more likely she is to breastfeed. A pediatrics study in 2010 found that if 90 percent of mothers breastfed their child for six months, the United States could save $13 billion in medical costs and prevent almost 1,000 infant deaths yearly.

Last year Representative Carolyn Maloney introduced the Breastfeeding Promotion Act which would protect a mother's right to breastfeed. It requires employers to provide mothers "with reasonable break time and a...non-bathroom place to express milk" up to the child's first birthday. The bill deserves support. In its larger sense, the issue underscores the rights of women, as well as health considerations for them and their children.

Our President's Faith

It should have come as no surprise when President Barack Obama recently described himself as "a Christian by choice." The president described in detail his journey to the Christian faith in his book *Dreams of My Father*. Still, unfounded suspicions about the president's "true" religious faith persist, proof that what Richard Hofstadter called the "paranoid style in America politics" remains as insidious as ever. Speaking to local families in Albuquerque, N.M., in September, the president was asked once again why he is a Christian. "Jesus Christ dying for my sins spoke to the humility we all have to have as human beings, that we're sinful and we're flawed and we make mistakes and we achieve salvation through the grace of God," Mr. Obama said.

The same week it was reported that Michelle Obama, while vacationing in Spain this summer, told a local Salesian priest that her husband keeps a picture of Mary Help of Christians in his wallet. Ms. Obama did not explain why the president chose this particular icon of Mary, who serves under that title as patroness of the Salesian Order. It seems unlikely that the president was drawn to Mary Help of Christians because of her reported intercession in two major battles against Turkish forces. It is also improbable that Mr. Obama is a "closet Catholic," as some commentators have mischievously suggested.

Perhaps the answer lies in the humility that undergirds President Obama's faith. Mary has always been invoked to intercede for Christians who know they are sinful but still seek God's mercy. That our president is aware of the need for such grace should be evidence enough, for those who still require it, that he is our brother in Christ.

A Saint for Our Time

The news that a soon-to-be-saint had once been excommunicated for her order's part in urging the church to act against an accused sex offender is a reminder of the virulence and long history of crimes of abuse by members of the Catholic clergy. The saga of Mother Mary MacKillop, who was to be canonized on Oct. 17, says much about sanctity, about sin, about women and about hope.

Mother Mary MacKillop (1848–1909), who hailed from a large Catholic family, was the co-founder of the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart. Her excommunication has been well documented as an almost unprecedented obstacle on the path to sainthood. After all, few saints have been excommunicated—the church's harshest canonical penalty. But in 1870 Laurence Sheil, the bishop of Adelaide, in Australia, formally ejected her from the church. Until recently, Mother MacKillop's punishment was thought to have been primarily a consequence of conflicts between her order (along with its co-founder, a priest) and Bishop Sheil, who cited insubordination as the reason behind his extraordinary move.

But the fuller story is that Mother Mary MacKillop was excommunicated partially out of revenge for her order's part in pointing to a case of abuse by a Father Keating. A priest angered by Father Keating's subsequent discipline successfully lobbied Bishop Sheil to punish Mother MacKillop and her order. Five months later, on his deathbed, the bishop reversed his decision. Paul Gardiner, S.J., the former postulator for Mother MacKillop's canonization, said on Australian television, "Priests being annoyed that somebody had uncovered it [the abuse]—that would probably be the way of describing it—and being so angry that the destruction of the Josephites was decided on." The Josephite Sisters have confirmed the documentary's report as "consistent with" studies of the event.

What might this episode mean for contemporary Catholics? First, it is no surprise that a saint found herself at odds with the church hierarchy. Joan of Arc, to take an extreme example, was burned at the stake in 1431 after being convicted of heresy by an English ecclesiastical court. Thomas Aquinas found his own writings under censure in the 13th century. The most recently canonized American saint, Mother Theodore Guérin, the independent-minded founder of the Sisters of Providence of St.-Mary-of-the-Woods, was instructed in 1847 by the bishop of Vincennes, Ind., to resign from her religious order. (The bishop was later removed from his post by the Vatican.)

Second, a powerful woman in almost any organization—religious or otherwise—is frequently seen as a threat to male leadership. Despite this, women in the church managed to found religious orders, establish colleges, high schools and elementary schools, run hospitals and care for the poor. Women may be particularly adept at seeing what Pope Benedict XVI recently called "sin inside the church," since they stand outside the power structure.

Third, whistleblowers, individually or corporately, typically face fierce opposition. Speaking the truth to power, the traditional role of the prophet, seldom garners gratitude from those to whom the truth is told. The prophet faces dismissive attitudes, hostile denials or, as in the case of Blessed Mary MacKillop and the Josephite Sisters, outright punishment. Only recently has the church begun to see whistleblowers in its own ranks as necessary—and sometimes holy.

Fourth, victims of sexual abuse may now have someone new to pray for them. Patron saints are often connected in a personal way to those who seek their intercession. Perhaps abuse victims, and all who desire justice and reconciliation in the church in the wake of the sexual abuse crisis, will see in St. Mary MacKillop a powerful intercessor. It may be providential that she walks back onto the world stage at this moment.

Fifth, her story shows how human the saints were. Often thought of as far removed from earthly realities, the saints led lives replete with every kind of joy—and suffering. The saints, however, also were men and women of "heroic virtue." And what is more heroic than standing up for a victim when advocacy costs you membership in the church that you love?

Finally, that the hierarchical church eventually canonizes some it once reviled—Joan of Arc, Thomas Aquinas, Mother Guérin and Mary MacKillop—says much about the wisdom of the church, and its ability to recognize its own errors and amend them.

St. Mary MacKillop's example is richer than this one episode. The redoubtable Australian co-founded a religious order, taught children, worked with the poor and in her lifetime was renowned for her holiness. Her life was full, active and holy. Like all saints, she is a model for all Catholics. But at this time, abuse victims and their families especially need all the help they can get—from heaven as on earth.

THOMAS KINKADE
Painter of Light™

The Elegant Blessings

Nativity Collection Presented by Thomas Kinkade

Only $19.99 for each figurine

May the glory of the First Christmas bless your home with the *Elegant Blessings* Nativity Collection—presented by Thomas Kinkade. It retells the story of the Savior's birth in three-dimensional sculpture and raised-relief artwork that evokes the elegantly rustic beauty of hand-carved wood.

Intricately Handcrafted and Hand Painted.

Meticulously handcrafted of the finest artists' resin and hand painted in soft Old World colors, the *Elegant Blessings* Nativity captures the grain and texture of chiseled wood. Elegantly elongated figurines make ideal "canvases" for raised-relief scenes depicting the story of the Nativity. Graceful poses, tranquil expressions, long flowing robes and starry Bethlehem skies recall the peace and joy of that Holy Night.

Raised relief artwork on their flowing robes details the blessings of the nativity—scene by scene!

Shown slightly smaller than actual sizes of 7.75" & 8.25" tall.

Begin with Issue One, "Loving Mary & Baby Jesus"

This heirloom-quality figurine of Mary lovingly cradling Baby Jesus can be yours for only $19.99* billed when it is shipped. Subsequent figurines will be sent about every other month—at the same remarkable price as Issue One. You may cancel at any time simply by notifying us. Your Second Issue will be the "Adoring Joseph" figurine.

A Superb Value; Act Now!

This first-ever "carved wood" Nativity collection presented by Thomas Kinkade is an exclusive limited-time offer, and strong demand is expected. Orders are limited to one collection per customer. Send no money now. Simply mail the coupon today.

Reserve Today! www.collectiblestoday.com/elegant

HAWTHORNE VILLAGE®

9210 N. MARYLAND ST., NILES, IL 60714-1322

Yes! Please enter my Charter Subscription for one *Elegant Blessings* Nativity Collection as described in this announcement starting with Issue One "Loving Mary & Baby Jesus." I need SEND NO MONEY NOW.

*Plus $5.99 shipping and service, subject to change. All sales subject to acceptance and product availability. Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery.

Certificate of Authenticity & 365-Day Money-Back Guarantee

LIMITED-TIME OFFER—RESPOND TODAY

Limited-time Offer—Please Respond Promptly.

Signature

Mrs. Mr. Ms.
Name (PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY)

Address Apt. No.

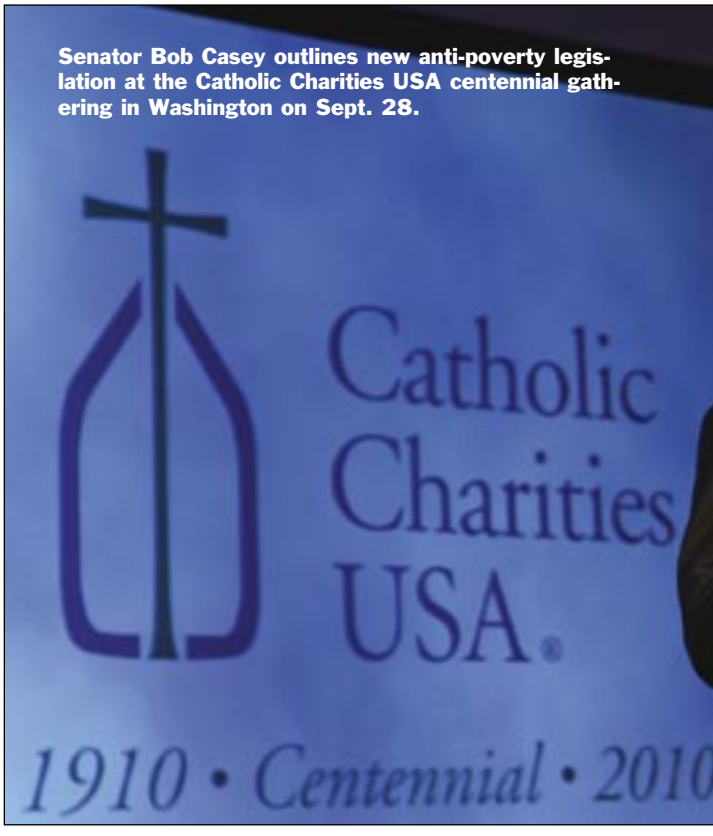
City State Zip

 14-00726-001-BIA

917267-E16102

CONGRESS

Legislation Opens New Front in War on Poverty



Senator Bob Casey outlines new anti-poverty legislation at the Catholic Charities USA centennial gathering in Washington on Sept. 28.

Recent data from the U.S. Census Bureau on escalating poverty shocked many. The 2009 figures indicated a reversal of national progress on hunger and want. Almost 44 million Americans now live below the poverty line ($22,050 for a family of four), and 21 percent of all U.S. children—up from 16 percent just 10 years ago—are growing up poor. The depressing statistics were enough to engage the attention of newspaper editorial writers around the country, but so far they have not inspired much discussion among U.S. policymakers.

"To be honest, we're not talking about this in Washington," said Representative James McGovern, Democrat of Massachusetts. "We're arguing about extending tax cuts for the rich or extending tax cuts for the middle class. The reality is that for a lot of people in this country, that debate is completely irrelevant."

Representative McGovern, along with Pennsylvania's Senator Bob Casey, a Democrat, introduced new legislation on Sept. 28 meant to redirect the Congressional conversation toward the nuts and bolts of a renewed national effort toward poverty reduction. The National Opportunity and Community Renewal Act was crafted with the help of Catholic Charities USA, capturing what its staff has learned from antipoverty campaigners around the country in a legislative package meant to modernize and invigorate the national response to poverty. The act calls for revisions not just in the way poverty and want are measured in the United States, using a system that was an innovation in 1963, but also in how antipoverty efforts are financed and executed at the local level. The legislation replaces income and food-basket measurements of poverty with a comprehensive "human development index," an easy-to-understand measure that tracks overall well-being in health, education and income.

