

America

THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC WEEKLY

AUG. 15-22, 2011 \$3.50



PEACEBUILDING: A GROWTH INDUSTRY
WILLIAM BOLE

**LADY GAGA'S
CONFESSIONS**
JON M. SWEENEY

Dotting regional and national bestseller lists in recent seasons have been various memoirs. Among this year's notable entries are: *Reading My Father*, by Alexandra Styron (Scribner), daughter of the acclaimed novelist William Styron (*Sophie's Choice* et al.), who himself wrote a memoir about overcoming a serious bout of depression at age 60; Joan Didion's *Blue Nights* (due this fall from Knopf), on the tragic death of the author's only daughter at the age of 39 (Didion's memoir of the year following her husband's sudden death, *The Year of Magical Thinking*, was published in 2005); Joyce Carol Oates's *A Widow's Story* (Ecco); and *The Long Goodbye*, by the poet and culture critic Meghan O'Rourke, on losing her mother to cancer at age 55 (Riverhead).

I have just finished reading *A Bittersweet Season: Caring for Our Aging Parents—and Ourselves* (Knopf), by the award-winning New York Times journalist Jane Gross. It is not only an affecting memoir of her mother's life and slow decline but an informed and helpful resource. It is always engaging, yet often brutally candid about the author's relationship with her mother. (Her brother shared in care-giving responsibilities.)

Gross's mother originally lived on Long Island, then moved to Florida after her husband's death. She managed well for seven years until back pain revealed cancer of the spine. Her daughter and son brought her to the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York, followed by rehab, relocation to assisted living and, finally, a nursing home. The author freely shares the questions, frustrations, challenges and lessons learned as she chronicles a waning life (not to mention juggling her service tasks and responsibilities with work as a reporter for *The Times*). Having been a part-time caregiver for my own mother during her decline, I felt a strong kinship with

Gross as I read her book.

And we are not alone. A total of 65.7 million Americans, the author notes, serve as unpaid caregivers. Gross came to see that as her mother's needs were changing during the latter phases of her life, it was necessary to have reliable and knowledgeable back-up—social workers, nurses and other professionals and, ultimately, round-the-clock care. She applauds these helpmates for “caring about us as a family unit—[with] neuroses, nastiness, unresolved issues...”

Gross emphasizes the importance of doing one's homework as to what expenses are covered by Medicare, investigating nursing home conditions and in general assuming the role of “advocates for their frail, elderly parents,” especially once they are in an institutional setting. She mentions reports by advocacy groups that indicate, despite regulation and oversight, worsening conditions in homes, due in part to worker shortages and increased turnover, as Medicare and Medicaid reimbursements have gone down. “Nursing homes commonly, to my naïve astonishment,” she discovered, “physically or chemically restrain patients, generally those with Alzheimer's disease, because behavioral methods are so much more labor-intensive.”

Ultimately, the author's mother—a strong-willed, stubborn, frugal former nurse—voluntarily stopped eating and drinking. Death came a month later. Feeling orphaned, as she put it, Gross revisited a photo album and found comfort—just as I did and continue to do—in celebrating special moments with her mother, “with me beside her, cheek to cheek...smiling so hard [I thought] my face was going to break.” This is a sharp contrast, the author notes, to the “slack-jawed, tilted-off-to-one-side broken puppet in a wheelchair.”

Bittersweet, indeed, is this memoir. I'm glad I didn't have to write it, but grateful that someone did.

PATRICIA A. KOSSMANN

EDITOR IN CHIEF

Drew Christiansen, S.J.

EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT

MANAGING EDITOR

Robert C. Collins, S.J.

EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

Karen Sue Smith

ONLINE EDITOR

Maurice Timothy Reidy

CULTURE EDITOR

James Martin, S.J.

LITERARY EDITOR

Patricia A. Kossmann

POETRY EDITOR

James S. Torrens, S.J.

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Kevin Clarke

Kerry Weber

Raymond A. Schroth, S.J.

Edward W. Schmidt, S.J.

ART DIRECTOR

Stephanie Ratcliffe

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Francis W. Turnbull, S.J.

ASSISTANT LITERARY EDITOR

Regina Nigro

GUEST EDITOR

Francis X. Hezel, S.J.

SUMMER INTERNS

Michael Avery

Timothy W. O'Brien, S.J.

Kevin C. Spinale, S.J.

BUSINESS DEPARTMENT

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

Lisa Pope

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

© 2011 America Press, Inc.

Cover: Men join hands during prayers in Tahrir Square in Cairo on Feb. 8, 2011. Reuters/Suhaib Salem

CONTENTS



ARTICLES

13 THE PEACE FRONT

Religious groups stake out a wider role in violent conflicts.
William Bole

COLUMNS & DEPARTMENTS

4 Editorials

Out of Afghanistan
Ahead of the Story

6 Signs of the Times

10 **Column** Attention: Deficit Disorder
Kyle T. Kramer

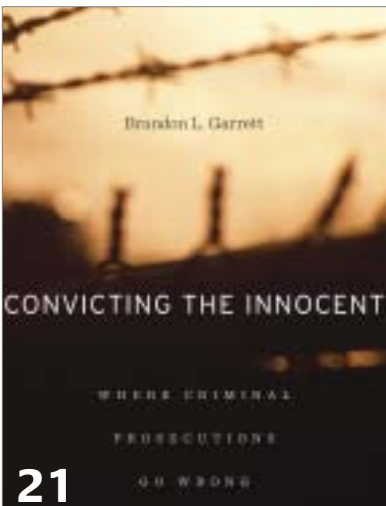
26 Letters

30 **The Word** Who Do You Say You Are?
Finding Your Self
Barbara E. Reid



BOOKS & CULTURE

20 **MUSIC** Lady Gaga's fascination with Christian imagery
BOOKS *Convicting the Innocent; Peculiar Institution*



ON THE WEB

Margot Patterson reports on the worsening crisis in **Syria**. Plus, **America's** Book Club discusses the novel ***Faith***, and Bryan McCarthy reviews the film "**Terri**." All at americamagazine.org.



Out of Afghanistan

Congressman Walter Jones Jr., of North Carolina, has undergone a thorough conversion. A Democrat, he became a conservative Republican; a Baptist, he became a Catholic. He supported the Iraq and Afghanistan wars; now he sends hand-written letters of condolence to the American families who have lost a son or daughter. He told George C. Wilson in *The Nation* (6/13) that he deals with the guilt over having voted for both wars because he was “not strong enough to vote my conscience as a man of faith.” Mr. Jones and his 13-member Out-of-Afghanistan caucus plan to push the war to the forefront in the presidential primaries. Public support for the war has fallen. Only 43 percent of Americans feel it is worth fighting, according to a *Washington Post/ABC News* poll (6/7). A Pew survey on June 21 found that 56 percent wanted troops out as soon as possible and only 39 percent supported staying until the situation stabilized.

In June, 40 religious leaders from all faiths wrote to President Obama that it is time to bring the war in Afghanistan to an end. What began as a response to the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, they contended, has become an open-ended war against a Taliban insurgency.

Since then President Hamid Karzai has replaced his assassinated half-brother, the Kandahar tribal leader, with another brother. U.S. investigators have uncovered a trucking scandal in which at least \$3.3 million paid to eight Afghan contractors has gone through middlemen to Taliban insurgents as bribes in the form of weapons, explosives and cash. Night raids, now 300 a month, have killed both Taliban men and their wives in the same bed.

President Obama’s address in June tried to placate both political critics weary of the 10-year war and military leaders who wanted more time to form a well-trained Afghan army, despite its overwhelming illiteracy and high turnover, and a stable government, in spite of its corruption.

The president promised 30,000 “surge” troops would leave Afghanistan by 2012, then 70,000 for a “complete” pullout in 2014. An unspecified force would remain, however, for “support.” Translated, this looks like an indefinite occupation. The administration should reconsider its priorities. The first engagement in Afghanistan was to arm the mujaheddin to drive out the Soviets in the 1980s. After 9/11, although we replaced a pro-Al Qaeda Taliban government with Mr. Karzai and have driven out Al

Qaeda again, the United States has not “won” in Afghanistan because the goals of “nation-building” were too broad and U.S. troops are laboring in inhospitable terrain and a closed culture.

Meanwhile, the damage at home has been significant. According to a Brown University study, the war will cost \$4 trillion. Much of that money could have been used to create jobs, rebuild this country’s roads, bridges, schools, health care system and parks. The greater cost has been in human life, both American and Afghan. There have been 1,574 U.S. casualties in Afghanistan. Add to that number the 6,670 severely wounded by improvised explosive devices, including amputees. These numbers do not account for the emotionally wounded, suicides, fractured families, victims of alcohol and drug abuse, accidents and sleepless nights. The question of civilian deaths—estimated at 11,700 to 13,900—is not resolved by saying that the insurgents have killed more people than NATO troops have killed. The Afghan people blame NATO more because it represents the intrusion of a foreign power.

Negotiations with the Taliban have not borne fruit. In the long run, only the Afghan people can determine their own fate. The 40 U.S. religious leaders urge that the military be replaced by civilian organizations with relief and development aid experience. Al Qaeda no longer lurks in a compound in Pakistan but is spread throughout the Middle East in cells. Whatever the future, the “global war on terror” is no longer the appropriate term for dealing with the complex challenges introduced by the Arab Spring. If the Central Intelligence Agency, now led by Gen. David H. Petraeus, imagines it can base a foreign policy in this volatile part of the world on the failed strategies of the last 10 years, it is misguided.

As the United States withdraws, it must accept responsibility for the moral dimensions of the decision, which extend beyond the hardships endured by Americans. They include the specter of civil war among Afghan tribes and the possibility that the Taliban will return to power. The respect for human rights we advocated and the additional roads and schools we wanted to build will not come about—a cautionary tale for future nation-building. After 10 years, the costs of this war are too high. The United States has done what it could. It is time for a rapid withdrawal that will have all troops home by Christmas 2012.

Ahead of the Story

Nobody likes reading about clerical sexual abuse. Yet for well over a decade now, in diocese after diocese, the actions of abusive priests and negligent diocesan officials have been brought to light—and appropriately so. Unfortunately, these revelations have come not from church leaders but from grand jury filings, government reports and press exposés. Almost without exception, the official response has lagged well behind reportage. Chanceries have reacted as though stunned by accusations that they have in some cases known about for decades, appearing combative and defensive while struggling to answer lurid allegations.

Recent weeks have proved no different, as the Irish church has been rocked yet again by a government report on clerical abuse. An investigation of the Diocese of Cloyne found that between 1996 and 2009—after national standards were set for dealing with abuse allegations—such reports were ignored, handled improperly or never reported to civil authorities. Fallout in Ireland, traditionally one of the world's most Catholic countries, has been severe. In a rare public rebuke, the Archbishop of Dublin, Diarmuid Martin, chided his fellow bishops for withholding reports on sexual abuse of minors, telling them, "Hiding isn't helping." Ireland's Prime Minister Enda Kenny, a Catholic, accused the Vatican of covering up the "rape and torture of children." The Vatican recalled its ambassador, Archbishop Giuseppe Leanza, to Rome for consultation and to assist in formulating the Vatican's official response before moving to his next post in the Czech Republic.

The sexual abuse crisis has devastated many, beginning with individual victims and their families. The morale of laity and clergy alike has been severely undermined, as has the moral authority of many bishops. Impressions of coverups and malfeasance have tainted the highest levels of church governance, triggering frequent and justified calls for mass resignations of bishops and, more recently, indictments of chancery officials. Lagging behind the story has made matters worse, fueling the impression that the church is hiding something, shielding abusers to protect "the institution" instead of vulnerable children.

