

# America

MAY 27, 2019

THE JESUIT REVIEW OF FAITH AND CULTURE

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## The Mode of the Receiver

“What is received,” wrote St. Thomas Aquinas, “is received according to the mode of the receiver.” Perhaps that is obvious, but if not, what Aquinas is saying is that what we see and how we see it depend, in large part, on where we are standing. This has always been true of human beings. Creatures, as opposed to the creator, necessarily suffer from a certain epistemological myopia.

There is a lot that we do not know, and this causes us not a little anxiety. To manage that anxiety, we make use of concepts, ideas that form a kind of internal map of reality. When we encounter new terrain—the data of experience—we then survey that terrain using our internal map.

All of that is good and necessary. The challenge comes when we human beings mistake the concept of a thing for the thing; when we confuse our map, a symbol of the terrain, for the terrain itself. Ironically, this then closes us off to reality and limits our intellectual horizons. It makes the world smaller, which, in turn, winds up making us more anxious. We then manage that anxiety by insisting on the primacy of our concepts. Human beings do this all the time, until something occurs that breaks the cycle, some event that disrupts the mode of the receiver. Believers often refer to this disruption as grace, and Peter Lucier eloquently describes a moment like this in this issue (Page 36).

All of this is part and parcel of being human and has been with us from the first moment of our consciousness. The challenge for us today is that the way we receive information and the sheer volume of that information have expanded exponentially, which,

in turn, has exacerbated the challenge of interpreting that information, dramatically increased our anxiety and revealed anew the deficiencies of our traditional means of coping with it. One result is the ideological partisanship we see in our secular politics.

As I have previously noted in this column, the use of social media as a news source has reinforced our worst habits. According to a Princeton University study, while it is virtually impossible to avoid encountering some contrary ideological views in social media, “those with the most consistent ideological views on the left and right”—that is, those most active in public discourse—“have information streams that are distinct from those of individuals with more mixed political views—and very distinct from each other.”

Social media, in other words, often deepens existing ideological and partisan divisions by reinforcing only those viewpoints with which we are already most inclined to agree.

In order to manage the anxiety caused by the epistemological onslaught of social media and cable news, we fall back on the false security of our concepts, our ideologies, those ideas that we equate strictly with reality. This, as I just wrote, is a natural human tendency; but left unchecked and taken to its extremes, this tendency becomes a destructive force.

As the late political theorist Kenneth Minogue once observed, “although ideology must take on political trappings in order to transform the world, its real character is entirely antithetical to the practice of politics. Ideology is to reality...as the reports of battles are to the concrete experience

of individuals in the field. In ideological moods, we think we see in social and political life those clear lines from the history books depicting the battle order of the antagonists in massed array. They have neat, clear names like bourgeois and proletarian, colonialist and national, city-dweller and producer, in a word, oppressor and oppressed. The actual reality, however, is messy.”

Indeed it is. Messy, that is. But don’t misunderstand me. I am a Thomist. I believe that the world is intelligible and that I am a knowing subject. But I also know that there is a difference between knowing that the world is understandable and then growing in that understanding and, on the other hand, believing that I understand the world in some absolute and final way. The former is a necessary presupposition for democracy, while the latter is a justification for authoritarianisms of one sort or another.

The solution to this problem is not obvious. But for Christians, at least, grace is an indispensable component. Grace has a way of scandalizing our ideologies, our cherished myths. It tends to break down in order to build up.

As the editors conclude in this issue’s editorial, “People acting in good faith will arrive at different answers. But for Christians, love, not fear, should guide the path forward.” Love, in other words, is our map of reality.

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Matt Malone, S.J.  
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AP Photo/Tsvangirayi Mukwazini

Children at a temporary shelter for children in Pemba, on the northeastern coast of Mozambique, on May 2. More than one million children have been affected by a pair of cyclones that ripped into Mozambique in less than two months.

Cover: iStock

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### BLASE J. CUPICH

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## Do you personally know someone who has served in the military?

One hundred percent of respondents personally know someone who has served in the military.

Readers referred to parents, husbands, sisters, brothers, siblings-in-law, aunts, uncles, cousins, co-workers and priests. “My parish priest was in the Air Force,” said Lisa Gramlich of San Francisco, Calif. “My grandfather was a colonel in World War II and the Korean War.”

Several readers served in the military themselves. “I’m a vet myself,” wrote Joe Offer of Applegate, Calif., “and I know several vets in my parish. Now that my dad is dead, I’m the only vet I know of in my family.”

### Francis in Romania

Re “Pope Francis: Be Wary of Hungary’s Right-Wing Populists,” by Marc Roscoe Loustau (4/29). The visit of Pope Francis to Romania will include very important moments in Transylvania. For ethnic and religious minorities in this region, who often have been at the peripheries and had to struggle for their identity and faith, this is a sign of hope and an incredible gift by the pope, greeted by thankful joy.