Candy Hill, Catholic Charities USA's senior vice president for social policy and government affairs, said the legislation would create pilot antipoverty programs around the country, waiving federal regulations that discourage local innovation. Comprehensive "individual opportunity plans," modeled after "individual education plans" familiar to parents of children with special needs, would replace standardized national antipoverty strategies. Persons and families attempting to emerge from poverty could take advantage of holistic plans designed specifically for their circumstances, obstacles and opportunities. If the pilots prove successful, the legislation could end the one-size-fits-all approach that has typified national antipoverty campaigns.

Hill has no delusions about the likelihood of quick passage for the Catholic Charities-inspired legislation anytime soon. She called it a "marker," "starter legislation" meant to get the topic of poverty reduction back into the national spotlight. She feared the nation's economic preoccupations might otherwise keep the worsening problem of poverty too long off the public agenda, with devastating effect on the nation's poor and vulnerable. "We can't continue to do this work the way we are doing it," she said. "We don't have the resources we need, and we're heading in the wrong direction."

"As a country we need to have a conversation about this," Hill said. "We have more people living in poverty than we've had in decades." If the nation does not respond now, Hill warned, antipoverty gains could be terminally set back. "We don't want to see another decade slip past and have more people left out."

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

N.Y. Plan Closes Weakest Schools

A strategic plan for the elementary schools of the Archdiocese of New York will close underperforming schools to reduce growing deficits, channel funds from the sale or rental of shuttered properties to a general education fund and replace the traditional parish governance model with a regional structure. The three-year plan, named Pathways to Excellence, was released Oct. 5.

"We like the analogy of the biblical vine grower," said Timothy J. McNiff, superintendent of schools for the archdiocese. "When you prune a tree, you're prepared for growth." McNiff said the short-term target is to reduce by half the subsidies the archdiocese gives to struggling schools. In 2009 the archdiocese spent $30 million to support struggling parishes and schools. More than 56,000 students are educated in 188 parish and archdiocesan elementary schools throughout 10 counties. Private Catholic schools enroll another 4,800 students.

Implementation of the strategic plan has already begun. A "reconfiguration steering committee" of principals, pastors and lay representatives will make recommendations for school closings and mergers to the superintendent during the first week of November. The archdiocese will consider appeals and alternate financing arrangements before implementing changes at the end of the 2010-11 school year.

Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan of New York, who recently issued a call in **America** for a comprehensive response to the challenges facing Catholic education ("The Catholic Schools We Need," 9/13), has repeatedly pledged that there would be a seat in a New York Catholic school for any child who wants it. He said Pathways to Excellence is "not the silver bullet," but the beginning of a recovery of confidence in the school system. Under the strategic plan, monies realized from the sale or rental of closed schools will be used to establish an archdiocesan-wide education fund to "reinvest in our school system," according to McNiff.

The strategic plan moves away from parish-based elementary schools and creates regional school boards to devise "viable governance models" that may vary from one geographic region to another. "The strategy," McNiff said, "is to break the system into smaller pieces through regionalization and ask the laity to take greater ownership of the schools, always in collaboration with the pastor."

Archbishop Dolan said, "This is not the end of parochial schools. Where one parish with one school is strong and vibrant, it will stay," but in suburban and rural areas, where two or three parishes are having trouble maintaining individual schools, the regional model will allow a single strong school to thrive. Pathways to Excellence anticipates that each parish will support a Catholic school, even if it is not located on the parish campus. And while the archdiocese will continue to support schools in areas of critical need, there will be a significant reduction in the total amount of financial subsidies from both parishes and the archdiocese.

The Pathways to Excellence program acknowledges that the archdiocese can no longer rely on good will and word of mouth to fill its classrooms. The plan recommends an aggressive marketing and recruiting campaign, including an interactive Web site that has already been launched to attract prospective families, www.buildboldfutures.org. The archdiocese also has joined with the University of Notre Dame in a program to increase the number of Latino children in Catholic schools.

Coaching in a computer lab at a New York archdiocesan elementary school

Gender Gap for Development Goals

With five years to go until the endpoint of the Millennium Development Goals in 2015—objectives set in 2000 to reduce poverty and improve the quality of life of the world's poorest people—many countries are falling short. Peru's maternal mortality rate—240 mothers die per 100,000 live births—has dropped by half in rural areas but is still far higher than those of other Latin American countries, which highlights a problem the overall statistics conceal. Even if countries hit their M.D.G. targets, poverty rates remain high among indigenous people, women, children and rural residents. The urban-rural gap also holds true for primary education and access to water and sanitation. Some millennium goals also show a gender gap. In Latin America, although girls outnumber boys in high school and postsecondary education, women hold only one-third of top-level jobs. In places like Panama, Venezuela, urban Brazil and Mexico, more than half of all women in nonfarm jobs work in the informal economy, with no benefits or security. The figure rises to more than 70 percent in cities in Peru and Ecuador.

U.K. Agency Appeals Same-Sex Ruling

The last remaining Catholic adoption agency in England has filed an appeal against a decision by the Charity Commission for England and Wales forbidding it to turn away same-sex couples as potential adopters and foster parents. Catholic Care lodged the appeal with the charity tribunal against a ruling by the commission rejecting its application to change its constitution so it could comply both with church teaching prohibiting gay adoption and with civil laws stopping it from discriminating against same-sex couples. The agency, which serves the dioceses of Leeds, Middlesbrough and Hallam in northern England, had sought to continue its policy of assessing married heterosexuals and single people as potential adopters, while turning away gay couples. But on July 21 the Charity Commission turned down its application on the grounds that it was discriminatory toward homosexuals and in breach of European and British equality and human rights laws.

Philippine Bishops, President Clash

The president of the Philippine bishops' conference said the church was open to dialogue with President Benigno Aquino III about his proposal to distribute contraceptives, and the prelate denied media reports that he threatened to excommunicate the president. Bishop Nereo Odchimar of Tandag, conference president, said in a statement on Sept. 30: "The initial approach of this issue is to be in the spirit of dialogue and not of confrontation. Threat of excommunication at this point of time can hardly be considered to be in line with dialogue. I maintained that the traditional position of the church is that human life starts at conception and not at implantation. Some contraceptive pills and devices are abortifacient. Any completed act to expel or kill the fertilized ovum is considered to be an act of abortion."

From CNS and other sources.

NEWS BRIEFS

Miguel H. Díaz

"We are people of hope," said the U.S. Catholic bishops in a statement on Sept. 29 supporting the faltering **Middle East peace negotiations** and calling for "active, fair and firm U.S. leadership to advance comprehensive peace in the Middle East." ✦ The U.S. ambassador to the Vatican, Miguel H. Díaz, said on Oct. 5 that **human migration** should be accepted both as a Christian duty to "uphold the value of unity in diversity" and as a political duty to "safeguard human rights." ✦ The chairman of the U.S. Bishops' Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, Bishop William Murphy of Rockville Centre, N.Y., urged Congress on Sept. 20 to give priority attention to **working poor families** as it debates tax policy. ✦ Nigerian officials investigating **human trafficking** concluded that thousands of Nigerian girls were being forced to work in brothels after being lured to mining communities in Mali with offers of work in Europe. ✦ Two Creighton University theologians, **Michael Lawler and Todd Salzman**, were rebuked on Sept. 15 by the Committee on Doctrine of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops for defending the moral legitimacy of homosexuality, contraception and premarital sex.

JOHN J. DiIULIO JR.

Two-Party Roulette

Big political change is in the air. With Election Day just weeks away, many political analysts predict that Republicans will regain control of the House; a few think the G.O.P. will retake the Senate, too.

Still, post-1970 history hints that no matter which party heads the House, steers the Senate or occupies the Oval Office, little is likely to change in three fundamental areas: how much the federal government spends, how it administers the programs it funds and what most Americans want from Washington.

Federal spending as a percentage of gross domestic product was 20.7 percent when President Jimmy Carter, a Democrat, took office in 1977 and 21.2 percent when President Ronald Reagan, a Republican, left office in 1989. It was 22.1 percent when the Democrat Bill Clinton was elected president in 1993 and 20.9 percent when the Republican George W. Bush was elected president in 2000.

As the recession that started in 2007 deepened, Congress passed two economic stimulus bills in 2008 and one in 2009. Federal spending as a percentage of G.D.P. was 24.7 percent in 2009; it will finish this year at about 23.8 percent, just slightly above the 23.5 percent in 1983 that followed President Reagan's first several budgets, each fashioned in the shadow of a recession.

But as the Congressional Budget Office estimated in 2002, even without huge new defense outlays, federal spending as a percentage of G.D.P. could reach nearly 40 percent in the half-century ahead, a level not seen since World War II.

And whether the new health care law is kept or killed, Washington will be paying interest on a $20 trillion national debt by 2015. By 2030 combined spending on Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid (already over 40 percent of the federal budget) will exceed half of all federal spending.

Since 1960 the number of federal non-defense employees has averaged around two million, but the number of people who work indirectly for Washington as employees of business firms, nonprofit organizations and state and local government agencies that are largely, if not entirely, funded by Washington has mushroomed to about 13 million and counting.

> Looking to Washington for what only magicians, can deliver.

Hundreds of federal programs, including giant ones like Medicaid and Medicare, are now run this way. The Department of Homeland Security has more private workers (about 200,000) than federal workers (about 188,000). Even the military relies heavily on private workers. In 2006 there were in Iraq nearly as many private workers as soldiers.

Most research finds that this proxy administrative system has neither saved money nor improved government performance. Its more famous failures include fraud in Medicare, defense procurement scandals and the FEMA follies on the Gulf Coast. Since 1969 five major government reform commissions (two championed by Republicans, two cheered by Democrats and one with a bipartisan pedigree) have wrestled in vain with how Washington administers the programs it funds.

As Benjamin Page and other scholars have documented, most Americans are both "philosophically conservative" (we want less big government and favor free enterprise) and "operationally liberal" (we want more government benefits for all and cling to the benefits we receive). Just as many people want to go to heaven without actually having to die, so do many people want from Washington what only magicians, not politicians, can deliver: smaller government that protects or expands existing programs and supplies more benefits without adding more bureaucracy or raising more money by taxes.

No wonder no leaders seem to satisfy us: the incumbent Democratic president, his Republican predecessor, Democrats in Congress and Republicans in Congress all rank below 50 percent in public approval.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches that as "far as possible citizens should take an active part in public life" and that political authority and participation ought to be directed toward "the common good."

Pray that We the People and our elected leaders—whether Republican, Democrat or Independent, liberal or conservative—will approach national politics in an ever more sober and selfless civic spirit.

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

U.S. Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner prepares to testify before the Senate Budget Committee in Washington on Feb. 4, 2010.

REUTERS/HYUNGWON KANG

Strategies for restarting the U.S. economy

Awakening the Giant

BY CHARLES K. WILBER

The old advice, "Keep your eye on the ball," applies to current discussions of the U.S. economy. The country has been diverted from focusing on the immediate issue, which is jobs, to an issue of importance over the longer term—namely, deficits and the national debt. The claim that the national debt will bankrupt the country deserves serious consideration later but not now, in the short term. The claim that the debt hinders economic recovery by crowding out private investment is not currently significant. Private investors are not investing in new capital goods because there is insufficient demand for the output from those capital goods and thus low profit expectations. The reason is not primarily, as some claim, because the federal government is out-competing the private sector for available savings.