As Ireland smolders in the report's wake, a hopeful yet far less noted development has emerged in Germany—a nation also weighed down by abuse allegations. Germany's Catholic bishops have begun taking steps to rebuild the trust that has been lost in recent years. In July they voted unani-

mously to grant independent investigators access to their files on sexual abuse by clergy—some cases as far back as 1945. No doubt their findings will raise serious questions about how allegations were handled and will reveal systemic failures in protecting children. Though prior damage cannot be undone, the country's bishops are acknowledging that they need outside help to combat this problem. In so doing, they are also being proactive, not reactive.

Bishops around the world should follow their example. If the church's own claims about abuse are true—that it is damnable yet distressingly widespread, infecting families and schools as often as churches—then there are certainly allegations against priests and religious that have yet to come to light. To date, the crisis has hit hardest in North America and Western Europe. Far fewer allegations have surfaced in other regions, including Central and South America, India, Africa and Asia. But all of these have enormous Catholic populations, and it would be foolish to presume that these locales have been free of abuse and mishandled allegations. Indeed, this is one instance in which the catholicity of the church will likely prove a liability, not an asset.

Recent years have shown that as a topic in the news, sexual abuse by clerics is resilient. Once in the headlines, it remains there indefinitely. Unless the church begins to respond differently, as the German bishops are trying to do, sexual abuse will continue to be the main story about the Catholic Church for years, even decades, as accusations surface around the world.

Countless bishops, including Pope Benedict XVI, have spoken of the crisis as an opening for repentance, conversion and purification in the church. We continue to hope that it will be so and pray that the many victims of abuse will be healed in the same measure that they have been harmed. For this hope to be well founded, however, church leaders must stop playing defense around the issue of abuse. Rebuilding relationships of trust between the hierarchy and the faithful will take more than promises from church leaders that they are trustworthy. They must prove it. This will require resignations in cases of mendacity and negligence. In more cases, it will demand that bishops be the bearers of their own bad news about abuse. This will be an act of humility, even a painful one. But there is no alternative.



SIGNS OF THE TIMES

MEXICO

Indigenous Community Rises Up Against Crime

The Rev. Antonio Mora ministers to a town under siege, where masked men guard checkpoints, the charred remains of logging trucks block roads and a banner in the town square demands a military presence. Set in the misty hills of Michoacán State in Mexico and surrounded by pine forests, Cherán is a place where loggers armed with chainsaws and assault weapons once clear-cut trees with impunity. The local mayor and police department were alleged to be in league with the criminals, and community leaders who resisted were assassinated.

The local population finally lost patience when the loggers encroached on the town's water source. Armed with two-by-fours, hatchets and bottle rockets, they chased off the loggers in mid-April and, later, the police department and the mayor. The uprising of April 15 failed to surprise Father Mora, although he and others in the community say the actions were spontaneous and unplanned.

"They'd tell me, 'Father, we're scared. We're arming ourselves. We're tired of this,'" he said. "It was a response to the anger, rancor, helplessness and sense of abandonment by the authorities."

The uprising in Cherán is one of the few grass-roots revolts against the growing reach of organized crime, whose illegal enterprises and bloody

turf wars have claimed 40,000 lives since a government crackdown began in December 2006. It also highlights the frustration with the failure of vari-



Father Antonio Mora, pastor of St. Francis of Assisi Church in Cherán, Mexico

ous levels of government to protect communities against organized crime, which increasingly has moved in on small-time nuisances—such as logging

HEALTH CARE

Bishops Seek Broader Exemption From Controversial Requirements

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has sharply criticized new guidelines for "preventive services" for women issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Among other provisions, the new guidelines, released on Aug. 1, require private health plans to cover female surgical sterilization and all drugs and devices approved by the F.D.A. as contraceptives. The bishops note this includes "drugs which can attack a developing unborn child before and after implantation in the mother's womb."

The new regulations were accom-

panied by an amendment that "allows religious institutions that offer insurance to their employees the choice of whether or not to cover contraception services." The agency invited public comment on the "interim" policy, suggesting revisions may be forthcoming.

Both the U.S.C.C.B. and the Catholic Health Association have rejected the wording of the religious exemption. "As it stands, the language is not broad enough to protect our Catholic health providers," the C.H.A. complained in a statement posted on its Web site. "Catholic hospitals are a significant part of this nation's health

care, especially in the care of the most vulnerable. It is critical that we be allowed to serve our nation without compromising our conscience."

Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo, Archbishop of Galveston-Houston and chairman of the U.S.C.C.B. Committee on Pro-Life Activities, complained the exemption "is so narrow as to exclude most Catholic social service agencies and healthcare providers." He called on Congress to pass the Respect for Rights of Conscience Act to close such gaps in conscience protection.

Cardinal DiNardo said, "Under the new rule our institutions would be free to act in accord with Catholic teaching on life and procreation only if they were to stop hiring and serving non-Catholics." Cardinal DiNardo asked:



without permits—and turned them into thriving illegal enterprises. “The only thing the state government has done is wash their hands of this and

“Could the federal government possibly intend to pressure Catholic institutions to cease providing health care, education and charitable services to the general public?”

Under the new H.H.S. requirements, as of August 2012 new health insurance plans must include women’s preventive services like well-woman visits, breastfeeding support, domestic violence screening and, most controversially, “contraception without charging a co-payment, co-insurance or a deductible.”

H.H.S. Secretary Kathleen Sebelius called the new guidelines “historic” and said they were “based on science and existing literature and will help ensure women get the preventive health benefits they need.” According to an H.H.S. statement, “Family plan-

pass along the problem to the federal government,” said Father Mora.

Cherán unfolds across a hilly region 250 miles west of Mexico City, and many in the mostly indigenous Purepecha population of 14,000 depend on the forests for their livelihood. A local combat committee now has teams manning checkpoints and patrolling the forests and has called for the military to intervene, but the main federal government response has been to send sacks of food and household basics.

“We don’t want them to militarize the town, rather patrol the areas with illegal logging,” said one leader, who, like many in Cherán, declined to provide his full name for fear of reprisals. The situation in Cherán had deteriorated over the past three years to the point that locals recall animals left without natural habitat roaming the streets in search of food and truckloads of logs rolling through town

ning services are an essential preventive service for women and critical to appropriately spacing and ensuring intended pregnancies, which results in improved maternal health and better birth outcomes.”

Covered under the new standards are “all Food and Drug Administration approved contraceptive methods, sterilization procedures and patient education and counseling for all women with reproductive capacity.” The so-called abortion pill, RU-486, is not covered, but “emergency contraceptives,” including pills known as Plan B and ella, are.

Cardinal DiNardo said that ella “can abort an established pregnancy weeks after conception.” He added: “H.H.S. says the intent of its ‘preventive services’ mandate is to help ‘stop health prob-

lems before they start.’ But pregnancy

is not a disease, and children are not a ‘health problem’—they are the next generation of Americans.”

The community’s uprising highlights the tricky situations parish priests and diocesan officials must face in carrying out their routine duties and social ministries in conflict zones in Mexico. Before the uprising, Father Mora worked on reconciliation projects that began after a political feud tore the town apart during the 2007 local elections. As the logging problem worsened, he celebrated a funeral Mass for those killed by the criminal groups protecting the loggers.

After the uprising, “People asked me to get weapons for them,” the priest recalled. Instead he provided spiritual support for residents during an enormously tense time as thugs—most likely from the quasi-religious crime group La Familia Michoacána or a splinter organization, the Knights Templar—would threaten to return with guns blazing. The military and federal police never showed up.



Famine in Somalia

With five regions in Somalia already declared famine zones, the the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization reported on Aug. 3 that famine is likely to spread across all regions of Somalia's south and that famine conditions may persist until December. Potentially more than 11 million people in the region could be affected by the famine, brought on by escalating food costs and the worst drought in half a century. More than 3.2 million are in need of immediate, life-saving assistance. According to the Jesuit Refugee Service, the current crisis is the consequence of the extreme drought and other overlapping problems, including the lack of a functioning central government in Somalia and the inability of aid agencies to gain access to south central Somalia, which is controlled by the al-Shabab militant group. In Ethiopia, a humanitarian effort led by Catholic Relief Services is ramping up; now feeding 400,000 people, it should reach one million later this month.

Israeli Policies Displace Palestinians

According to a new U.N. report, Palestinian families within the Israeli-administered Area C on the West Bank are being driven from their homes because of movement and access restrictions, settlement activity, restrictions on Palestinian construction and insufficient law enforcement on violent settlers. Area C, a "temporary" jurisdictional zone created by the 1995 Oslo Peace Accords, includes 60 percent of the West Bank. Israel retains control over security, planning and building in the zone, where an estimated 150,000 Palestinians reside. Palestinian families in Area C have

NEWS BRIEFS

Sri Lankan religious leaders and the United Nations have called for an investigation into the **killing of Pattani Razeek**, a leading human rights activist whose body was found on July 29, 17 months after he was reported missing. + Archbishop **Pietro Sambì**, the apostolic nuncio to the United States since 2006, "enjoyed the highest respect and deepest affection" of the U.S. bishops and the nation's Catholics, said New York's Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. Archbishop Sambì, 73, died on July 27, apparently of complications from lung surgery. + The ailing Rev. **Thadeus Nguyen Van Ly**, 64, one of Vietnam's best-known democracy activists, has been returned to prison more than a year after he was sent home to seek treatment for a brain tumor. + Currently 29,437 pilgrims from the United States plan to attend **World Youth Day**, Aug. 16 to 21, in Madrid, a record number for U.S. participation in a W.Y.D. outside of North America. + The collapsing détente between Beijing and Rome continues as the **Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association** prepares to ordain seven more bishops without papal sanction.



Pietro Sambì

difficulty gaining access to water, grazing or agricultural land and even reaching basic services because of movement restrictions and lack of infrastructure. Violence and harassment by Israeli settlers is constant. The report states: "Irrespective of the motivation behind the various policies applied by Israel to Area C, their effect on the visited communities has been to make development virtually impossible, to impose living conditions that are untenable for many and to prevent residents from earning a sustainable livelihood."

Christians Targeted In Northern Iraq

A car bomb exploded in the early morning on Aug. 2 outside the Holy Family Syrian Catholic church in the northern Iraq city of Kirkuk, leaving at

least 20 people injured. Police later defused two car bombs—one in front of a Christian school and another in front of a Presbyterian church. Louis Sako, the Chaldean archbishop of Kirkuk, said that the blast set nearby cars on fire and damaged not only the church, but also about 30 surrounding homes. The archbishop visited the injured in the hospital. He said both Christians and Muslims were wounded in the attack. "We hope this is the last act of violence," Archbishop Sako said. "Christians are sad and in shock" because such a sacred place and innocent people were targeted, he said, and "because Christians play no role in the political games" in Kirkuk—an oil-rich city rife with tensions between ethnic Arabs, Turkmen and Kurds.

From CNS and other sources.

NATIONAL GUARD

NATIONALGUARD.com



You're armed with something more powerful than any weapon: Faith.

As a chaplain in the National Guard, you can give strength to the Citizen-Soldiers who serve our communities and country. You can help them succeed in their mission, whether they are protecting their hometowns during disasters or defending our freedom overseas. Your words, your wisdom and compassion are needed here. Learn how your faith can serve you well at NATIONALGUARD.com/chaplain.





Attention: Deficit Disorder

As this column goes to press, there is a glimmer of hope that American lawmakers, in their debate about the national debt ceiling, have reached a compromise that charts a course between the dangerous Scylla of even greater budget deficits and the potentially catastrophic Charybdis of a national default. Aside from the self-serving political theater, I have been especially frustrated by the utter lack of attention paid to a large elephant in the room. Even if by some legislative miracle we could cut government spending and raise enough tax revenue to balance the federal budget, the U.S. economy (like the global economy) would still rely on another sort of insidious deficit spending: the natural capital on which all economic activity depends.