The holy Mass at Csíksomlyó, the most important pilgrimage place for Hungarians in the world, will strengthen the faith and contribute to building bridges between Hungarian communities and other peoples in the region, cooperating on an equal basis, respecting the rights and traditions of every community.

A propos of traditions: Our symbols, like the Hungarian national anthem (which is, in fact, a prayer), predate the 20th-century divisions of our nation and are considered by all our communities part of their patrimony. As the Holy Father recently reminded us: “The church has always urged the love of one’s own people and homeland, the respect for the treasure of various cultural expressions, of the customs and habits of peoples.” That attitude was somehow lacking in the article.

What I can say is that Hungary is grateful to Pope Francis and joyfully looks forward to his visit to neighboring Romania.

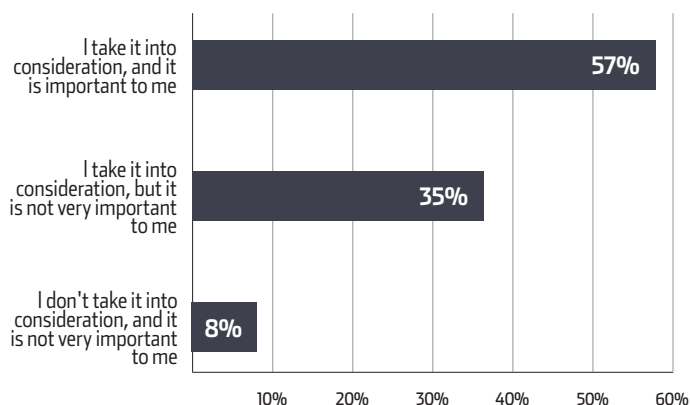
**Eduard Habsburg-Lothringen**

Ambassador of Hungary to the Holy See

Asked if they take military experience into consideration when thinking about candidates for public office, our readers were divided. See graphic.

“I tend not to trust pro-war politicians if they have not served in the military,” said Mr. Offer, who indicated that he takes military experience into consideration and it is important to him.

### Do you take military experience into consideration when thinking about candidates for public office?



### Ch-ch-changes?

Re “New Life Goes Old School: Why Megachurches Are Embracing (Some) Catholic Traditions,” by Anna Keating (5/13): The author describes a trend in charismatic Protestant congregations that I have noticed over 20 years in evangelical Protestant congregations. Is it “a move of the Holy Spirit toward greater unity or cultural appropriation on a massive scale”? Neither, as the author describes it. It seems that Protestants are just adopting some traditional liturgical practices.

**Richard Bell** ●

*These results are based on 131 reader responses to a poll promoted on Facebook and Twitter and in our email newsletter.*



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## Keep Conscience Protections Out of the Culture War

Opponents of a religious liberty bill working its way through the Texas state legislature have characterized the measure as a “license to discriminate” and a “bigot bill.” They argue that Senate Bill 17, which passed in the Republican-controlled Senate in April and awaits a vote in the House of Representatives, will give everyone from doctors to barbers the right to discriminate against L.G.B.T. people and others. Major employers in the state, including Amazon and Facebook, have warned legislators that the bill would damage Texas’ business-friendly reputation.

In reality, the bill is modest in its scope. The Texas Occupational License RFRA prohibits state licensing agencies from adopting rules that burden the free exercise of religion and allows professionals to cite their “sincerely held religious beliefs” as a defense for denying services if their license is challenged. The defense could not be used by first responders or in situations where the refusal of service could result in death or serious physical harm. The Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops registered its support for the bill, and one Democratic state senator, Eddie Lucio, crossed the aisle to vote for the bill, citing his Catholic faith.

The bill has prompted a familiar clash in the ongoing culture war that pits religious liberty against anti-discrimination measures. As was seen in fights over transgender access to public bathrooms in North Carolina, Indiana’s Religious Freedom Restoration Act and wedding cakes in Colorado, critics and supporters of S.B. 17 alike fear that their most fundamental rights are under attack.

Critics are wrong in saying that the bill gives professionals an affirma-

tive right to discriminate. At most, the introduction of a new legal defense could make them more confident about denying services when they feel their religious freedom is at stake. Texas, like most states and the federal government, has no antidiscrimination laws for L.G.B.T. people.

However, while S.B. 17 makes no mention of sexual orientation or gender identity, it is only one of a raft of faith-based exemption bills under consideration in Texas that raise concerns about discrimination. Other measures would allow medical and mental-health professionals to refuse nonemergency care for religious reasons, would let individuals and businesses refuse to provide goods and services for same-sex weddings and would prohibit local regulations that require transgender-friendly bathrooms. It is not surprising, then, that the L.G.B.T. community in Texas feels besieged and sees religious liberty as a thinly veiled excuse for discrimination.