There is, however, one argument for making debt reduction a key issue now, and that argument is a psychological one that goes something like this: Investment by businesses, particularly small businesses, is driven by future profit expectations; large federal budget deficits increase uncertainty about the future stability of the economy, with the result that businesses invest less and hire fewer workers. This, in turn, impedes the economy from recovering. What is needed, proponents say, is a firm sign that the debt problem will be addressed. If this is believed, they say, businesses will be willing to invest and hire workers in the expectation that the future will be stable and prospects bright for future profits.

The major problem with this theory is that there is little undisputed empirical evidence to support it as an explanation for growth or the lack thereof. On the other hand, there is evidence to refute it. Ireland, for example, has pursued a deficit reduction program for the past two years, but the Irish economy has not improved at all. Rather, it has declined fur-

CHARLES K. WILBER *is emeritus professor of economics and a fellow at the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana.*

ther than most, averaging 13 percent unemployment at the present time. Nevertheless, a number of European countries are pushing for debt reduction now. The argument cannot be ignored, and I will return to it.

The recession of the past three years has held back growth in income and, as a result, tax revenues. The normal expectation is that there should soon be three or four years of better economic growth, enough to reduce the deficit significantly. But the problem with that expectation is that the economic stimulus of 2009 was too weak, too small to kick-start the economy into a growth path that would absorb the unemployed and provide jobs for new entrants into the labor force. Now Congress (mainly Republicans and Blue Dog Democrats) is resisting any further stimulus on the grounds that it will worsen the deficit.

The undesirable prospect facing the nation is decade-long, Japanese-style stagnation of growth and employment or even a double-dip recession. The primary task at this time, therefore, is to provide further economic measures that will generate jobs and a growth in incomes that will result in increased tax receipts. This in turn will help reduce the deficit, though it will not be enough by itself.

Long-Term Deficit Reduction

In three to five years, attention will have to be given to the structural deficit problem, defined as a deficit at full employment. Continuing economic growth in the United States will require an increase in national savings (defined as personal plus business plus government plus foreign savings) by reducing the chronic federal budget deficit (which is "dis-savings") to finance private and public investment.

An approach to deficit reduction in the long term that relies on economic growth to increase tax revenues is faced with a chicken-or-egg problem: economic growth is needed to lower the deficit, but deficit reduction is needed to ensure long-term economic growth. Though control of expenditures must be part of the solution, neither "natural" growth nor spending cuts can of themselves eliminate the deficit. It follows that tax increases are also needed. In economic terms, the deficits resulting from the ill-advised tax cuts of the early 1980s and the early 2000s are dis-savings. They have lowered the total national savings available to finance long-term investment in the economy, the source of productivity gains and economic growth.

Except for the last years of the Clinton administration, the continuous deficits over the past four decades have forced a reliance on foreign savings for U.S. domestic investment, resulting in increasing trade deficits.

Fair Tax Increases

One must conclude that while deficit reduction is not the primary problem at this time—creating jobs is—deficit reduction is a serious problem for the long term. The Obama administration would do well to signal now that it is thinking and planning how best to reduce the deficit when the time comes to do so. This is where values are crucial in making the best choices regarding tax increases and cuts in spending.

Since economic institutions and policies have a major impact on human dignity, they raise not only technical concerns but moral concerns as well. As the National Conference of Catholic Bishops argued in the very first paragraph of its 1986 pastoral letter "Economic Justice for All," every perspective on economic life that is human, moral and Christian must be shaped by three questions: What does the economy do for people? What does it do to people? And how do people participate in it? In addition, the bishops argue that in pursuing the common good, special concern must be given to the economy's impact on the poor and powerless because they are particularly vulnerable and needy (No. 24). Equity, then, is an important factor in deciding how taxes are to be raised and expenditures reduced.

Two arguments are typically made against raising taxes: first, that citizens are already overburdened and second, that more taxes will reduce incentives to save, invest and work. In fact the available empirical evidence supports neither contention. The United States and Japan have the lowest rate of taxes (federal, state and local) out of income (G.D.P.) among the major industrial countries: 27 percent and 28 percent compared with an average of 45 percent for Europe. The excessive-burden argument against tax increases is therefore unpersuasive.

What about the argument that high taxes work as a disincentive that slows economic growth? When cross-country studies are used to measure economic growth for industrial countries in comparison with tax rates, there is no undisputed relationship. Some high-tax countries grow rapidly; others grow slowly. It is the same for (relatively) low-tax countries. Econometric attempts to tease out a relationship have led to mixed results with no clear-cut outcomes. Some years back Robert Barro of Harvard University found a relationship, and a few others have done so after him; but many studies find no relationship. Empirical studies appear to indicate that higher taxes do have a small effect on investment, but the results are murkier in terms of any effect on savings and work.

Why do Americans resist taxes more than others? The major reason for low tax rates probably has to do with U.S. political culture: Americans have always been more suspicious of government than Europeans. President Ronald Reagan, who had a visceral, ideological distrust of government, played on that suspicion to convince the public that taxes were too high and government spending wasteful. President George W. Bush learned from his father's election defeat that reducing taxes, not raising them, was a winner. A

politician running for office who advocates more taxes takes an enormous risk.

New Revenue Sources

From my viewpoint as an economist concerned for the common good, the Reagan and Bush tax cuts, coupled with dramatic increases in military expenditures, have led not only to persistent structural federal deficits but also to a record widening of the income and wealth distribution between the rich and the poor. In the near future, tax increases will be needed to help close that structural deficit. Increasing the progressivity of the federal income tax is an important step, but other options ought also to be part of the political dialogue.

First is the adoption of a value added tax system for the United States. An exemption for basics (food, housing, medical care) would reduce the regressivity inherent in any such excise tax. The overall level of income taxes could be reduced (while increasing progressivity) as an incentive to accept a VAT. It would be easy to share the VAT revenues with states and local governments to carry out needed programs. An added advantage is that the tax would fall on consumption rather than income, thereby providing some incentive for savings.

Second, increased taxation of gasoline could raise additional revenues and encourage conservation in its use. U.S. gasoline prices are still among the lowest among industrial countries and, in real terms, not significantly higher than they were before the 1973 oil crisis. The following inflation-adjusted gasoline prices are on an annual basis: 1958 $2.24; 1968 $2.11; 1978 $2.16; 1988 $1.75; 1998 $1.35; 2008 $3.23; and 2009 $2.28. If additional gas taxes were used partly to subsidize public transportation, it could be of real help to the poor.

Third, a good case can be made for a securities transfer excise tax. Such a tax could raise an estimated $100 billion a year in revenue and would discourage dubious short-term, speculative practices while fostering a more stable supply of long-run capital funds. Lawrence Summers offered the following opinion on this in an article published in the 1980s: "Such a tax would have the beneficial effects of curbing instability introduced by speculation, reducing the diversion of resources into the financial sector of the economy, and lengthening the horizons of corporate managers." In a recent interview, however, Summers, currently assistant to the president for economic policy and director of the National Economic Council, has backed away from supporting such a tax, maybe for political reasons as much as for economic ones.

Reduction of Expenditures

If one looks at the 2010 federal budget, one sees that three expenditure items dwarf all the others: Social Security

($695 billion), Medicare plus Medicaid ($743 billion) and military expenditures ($664 billion). Social Security appears politically untouchable at this time, and, in addition, it is paid out of a separate fund that has had a surplus every year and has not required subsidy from the federal budget. In fact, the Social Security surplus has been used to cover the federal budget deficit through the purchase of government bonds. There are real limits to military reductions as long as the war in Afghanistan continues. The new health care bill may or may not reduce medical costs, but reductions are not even calculated to begin until 2014. The belief that expenditure reductions alone can substantially lower the deficit, therefore, is mistaken.

How can federal expenditures be reduced? In the very near term the Social Security fund will move from a surplus to a deficit. Government will have to take corrective measures to restore sustainability—measures like reducing the inflation indexing and fully taxing benefits. The government and the public will have to face up to end-of-life issues in Medicare and Medicaid. Currently, medical expenditures in the last six months of life absorb nearly a quarter of all medical expenditures. Tort reform for medical malpractice suits is needed to stop defensive medical practices. Finally, voters must rethink whether it is necessary or feasible for the United States to carry a defense budget so much greater than those of other nations.

The economic problems confronting the American people are real and extremely serious. In the near term, it is proper for the United States to continue the deficit and even increase it through added stimulus spending. The economy needs policies deliberately aimed at overcoming stagnation and promoting equitable and sustainable growth, while also protecting the environment. In the longer term, however, we cannot achieve any of these goals, nor can we contribute to global economic stability as long as we suffer from the fiscal constraints imposed by the trade and federal budget deficits.

ON THE WEB
Charles K. Wilber answers readers' questions on our blog.
americamagazine.org/things

Many Americans are already correctly convinced that there are no painless solutions. In practice, all workable programs will meet opposition from powerful special interests. Yet they must be enacted and carried out despite deep philosophic differences among the American people over such issues as free markets versus government intervention, individual freedom and responsibility versus community obligations and so on. The times, in short, demand real political leadership. As Americans we must expect it and require it of our representatives. A

Announcing

Henk A.M.J. ten Have, M.D., Ph.D.

Newly appointed director of the Center for Healthcare Ethics at Duquesne University

A physician, philosopher and bioethicist, Dr. ten Have has an international reputation for expertise in palliative care, euthanasia, genetics and the allocation of health care resources.

Among his credentials:

- Former director, UNESCO Division of Ethics of Science and Technology
- Editor-in-chief, *Medicine, Health Care and Philosophy*
- Co-founder of the European Society for Philosophy of Medicine and Health Care
- Author of 27 books, including *Ethics and Alzheimer's Disease* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004) and *An Ethical Analysis of Dutch Euthanasia Practice* (Open University Press, 2005), as well as over 300 articles and book chapters.

The Center for Healthcare Ethics

Offering interdisciplinary doctoral, master's and certificate programs for health care professionals and scholars:

Doctor of Philosophy in Healthcare Ethics (PhD)
Doctor of Healthcare Ethics (DHCE)
Master of Arts in Healthcare Ethics (MA)
Joint Healthcare Ethics-Law Degree (MA/JD)
and
Graduate Certificate in Healthcare Ethics (online)

For information, call 412.396.4504 or visit **www.duq.edu/healthcare-ethics**.

DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY

McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Christopher M. Duncan, Dean

WWW.DUQ.EDU

Duquesne University *was founded by the Congregation of the Holy Spirit, the Spiritans, in 1878. It is a private, coeducational university with more than 10,000 students and an extensive selection of undergraduate and graduate degree programs offered across 10 schools of study. Duquesne is ranked consistently among the nation's top Catholic universities for its award-winning faculty and tradition of academic excellence.*

The Road to Nonviolence

Moving peace work to the center of Christian life

BY HANSULI JOHN GERBER

Two special designations were proclaimed for this millennium's first decade, which comes to an end this year: the Decade to Overcome Violence, sponsored by the World Council of Churches; and the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence for the Children of the World, sponsored by the United Nations. The core objective of the World Council of Churches' decade was to move the concern for peace from the periphery of the churches to their very center. And while that goal has not been reached, some progress has been made. What is important at this point is to determine how the urgent tasks of preventing and overcoming violence and of building a just peace may be continued, even if they are still somewhat marginal to the churches whose raison d'être is the ministry of reconciliation.