Examples abound, but two suffice to make the point. Energy is the fundamental engine of almost all modern economic activity. Try to think of any good or service money can buy—Ikea furniture, a Starbucks latte, a car wash—that is not subsidized at every step by massive amounts of energy used to produce it, get it to you (or you to it) and keep it functioning. The U.S. Energy Information Administration projects global energy consumption will rise almost 50 percent by 2035, but most energy will still come from finite and quickly diminishing sources like coal, oil and natural gas.

Economic activity also depends on food production, since we cannot go about our business on empty stom-

achs. Yet a Cornell University study in 2006 estimates that U.S. agricultural practices erode soil 10 times faster than nature rebuilds it; in China and India soil loss is 30 to 40 times the natural replenishment rate. Over the past four decades, almost a third of the world's arable land has become unproductive because of erosion. Modern food production is also an energy hog: it consumes between three to 10 calories (depending upon how you count) of nonrenewable energy for every one calorie of edible food it produces.

Deficit spending of natural capital is like heating a library with a furnace that burns books. Unlike the Federal Reserve, which can create billions of dollars at will, we cannot simply print more soil, oil or other natural resources. When they are gone, they are gone; mother nature always collects on her debts. And although all of us will eventually feel the pain as these resources diminish, the global poor feel it first and feel it worst.

The Catholic tradition speaks eloquently about the need for faithful stewardship of God's creation. It also reminds us that our economy is simply a reflection of our values; our economic decisions are always moral decisions, creating weal or woe for our fellow human beings, other creatures and the earth as a whole. Unfortunately, however, most Catholics are just as complicit as others in deficit spending of natural capital. We often tend to bracket our religion off from our economic lives. Sometimes we even claim that our prosperity results from God's

blessing rather than credit-bingeing on energy and natural resources.

It need not be this way. In fact, when commenting about the church's role in environmental concerns, Pope Benedict stated recently that the church is "often the only hope" when it comes to summoning the moral motivation to address such large-scale and seemingly intractable problems. As individual Catholic households, as

parish communities, as dioceses and religious orders and as a universal church, we have tremendous potential to help fashion a different sort of economy. How?

We would begin by advocating for and trying to engage in honest accounting of natural capital alongside monetary capital, so that we

know whether our books balance on nature's ledger. Including the true costs of limited resources would likely increase the price of energy and goods. We in developed countries would have to pare down our lifestyle, and we would need to put special safeguards in place for the poor. Overall, however, higher prices could usher in a more modest, less growth-addicted economy, based on humility, prudence, efficiency and the preservation of natural capital. We could shift the core value of our economy from consumption to community, which is a truer form of wealth.

All of this is necessary, all of it is complex and none of it is easy. But we must address our deficit disorder, starting now. God's creation hangs in the balance of our budget.

Mother
nature
always
collects
on her
debts.

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

Aglow with the true spirit of Christmas!
First Ever Illuminated Nativity Tree
presented by Thomas Kinkadee!

An impressive 16" high with illuminated Crèche and Nativity structures, and over 40 characters all hand-crafted!

The Nativity story comes vividly to life in a three-dimensional, fully sculpted, illuminated miniature tree inspired by the *Painter of Light™*. This beautiful tree retells the blessed event step by step—from the Three Kings' journey to Bethlehem, to the heavenly angels bringing good tidings and praise, to the night Jesus was born.

Superb handcraftmanship & hand-painting

Handcrafted, hand-painted scenes and figurines nestle cozily within its lush, sculptural greenery. Reflecting a warm, holiday glow, the tree and structures illuminate and it plays the cherished melody, *Silent Night*. The brilliant crystalline Christmas Star treetopper, beautiful mahogany-finish base and brass name plaque make it truly a one-of-a-kind.

Urgent Notification! Availability Is Strictly Limited.

Be one of the first to get this incredible Nativity tree, remarkably priced at \$135.00, payable in 4 convenient installments of just \$33.75*.

Orders limited to one tree per customer.

Send no money now. Your prompt response is critical. Simply complete and mail the attached coupon today!

Reserve Today!

www.hawthorne.com/nativitysculpt



Shown smaller than actual size. Powered by AC adapter (included) or 3 "AA" batteries (not included). ©2009 Thomas Kinkadee



THOMAS KINKADEE
Painter of Light.



Plays the cherished melody of *Silent Night*



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

Limited-time Offer—Please Respond Promptly.

Yes! Please reserve one Thomas Kinkadee "Glory To The Newborn King" Illuminated Nativity Tree Masterpiece Edition as described in this announcement. I need SEND NO MONEY NOW.

Certificate of Authenticity and 365-Day Money-Back Guarantee

Signature _____

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

Address _____ Apt. No. _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

14-00101-001-E39414

*Plus \$19.99 shipping and service, subject to change. All sales are subject to acceptance and product availability. Allow 4-6 weeks after initial payment for shipment.
 ©2009 Hawthorne Village 14-00101-001-B12

A Muslim girl chants slogans and holds up a Koran and a cross during a rally to demonstrate the unity between Muslims and Christians in Tahrir Square in Cairo on March 11, 2011.



PHOTO: REUTERS/MOHAMED ABD EL-GHANY



RELIGIOUS GROUPS STAKE OUT A WIDER
ROLE IN VIOLENT CONFLICTS.

The Peace Front

BY WILLIAM BOLE

On Sept. 11, 2001, a cadre of young Muslim men hijacked planes and, perhaps with visions of black-eyed virgins in Paradise, crashed them into the Pentagon and the twin towers of the World Trade Center, acting supposedly in the name of their religion. Within hours of these atrocities, Top 40 radio stations across the United States began playing John Lennon's anthem "Imagine," which supplied what many saw as a soundtrack of hope and harmony in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks. The lyrics longingly envisioned "all the people, living life in peace." But with a disquieting relevance to the suicide attacks, Lennon had also pondered, "Imagine there's no heaven...and no religion, too."

Since then commentators have fleshed out this contemplation of a religion-free world. "Imagine no suicide bombers, no 9/11...no Crusades...no Israel/Palestine wars...no Taliban," wrote the prominent atheist and evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins five years after the towers crumbled. This past December, 30 years after the ex-Beatle was gunned down by a deranged fan, the comedian and television personality Bill Maher, alluding to religious strife in general, sent a message to his fans on Twitter: "Remember Lennon said 'Imagine NO religion.' Honor what he wrote—it holds up." These and other secularist screeds have tapped into a larger feeling that religion usually is a cause of violence rather than an agent of peace helping to resolve and heal conflicts.

This perception is not hard to substantiate. On any given day, religious rivalry is likely to combust into deadly street violence somewhere. In March, for instance, Muslims and Christians clashed mercilessly in Egypt, leaving a dozen dead and 140 injured after the torching of a

WILLIAM BOLE, a journalist in the Boston area, is a co-author, with Drew Christiansen, S.J., and Robert T. Hennemeter, of *Forgiveness in International Politics: An Alternative Road to Peace* (U.S.C.C.B.).

Coptic church near Cairo. Apparently a love affair between a Muslim man and a Christian woman sparked a feud between the couple's families, which escalated into a street fight between Copts and Muslims. Just a month after the nonviolent campaign that toppled the dictator Hosni Mubarak, religion was again dividing rather than uniting. And yet some of the more profound images of the anti-Mubarak uprising were those of Muslims and Coptic Christians rallying together in Cairo's Tahrir Square—young people holding crosses and Korans with raised hands joined, Christians forming a circle around prostrating Muslims to protect them from police during their Friday prayers and other scenes of inter-religious amity.

Religious Peacebuilding

In struggles around the globe, religious believers are showing that they can bow in either direction: toward entrenchment and extremism or toward solidarity and compassion. Untold numbers of faith communities are exploring the latter option, using both spiritual and worldly tools to lessen conflicts and prepare a way for lasting peace and stability. In doing so they are pressing their inherent advantages, which include having a foothold in many fractious societies and adherents at many or all levels of those societies, as the Catholic Church often has. In her 2006 book *The Mighty and the Almighty*, Madeleine Albright, secretary of state during the Clinton presidency, went further to say that faith-based organizations "have more resources, more skilled personnel, a longer attention span, more experience, more dedication, and more success in fostering reconciliation than any government."

Increasingly these religious works are being assigned to the broader category of "peacebuilding," a movement with no clear definition of itself but a growing movement nonetheless. The compound word came into play during the 1990s, as the international community grappled with post cold-war conflicts in places like the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, which, unlike the superpower rivalry, derived from centuries-old religious and ethnic grievances.

The intractability of these conflicts called for strategies beyond simply hammering out cease-fire resolutions. In 2005 the United Nations inaugurated its Peacebuilding Commission, an advisory body that seeks to improve international support for countries emerging from violent con-

licts, helping with peacekeeping, mediation, reconstruction and long-term development programs. Beginning in the administration of George W. Bush, even the U.S. military spoke the language of peacebuilding in its "post-conflict" efforts to rebuild Iraq's political institutions and physical infrastructure, notwithstanding that president's famous aversion to "nation-building." Non-governmental organizations and projects with *peacebuilding* in their names have proliferated almost as visibly as AK-47 assault rifles in African conflict zones.

According to its practitioners, peacebuilding is different from traditional peacemaking, in part because the work is continual and not simply a reaction to the onset of war. "Peacebuilders strive to address all phases of...protracted conflicts, in which pre-violence, violence and post-violence periods are difficult to differentiate," writes R. Scott Appleby, director of the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame, referring to the cyclical nature of long-running conflicts in countries like Colombia, the Philippines and parts of Africa. Another mark of peacebuilding is that it "engages all sectors of society and all the relevant partners," ranging from business and political leaders to religious communities and even perpetrators of violence, Appleby reports in *Peacebuilding: Catholic Theology, Ethics, and Praxis* (Orbis Books), a fresh collection of studies produced by the Catholic Peacebuilding Network at Notre Dame. Peace-treaty negotiators and "Troops Home Now" banner carriers are no longer the only players in the peace arena.

"Peacebuilding is a growth industry" is a favorite expression of Maryann Cusimano Love, a professor of international politics at The Catholic University of America and a member of the steering committee of the seven-year-old Catholic network that has been identifying, studying and bolstering this work within the Catholic Church worldwide. She refers principally to the secular peacebuilding community, which features such heavy hitters as the United Nations and the U.S. Institute of Peace, a quasi-governmental body that promotes international conflict resolution. The faith-based component of this movement is less recognizable—more like a startup company or a multitude of such ventures, often operating below the political radar. By most accounts, religious peacebuilding has barely begun to gel into an international movement of its own, whether ecumenically or within such a large and socially engaged insti-

Faith-based peacebuilding makes room for a prodigious array of participants or actors—not excluding the people holding the guns.

tution as the Catholic Church. Still, much is happening in many places.

As Madeleine Albright intimated, religious peace-builders can do things their secular counterparts cannot do, like respond directly to the spiritual need for personal healing and reconciliation. But the resources that religious communities bring to violence-wracked societies are more basic: they are there, on the ground, operating parishes, schools and social services. This is a significant asset because, as Professor Love points out, one-third of the world's nations are failed states, meaning they have no central government to speak of and lack such institutions as educational and health care systems.

Peaceful Transition in South Sudan

The Republic of South Sudan is now an incipient state, following a referendum earlier this year in which voters chose overwhelmingly to secede from the government in Khartoum, splitting up Africa's largest country. Most analysts had predicted that the referendum in January would be thwarted or tainted by violence and chaos, in a land where millions of people had been killed in decades of civil war between the mostly Arab and Muslim north and the mostly black Christian and animist south. But Sudan's churches, which have institutional assets in the south (including radio stations), spearheaded prayer campaigns for a durable peace, aimed especially at encouraging voters to turn out despite fears of northern-backed militia violence during the seven days of balloting.