This is a problem for supporters of religious freedom protections. While the intent of S.B. 17—to create a professional environment that is hospitable to people who disapprove of same-sex marriage—is itself worthy, such laws are tactically questionable. Conscience protection laws that allow health care professionals to refuse to perform abortions, sterilizations or euthanasia are too important to be dragged into the culture war. Balancing sincere religious beliefs about marriage and gender identity with concerns about discrimination is a real challenge. In the face of rapid social change, these fundamental questions should be grappled with in our communities and churches, not prematurely adjudicated in courts, legislatures or corporate

headquarters. As we noted following the Supreme Court’s decision in the Masterpiece Cakeshop case, “what the country needs is not a definitive legal ruling, but common understanding of the real fears felt by people on all sides of these cases.”

Religious Americans inhabit an increasingly secular culture. But we must not let legitimate concerns about our ability to live out our faith in public life blind us to the fears of our fellow citizens who feel their civil rights are up for debate. The heated national conversation about this tension can obscure the fact that, ultimately, these are questions that will be faced by neighbors: Will I refuse to cater my neighbor’s wedding? Will I sue my neighbor for refusing or find another vendor? People acting in good faith will arrive at different answers. But for Christians, love, not fear, should guide the path forward.

## The Threat of Extinction

The United Nations released a report on May 6 that brought the rapidly accelerating global environmental crisis into sharp perspective. Up to a million species are threatened with extinction within the next few decades, noted the report from the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, with catastrophic consequences not just for ecological biodiversity but for human life as well. Some three billion people, for example, rely on creatures of the sea for their daily protein needs, but projected rises in sea temperature of up to 3.5 degrees Celsius are expected



to cause widespread collapses in fisheries and marine ecosystems.

Even immediate action on a global scale cannot save many of the endangered plant and animal species at risk. Rising temperatures in the world's oceans, the desertification of many once-lush regions and reckless pollution are all leading toward a mass extinction unprecedented since humanity's emergence as the world's apex predator.

The United States is a major contributor to these changes, and the last two years of the Trump administration have only made the U.S. more complicit in global extinctions. From the U.S. withdrawal from the Paris climate accord to ongoing efforts to revive "dirty energy" industries like coal, our nation's actions have made us a cynical and difficult participant in global efforts to prevent a climate catastrophe.

A leader in efforts to ameliorate or even prevent climate change has been the Catholic Church. Even before his groundbreaking environmental encyclical, "Laudato Si'," Pope Francis wrote in "Evangelii Gaudium" that "God has joined us so closely to the world around us that we can feel the desertification of the soil almost as a physical ailment, and the extinction of a species as a painful disfigurement."

Will U.S. Catholics heed the call to take global action immediately? Or will our children and grandchildren live in a world drastically changed and terribly broken? It is not enough for religious leaders to call for action: We need our politicians to heed that call.

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## Three ways to judge Pope Francis' reform of the Roman Curia

The cardinals who voted in conclave to elect Pope Francis did so hoping he would reform the Vatican Curia and make it more responsive to the concerns of the universal church. Six years later, his Curia reform proposals are reportedly to be promulgated at the end of June. Will they satisfy the critics of the Curia?

Reforming the Vatican Curia has been a constant topic since the Second Vatican Council ended in 1965. The Curia has been accused of being inefficient, Byzantine, dictatorial and out of touch with the needs of ordinary Catholics. On top of that, it has been plagued by financial and sexual scandals. Popes have rolled out reforms, but they have had little impact.

Paul VI did the most, requiring the heads of Curia offices to submit their resignations at age 75 and requiring bishops and cardinals to leave the committees that supervise the work of Vatican offices when they reach 80. He also created new offices for dialogue with other Christian churches and with other religions. Later popes added offices to deal with their favorite projects.

Francis made some initial changes in the Curia when he became pope, merging some of the post-Vatican II offices so that fewer people report directly to him. He also combined the various media offices, but because of ineffectual leadership, the merger threw Vatican communications into chaos. Perhaps his greatest impact has been on the culture of the Curia, rather than its structure. His constant emphasis on service and listening has changed how Curia officials interact with visiting bishops. Now more time is given to listening to the bishops' concerns.

The new reform proposals, however, are being presented as a compre-

hensive reform of church structures. Here are three questions to ask in evaluating these reforms.

*Does the reform convert the Vatican from a court to a civil service?* The Vatican is still organized as an 18th-century royal court where princes (cardinals) and nobles (bishops) help the king (pope) govern the nation (church). The problem with such a structure is that you can't fire princes and nobles when they prove incompetent. The church needs a competent civil service, not a court.