Children wave copies of the final statement signed by 100 religious leaders at the close of the annual International Prayer for Peace at Georgetown University in 2006.

CNS PHOTO/NANCY WIECHEC

In spite of the fact that neither the United Nations nor the World Council of Churches was really equipped or determined to carry out their full-blown, decade-long campaigns, their attempts have left indications that the movement is going in the right direction. The discourse on peace and violence, for example, has undergone lasting change. The debate about just war has given over some space to the debate on just peace. Serious work on the meaning and implementation of just peace has begun and cannot be escaped. Some taboos have been broken and new issues have come up, like suicide, genital mutilation and domestic violence. Violence, in its many types and forms, is more fully understood and more clearly analyzed. The positions of the churches and of religions in regard to violence and peace are more clearly explained, their potential for peacemaking more challenged. Churches see themselves obliged to come out of their isolation on issues related to war, peace and justice.

Making a Path for Peace

Since the year 2000, the context itself, which includes violence, war and peace, has also changed. Violence as a subject has found its way into the daily headlines; terrorism has gone global; and violence has been diffused. War is beyond the control of single states or the international community. It is decentralized and outsourced to private actors. Today the idea of a just war seems more fiction than reality.

One of the most remarkable and sustainable impulses of the past decade has come from the World Health Organization. Who in church circles would have expected that an evidence-based public health approach to the prevention of violence could reduce violence significantly in many places, across many cultures? The organization's approach maps violence in its context and documents the direct impact of prevention measures. This has led to surprising results—for example, a reduction of violence through coaching parents

HANSULI JOHN GERBER, *executive secretary for the Swiss Fellowship of Reconciliation, was coordinator of the Decade to Overcome Violence at the World Council of Churches from 2002 to 2009.*

about parenting even before their children are born.

It takes time for the churches to catch on to such good news. Meanwhile, peace building and conflict transformation have become academic and practical disciplines around the world. Domestic violence is also better documented and addressed in interdisciplinary ways. These developments are quite recent and must be continued, broadened and deepened in the next decade. No single party or branch of society can do that by itself, nor can any significant part of civil society exempt itself from such a responsibility, least of all the churches.

The context seems ripe as never before for the implementation of ideas as old as humanity—peace and justice.

Today's context for violence prevention and promotion of peace is at once difficult and encouraging. Elements like the following give reason for concern. The peace movement, insofar as it exists, is very dispersed and lacks or refuses coordination. The institutional churches, primarily in Europe and North America, have lost much of their historic leverage and are preoccupied with internal issues and a struggle for survival. Political leaders lack efficiency and credibility while being increasingly subject to celebrity media. The world economy suffers from uncertainty and is built to a high degree on a historic injustice: that industrialization tends to widen the wealth gap. Democracy as we know it is increasingly questioned as a value and is undergoing profound changes that feel threatening to many. Direct democracy, for example, is threatened by populist politics and by globalization.

At the same time, several encouraging developments can be observed. Civil society no longer accepts violence as an unavoidable given. Violence prevention, peace education and peace building have become international, interdisciplinary programs. Interreligious interest, encounter and action are becoming mainstream. Direct access to information and interaction is possible for large parts of society anywhere. While abolition of nuclear weapons may still be far away, it is being sought with increased energy. More encouraging signs could be listed.

The context seems ripe as never before for the implementation of ideas as old as humanity—peace and justice.

Are the Churches Changing?

In 2006 the Assembly of the World Council of Churches asked for a consultative process toward an ecumenical declaration on just peace and an international ecumenical peace convocation, known as I.E.P.C. The consultative process began in 2008 and the convocation will take place in 2011. The Decade to Overcome Violence, deliberately launched with an emphasis on joint ecumenical efforts and processes among church hierarchies and also at the grass-roots level, tried to challenge the churches to "relinquish any theological justification of violence." If the D.O.V. has not brought churches to that point, it has at least helped to determine what it implies, which turns out to be nothing short of a paradigm shift. Historically, churches have resisted change, especially when that change involved questioning common practices handed down over time. From that perspective, the current consultative process, limited as it may be, is a test.

Will Dietrich Bonhoeffer's 1934 appeal for a clear stance on peace and against war finally be heard? Will the peace theology that has existed over centuries but was often excluded from serious debate or relegated to a small cadre of idealists come to enjoy greater support? There is no shortage of appeals to peace, calls to stop violence and reprimands against injustice or acts of terrorism from leaders of various church traditions. But in Christian tradition the justification of war, now more neutrally called "military intervention," has been a majority position. Is that about to change? Given the state of the world in 2010, one would certainly hope so.

What further evidence is needed to document that armed intervention is neither stopping violence nor preventing injustice, much less creating a just peace? Only in the 20th century has war been justified by the claim that it is necessary for bringing peace. Historically, war was used to build, expand or secure nationhood, and churches did not usually object to such wars. The just war teaching was

intended to make sure war was declared and carried out in self-defense, preserving the safety of citizens. (That is a far cry from any war our generations have seen.) Will the churches now find it possible or, even better, necessary to no longer justify war that pretends to make peace?

Today, the amount of money spent on the military in wartime and in peacetime is a gross violation of human rights, sustainability, justice and peace. Why, for instance, is military spending not linked to the U.N. Millennium Development Goals? Why don't the churches speak up in that regard? To be antimilitary was an early Christian virtue, at least until Constantine. For a long time now that position has been considered politically incorrect or economically impossible at best and antipatriotic at worst. The issue of human security is genuine, but there is ample proof that militarism increases insecurity, not security, for the earth and its people.

It is true that for most of its history, more precisely since the fourth century, Christianity has not been strictly pacifist. But is that reason enough to maintain that violence is compatible with the way of Jesus? In many people's view, God condones violence. Love and violence are not seen as mutually exclusive. As the Decade to Overcome Violence reaches its end and violence remains a major threat to human life and to the earth, what is at stake is that image or understanding of God and with it the fate of humanity.

Justice, Essential for Peace

Violence on the macro level, capable of killing humanity and making the world uninhabitable, is very real. Not unrelated is violence on the micro level: domestic violence and street violence, which many lament as a sign of uncivilized behavior that should be kept in check through repression. Both recent research and experience show that microviolence is preventable. Whereas nuclear weapons can and must be abolished, violent behavior on the street or at home cannot be abolished in the same way, but it can be significantly reduced. Major steps in prevention are education, training, coaching, practical measures, coherent legal frameworks and the building of trust and respect. Those measures are in opposition to popular electoral promises to "get tough," which generally give priority to repression, apprehension and exclusion. Churches do much compassionate, constructive work in the area of interpersonal violence. The Decade to Overcome Violence is a witness to such work. Full violence-prevention, however, has to overcome not only the violence of individuals, but the structural violence of an unjust world order and the double standards that condemn violence by others while accepting violence on one's own behalf. Peace and justice are related not simply because there is no peace without justice. There is essential injustice in the way violence is being judged by political, economic or religious authorities.

All of this points to a necessary paradigm shift within the Christian churches, which the Decade to Overcome Violence has not accomplished but has helped to promote, making the imperative for nonviolence more evident.

Let me suggest five priorities for churches, movements and people who are committed to peace work beyond this decade. 1) *Seek cooperation*: commit to coordination in preference to self-protection and use synergies. 2) *Promote civil rights and civic action*: act in favor of kindness and justice, intervene against violence, be prepared to engage in self-giving acts for justice. 3) *Resist confusion:* Reduce fear, accept the fact that conflict is inevitable and refuse violence of any kind. 4) *Practice violence-prevention* by taking a public health perspective, which is recommended by the World Health Organization. This means understanding violence not exclusively in criminal or political terms, but as a phenomenon within the agenda of public health. This approach should be used as part of an interdisciplinary approach. Go by the evidence instead of relying on assumptions. 5) *Learn and teach nonviolence as a way of life; r*eflect it in attitude, speech and action.

Peace work has a future. That future is in diversification. Peace work must be practical, competent, networked and holistic. It includes spirituality, by which I mean faith, hope and love. There is little doubt that peace work will be controversial and will sometimes meet with violent response. That has been true since the time of the biblical prophets. Yet a violent response will not keep the peacemakers from moving ahead, toward a future lived in a just peace. Peace work is a gift and a responsibility. Everything else is temporary and misleading. A

PEACE ONLINE

Decade to Overcome Violence: **www.overcomingviolence.org**
Nuclear weapons: **www.globalzero.org/ and www.globalpriorities.org**
Practical active nonviolence: **www.aforcemorepowerful.org/**
U.N. Peace Education: **www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/peace/index.asp**
U.S. military spending and costs of war: **www.nationalpriorities.org/**
World Health Organization: **www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/en**

For a select bibliography on conflict transformation and peace:
www.peacemakers.ca/bibliography/bib40christian.html

The Other Haiti

Rebuilding quake-shattered lives beyond Port-au-Prince

BY TOM PRICE

Try to imagine Haiti, ravaged by a massive earthquake last January, and images of rubble, masonry at crazy angles and huge homeless camps come to mind. Port-au-Prince, the capital, is still dotted with the camps that people spontaneously formed after the quake and white Land Cruisers of the United Nations and other relief agencies. While cleanup is underway, collapsed buildings and debris overwhelm the landscape. In Léogâne, west of the capital and close to the center of the quake, barely a building is left standing. To see how the nation is changing and to glimpse its future, you have to take a road out of Port-au-Prince.

I recently traveled to Haiti for Catholic Relief Services to document the plight of rural Haitians. There I observed a number of projects fully or partially funded by C.R.S. that provide short-term jobs, grant microloans to small businesses, subsidize daily meals for Catholic schoolchildren and help local communities plant trees and grow food. A small agricultural school teaches men and women farming techniques to enrich the soil, increase crop yields and channel runoff. I also saw how the Haitian countryside has been affected by the quake.

In the southern and western departments (or provinces) island life is beginning to look more normal. The people here are poor, but the buildings are intact. Yet the quake has brought enormous pressures: Some 110,000 internally displaced people live in the Sud Department—more than the 80,000 who live in the two largest camps in Port-au-Prince to which the prominent visitors and film crews come. Many of the displaced people now in Sud lost their homes in the capital during the quake and have returned to their rural roots in these provincial towns to stay with family. The two neighboring departments of Grand Anse and Nippes also

TOM PRICE *is a senior communications manager for Catholic Relief Services, the official international humanitarian agency of the Catholic community in the United States.*

PHOTO: TOM PRICE

Desir Jeanne Ornelie, 55, with eggplants she is raising as part of a C.R.S.-supported agricultural and reforestation program in rural Bom Pas, Haiti.

"host" displaced Haitians from the capital, almost 200,000 of them. With their arrival, household sizes in Sud have swelled by an average of five people. In rural areas like the small coastal town of Carrefour, I met many families who had left Port-au-Prince.

Meprilant Desir is philosophical when he talks about making ends meet with extra mouths to feed. "God gave them to us, so we make do. Some days we get enough, some days we don't," he smiles. Desir now supports nine children, four of his own and five who fled the quake. Recently widowed, he is caring for them alone. Straight across the dirt road that runs through the town, his neighbor Frisca Saint Juste, 23, has a similar story. He is sheltering his cousin and his cousin's three children, plus his mother and father.