Parish volunteers confronted other obstacles by showing illiterate people how to cast the ballots. Faith-based humanitarian agencies like Caritas Internationalis helped foster a sense of stability, providing a stream of vital services including potable water and sanitation. Against long odds, the elections turned out to be free, fair and relatively tranquil. The churches (Catholic and Anglican, mainly) not only carved out a nonviolent path, with guidance from the international community but, in view of the institutional vacuum, are considered the only indigenous institutions that could have done so. Reversing course, Sudan's government in Khartoum accepted the outcome of the referendum.

In other countries, physical infrastructure and governmental institutions may be largely in place, but there may also be gaps in what Kenneth R. Himes, O.F.M., a theologian at Boston College, calls the "human infrastructure for peaceful communal life." As he has described in several articles, such an infrastructure would include the requisite "social space" for people to come together and contribute to stability and reconciliation. In dozens of countries ranging from Colombia to Sri Lanka to Uganda, religious leaders have attempted to fill this particular vacuum by forming civil-society organizations to address common concerns.

These local initiatives are often assisted by international groups, including the New York-based World Conference of Religions for Peace and the Washington-based International Center for Religion and Diplomacy. One important tool has been interreligious dialogue, a term that to Westerners may suggest a prosaic activity, an obligation undertaken by theologians and local clergy associations. In other parts of the world, however, there is drastically more at stake in these dialogues, particularly where talking to one another is an alternative to mutual slaughter.

Interreligious Dialogue

On the large island of Mindanao in the Philippines, where Islamic insurgencies are scattered around the southern region, distrust between Muslims and Christians is palpable. In 1995 a Catholic peace group commissioned an opinion survey of Catholic priests and religious in southwestern Mindanao. Most of these leaders would not trust a Muslim with their valuables, would not want a relative to have an "intimate" relationship with a Muslim and would prefer to avoid physical proximity with Muslims altogether, according to the findings by the sociologist Grace J. Rebellos of Western Mindanao State University, who helped conduct the study for Peace Advocates Zamboanga. The Catholic group had been formed in 1994 by activist laypeople, religious and clergy—as was a similar Muslim association, the

The *DAILY* resource for the homilist who preaches with one eye on the Gospel — and one eye on the clock.

Connections DAILY

is the *NEW ONLINE* newsletter of ideas and images designed to help homilists develop their own brief reflection on the daily Gospel reading. Because time is a factor at weekday liturgies, each *Connections DAILY* offering focuses on a single point or idea, drawn from the everyday world of the parish community.



*Special introductory annual subscription rate: \$50.
For a sampler and order form:*

ConnectionsMediaWorks.com

Symposium on the Priesthood

October 5, 2011

The Catholic University of America

On the occasion of the publication of

*Why Priests Are Happy: A Study of the
Psychological and Spiritual Health of Priests*

by Monsignor Stephen J. Rossetti

SPEAKERS INCLUDE:

Monsignor Stephen Rossetti
Associate Clinical Professor, CUA

Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory
Archbishop of Atlanta

Joseph White, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, American Catholic Church History, CUA

Monsignor Robert Panke
President, National Conference of Diocesan Vocation Directors

For more information or to register, please visit
cuatoday.com/symposiumpriesthood2011
or call 202-319-5683.

*This event is co-sponsored by Associated Sulpicians of
the United States; Saint Luke Institute, Silver Spring, Md.;
School of Theology and Religious Studies, CUA;
and Theological College.*

THE
CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY
of AMERICA 

Salam Peace Foundation. Soon after, the two faith contingents merged into Paz-Salam, which has since facilitated a plethora of low-profile, small-group conversations involving Christian and Muslim young people, schoolteachers and even soldiers. Paz-Salam has made its biggest splash with the Mindanao Week of Peace, which began in 1997 as a local interreligious peace festival in the town of Zamboanga. It was taken islandwide a few years later by a larger interfaith partnership, the Bishops-Ulama Conference, sponsored by Catholic prelates and Muslim *ulama*, or clergy and scholars. The sheer numbers are impressive. The peace week, held annually in late autumn, opened grandly this past year with a parade through Zamboanga that banded together 20,000 Catholics, Protestants, Muslims and Lumads or indigenous people.

Less peaceable forces, however, are contending. There have been bombings in shopping malls by Islamic separatists and harsh crackdowns by the Filipino military, constantly countered by acts of interreligious solidarity. The U.S.-based Catholic Relief Services and its Mindanao partners have added materially to the goodwill by setting up interfaith economic ventures in Mindanao, including a cooperative Christian-Muslim bakery. (In Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim nation, C.R.S. took particular care to distribute prayer rugs and veils to Muslim women following the devastating tsunami that struck off northern Sumatra in December 2004; it was an interfaith gesture and a deliberate first step toward building trust between Christians and Muslims there.)

In almost every region with a major conflict, faith-based agencies, including the evangelical-sponsored group World Vision, have mounted peacebuilding initiatives that range from grass-roots mediation and trauma healing to economic development and the resettling of child soldiers in places like Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Such programs date to the 1990s, when relief agencies saw their best-laid plans for development in Rwanda unravel in the genocide there and realized that peace work had to be incorporated into humanitarian work. C.R.S. is running peacebuilding programs in 50 countries.

Armed Actors

Faith-based peacebuilding makes room for a prodigious array of participants or actors, as they are called in this field—bishops, priests, lay staff, catechists, scholars, relief workers, regular parishioners and others. Not excluded are the people holding the guns, who are, in the nomenclature, armed actors.

One participant is General Raymundo Ferrer of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, which has waged counterinsurgency campaigns in the southern islands since the 1970s. During the past decade he concluded that a final mil-

itary victory was unlikely and began repairing ties with long-aggrieved Muslims in little ways. He ordered his troops to point their guns down and smile at Muslims when passing them on the streets, as Professor Love spotlighted in a detailed case study of military-religious peace collaboration in the Philippines she conducted for Georgetown University's Institute for the Study of Diplomacy. General Ferrer himself began striking up conversations on the streets near his post in Basilian, Mindanao, meeting the locals, among them a Catholic social worker who wasted no time linking him up with interfaith peace activists. They, in turn, persuaded him to sign up for peacebuilding training conducted jointly by C.R.S. and the Mindanao Peace Institute, a Mennonite-Catholic collaboration. He did so in 2005, in the face of resistance from both the army's top brass and church human-rights activists who distrusted the military.

Since then the general has enrolled his colonels in classes dealing with nonviolent communications, mediation, religion and culture, community relations and more. Professor Love reports that the training has helped enlighten members of the army command while also teaching officers practical skills that can be useful, for example, in mediating disputes between feuding Muslim clans. Disunity among Muslims is a complicating factor. The Filipino government has frequently made conciliatory strides together with Islamic insurgencies, only to see members of those groups splinter off to renew fighting.

Sometimes peacebuilders refer to "bad actors," like the so-called narco-guerillas in Colombia or the Maoists fighting in the Philippines (usually separately from the Muslims). These are extremely violent characters who, nevertheless, have been engaged in dialogue by church representatives through peace-and-justice offices. Peacebuilders are not purists.

The roles of armed actors throw light on a sobering dimension of peacebuilding—that the work is fraught with risk, pitfalls and ambiguity, as John Paul Lederach of the Kroc Institute emphasizes. (Many of the "bad actors" appear on the U.S. terrorism watch lists that have proliferated since Sept. 11, 2001, which could make dialogue with them illegal.) Prominently situated within the messiness is the Catholic Church, which, as Lederach points out, tends to be the only institution with adherents on both sides of polarizing divides. As a result, church representatives often find themselves building relationships with different groups of armed actors, including bad ones, many of whom are accessible in part because they cling to the symbols and imagery of the Catholic faith in which they were raised. Mr. Lederach, who has facilitated peace training in 25 countries, is one of the most influential figures in both the secular and faith-based peacebuilding communities. "The church has an

Yale

Invites applications and nominations
for the post of

DEAN OF THE DIVINITY SCHOOL

Candidates must be able to work effectively in a university context and an ecumenical setting, and be committed to theological scholarship and to preparation for diverse ministries in church and society around the world. Applicants and nominees must have demonstrated capacity to provide intellectual, spiritual, and administrative leadership. The search committee is actively seeking nomination of women and minority candidates.

The position becomes available
July 1, 2012.

Applications and nominations with
curriculum vitae and other supporting
materials should be sent by

September 30, 2011 to:

Professor John J. Collins
Chair, Dean Search Committee
c/o Ilana Danilowitz
Yale University
c/o Office of the Provost
PO Box 208365
1 Hillhouse Avenue
New Haven, CT 06520-8365
(lani.danilowitz@yale.edu)

YALE UNIVERSITY
Yale University is an Affirmative Action,
Equal Opportunity Employer.

Faithful Citizenship I Voters, Bishops and Presidential Elections

Tuesday, 6 September 2011 | 6-8 p.m.

Pope Auditorium | 113 West 60th Street
Fordham University | Lincoln Center Campus

Since 1976, the conference of America's Catholic bishops has issued statements—titled “Faithful Citizenship”—before each presidential election year to help Catholics apply their faith to their political choices. Over the decades, “Faithful Citizenship” has become increasingly controversial, criticized both for being too vague or too partisan.

How have the statements evolved? What have they achieved? How have they been used—and abused? Can the bishops do better for the 2012 presidential election? The forum will look at voters, bishops and presidential elections from the perspective of recent Catholic history, the bishops' conference, and conservative and liberal Catholics.

MODERATOR

Peter Steinfels, Co-director of the Fordham Center on Religion and Culture

PANELISTS

John Carr, Executive Director of the Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Robert George, McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence, and Director of the James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions, Princeton University

Stephen Schneck, Director of the Institute for Policy Research and Catholic Studies, the Catholic University of America

SAVE THE DATE | 18 OCTOBER

Faithful Citizenship II:
Keeping the Faith in a Season of Spin

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

RSVP: crcevent@fordham.edu | (212) 636-7347

For more information, visit www.fordham.edu/ReligCulture.



FORDHAM
THE JESUIT UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

ubiquitous presence” in many societies, he says, meaning that its representatives can reach out to co-religionists at society’s higher echelons as well as into local communities. A Mennonite, Mr. Lederach jokes that he has a case of “hierarchy envy.” He marvels at the ability of bishops to mobilize the church for peacebuilding purposes across various sectors of society (when they are so inclined).

Secularist Blindspot

The global scale of faith-based peacebuilding is difficult to measure, partly because of definitional questions about what qualifies under the heading. A fair indication of the scope would be C.R.S. and its peacebuilding operations in 28 of the 35 conflict-weary nations, programs conducted almost always in collaboration with other groups, Catholic and non-Catholic. The impact is real, but reality has not changed perceptions within the “imagine no religion” choir or among secular experts in international relations who tend not to discuss religion except as a source of intergroup violence. “It’s the skunk at the garden party,” as Ms. Love puts it, referring to religious intrusions into those discussions. Attitudes are beginning to shift (one sign being former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright’s contention that religion is part of the solution), “but it’s a slow movement,” Love adds.

This is not to say that faith-based peacebuilding is a coherent, well-conceived enterprise. Many of its practitioners would admit they are making up much as they go along and that there is a shortage of moral and religious reflection to guide them. Catholics in the movement seem especially concerned about the missing theological frameworks. The Catholic Peacebuilding Network has been bringing ethicists and theologians together with grass-roots peacebuilders in a number of countries to generate a clearer account of this work in light of Catholic faith. Gerard Powers, the network’s coordinator

ON THE WEB

A video report from
Religions for Peace.
americamagazine.org/video

and a noted international affairs analyst at the University of Notre Dame, explains that Catholic just-war doctrine may speak robustly to questions about when it is right to go to war and how to conduct the intervention morally, but the teaching is far less incisive when it comes to wars that are seemingly without end and to post-conflict situations.