ON THE WEB
Tom Price reports on Haiti's reconstruction.
americamagazine.org/podcast

Both Desir and Saint Juste have planted seeds they received as part of a church distribution at a seed fair. They are both tending strips of peas and corn. The peas provide vital nitrogen to the soil for the next crop. Saint Juste depends on the crops he grows behind his small house. His cousin helps out, but it is backbreaking work, especially with no nearby water source to irrigate the crops. Saint Juste explains to me how bringing water closer to the field, with a community water pump, for instance, would greatly help him and his neighbors.

Desir, a man with a heavy weight on his shoulders, is nevertheless optimistic about the future. He attributes his optimism to the new agricultural venture. "I got the seeds at a seed fair, and I know enough not to eat them but to plant them," he laughs. "I am stronger now, I have more energy, and I have the energy to plant more." He has ambitions to plant peanuts next.

Salvaging the Land

For decades, sloping hillsides bare of trees have been the defining feature of rural Haiti. Massive deforestation has led to soil erosion and frequent, damaging flooding. It is one of the biggest problems facing Haitian agriculture in one of the poorest parts of the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. Since most people live from hand to mouth, few worry about cutting down the last tree for charcoal if it meets their needs for that day. The road around the southwest coastline detours often through fords and along the beach, where bridges and road surface have been washed away. The lower slopes have long been used for crops and grazing livestock. Higher up, the trees have been felled for fuel, principally to make charcoal for cooking.

Along the coast in Bon Pas, at a little agricultural school run as a partnership by C.R.S., the U.S. Agency for International Development and Caritas Haiti, a dozen men and women are planting cassia tree seedlings. Hundreds of plastic pots dot the hillside. The cassia seedlings are destined to return some life to the denuded hillsides and to protect the earth from erosion. The trees will give nitrogen to the soil and grow back well after they have been trimmed for charcoal wood. It will take many years for the cassia seedlings to mature, but the work to stop soil erosion and flooding has already started.

On the hillsides that rise behind the coastal strip of agricultural land, drainage channels have been dug to divert rainwater away from crops and houses and safely into natural water courses. Local villagers who work for Catholic Relief Services as part of a cash-for-work program provide most of the labor. The program aims to provide vital infrastructure work and local employment, while it also injects badly needed cash into the local economy. (In Port-au-Prince I saw how well the drainage channels work during a storm. When the rainy season started in April, the drainage channels built on the hilly Petionville Club camp prevented flooding and directed the water down to the municipal drains.)

At the agriculture school, smallholder farmers like Desir and Saint Juste can also learn about new crops and techniques to increase their yields. Rows of leeks, tomatoes and eggplant run across the narrow strip of land at the school. A woman named Jeanne Ornelie Desir, (no relation to Meprilant) tells me she has planted eggplant, tomatoes, leeks

and carrots. Some, she explains, are for her family, but she is also planning on a large enough harvest to sell produce at the market. She and her husband support a family of 18: six of their own and 12 quake émigrés. "The program has helped us a lot," she says. "Now we can have beautiful gardens with vegetables so we can eat. And we are planting trees to rebuild the land." Desir shares plant care tips with her friend Elisme Amanta, who is busy among the tomato plants. Amanta has three extra mouths to feed at home since the quake.

Life Outside the Capital

In the provincial capital of Les Cayes, the schools are overflowing with city children who have come to stay with their country cousins. Transplanted parents complain that they are being asked to pay school fees in Les Cayes when they already paid for schools in Port-au-Prince. But many of those schools no longer exist. In Haiti there is no nationwide public school system. Virtually all Haitian schools are run by the private sector, and Catholic schools are common. The school feeding program has been stepped up dramatically to reach the quake émigré children. The number of children who receive a hot meal at school every day doubled this year from 45,000 to 90,000, and C.R.S. and its partners planned to reach 135,000 children by August.

"Let's keep the I.D.P.s [internally displaced people] back home in the country, but we have to give them opportunities," says Dr. Jude Marie Banatte, who coordinates Catholic Relief Services programming out of Les Cayes. "This crisis has created an opportunity to decentralize the country," he explains. A daily hot meal is an important incentive for families to stay in the province; but, as Dr. Banatte explained, people need opportunities. Boosting livelihoods through agriculture, cash-for-work and microfinance (small loans for family businesses) are all designed to meet this goal.

Places like Les Cayes and Sud Department need to be developed if Haiti is to decentralize its population, develop its infrastructure and create viable employment opportunities outside the capital. The Haitian authorities strongly encourage decentralization, which has been tried before. The quake has given it a new urgency.

"The piece that has always been missing is involving civil society, local groups," explains Dr. Banatte. "All the programs, the agriculture, the microfinance involve local groups.... We are teaching these communities about watershed management. The community understands, protects and manages the land that they are dependent on." Civic involvement—perhaps even that missing piece can now be supplied.

As I traveled back toward Port-au-Prince, I began to see more quake damage and an increase in traffic. Although international attention has focused on this devastated, choked, dusty wreck of a city, the key to a better life for Haitians lies back down the road, in the provinces. A

Sea Change

Finding old friends and a new outlook at the ocean

BY B. G. KELLEY

I was losing my soul on the information superhighway, so I jumped off. Weary of being confused and co-opted by too much information, too many people telling me what I should be doing and eating and thinking, I escaped to the sea. There I could empty my mind of the crush of information and opinions crowding it.

It was late afternoon on the beach in Ocean City, N.J., a pin-tucked shore retreat, neat and clean with a distinctly family feel. The sun was gaining distance as I walked along the sea line, reeling in the peaceful rhythm of the waves. Suddenly, I heard my name called. I turned and saw an old friend coming toward me—"Mad Dog," we used to call him growing up—a smart guy but prone to fits of anger. I hadn't seen him in maybe 20 years but had heard he hit it big on Wall Street.

As he came nearer I noticed that my old friend was bent like a parabola, perhaps from arthritis, walking slowly and struggling to keep up with his Labrador retriever. Under the impartial sun-stream, deep lines on his face, almost like scars, created a crosshatch of worry and anxiety. He was 55 years old but looked 75. We talked for a while and then, as we were about to go our separate ways, my old friend said with a palpable sadness, "You know, the sea is the only place that I feel close to God. I should have taken more time for it over the years."

Mad Dog was right. The sea *is* spiritual, like saying a prayer or being in a church. The sea captures us, awes us, comforts us and calls us. It is ministerial, mysterious, magnificent. We see no signs of its age. The sea is strong, immortal, everlasting in its perfection. It connects us not only to God but also to ourselves. The sea evokes a feeling of just how temporal and fragile our lives are. It is inflexible in its disquieting teaching: that such things in life as power, glory, possessions do not really matter. In the real run-out of our lives, they will disintegrate like a sand castle under a tidal wave. Only God is certain, says the sea.

For some, the sea can foster more secular dreams. As a teenager, I would go to the sea with a girl who would build sand castles each time we were there and point to them saying, "I'm going to be a princess, and this is where I'm going to live." She was right, in a way. She settled in a huge house at the highest point of Beverly Hills—a castle that overlooked the City of Angels. It did not bring her complete happiness, though. As she grew older, she would go to the sea and build a sand-church as near to the water as she could, then sit there and watch the water come close to it, but never cause it to disintegrate. She died with a priest at her bedside.

At the sea, in reflection and contemplation about our lives, we can peel away those parts that lead us astray. The sea encourages us to behave differently: to celebrate the passion of the soul, to not take life as seriously as the talking heads and suits make it seem, to awaken an innocence that often gets lost, or at least misplaced, when we become adults. At the sea I feel gratitude so sharp it is physical.

ART: DAN SALAMIDA

B. G. KELLEY *has written for* ***America****, The New York Times, Sports Illustrated and other publications. He was a writer for the television movie* Final Shot: The Hank Gathers Story *and is the author of a book of poetry,* The World I Feel.

The next day on my walk along the shoreline I reflected on another friend, Bobby, who had moved from the city to the seaside in Wildwood, N.J., seven years ago, simply so he could be near the water, walk along the shoreline every day, embrace its perfection, soak up its eternal mysteries. "The sea keeps giving back to me," he once told me, "and I keep taking its gifts like some cosmic outlaw. It is here that I am at the sweetest chapter in the passage of my life." My friend is a poet.

Bobby's return to more innocent, freeing times brought to mind these lines from T. S. Eliot: "We are the hollow men/ We are the stuffed men/ Leaning together/ Headpiece filled with straw." Bobby was no longer permitting his adulthood to grow stuffed and stale with insignificant, unimportant things.

Sometimes I wonder where the mystery in life has gone. Do we know too much while traveling the information superhighway? Has our spiritual landscape fallen too flat, become too barren? Why do we not revel more in the talk of God and truth and purpose? Are life's minutiae more important—indeed more indulgent—than eternal questions and answers? The willful and willing can find answers, or at least begin their search, in God's gift: the sea.

The sea gives me a sense of who I am. It cuts out my tendency to live according to how others think I should live, and it helps me embrace the promises of God in order to find the meaning of life; it contributes to the destiny of my soul. For me, the sea is sacred. It swells, like faith, and there I hear God's voice in the splashing of the waves. On my last day at the sea, I sat down to read a book called *Future Youth*. When I reached a chapter titled "Picture a New You" I tossed the book aside—in fact, I tossed it in the trash can. I did not want a new me. The present version is fine. A

FILM | JOHN ANDERSON

THE SEER

'Vision' profiles Hildegard of Bingen.

For this reviewer, the most memorable intersection of motion pictures and Catholicism involves Fordham Road and University Avenue in the Bronx, circa 1961. Across those streets, the lovely Sister Laureen herded a class of unruly uniformed first-graders to see the Twentieth Century Fox epic "Francis of Assisi." As a movie, and a moral lesson, it left almost no impression other than the memory of a miraculous morning free of school. But as I have discovered recently, courtesy of the invaluable Internet Movie Database, "Francis" was directed by Michael Curtiz (who also directed "Casablanca") and featured Bradford Dillman, Stuart Whitman and Dolores Hart, who, perhaps not coincidentally, later entered a religious order.

As a film, "Francis" qualifies more as a symptom: ancient Hollywood always had a weakness for Catholicism, a fixation often blamed on the early Jewish film moguls' desire to preempt anti-Semitic criticism. But the results were a mixed blessing. Some film fans, it is safe to say, would rather revisit the director Henry King's "Jesse James," say, than his "Song of Bernadette."

But **Vision**, the story of the German mystic, writer, composer, artist and protofeminist Hildegard von Bingen, directed by Margarethe von Trotta, is not Hollywood cinema. Neither is it forgettable, either as a movie or a moral lesson.

The performance of Barbara Sukowa as Hildegard seems as much an act of faith as it is acting; it's difficult to imagine that a performer could

PHOTO COURTESY OF ZEITGEIST FILMS

Barbara Sukowa (center) as Hildegard von Bingen in Margarethe von Trotta's new film, 'Vision.'

inhabit a personality as fierce, idiosyncratic and fraught with complexities as Hildegard without believing in what the woman was, and in what she aspired to be. Of course, that may simply be an example of miraculous transference, empathy and performance. But viewers will choose to believe otherwise. The totality of what Hildegard was and meant to be is too unruly a mob of meanings, intentions, interpretations and signifiers to be herded into one movie, so von Trotta does what any self-respecting dramatist would do: She presents Hildegard as a woman first, and an object of veneration second.

ON THE WEB
Kerry Weber reviews
"The Social Network."
americamagazine.org/culture

Von Trotta's work as a director includes "Rosenstrasse" (2003), "Rosa Luxembourg" (1986) and "The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum" (1975), which she and her ex-husband, Volker Schlöndorff, co-wrote and co-directed. Von Trotta is a feminist filmmaker, who in "Vision" concentrates on Hildegard's position as a progressive in an ecclesiastical universe of mortification. Indeed, Hildegard's mentor, Jutta the Holy (Lena Stolze), is discovered on her deathbed to have worn under her clothing a belt of ragged steel, her flesh discolored and septic. Self-flagellation is the rage.

As the film opens—on "the last day of the first millennium"—the faithful are portrayed as a doomsday cult awaiting the end of the world in a tableau that suggests Jonestown as much as it does Y2K. Into this world Hildegard is born; it is one she will help reform and modernize, at least in the gospel according to Margarethe.

The young Hildegard von Bingen was given over to the church by her parents, whose motives are presented as suspect. The child was frequently "ill," although her symptoms are interpreted here as the visions that made, and continue to make, Hildegard an object of cultish veneration. The Benedictine sister's worldly accomplishments were multitudinous: she is credited with creating opera; advancing architecture, plumbing and herbal medicine; and all with a certain aggressive advocacy of women at a time when such an approach equaled heresy.

Her credentials as a mystic were questioned then and are questioned now. The neurologist and author Oliver Sacks has cited Hildegard as a likely sufferer of migraine headaches, which had not been defined in 1136 but cause symptoms similar to Hildegard's visions. Von Trotta allows room for that interpretation. Hildegard's episodes seem to coincide with the stress she suffers at the hands of her abbot at Disibodenberg (Alexander Held), who initially sees Hildegard's cosmic connections with "the living light" as something to be parlayed into contributions of land and money, but who recoils from her demands for autonomy.

Perhaps the most controversial sequence in the story involves Hildegard's subordinate, Sister Clara (Paula Kalenberg), who becomes pregnant by a brother at the co-ed cloister at Disibodenberg. (According to the director, this episode was not inspired by anything in Hildegard's past, but rather by archeological research into life in medieval co-ed monasteries). "Maybe there's a medicine I could take," the desperate Clara pleads, as Hildegard silently recoils. The banished nun, after consulting one of Hildegard's medical texts, commits suicide by poisonous herb. The knife's edge of knowledge is razor sharp.

Hildegard's intellect is also sharp. It leads her into various fields of intellectual exploration, not the least of which is politics. Her successful "negotiations" with the abbot regarding the founding of a monastery at Rupertsberg, which would become her permanent home base, is less about pure logic than the aligning of political allies (including the Cistercian abbot Bernard of Clairvaux). But Hildegard is also a fierce theological debater. Parrying with a visiting "magistra" (as the abbess is called here), she recalls the young Jesus debating the temple elders; von Trotta's strategy—to structure Hildegard's biography as a parallel to the story of Jesus himself—suddenly becomes clear.

There is a passion of Hildegard as well. Richardis (Hannah Herz sprung), an angel-faced nonconformist, is brought to the monastery by her wealthy, noble mother (Sunnyi Melles) and becomes Hildegard's obsession. Here the story wanders from holy to profane. When Richardis is suddenly plucked from the Rupertsberg cloister to head a monastery of her own, Hildegard becomes desperate, pleading, literally getting on her knees to her old neme-

sis, the abbot, to keep Richardis near her. The visionary mystic, who certainly seems caught in a riptide of lesbian love, is reduced to her most basic, and even base, elements. But the effect is to bring Hildegard to earth and recognizable human experience.

The look of the film is extraordinary. Shot in widescreen format, but set almost exclusively inside the two monasteries where the story unfolds, the film possesses a natural visual tension created by its intimacy and broad scope. The compositions of cinematographer Axel Block suggest Jan van Eyck, his lighting Vermeer. It is a memorable, beautiful film.

Now if only St. Francis of Assisi could get himself an advocate like Margarethe von Trotta.

JOHN ANDERSON *is a film critic for Variety and The Washington Post and a regular contributor to the Arts & Leisure section of The New York Times.*

BOOKINGS | EMILIE GRIFFIN

WOMEN OF FAITH

The series titled "Called to Holiness: Spirituality for Catholic Women," from St. Anthony Messenger Press, is an adventurous treatment of the spiritual life. The theologian Elizabeth A. Dreyer is general editor of the eight-volume paperback series. The books are not based on an unexamined notion that women are somehow "more spiritual." Instead, the series takes a broad, theologically grounded view that women are well suited to do theology and spirituality through study, reflection, biblical formation, prayerfulness and worship, depth of experience and a sharp sense of social conscience. "Take a couple of deep breaths," Dreyer suggests. "Close your eyes and open your mind and heart. Slowly, deliberately, and with a quiet confidence say: 'I am a theologian.'"

Dreyer is developing what she calls a "grassroots theology," in which everyone can participate. Part of the task is to weigh one's own experience against the received tradition in which one has been raised. "How do our thoughts, values and behaviors align with the wisdom of the tradition to which we have given assent in faith?" Dreyer asks.

The editors and authors have designed this series for Catholic women, partly because women are typically more active in the church. But it is to be hoped that men will dip into these books as well. Each one is a brief but substantial treatment of spirituali-

ty from a woman's perspective. Every 100-page volume is also practical, offering reflection questions, prayers, rituals and additional readings on each theme.

The series takes for granted that readers, including Catholic women, are already practicing the spiritual life. The authors focus on how their development is and should be proceeding today. In *Making Sense of God*, Dreyer, a widely known theologian who is a professor of religious studies at Fairfield University, lays out a framework for spiritual theology. She overturns any longstanding popular supposition of a division between head and heart. Both theology and spirituality, in her view, will rely on reason and thought as well as on love and compassion. With careful argumentation and long-held convictions, Dreyer forges a tight, intelligent framework for the discussion, not only in her own first volume, but anticipating those that follow.

Unlike some treatments of the spiritual life, the "Called to Holiness" series does not focus on particular spiritual practices, like retreats, Bible study and spiritual direction. Though spiritual practices are mentioned, everything from the rosary to eucharistic adoration and the Stations of the Cross, the how-to of Catholic spiritual life is largely assumed.

Each volume is thematic and focuses on a different aspect of spirituality: *Awakening to Prayer* (the last of the series) by Clare Wagner, moves way beyond conventional instruction in prayer to examine such themes as noticing, awakening, thirsting, nurturing, struggling and transforming. Wagner is a Dominican Sister of Sinsinawa who lives in Madison, Wis. She is widely known as a spiritual director—both trainer and practitioner—and for her work as a retreat leader.

Grieving With Grace (Dolores R. Leckey) explores faith-filled recovery from the loss of a beloved spouse. *Living a Spirituality of Action* (Joan Mueller) charts a spirituality of social justice and compassion. Michelle A. Gonzalez examines her own culture and spirituality in *Embracing Latina Spirituality*. Sidney Callahan explores many ways of nurturing in *Creating New Life, Nurturing Families*. Patricia Cooney Hathaway examines the life cycle and especially the middle years in *Weaving Faith and Experience*. The youthful search for meaning and identity is handled by Beth M. Knobbe. While I read the titles as a sequence, each one stands on its own.

Are these books feminist in approach? Yes and no. They are certainly not contentious, and they don't engage in controversy. But the authors intend to correct a longstanding imbalance. Claire Wagner writes in *Awakening to Prayer*:

> …you may want to say, as I do, that certain things over the centuries of religious development have pushed women to the edge of belonging, if not separation. A system that has prevailed in society has prevailed in our church, and that is a system of domination and hierarchical dualism. For many centuries, the prevalent image of God was that of a sovereign male, demanding and distant, possibly frightening and judgmental, definitely patriarchal….in many church circles around the globe, that patriarchal image prevails to this day.

Wagner's book is not just about the feminist struggle; even so she points out ways that women have been hemmed in by masculine assumptions.

Dreyer voices a similar concern—that women in Western cultures should take a global look: "When we cast our eye beyond the women of our own nation, it takes but a split second to realize that the majority of the world's poor and oppressed are women." She voices this in a preface that frames every book in the series. Despite this fundamental viewpoint I find the books more reflective than argumentative. They are not tracts but theological statements. Women's gifts and their right to equality are assumed in a way that shapes the series overall. Typical of this evenhandedness is Callahan's spiritual advice: "Society offers conflicting opinions on feminism.... Name one of your strongest convictions on this topic and explain your position. What further questions do you still have?"

One of the most instructive volumes in the series is Leckey's *Grieving With Grace*. This diary of the author's passage through a time of loss is moving and concrete. Dated journal entries capture the experience of certain days.

Yet Leckey's approach opens up the rich rewards of Catholic spiritual practice. The blessing of the liturgical year—Advent, Lent, ordinary time and the feast days of the saints—is reflected in the author's life events. Leckey, a popular author and a senior research fellow at the Woodstock Theological Center, honors spiritual direction as a way of gathering fruit and insight from a lifelong relationship to God.

An encouraging look at social justice work is offered in *Living a Spirituality of Action*. Its author, Joan Mueller, a member of the Franciscan Sisters of Joy and a professor of theology and Christian spirituality at Creighton University, takes for granted that social commitment is not easy. Her constant reference to Jesus and his disciples is reassuring. She dips into biblical stories in ways that renew our courage and sense of purpose. Her concern is for spirituality as staying power against the huge challenge of poverty and violence. Mueller provides a satisfying answer to the frequently heard cry, "What can one person do?" The woman who practices a spirituality of action relies on the support of an extended community of like-minded believers. She peppers her book with vivid wisdom sayings: "Plan carefully," "Understand that failure is part of the process," and "Work against grumpiness."

Finding My Voice, by Beth M. Knobbe, is an engaging treatment of youthful self-discovery and the development of a sense of identity and calling. Knobbe explores such matters as love, intimacy, sex, friendship, commitment and the dignity of the person. She has a clear moral vision and a personal relationship with God that she expresses in a fresh, straightforward style. Knobbe, who has worked extensively with young people as a campus minister at the Sheil Catholic Center of Northwestern University, raises perennial questions: "Who am I really?" "Where am I going?" "How will I make a difference?" Even more impressive, she deals with the formation of a mature social conscience.

ON THE WEB
The best of
America's Web-only content.
americamagazine.org/picks

The interplay between culture and spirituality is very clear in *Embracing Latina Spirituality*. Michelle A. Gonzalez takes pride in her origins and Catholic formation. An accomplished theologian and author who teaches at the University of Miami, Gonzalez spent two years in a Mayan community in Guatemala. She has also engaged in Afro-Cuban studies and published a book on Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. She treasures the strong sense of family she finds in the Latin community and sees it as a resource for all Catholics. Gonzalez honors the simple faith expressed by conversing with the saints and with Mary, lighting candles and leaving flowers beside their statues. Dealing with such beliefs as "the evil eye," Gonzalez shows herself to be in tension with the culture she loves. Still, she wants us to embrace the "folk Catholicism" in our own histories. Her chapter on Marian devotion sees Mary as a source of Latina empowerment. Gonzalez works with a light touch to help readers value the concrete materiality of sacramental faith.

Sidney Callahan takes on a large challenge in *Creating New Life, Nurturing Families*. With the title of distinguished scholar at the Hastings Center, Callahan is widely known as a commentator on literature, psychology and faith. Here she deals with generativity and marriage, parenting and work, and, finally, the meaning of suffering. She negotiates this vast territory with confidence:

> Women of faith can also receive glimpses of light and the gift of joy in the midst of the suffering and struggle of everyday life. While pain and suffering are real

CARTOON BY HARLEY SCHWADRON

and not an illusion as some thinkers have asserted, joy can be present in the midst of pain.