How does the church engage the bad actors while also demanding accountability for their crimes? Mr. Powers asks, articulating one moral quandary. “That’s a peacebuilding question, not an ethics-of-war question,” he says. These are the issues faced by a religious community that has entered the fray and that is searching for a way through the ambiguity, intractability and belligerence to make peace possible. **A**

JESUIT RETREAT HOUSE

420 West County Line Rd.
Barrington, IL 60010-4043



"Come to the Quiet"

Bellarmino offers a peaceful environment wherein silent retreats, based on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, enable persons to experience a deeply satisfying encounter with Christ and His word.

Give yourself a gift and "Come to the Quiet" of Bellarmine and experience the love of God in the Light of Christ.

For more information call our office at 847-381-1261 or visit our website at www.bellarminehall.org.



Our priests are messengers of hope

A friendship waits to be born between a family in Illinois and a little girl living in poverty in Honduras. Before long a teenage boy in the Philippines and a parish youth group in Connecticut are going to become acquainted through the exchange of encouraging letters. In Idaho a woman with grandchildren of her own will soon enter into a blessed relationship with an elderly woman in need of help in Kenya.

All they need is a CFCA priest to bring them together.

The priests who work with CFCA celebrate Eucharist in parishes across the country while sharing the good news of our Hope for a Family sponsorship program. They travel for weekend assignments only and accept as many or as few assignments as they like. We especially need bilingual priests, and we offer just compensation.

If you would like to learn more about preaching for CFCA, contact Tim Deveney at (800) 875-6564 or cfcaoutreach@cfcausa.org.



Christian Foundation for Children and Aging is an international movement of people who support and encourage children, youth and the aging in developing countries. Founded by lay Catholics acting on the Gospel call to serve the poor, CFCA works with people of all faiths. To learn more, visit www.hopeforfamily.org.

america

OUR FUTURE DEPENDS ON YOU!

**PLEASE
REMEMBER
AMERICA
IN YOUR WILL**

**OUR LEGAL TITLE IS:
AMERICA PRESS INC.,
106 WEST 56th STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10019**

MUSIC | JON M. SWEENEY

CONFESSIONS OF A DANGEROUS DIVA

Lady Gaga's fascination with Christian imagery



Lady Gaga performs in Assago, Milan, Italy, in December 2010.

Here is what happens when you declare yourself a legend before becoming one: anything you do as an artist is destined to be anticlimactic. Lady Gaga's new album, **Born This Way**, released in May, was highly touted even before its release. A tweet from Gaga herself proclaimed it as "the anthem for our generation." But perhaps she is too wrapped up in her own personal cocktail of influences and passions to create anything truly anthemic. Maybe her calling is to be a phenomenon for this generation. The music is consistently surprising even after the first few listens, and to Gaga's credit, there is not a conventional moment on "Born This Way."

The songs are an eclectic mix of manifesto-like intonations behind loud industrial beats, risqué techno dance music, 1980s-style anthems, with a lavish use of foreign accents and Catholic motifs. Overtly Christian imagery crops up often, and two songs take Christian tropes as a central theme: "Judas" and "Bloody Mary." These both twist familiar Bible stories into metaphors that fit what is presented as Gaga's own experience.

The message of "Judas"

becomes clear in one line: "Jesus is my virtue/ But Judas is the demon I cling to—I cling to!" The singer wants to be good and wants forgiveness, but struggles to give up the pleasure of sin. We've heard this before, as early as St. Paul and St. Augustine. Hers is a struggle that any honest Christian will recognize: to uphold one's virtue and be "good" amid a reality brimming with temptations to be "bad." Gaga personifies the dilemma in the characters of Jesus and Judas—the savior and the tempted, or here the tempter—addressed as possible lovers.

In the music video, Gaga swaggers around an overheated party in the Jerusalem dusk with Jesus on her arm (a handsome male model wearing a gold crown of thorns), exchanging charged glances with Judas, who moves aggressively through the crowd, cozying up to every woman on the floor. The disciples are part of a biker gang, with Judas the meanest and scraggiest looking among them. The beautifully shot video has plenty of poetic moments that take their inspiration from fashion photography.

Public controversy, however, has centered around the fact that Gaga dares to use

this subject matter at all, much less make it sexy and stylish. This shows, of course, the influence of Madonna, the first pop artist to use Catholic imagery to such effect in the 1980s. (She also was able to provoke bishops and pastors to denounce her from the pulpit.) Many critics have dubbed Lady Gaga a mere Madonna wannabe, and the recent amplification of her religious imagery serves to strengthen that connection.

The message of “Bloody Mary” is similar to that of “Judas.” It is a soft, throbbing song with intriguingly brief string parts, a few screams and a Gregorian choir (perfect —can’t you just imagine it, in stark gloom, a worship service: “GA-GA... GA-GA...”). The song is sung as if by Mary Magdalene herself, which makes sense if you have ever read Nikos Kazantzakis’s novel, *The Last Temptation of Christ*. For both Kazantzakis and Gaga, Jesus and the Magdalene were lovers. Gaga’s chorus goes:

*I’ll dance dance dance
With my hands hands hands
Above my head head head like
Jesus said
I’m gonna dance dance dance
With my hands hands hands
Above my head, dance together
Forgive him before he’s dead
because
I won’t cry for you
I won’t crucify the things you
do
I won’t cry for you
When you’re gone I’ll still be
bloody Mary.*

This sounds like a cryptic personal confession. Another lyric runs: “When Punk-tius comes to kill the king upon his throne/ I’m ready for their stones.” There is plenty of wordplay on this album, as well as foreign-language play. “Punk-tius” is a strange conglomeration of the name Pontius Pilate with *punk* spliced onto the front.

There is no easy way to account for this; sometimes Lady Gaga is too bizarre to be exactly irreverent. But again, Mary pines for Jesus in sensual ways that go far beyond the biblical events the song describes. Another line goes, “And when you’re gone, I’ll tell them my religion’s you.” There is a faithful passion in that voice, looking for meaning in all the wrong places.

What makes Lady Gaga consistently interesting among pop stars is her willingness to embrace unusual imagery and concepts and to use them successfully in a mass-marketable way. She has raised the bar for her diva rivals in ways that echo the controversies sparked nearly 30 years ago by Madonna. Both Madonna and Lady Gaga (her real name is Stefani Joanne Angelina Germanotta) were raised in Italian-American Roman Catholic families. (Germanotta attended the Convent of the Sacred Heart school in New York City as a young woman). Their trajectories are also similar. Madonna’s “Like a Virgin” album (1984) also dripped with the artist’s self-recriminations as well as self-comparisons to

the Blessed Mother.

Gaga’s shape-shifting ability, like Madonna’s, is a perfect one for marketing. When she poses in a blessing posture, with her hands outstretched (is she praying the Rosary or reaching for a man?), it is simply another bit of fashion. It is understandable that these gestures can be viewed as irreverent.

But in the end, the best way to approach such flirtations with Catholicism may be not to consider whether they are offensive, but to ask whether the artist is using them purely for effect or as part of a personal dialogue. Gaga is no longer a practicing Catholic, but she does profess a Christian faith. For this reason, and also because her album is so fiercely passionate, preaching honest self-expression ardently if somewhat heretically, it seems clear that Gaga still cares about her God.

ON THE WEB

Bryan McCarthy
reviews the film “Terri.”
americamagazine.org/culture

JON M. SWEENEY, *author of Verily, Verily: The King James Bible—400 Years of Influence and Beauty*, wrote this review with the help of his daughter, Clelia Sweeney, a sophomore at Bard College at Simon’s Rock, in Great Barrington, Mass.

BOOKS | KEVIN DOYLE

WEIGHING THE EVIDENCE

CONVICING THE INNOCENT Where Criminal Prosecutions Go Wrong

By Brandon L. Garrett
Harvard Univ. Press. 376p \$39.95

PECULIAR INSTITUTION America’s Death Penalty In an Age of Abolition

By David Garland
Belknap/Harvard Univ. Press. 432p \$35

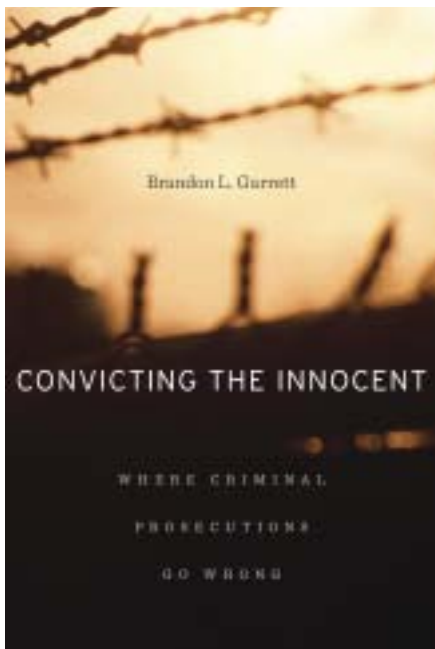
As Marcus Lyons approached the

arched courthouse entrance in March 1991, it was not his naval uniform that drew attention. It was the eight-foot-long wooden cross he shouldered. Curiosity turned to alarm when Lyons attempted self-crucifixion, raising a hammer and pounding a nail into his foot.

Police saved Lyons. But that did not even begin to set things right. Lyons had left an Illinois prison two weeks before to serve out parole for a rape he did not commit. His life in ruins—a fiancée lost, a good job gone,

a reputation shattered—Lyons had mutilated himself in desperate protest.

The protest did not bring immediate justice. Eventually, though, Lyons read about another man's exoneration through DNA evidence. Lyons contacted the man's lawyer, who agreed to take on Lyons's case. In 2007, thanks to DNA testing, Lyons won official



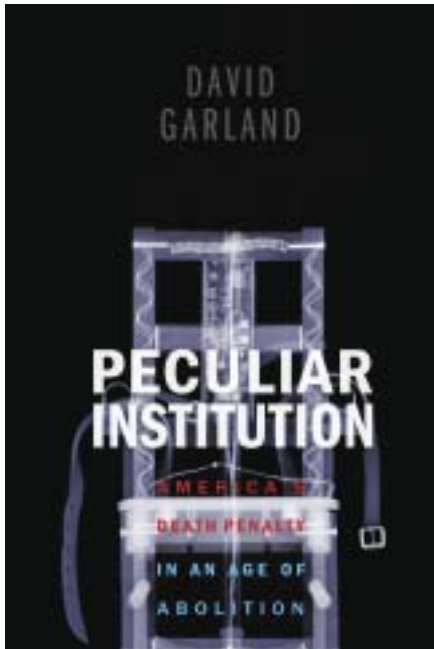
exoneration from the state.

In *Convicting the Innocent: Where Criminal Prosecutions Go Wrong*, Professor Brandon L. Garrett, of the University of Virginia School of Law, insists that the story of Lyons and other DNA exonerees should incite and not reassure, should spur reform rather than engender complacency. The United States should not focus on the DNA evidence that liberated the innocent. It should instead turn its attention to the non-DNA evidence that put the wrong people in jail to begin with.

Most crimes do not yield DNA evidence that will identify the real perpetrator and exclude the falsely accused. Rape will ordinarily do this, but robbery, assault, arson, extortion and murder usually will not. Innocent Americans accused of the latter crimes

will, without benefit of the DNA *deus ex machina*, be at risk for wrongful convictions. The risk arises from the same things that allowed DNA exonerees to be convicted in the first place—sincere but mistaken eyewitness identifications, coerced confessions, shoddy forensic science and scheming informants.