The author draws not only from formal disciplines but also from her lived experience. She and Daniel Callahan, married in 1954, are the parents of six children and grandparents of four. Especially satisfying is the upbeat tone of her spiritual counsels: "Where, in your family life, have you experienced healing?" "Make a list of heroines in your life." "Create a short gratitude list and take a moment to dwell on each item in prayer."

In *Weaving Faith and Experience*, Patricia Cooney Hathaway takes a look at the life cycle, with special emphasis on the later years. Hathaway is associate professor of spirituality and systematic theology at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit, Mich. Her volume deals with the seasons of adult life, especially the seasons of a woman's life. Hathaway treats each season thoroughly, drawing on insights from psychologists and spiritual writers. Two sections are devoted to autumn—the middle years—one to the spring and summer of life (young adulthood) and one to the winter of life. Her discussion of integrity versus despair, in which she examines Erikson's idea of "the consolidation of life," and the search for wisdom in the later years is impressive. This wisdom is born out of struggle, to review one's past accomplishments and failures, to forgive oneself and others. "Can we acknowledge our own guilt, sadness and remorse for the hurt we have caused others and even ourselves and ask for forgiveness? To do so is to allow the psyche to heal...." Hathaway says this process is helped by Christian belief in a compassionate, loving God, and she mentions Billy Graham as an example of the trustful faith that is needed for this "consolidation" process.

In dealing with the later years, Hathaway reflects on three major mystical writers: Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross and Bernard of Clairvaux. I was glad to find a diagram of Teresa's Interior Castle, a fitting counterpoint to the life-cycle charts shown earlier in the book. It's clear that wisdom discovered in earlier centuries is still pure gold.

The "Called to Holiness" series lends stature to spirituality. It has structure, weight and theological insight. Each of these eight female perspectives shows the interplay of theology, spirituality, philosophy and psychology. Together they demonstrate the root meaning of holiness: wholeness, well-being and health.

Do women as theologians have something to say to the church at large? This fine series of books shows that they do.

EMILIE GRIFFIN *is the author of several books about the spiritual life, including* Simple Ways to Pray: Spiritual Life in the Catholic Tradition. *She lives and works in Alexandria, La.*

Is America arriving late?

You can notify your local post office and make a complaint and/or request a publication watch. (Note: postal regulations allow this only after at least three instances of late delivery or no delivery.)

Or notify us by phone at (212) 581-4640, ext. 118; or by e-mail at subscriptions@americamagazine.org. We will then contact the U.S. Postal Service.

CLASSIFIED

Baptism Garments

BAPTISM GARMENTS FROM BETHLEHEM in timeless design that recalls the baptism of Jesus. Six infant sizes, embroidery inspired by mosaics in the Church of the Nativity. Purchase supports Holy Land Christians. Visit www.BaptismGarment.com or call (805) 544-9088, Pacific Time.

Books

HELP SEVERELY AUTISTIC adults. Buy a book at douglasacres.com.

Parish Missions

FAITH BEGINS IN FAMILY LIFE. This mission promises to keep parents of all ages (grandparents too) interested and entertained, ultimately deepening the faith of each domestic church and creating in families a longing for greater participation in their parish church. Visit www.familyfaithonline.com.

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

Pilgrimages

HOLY LAND PILGRIMAGES. Can be customized for your group of 12 to 20 persons. Visit Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Galilee, Dead Sea, Petra and more. Stay in Christian guesthouses. Meet local people in their homes. See Christianity in orphanage and school for special-needs children. Visit fair trade shops. Next scheduled pilgrimage: April 30 to May 13, 2011. Visit www.HolyLandInstitute.org, or call Claudia Devaux at (805) 544-9088, Pacific time.

Positions

BREEN ENDOWED CHAIR IN CATHOLIC SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY. The Department of Theology and Religious Studies at John Carroll University seeks a scholar-teacher for its new Jack and Mary Jane Breen Endowed Chair in Catholic Systematic Theology. The successful candidate will have demonstrated excellence in scholarly publication and teaching and be able to support the Catholic and Jesuit traditions of the University. The chair holder will teach courses in Catholic systematic theology to undergraduates and to graduate students in the master's program. She or he is expected to sustain regional and worldwide connections with theological communities. Rank, teaching load, research support and salary are to be determined. Applicants will submit a letter of application detailing interest and qualifications for the position and a current résumé, including a teaching portfolio and names of at least three references, who will not be contacted until the search is in its advanced stages. Review of applications will begin on Dec. 6, 2010. The appointment will begin in August 2011. Correspondence should be directed to: Dr. Thomas L. Schubeck, S.J., Chair, Breen Chair Search Committee, Department of Theology and Religious Studies, John Carroll University, University Heights, OH 44118; e-mail: religion@jcu.edu; Web site: www.jcu.edu/religion. A full description of the position is available on the Web site.

DIRECTOR OF LITURGY. St. Mary's Seminary and University in Baltimore invites applications from Roman Catholic priests for a position as Director of Liturgy for the School of Theology/Seminary program, beginning fall 2011. The Director is responsible for the planning and supervision of all seminary liturgies. He works with the Director of Liturgical Music and reports to the President-Rector. Graduate-seminary level teaching in liturgical and/or sacramental theology and service as a formator in the Sulpician tradition are additional responsibilities of the position. The successful candidate should have both experience in practical liturgical direction and academic credentialing. A terminal ecclesiastical degree in the field is preferred; an earned graduate degree beyond ordination requirements is acceptable. Academic rank is commensurate with prior achievement. Competitive salary and benefits package.

Send letter, curriculum vitae and names of references to: Timothy Kulbicki, O.F.M.Conv., Dean of the School of Theology, St. Mary's Seminary and University, 5400 Roland Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21210; or send e-mail to tkulbicki@stmarys.edu.

DIRECTOR OF MAJOR GIFTS. America Press Inc., New York, N.Y.—national media ministry of the U.S. Jesuits, publisher of **America** magazine and host of www.americamagazine.org—seeks a full-time Director of Major Gifts to solicit and close major gifts that support the mission, needs and priorities of A.P.I. Capacity to support enthusiastically and knowledgably the mission of A.P.I. is essential. Creativity, passion and motivation to engage potential donors a must. Bachelor's degree required plus 5 to 7 years of experience in fundraising and a proven track record in securing major gifts. To apply please send cover letter, résumé, salary history/requirements to publisher@americamagazine.org, or fax to publisher's attention at (212) 399-3596. Preferred deadline is Nov. 1, 2010, with candidates reviewed on first-come basis. Be part of a team that translates dreams into goals with deadlines!

KENRICK-GLENNON SEMINARY RECTOR PRESIDENT. The Archdiocese of Saint Louis has an immediate need for a full-time Rector President for Kenrick-Glennon Seminary. The candidate who is selected will assume responsibilities July 1, 2011. Founded in 1893, today K.G.S. has a student body of 126 seminarians, after ordaining one of the largest classes in the United States in 2010. The Rector President must be a priest in good standing with an advanced degree in theology or canon law. This is a full-time position and demands someone who has the ability to form a seminary community as outlined in the *Program of Priestly Formation* (fifth edition). Send applications to: Archbishop Robert J. Carlson, Archbishop of Saint Louis, 20 Archbishop May Drive, St. Louis, MO 63119-5738.

PRESIDENT, FRANCISCAN SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY, a Roman Catholic seminary and graduate school of theology operated by the Province of St. Barbara, Order of Friars Minor, and a member school of the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, Calif. The Franciscan School of Theology seeks an experienced academic leader and administrator with a proven record of institutional advancement and relevant Ph.D. or equivalent. Applicants must support the Franciscan theological tradition/educational mission and the ecumenical mission of the Graduate Theological Union. Preference will be given to a vowed religious member of the Franciscan family or other vowed religious who has demonstrated commitment to and understanding of the Franciscan vision. For complete description, see www.fst.edu. By Nov. 15, 2010, applicants should send letter of application, C.V. and three references to: Chair, Presidential Search Committee, Franciscan School of Theology, 1712 Euclid Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94709; e-mail: presidentialsearchFST@fst.edu.

Retreats

WISDOM HOUSE, Litchfield, Conn. Labyrinth walks are open during the month. Interfaith Institute, "Money and Faith," Oct. 29-30: Speakers include Margaret McCarthy, Barbara Cohen, Rev. Terry Wysong and Mufti Ikram ul Haq. For other retreats and programs, visit www.wisdomhouse.org, or call (860) 567-3163.

Treatment Center

INTENSIVE OUTPATIENT PROGRAM, clergy and religious. Multidisciplinary approach to personal healing, behavior change and weight management. Local community housing arrangements. Program for Psychology and Religion, St. Louis Behavioral Medicine Institute. Ph: (314) 289-9407. www.slbmi.com.

Wills

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

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

LETTERS

Getting Our Money's Worth

I wish Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan had spent more time presenting the "evidence" he so briefly cites in "The Catholic Schools We Need" (9/13). Much of this reference material is not readily available to me. And I need a clearer definition of Catholic schools.

The contributions of inner-city Catholic elementary schools and high schools are undisputed. But I am harder pressed to understand the need for parochial elementary schools in middle-class suburban communities where public schools are effective teaching and "civilizing" institutions and are supplemented by religious education classes at church.

How do Catholic schools compare in these settings, and to what shall we compare them? Is there research comparing the outcomes for alumni of parochial schools and those, like my children, who attended public schools and C.C.D.? What is the difference in happiness, success, religious practice and ethical attitudes for these two groups? I am concerned because 30 percent to 35 percent of my own parish's net revenue subsidizes our parochial elementary school, and I don't know what we are getting for that expenditure.

ROBERT V. LEVINE
Collegeville, Pa.

What Keeps Them Faithful?

Though my experience is limited, I do not believe that Archbishop Dolan's premise (9/13) that Catholic school graduates "emerge as lifelong practitioners of their faith...and will be leaders in church and society" is borne out as often as he might hope. I went through all Catholic schools; my husband never attended one. Yet we are both active in the parish and cherish our Catholicism.

On the other hand, we have many friends who sent their children to Catholic schools, and the adult children no longer practice the faith. Our two children did not attend parish schools and are active Catholics. Nor does the evidence bear out that Catholic school graduates are committed to social justice.

There must be other experiences that keep people in the church. **America** might look into the other factors, like family background, examples of teachers, liturgies and homilies that strengthen faith.

CLAIRE MARMION
Long Beach, Calif.

Read & Write, Right & Wrong

Bravo for Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan's article (9/13). But as an alumnus of 16 years of Catholic education and a former educator in a Franciscan high school and Jesuit university, I would add to your list of causes and actions.

(1) Catholics have allowed their students to be absorbed by public schools for decades rather than organize to demand the support we have paid for with our taxes. (2) Catholic charity and philanthropy have never targeted academic excellence in elementary education. (3) Competition for Catholic dollars is fierce and protected by the traditional recipients. (4) Equity requires tuition assistance for those who cannot afford it, especially Hispanic immigrants from Central America. (5) The bishops must plan a national development effort. I remember the words of my college friend Tim Russert about his seventh grade teacher, Sister Mary Lucille: "She founded a school newspaper and appointed me editor and changed my life." His teachers, he said, taught him to read and write and tell right from wrong.