Looking at the 250 people exoner-



ated through DNA as of February 2010, Garrett aimed to determine how often each of these malignant factors had warped the criminal justice process at the expense of an innocent person (and to the benefit of an actual criminal who went unpursued). Garrett tracked down court transcripts and dug into case files. He then sliced, diced, sifted and collated the data.

Some law professors would take a pass on this kind of grunt work. Garrett did not, and our justice system can be the better for it.

Garrett found that eyewitness misidentification helped jail the innocent in 76 percent of the false convictions he analyzed. No surprise. Little tests the presumption of innocence as much as a jury's inability to distinguish between certainty and accuracy

when a victim points at the defendant and tells the jury: "That is the man." And little tilts the playing field so much as pretrial police steering of an eyewitness; Garrett found that show-ups (one-to-one showing of a suspect to a witness), flawed line-ups and suggestive remarks paved the way to unjust verdicts in most instances of eyewitness misidentification.

Forensic science evidence played a role, usually a pernicious one, in 74 percent of the cases. Sometimes this evidence centered on microscopic hair comparisons, at other times on bite marks, shoe prints, fingerprints or serology. Some errors arose from unreliable methodologies that were high in subjective judgment and low in accepted quantitative standards (like microscopic hair comparison). Other errors derived from testimony and argument overstating the significance of findings reliable in themselves.

Faulty informant testimony infected the proceedings in 21 percent of the cases. In 23 of 52 cases, the informant was a codefendant. In 28, the informant resided in the jail that housed the wrongly accused. This latter situation is spring-loaded for the most egregious miscarriages of justice. As Garrett points out, the unscrupulous jailhouse snitch looking to exchange testimony for a break on his own case will likely do so at the expense of the fellow inmate facing the gravest charges. He understands that the prosecutor will most richly reward the inmate who helps him win the big conviction for capital murder.

In 16 percent of the cases Garrett analyzed, 40 of 250, the wrongly accused himself confessed to a crime he did not commit. Fourteen of these false confessors were mentally retarded, three were mentally ill and 13 were juveniles. Virtually all these people implicated themselves after unusually long interrogations.

Of course, serious diagnosis without recommended treatment leads to

despair. So Garrett closes out his book with some very concrete prescriptions. Many of them were presaged a decade ago in the superb book *Actual Innocence*, by Jim Dwyer (disclosure: a friend), Peter Neufeld and Barry Scheck. Yet each merits renewed consideration by legislators, judges, prosecutors and police authorities. Here is a partial list:

- Police identification procedures should conform to written protocols, and each procedure should be documented contemporaneously. Ideally, officers unfamiliar with the specific investigation should conduct the procedures to prevent influencing witnesses with even unintended clues and cues. Judges should emphatically instruct jurors not to evaluate an identifying witness solely by the person's certainty and not to imagine that the memory works like a camera.

- Forensic labs should stand independent of law enforcement and submit to external oversight in the form of periodic blind audits. "All examiners should be blind-tested for proficiency. The defense should have access to underlying bench notes and laboratory reports, and to their own defense experts." Courts should stand guard against junk science.

- Before allowing a jailhouse informant to testify, a trial court should render a threshold judgment of minimal reliability. All police or prosecutor conversations with informants should be recorded; this will ensure full disclosure of deals struck and deter informants' ascribing to defendants details learned from the police.

- Interrogations should be recorded, as 11 states and the District of Columbia currently require or encourage. Trial courts should scrutinize resultant recordings for hints of coercion or of the police's feeding a suspect crime details the suspect then weaves into his confession. Minors and the mentally compromised should enjoy special safeguards.

Though Garrett's prescriptions mostly track specific procedural or systemic infirmities, one category of crime merits its own reform. Garrett would endow the accused capital murderer with extra protections, such as a standard of proof effectively higher than beyond-a-reasonable-doubt.

Garrett does not pretend that any reform will absolutely ensure against the society's killing the wrong person. That guarantee will come only when we abandon the death penalty.

Which brings us to David Garland's *Peculiar Institution: America's Death Penalty in an Age of Abolition*. Garland, currently a professor of sociology at New York University, scants the problem of capital innocence. This, along with his light treatment of religion, might seem odd initially. Faith and fatal error loom large for death penalty opponents.

Garland, though, has not written a game plan for getting rid of the death penalty. One need not infer too wildly to recognize that Garland would like us to get rid of it. But for now he aims to deepen our understanding of why we still have a death penalty when nations toward whom we feel most kindred do not. In the tradition of de

Toqueville, Dickens, Chesterton and Gunnar Myrdal, Garland, who hails from the Scottish Lowlands, casts the discerning eye of the outsider on us. And to compelling result.

With minimal "Oh you Yanks" condescension, Garland identifies the legal, political and cultural factors behind our retaining a punishment left behind by neighbors and friends such as Canada, Mexico, Britain, Italy, France, Spain, Portugal, Austria, Germany, Holland, Belgium, Denmark, Poland, Australia and New Zealand.

The death penalty can survive in the United States because America does not lend itself to centralized, top-down reform, much less to centralized, top-down reform that is contrary to popular sentiment.

In Europe, national parliamentary "elites" imposed abolition from on high. With the possible exception of the Irish, no European citizenry favored abolition before the fact.

In 1972, with the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Furman v. Georgia*, judicial abolition (a species of top-down reform) seemed imminent, or even accomplished, here. But, as Garland brilliantly recounts, by 1976 a

Rekindle Your Spirit . . .

The Journey Begins Here

- STRESS ■ BURNOUT ■ DEPRESSION
- TRANSITION ■ RELATIONSHIP ISSUES ■ ADDICTION ISSUES

We offer:

- Spiritual Direction
- Liturgy and community prayer
- Professional counseling
- Small-group environment
- Bilingual counselors
- Serene wooded grounds
- Affordable pricing



**SHALOM
CENTER**

*A Residential
Renewal and Treatment Center
for Clergy and Men and Women Religious*

For help, call Deacon William Hartman, Residential Program Coordinator
281-399-0520

13516 Morgan Drive • Splendora, Texas 77372 • www.shalomcenterinc.org

majority of Justices (deciding *Gregg v. Georgia*, which revived capital punishment) could not—or would not—say no to the 35 state legislatures that had readied new death statutes over the previous 48 months. Thinly disguised racial backlash and calls for “law and order” won out. Roughly a decade later, the victory was solidified in a 5-to-4 decision in *McCleskey v. Kemp* to ignore powerful statistical evidence of capital discrimination based on the “race of the victim.”

Today, barring fundamental change on the Supreme Court, American abolition will have to occur in our “hyper-democratic” political arenas. This means one state at a time against the backdrop of a criminal justice system driven by local elected officials rather than, as elsewhere, appointed career professionals.

The death penalty survives because in the United States we suffer high homicide rates; because the Deep South underfunds law enforcement; because the death penalty serves as a proxy for states’ rights, itself a proxy for white hegemony; and because the illusion of our collectively controlling death holds some allure for our

Thanatos-phobic society. The death penalty “tames death and puts it to work.”

There is another reason the death penalty survives: American consciences rest easy in the notion that capital defendants receive elevated due process. That, however, is a lie, even if Garland, for reasons unknown, abstains from calling it that.

Granted, I have a dog in the fight. Or maybe I have been a dog in the fight, having practiced law on behalf of capital defendants in Alabama and New York. Still, I have no doubt that average citizens would be appalled were they to watch what passes for adequate capital defense in most death jurisdictions. (Only recently have I given up my Prince-and-the-Pauper fantasy of a disguised Chief Justice Roberts slipping into a Death Belt courtroom and comparing the advocacy there to that which he provided moneyed clients when in private practice.)

Even to attempt a halfway reliable capital justice system costs an obscene

amount. Garland understates when he pegs at \$170 million the cost (prosecutorial, judicial, defense and corrections) of New York’s 12-year effort toward a responsible death penalty. Were the Supreme Court even to begin seriously enforcing the right to counsel throughout the country, budgetary hell would break loose.

Given the current fiscal climate, it might break loose anyway. Garland points out that in many death states the death penalty is far more a symbol and political cudgel than a practice, “a resource for political exchange and cultural consumption” more than “a penal instrument that puts persons to death.”

To be sure, we have executed over 1,200 men and women since 1976. The overall national rate of execution, however, remains low. As of 2007, the lag between conviction and execution ran 12 years on average. Most death rows serve more as warehouses than as hospices or on-deck circles for executions.

As towns and cities lay off police and teachers, it may not be long before non-abolitionists take a more pragmatic look at the death penalty. California maintains the nation’s largest death row. A poll has already found that a 63-percent majority there favor mass commutation as a cost-saving measure.

Ideally, abolition should be a triumph of conscience, not of calculators. It ought to spring from concerns over the human fallibility Brandon Garrett explores or the sanctity of life John Paul II proclaimed. Still, perhaps we are destined to emulate our European cousins and condemn the death penalty only after we are free of it.

KEVIN DOYLE is a lawyer who has defended capital cases in Alabama and New York.

ON THE WEB

America’s Book Club discusses Jennifer Haigh’s novel *Faith*. americamagazine.org/podcast

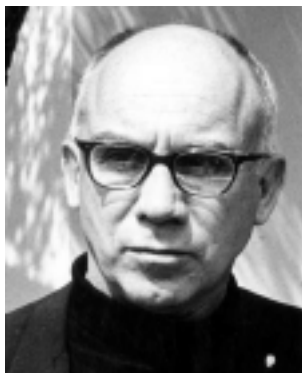
Contemplation in a Technological Era: Thomas Merton’s Insight for the Twenty-First Century

A Conference on
Merton and Technology
September 23rd - 24th, 2011

Thomas Merton Center, Bellarmine University
Louisville, Kentucky.

Speakers:

Albert Borgmann	Daniel Horan, OFM
Claire Badaracco	Gray Matthews
Paul Dekar	Phillip Thompson
Kathleen Deignan, CND	

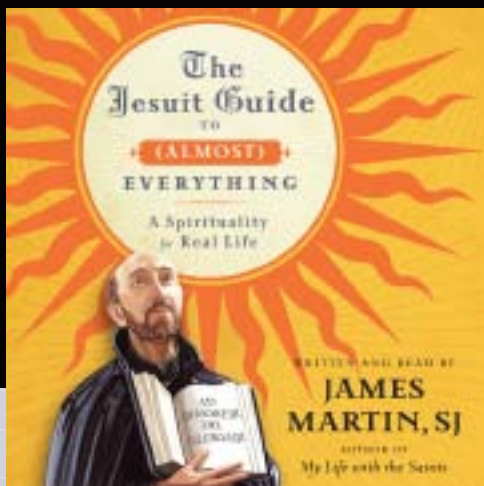


For Further Information or to Register:

Thomas Merton Center, Bellarmine University,
2001 Newburg Road, Louisville, KY. 40205.

Tel: 502 272 8177 / 8187 www.merton.org/technology/

Winner of The Christopher Award



“A remarkable achievement. Enlivened with Jesuit humor and touching personal anecdotes... To read the guide is to be on an enlightening Jesuit retreat.”

—*London Tablet*

READ BY THE AUTHOR

Available for download from iTunes, Audible.com, Barnesandnoble.com, Borders.com, and eMusic.com

 HarperOne

An Imprint of HarperCollinsPublishers

www.harperone.com

HOLY LAND PILGRIMAGES

Is this the year that you will walk in the footsteps of Jesus and Apostles?