BOB LONGO
Cleveland, Ohio

Time for Something New

My heart resonates with Archbishop Dolan's article (9/13), but I feel we are

not paying enough attention to the signs of the times. The goals of Catholic schools—inculturating our children and promoting their growth in faith—can be met by other means. There are simply not enough philanthropic dollars available to preserve the current Catholic school system. Meanwhile, the graduation rate of Hispanic Catholic immigrants is disastrously low.

Perhaps we are called to develop a response other than a separate school system. In the 19th century, Archbishop John Ireland of St. Paul, Minn., wanted to work with the public schools by conducting the religious education of our children during released time in classrooms rented in public schools. This was squelched by the rest of the American hierarchy.

Maybe the charter school movement has presented an opportunity to return to Ireland's idea.

DAVID HASCHKA, S.J.
President, Cristo Rey Jesuit High School
Minneapolis, Minn.

No Need to Be Roman

In response to the editorial "Truly Catholic" (10/4): As the Roman Church becomes more a fortress church, we need an American Catholic church that is *sui iuris*. The Roman Church of the Crusades, sex scandals, the Vatican bank scandal and Vatican princes no longer identifies with many people, and we no longer identify with it. Many in Europe and the United States have left.

By allowing the patriarchs to have authority only in the Middle East, the Roman Church would also put the Eastern churches in a box. It makes second-class citizens of their members who live elsewhere. The existence of other Catholic churches proves that Catholics do not need to be Roman to be Catholic. The preservation of the Roman Church is not important. What is important is only that the church's work, its social teaching, survive.

KEN CHAISON
Bethesda, Md.

Close Eyes; Open Mouth

Alone worth the cost of the subscription to **America** is its editor's brief but luminous essay "A Classic Revisited" (9/27) on Cardinal Newman and the role of the laity in the church.

As the writer, Drew Christiansen, S.J., says, "When the teaching office leans excessively on its authority, it mistakes commanding for teaching." For Newman, as he found the clerical tradition in Ireland, the laity were "treated like good little boys."

It is difficult for us to realize that Newman, now safely beatified, was once the subject of frequent delations to Rome as "dangerous" and "untrustworthy." Time, though, has demonstrated the topicality of his words for mature laypeople, recognized and consulted for their proper role in public life.

E. LEO McMANNUS
Venice, Fla.

Environmental Ethic

Kyle T. Kramer's "Appalachia's Wounds" (10/4) is terrific. I posted it to my Facebook profile and will direct students in my introduction to theology course to it, since we have discussed the relationship of the biblical creation narratives and wisdom literature's poetry on creation to a Christian environmental ethic.

JERRY VIGNA
Cherry Hill, N.J.

Make Me Proud

After reading the two forthright and courageous editorials "Mosque Hysteria," on the Park51 community center, and "Hold to the Deadline," on leaving Afghanistan (9/13), I was again proud to have once added the letters S.J. to my name.

I would be even more proud if your editorials could address the vital if controversial question of the biased attitude and behavior this country often shows toward Israel in its relations with Palestine.

Finally, I would react with humble satisfaction if **America** could bring up for discussion the church's rigid attitude toward contraception, an attitude so hurtful to thousands of poor and unprepared mothers-to-be.

EDWARD L. MOONEY
St. Petersburg, Fla.

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

America (ISSN 0002-7049) is published weekly (except for 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.

Incomparable Mercy

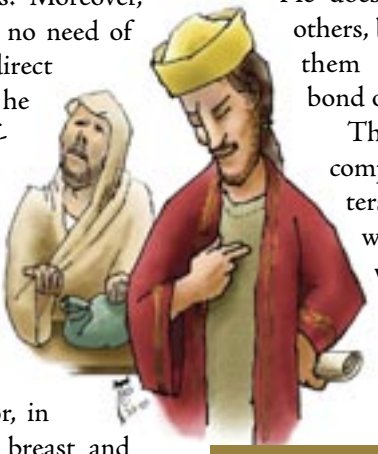
THIRTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (C), OCT. 24, 2010

Readings: Sir 35:12–18; Ps 34:2–3, 17–23; 2 Tm 4:6–8, 16–18; Lk 18:9–14

"O God, be merciful to me a sinner" (Lk 18:13)

"Comparisons are odious," wrote John Lydgate in his poem "Horse, Sheep, and Goose," which dates to the mid-15th century. In the poem, the animals debate which one is more useful to human beings. The poem creatively exposes how boastful comparisons fuel attitudes of superiority and disdain for others. In much the same way, Jesus uses parables, like the one in today's Gospel, to help his listeners identify and change behavior in themselves that is harmful.

Two characters, a Pharisee and a tax collector, go up to the temple to pray. Jesus' original audience would have instinctively compared them, thinking the first to be admirable and the latter despicable. Pharisees were known for their piety. This particular one fasts and tithes above and beyond what is required. Surely these actions indicate that he is righteous, that is, in right relation with God, other human beings and the whole of creation. The Pharisee's prayer, however, indicates otherwise. The entire prayer directs attention to himself and his accomplishments: "I thank you...I am not like.... I fast.... I pray...." He thanks God not for the gifts he has been given but for not being like all the rest of humanity, which he sees as rapacious, unjust and adulterous. His comparisons make him haughty and disconnected from others. Moreover, he appears to have no need of God. If he were to direct his gaze at God, he might arrive at a different kind of comparison. He might see how poorly he embodies divine compassion and connectedness to all other beings.



The tax collector, in contrast, beats his breast and prays simply, "O God, be merciful to me, a sinner." Focusing on God, he prays for openness to divine mercy, which has the power to transform his sinfulness.

It is likely that he finds himself in this degraded position of collecting taxes because there are no alternatives. One would only stoop to such a job when no other work could be found. Tax collectors were low-level functionaries with no bargaining power. If they extorted money beyond what was their due, it was out of desperation, to keep starvation at bay. Should the tax collector try to repent, there would be no way to repay the many passersby from whom he exacted extra money, so as he prays he offers no vow to make restitution. He knows that is impossible. All he can hope for is God's merciful forgiveness.

The end of the parable is startling: It is the tax collector who is in right relation. He has sinned, but he knows and acknowledges it. He is acutely aware of his utter dependence on God. He does not compare himself to others, but seeks connectedness to them through their common bond of reliance on God's mercy.

The parable seems to invite comparison of the two characters, and we are wont to side with the tax collector. In the very act of making comparisons that reflect unfavorably on the Pharisee, however, we may find ourselves caught up in the same judgmental attitude we despise in him. In truth, there is something of the Pharisee in us, as we so easily make comparisons, exalting ourselves by humiliating others. There is also something of the tax collector in us, who humbly recognizes his own weaknesses while opening himself to the source of all mercy. The parable invites us to leave aside all odious comparisons and to seek oneness with the incomparably Merciful One. From this stance comes right relation with all.

BARBARA E. REID

PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

- Try to leave out *I* the next time you pray.
- Pray with gratitude for the mercy you have received and let yourself be transformed by it.
- Pray to let go any tendencies to compare yourself with others.

ART: TAD DUNNE

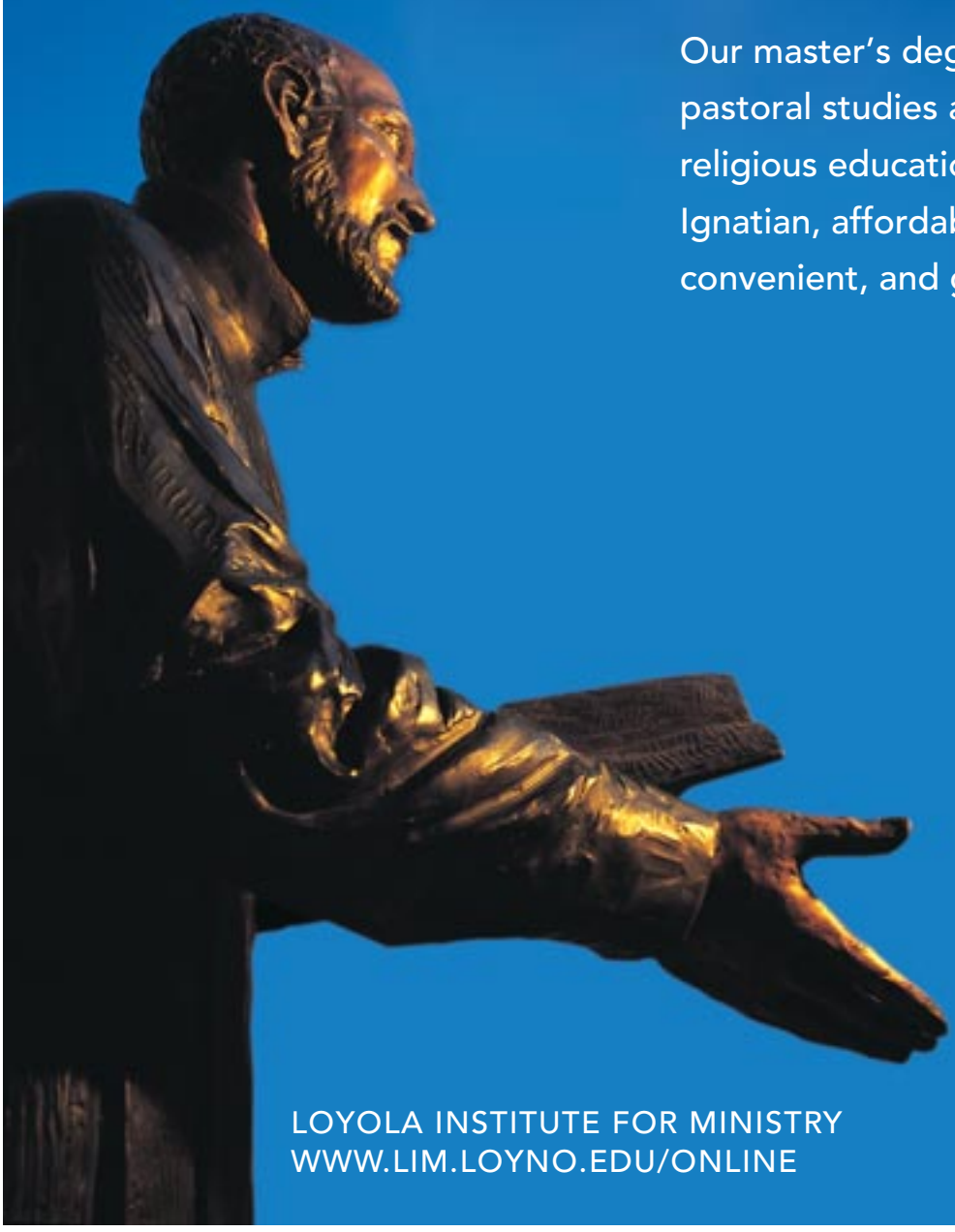
BARBARA E. REID, O.P., *a member of the Dominican Sisters of Grand Rapids, Mich., is a professor of New Testament studies at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, Ill., where she is vice president and academic dean.*

LOYOLA INSTITUTE FOR MINISTRY

40 years experience in ministry education

25 years in distance education • 10 years in online education

Now earn your master's degree all online.



Our master's degrees in pastoral studies and religious education are Ignatian, affordable, convenient, and global.

LOYOLA INSTITUTE FOR MINISTRY
WWW.LIM.LOYNO.EDU/ONLINE

LOYOLA UNIVERSITY NEW ORLEANS