JOIN FATHER DAVID WATHEN, OFM, AN EXPERIENCED PILGRIMAGE LEADER

Specialized pilgrimages

Call about planning a trip
for your parish,
organization or group

Egypt and the Holy Land

September 14-27, 2011 • \$3,747

Holy Land

October 1-10, 2011 • \$3,500

Holy Land, Jordan and Mt. Sinai

November 28 - December 10, 2011 • \$3,680

Holy Land and Mt. Sinai

February 8-19, 2012 • \$3,360

Egypt and the Holy Land

March 22 - April 3, 2012 • \$3,430

Easter in the Holy Land

March 29 - April 9, 2012 • \$3,487

Holy Land (Spanish-speaking)

November 8-17, 2011 • \$3,570



HOLY LAND FRANCISCAN PILGRIMAGES

Bringing pilgrims to the Holy Land for over 100 years

1-800-566-7499 | For more information, visit www.HolyLandPilgrimages.org

CLASSIFIED

Parish Missions

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

Positions

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR ASIAN AND PACIFIC ISLAND AFFAIRS. The Assistant Director is a practicing Catholic in good standing with the church, who under the supervision of the Executive Director of Cultural Diversity in the Church assists the Executive Director in: coordinating and implementing the U.S. Bishops' strategic plan for the Conference and the associated pastoral efforts and priorities among ethnic and culturally diverse communities in the United States, especially Asian and Pacific Catholics; and developing and strengthening the implementation of approved committee and subcommittee goals, objectives and activities.

The Assistant Director also assists in the preparation of committee reports; represents the U.S.C.C.B., the C.D.C. Committee and the Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Island Affairs in public forums; and serves as the voice of the U.S.C.C.B. when out in the field and as a strong in-house advocate for the communities served by the department. Master's degree or combination of bachelor's degree, major field/specialty: social sciences, pastoral ministry and formation, education, humanities or a related field. A minimum of 5 to 6 years' experience with pastoral ministry in an (arch)diocese, national Catholic organization or religious community. Proficiency in any Asian or Pacific language.

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (C.D.C.), 3211 4th Street N.E., Washington, DC 20017-1194; Fax: (202) 541-3412; e-mail: resumes@usccb.org. EOE/M/F/D/V. No phone calls, please.

DIRECTOR OF FAITH FORMATION AND EVANGELIZATION. Blessed Sacrament Parish, Seattle, Wash. This Dominican parish of over 1,000 families is seeking a Director of Faith Formation and Evangelization, who will enable parishioners to gain a greater knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith and to deepen their spirituality. The Director will take a leadership role in designing and implementing programs that will enhance our parish vision as a center of evangelization. In collaboration with the parish community, the Director will develop and implement curricula and opportunities for the spiritual formation of parishioners, from those who are taking their first steps to those ready to manifest the Gospel to the world. This position requires energy, commitment, courage and creativity. Successful candidates will be proficient in organizing and teaching, with excellent leadership and communication skills. Preferred candidates will hold a master's degree in religious education, theology or pastoral studies and have five years of parish experience. The candidate must be a practicing Catholic. The position is currently available.

Applications deadline Sept. 15, 2011. All finalists will be interviewed in Seattle. To obtain a job description and application, please send your résumé to: hr@bspwa.org. Blessed Sacrament Parish is located at 5050 8th Ave. NE, Seattle, WA 98105.

POSITION IN SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY. Yale Divinity School seeks to make a tenure-track appointment in the field of systematic theology, to begin July 1, 2012. In an ecumenical environment Yale Divinity School prepares students for ministry in diverse Christian churches and for a wide range of professional involvements, including higher education, law, medicine, management and public service. A Ph.D. (or its equivalent) and strong potential as a teacher are required. The successful candidate will have expertise in systematic theology informed by the history of Christian thought (including but not limited to the modern period). An interdisciplinary perspective, utilizing contemporary academic approaches such as cultural studies, critical, feminist, social or political theory for theological study, is also a plus. A letter of application with curriculum vitae and a list of three references should be submitted by Oct. 15, 2011 to: Dean Harold W. Attridge, Yale Divinity School, 409 Prospect Street, New Haven, CT 06511-2167. Yale University is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity employer. Yale values diversity in its faculty, staff and students and especially encourages applications from women and underrepresented minorities. Applications begin to be considered Oct. 1, 2011.

Retreats

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

Sabbatical

SABBATICAL PROGRAMS at the Boston College School of Theology and Ministry, a dynamic global academic community, during our Summer Institute or fall semester. Theological updating and spiritual growth with small group process. Information: www.bc.edu/stmsabbatical; e-mail: melinda.donovan@bc.edu.

Wills

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

America classified. To submit a classified ad to America, e-mail ads@americamagazine.org, fax (928) 222-2107 or mail to: Classified Department, America, 106 West 56th St., New York, NY 10019. 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. We do not accept ad copy over the phone. MasterCard and Visa accepted. For more information call: (212) 515-0102.

LETTERS

Taking Part in the Body

Cynthia Reville Peabody's article, "Staying Power" (7/18), found me asking myself once again, why do I stay in the Catholic Church?

My answer to this question is, quite simply, the Eucharist. Coming together as the body of Christ, we women in the pews give thanks and receive the bread of life, which nourishes our souls and sends us forth to love and serve. In spite of the investigations of women religious, in spite of top-down changes in the very language that attempts to express our faith, in spite of being denied a place at the table of power, we women come to take part in the Eucharist. We prepare the table; we run the schools and hospitals; we raise children in the faith. We stay, and by doing so, we quietly attempt to correct the evils we perceive.

Why do I stay? My answer was given long ago: "Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words of everlasting life." This much I know for sure: If we women did not stay, the church would die of neglect.

JANE W. URSO
Bridgeport, W.Va.

Pearl of Great Price

Thanks so much for a wonderfully clear and thought-provoking commentary, "Staying Power" (7/18). I think the question is not why women are leaving the church, but why, in the name of everything that is good and holy, are we staying? I love the church. I grew up in it, thrived in it and deepened my spirituality and sense of service through it.

But the church I experience now is remote, controlled, power-hungry and so unlike Jesus that my prayer now includes a lament for the poor Christ.

When will we find our way back through the centuries to the simple, straightforward way to love God and all people that Jesus modeled for us? When will we be able to sell every-

thing we have accumulated over the centuries to buy back the pearl of great price that Jesus left us? I am not leaving the church. I am resolved to live simply the model that Jesus left us.

PATRICIA NICHOLSON
Newburg, N.Y.

Promoting the Common Good

Your editorial “The New ‘Americanism’” (8/1) provides interesting insights about the American dream. There is no one party that espouses the concerns of the vulnerable and the common good. Republicans tend to be pro-life and pro-growth and rationalize the common good to include, basically, the protection of the freedom of opportunity for anyone to succeed economically.

Democrats, on the other hand, tend to be more socialist and want to share

the resources of the fortunate with those who are less fortunate—with one glaring exception, the unborn. They are more concerned with the rights and fair treatment of the common good of us all, except for the unborn.

Both parties hold to a form of exclusivism. The Republicans tend to exclude social programs for the poor, elderly and disadvantaged, while the Democrats tend to exclude the business sector and the unborn. Hence, the idea of the common good cannot be fully embraced by either party.

Maybe a third party could include a subtle socialist agenda for the poor, vulnerable and unborn, while, at the same time, promoting growth in the business sector. There are very few pro-socialist Republicans and probably even fewer pro-life Democrats. If

each party were more inclusive of these views, maybe the common good of all Americans could be secured.

HANK LABORE
Bismarck, N.D.

Helping the Poor at the Parish

Your editorial writer (8/1) is quite wrong to identify a “peculiar American premise that the poor are generally better off left to their own devices, lest their dignity be degraded by paternalism—a high-sounding slogan that can be used to abdicate collective responsibility” in the rejection of entitlement programs.

My grandfather refused to accept government assistance to feed his large family for over two years—not due to the sin of pride, but due to his concern for the simple human dignity of his family. Ultimately, he found

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.

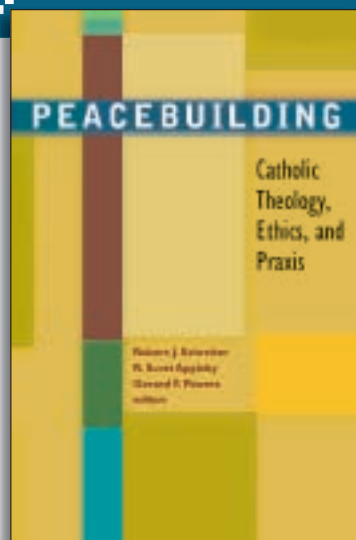
**LOOKING FOR
A JOB**
IN THE CATHOLIC SECTOR?
**HIRING AT YOUR
CHURCH OR SCHOOL?**
GET THE WORD OUT WITH
AMERICA!

Job Listings are accepted for publication in America's print and web editions.

For more information contact Julia Sosa at jsosa@americamagazine.org
Telephone: 212-515-0102 or visit:

WWW.AMERICAMAGAZINE.ORG

America



978-1-57075-893-5 pbk \$30.00

Peacebuilding

Catholic Theology, Ethics, and Praxis
ROBERT R. SCHREITER, R. SCOTT APPLEBY,
GERARD F. POWERS, Editors

“The audiences for this book are multiple; the issues it confronts are compellingly important; the message it offers will be a sign of hope and a source of wisdom.” —J. BRYAN HEHIR
Harvard Kennedy School of Government

“Provides a well-developed theology, ethics and spirituality that will serve as a firm foundation for effective peacebuilding programs.”

—LESLEY-ANNE KNIGHT
Former Secretary General, Caritas International

Contributors

John Paul Lederach
Maryann Cusimano Love
Daniel Philpott
William Headley

Reina Neufeldt
Todd Whitmore
Peter-John Pearson
Thomas Michel

Kenneth Himes
Lisa Sowle Cahill
Peter Phan
David O'Brien

www.maryknollmall.org
From your bookseller or direct
Follow us on Facebook



ORBIS BOOKS
Maryknoll, NY 10545
1-800-258-5838

9th Annual Conference on Contemporary Catholic Healthcare Ethics

FEATURED SPEAKERS

(at time of printing)

Aziz Ansari, DO
Loyola University Health System
Maywood, IL

Sr. Simone Campbell, SSS
NETWORK
Washington, DC

Daniel Dwyer, PhD
Trinity Health
Novi, MI

Ron Hamel, PhD
Catholic Health Association
St. Louis, MO

Fr. Thomas Kopfensteiner, STD
Catholic Health Initiatives
Englewood, CO

Vince Miller, PhD
University of Dayton
Dayton, OH



PALLIATIVE CARE & ETHICS FROM THE CATHOLIC PERSPECTIVE

October 6-7, 2011
Register today!

Our annual Contemporary Catholic Healthcare Ethics Conference located on our Maywood, IL campus, offers a unique and collegial venue for healthcare providers to acquire practical and theoretical resources for improving the delivery of Catholic healthcare in our contemporary and varied settings.

Sponsored by:

Loyola University Chicago Stritch School of Medicine
Neiswanger Institute for Bioethics & Health Policy

The Catholic Health Association of the United States

The Illinois Catholic Health Association



**LOYOLA
MEDICINE**
Loyola University Chicago
Stritch School of Medicine

CHA
THE CATHOLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION
OF THE UNITED STATES

Catholic Health
Promoting the Healing Ministry of Christ

Visit our website: bioethics.lumc.edu
for conference schedule and registration.

work and his family prospered. Yes, he did accept gifts from his Protestant brethren at his church. This is where charity begins—with a human, neighborly, Christian connection and not a faceless government bureaucracy.

I am not a wealthy man, but I am moved to compassion for the long-term unemployed in my parish. I try to do for them what others did for my grandfather many decades ago. Such is one's Christian duty. When government spends other people's money to care for the forgotten in society, this seems to be a good thing, but it is far better for government to enact policies that create conditions for fuller employment in the private sector. Collective responsibility for the poor must be assumed by communities and parishes, not by tax-payers.

ROY CAMPBELL
Nyack, N.Y.

Dust Off the Catechism

"Keep Holy Election Day," by Nicholas P. Cafardi (7/18), seems to be a deceitful article. I am surprised that the magazine is still able to identify with Catholic readers. My fear is that the author soothed some souls on the left with his article, which was clearly his intention.

In the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Nos. 2270-73, abortion is defined as directly contrary to moral law and manifests an abominable crime along with infanticide. No president before Mr. Obama has done more to advance abortion and infanticide. While in the Illinois senate, he led the opposition to the "Born Alive Infants Protection Act" and as chair of the Health and Human Services Committee in the same legislative body, he kept Born Alive (IL SB1082) from coming up for a vote in 2003. I hope neither Mr. Cafardi nor the editors of *America* were aware of this.

RICHARD WILLITS
Conyers, Ga.

No Deliberation Needed

Contrary to Professor Cafardi's opinions about holiness, there are some readily apparent answers to some complex issues. Abortion is not a question that allows for any discussion or deliberation. Mr. Cafardi cites a church teaching that error has no rights. Death to an innocent child is not the privilege of any person to call a right.

Our holiness as voters should not depend on whom we are encouraged to support by the church. We may and should be advised, however, to avoid some candidates who do not recognize that there is a hierarchy in law, when or if there is a conflict as clear as abortion.

RAYMOND TIMM
St. Louis, Mo.

Violence and Legality of Drugs

Drugs did not create Mexico's organized crime networks. Just as alcohol prohibition gave rise to Al Capone, drug prohibition created the violent drug trafficking organizations behind all the killings in Mexico. With alcohol prohibition repealed, bootleggers no longer gun each other down in drive-by shootings. It is worth noting that Mexico's upsurge in violence began only after an anti-drug crackdown that created a power vacuum among competing cartels.

Drug prohibition funds organized crime at home and terrorism abroad. It is time to end this madness. Whether we like it or not, drugs are here to stay. Changing human nature is not an option. Reforming harmful drug laws is an option that Congress should pursue.

ROBERT SHARPE
Arlington, Va.

America (ISSN 0002-7049) is published weekly (except for 12 combined issues: Jan. 3-10-17, 24-31, May 2-9, June 6-13, 20-27, July 4-11, 18-25, Aug. 1-8, 15-22, Aug. 29-Sept. 5, Nov. 28-Dec. 5, Dec. 19-26) 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 U.S.A.

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

Campus Ministry

Campus Minister and Program Director

Full-Time, 12 months



Responsibilities Include:

- Direct RCIA Program.
- Assist with Retreat Programming .
- Catechetical and Faith Formation Programming.
- Pastoral Care and Guidance for Students, Faculty and Staff.

Candidate Requirements:

- Master's degree or Bachelor's degree (5years) – M.Div. or M.A. in Theology or Pastoral Ministry preferred.
- 1-2 years experience in college campus ministry or ministry to young adults.

To view this opportunity further or apply formally online
please visit <http://ND.jobs> (job #11311) or
<http://jobs.nd.edu/applicants/Central?quickFind=57157>.

The University of Notre Dame is committed to diversity in its staff, faculty, and student body. As such, we strongly encourage applications from members of minority groups, women, veterans, individuals with disabilities, and others who will enhance our community. The University of Notre Dame, an international Catholic research university, is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer.

Graduate Religious Education ONLINE

Master of Arts in Religious Education (33 credits)
Master's Certificate in Religious Education (18 credits)
Post-Master's Certificate in Religious Education (18 credits)



- Courses address recommendations found in the Standard Three – Catholic Theology, Lay Ecclesial Ministry Certification Standards and Elements of Intellectual Formation, Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord.
- All courses are online and residency is not required.
- All faculty received the Mandatum and hold doctorates.
- 50% ministerial discount is available to qualified persons.

STUDENTS FIRST

FELICIAN
COLLEGE

The Franciscan College of New Jersey

201.559.6077 or adultandgraduate@felician.edu
262 South Main Street, Lodi, NJ • www.felician.edu

Who Do You Say You Are?

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (A), AUG. 21, 2011

Readings: Is 22:19-23; Ps 138:1-8; Rom 11:33-36; Mt 16:13-20

“Who do you say that I am?” (Mt 16:15)

The question Jesus poses in today’s Gospel reading is not a pop quiz for the disciples. Since it comes halfway through Matthew’s Gospel, at a critical turning point, we might be tempted to think Jesus is giving a kind of midterm exam to see how well the disciples are understanding him and to test whether they have what it takes to go the rest of the journey with him. But the scene may also reflect Jesus’ own development in understanding of his identity and mission. Taking Jesus’ humanity seriously and recalling Luke’s assertion that Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor (Lk 2:52), we might say that in today’s Gospel and next Sunday’s, we see a glimpse of Jesus’ deepening understanding of what it meant to be the Christ, the Son of the living God (v. 16).

In contrast to modern Western cultures, in which individuals expend energy trying to find their own unique identity as persons distinct from other persons, in Jesus’ culture, characterized by dyadic personality, a person understood himself or herself only in relationship to the groups in which she or he was embedded: family, clan, nation and religion. Paul, for example, identifies himself as a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews, and as to

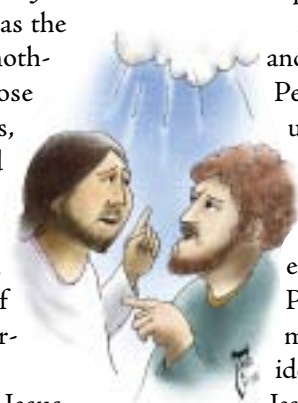
the law, a Pharisee (Phil 3:5). Earlier in the Gospel, the people of Jesus’ hometown identify him as the carpenter’s son, whose mother is Mary and whose brothers are James, Joseph, Simon and Judas, and who also has sisters (Mt 13:55-56). In addition, in such a culture the perceptions of others help shape a person’s identity.

In today’s Gospel, Jesus seeks out others’ perceptions as he solidifies his understanding of himself. The disciples first report that people align Jesus with revered prophetic figures: John the Baptist, Elijah or Jeremiah. While there are many parallels between Jesus and these prophets, Matthew clearly distinguishes Jesus from them. He is the more powerful one coming after John (Mt 3:11). And it is John who embodies the returned Elijah (Mt 11:14; 17:12).

As Jesus presses the disciples for their own response, Peter, the spokesperson for the group, rightly declares, “You are the Messiah” (*christos*). This is a term used in the Old Testament for one who is set apart by God for particular service, like kings (Ps 2:2; 89:20), priests (Lv 4:3, 5) and prophets (1 Kgs 19:16). That Jesus is *christos*, anointed, is not a new revelation in Matthew’s Gospel (see 1:1, 17, 18; 11:2). But the nature of Jesus’ messiahship as entailing suffering and death is articulated for the first time in

the ensuing verses (16:21-27), the Gospel for next Sunday.

As Jesus’ identity emerges and solidifies, so too does that of Peter. Verses 17 to 19 are unique to Matthew, with a wordplay on the name Petros and the Greek word for rock. Jesus exalts the emerging, rock-like faith of Peter and of the whole community of disciples whose identity is tied up in that of Jesus. Yet in the very next verses,



PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

- What is Jesus saying to you about your identity as his follower?
- How are your gifts for mission identified by your faith community?
- Who do you say you are?

the rock will falter when confronted with the stumbling block (*scandalon*, 18:6, 7) of Jesus’ passion. Nonetheless, as the Gospel progresses, Jesus continues to call him Peter, enabling him to become what he is named.

Just as the disciples’ naming of Jesus as Messiah and partnering with him in his mission enabled him to embrace all that being the anointed one entailed, so too Jesus’ identification of the believing community as rock solid brought forth that quality in them. Likewise, we are invited to let Jesus and our faith community call forth our deepest identity as followers of the anointed, whose solidity is sure.

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.

ART: TAD DUNNE

Finding Your Self

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (A), AUG. 28, 2011

Readings: Jer 20:7-9; Ps 63:2-9; Rom 12:1-2; ; Mt 16:21-27

“If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me” (Mt 16:24)

Having had the privilege some years ago of listening to indigenous women in La Paz, Bolivia, reflect on today’s Gospel, I can never hear it without remembering their interpretation:

We women identify strongly with the crucified Christ and his sufferings. There is a strong sense of submission in our Aymara and Quechua cultures. Women submit to sexual abuse from their fathers, uncles and husbands, with a strong sense of resignation, thinking that whatever suffering they endure, they do silently and heroically, as their way of carrying the cross with Jesus.

This particular group had come through a process of learning to interpret the Gospel differently, so that their consciousness of themselves as lovable and precious in God’s eyes had been heightened; and thereafter they questioned the wisdom they had received for generations about how submitting to abuse and injustice was the way to identify with the crucified Christ. Gradually, they tested new ways of relating, as they claimed their power, uniting with one another to bring about change for themselves and their daughters.

What these women came to discover was the way in which a misreading of today’s Gospel had obliterated their sense of self and kept them cowering in abusive relationships.

How could Jesus, who was so intent on lifting up those who were bowed down and on healing all who suffered, have meant it otherwise for them, they reasoned.

One does not have to go to Bolivia to find abuse justified by such interpretations of the cross. Whether immediately visible or not, such situations can be found in almost every community. A closer look at the context of Jesus’ saying reveals that he is speaking about a particular kind of suffering that his disciples must be willing to embrace: that which comes as a direct result of following his manner of life and mission. Suffering that comes from abuse and injustice is to be resisted and eradicated as fully as possible, as Jesus did throughout his ministry.

Moreover, the saying about denial of self is not referring to giving up certain pleasures, like forgoing chocolate during Lent. Rather, it refers to a disciple’s choice to lose himself or herself entirely in Christ—to take on Christ’s way of life and mission and his very identity as one’s own. This identity does not center on suffering, but on the love of God, expressed through loving service to one another, intent on bringing forth life to the full for all. But not all will welcome a man-

ner of living and loving that undermines systems of domination and submission. The repercussions one is willing to risk for the sake of living and proclaiming the Gospel—that is the cross.

For the women in La Paz, a new-found understanding of the Gospel was born in meetings in which they were able to join in solidarity to share their experiences and reflect together with new eyes on the Scriptures. From this grew their sense of being empowered, beloved by God and able together to confront and end the suffering

PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

- What does “taking up the cross” mean in your life?
- Do you stumble at the thought of losing yourself in order to find yourself in Christ?
- Ask Jesus to show you how to overcome the fear of repercussions for living and spreading his liberating love.

they and others they loved were experiencing.

True to today’s Gospel, these women indeed found their lives. Jesus increasingly came to understand what lay ahead for him from his own denial of self in finding his true life. How do you find yourself?

BARBARA E. REID



NEED TOMORROW’S WORD TODAY?

Visit americamagazine.org and click on “The Word” in the right-hand column under the “Print” heading.

UNIVERSITY OF DALLAS Ministry Conference

OCTOBER 28 - 29, 2011

Dallas Convention Center



Walking Together in Faith

Caminando juntos en la fe / Cùng Đồng Hành trong Đức Tin

Featuring

- Keynote speaker, His Eminence Francis Cardinal George, OMI, Archbishop of Chicago and past president of the USCCB
- Other nationally recognized speakers talking on topics relevant for all Catholics, including faith, parenting, and social justice
- Over 80 exhibitors, including non-profits, Catholic bookstores, and many more
- A liturgical art display and musical performances by Catholic artists
- Prayer services & Mass

Sponsored by:



Diocese of Dallas



University of Dallas



Diocese of Fort Worth



Only \$65
(If registered before 9/16)
In a church group?
Group rates available!

udallas.edu/udmc/america