Curia officials should not be bishops or cardinals, which creates the impression that they are middle management between the bishops and the pope. Rather, they should be priests and laypersons, with expertise in their area of responsibility. As such, it would be clear they are not part of the magisterium. Rather, they are servants of the pope and the college of bishops. They are staff, not rulers.

*Does the reform foster decentralization?* What decisions currently made in the Vatican will now be made at the diocesan or episcopal conference level? For example, more than two decades ago, the English-speaking conferences of bishops developed a very good translation of the liturgy, which was vetoed by Rome. The Vatican then forced the bishops to accept the seriously flawed translation we have today. If the Vatican does not give up its stranglehold on this kind of decision-making, the new reforms will be meaningless.

*Does the reform move the Vatican toward separating executive, legislative and judicial powers?* Because the Vatican is modeled on an absolute monarchy, there is no separation of powers. Today, Curia offices make the rules, police the rules and pass judg-

ment on those who violate the rules. A separation of powers would mean giving more authority to the Synod of Bishops, making it more like a real legislature. Perhaps the synod could have standing committees that would replace the committees of cardinals that make up Vatican congregations. The Vatican also needs a separate department of justice to investigate and prosecute canonical crimes, whether they be sexual, financial or otherwise. The accused should be tried before an independent judiciary.

I expect, unfortunately, that the answers to all my questions will be "no." Although I love Francis, I expect to be disappointed by his reform proposals. Francis is a pastor, not a management expert. In addition, there are strong opponents of reform in the Curia. Some of the boxes on the organizational chart will be moved around, but it will make little difference.

Finally, all of us who propose reforms need to do so with humility. Social science and experience warn us that every reform has unanticipated consequences. That is why the church has tended to muddle through with incremental change rather than real revolution. On the other hand, incremental change will not deal with the issues facing the church today. More is needed.

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Thomas J. Reese, S.J., is a senior analyst for Religion News Service. Previously he was a columnist at *The National Catholic Reporter* and an associate editor and editor in chief of *America*. This column is from Religion News Service.



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# U.S. Catholic leaders welcome new Vatican protocol on sex abuse accountability

By Michael J. O'Loughlin

Catholic leaders in the United States welcomed new procedures from the Vatican aimed at holding church leaders accountable for reporting sexual abuse. The initial reaction of victim advocates was more cautious.

Cardinal Blase Cupich, the archbishop of Chicago who in November floated an idea for bishop accountability similar to the new rule promulgated by the Vatican, called the new Vatican measures “revolutionary” and said the new mandate “closes a loop” when it comes to holding church leaders accountable.

“What’s quite extraordinary about this is that if...there is a mishandling by a bishop who’s responsible for an investigation, then he is liable to be investigated for any cover-up,” Cardinal Cupich said in an interview with **America**.

The document, issued *motu proprio* (“on his own initiative”) by Pope Francis on May 9 and known by its Latin title “Vos estis lux mundi” (“You are the light to the world”), lays down procedures and norms for reporting abuse in the church. Bishops will have just over a year to establish a system available to the public to report the sexual abuse of minors or adults, the use of violence to coerce adults into sex, and the creation, possession or distribution of child pornography.

Anne Barrett Doyle, a co-director of BishopAccountabil-

ity.org, said in a statement that the new law is “a step forward,” specifically for protecting whistleblowers, prohibiting a requirement of secrecy for those making allegations and requiring bishops to adopt procedures for reporting allegations.

“Yet it’s not nearly enough,” she said, pointing out that the church law does not include language relating to penalties. “[I]t’s still entirely possible for a bishop to punish a child-molesting priest with a slap on the wrist and to keep his name hidden from the public. The new law does nothing to enact zero tolerance for child sexual abuse or for cover-ups.”

The Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests also offered some praise, noting in a statement that “mandated reporting is a good thing” and highlighting that the new law applies to both children and “vulnerable adults.”

“We would have been far more impressed if this new law required church officials to report to police and prosecutors instead,” the statement read. “Oversight from external, secular authorities will better protect children and deter cover-ups.”

The Vatican has argued that different legal systems in different countries make a universal reporting law impossible and that imposing such a requirement could endanger the church in places where Catholics are a persecuted minority.



But the procedures do for the first time put into universal church law the understanding that clergy must obey civil reporting requirements where they live and that their obligation to report abuse allegations to the church in no way interferes with their obligation to notify civil authority.

Responding to concerns that investigations will still be handled by church authorities, Cardinal Cupich said that with the inclusion of laypeople in the investigation process, “it’s very clear there’s transparency.”

The new procedures call for any claim of sexual misconduct or cover-up against a bishop, religious superior or Eastern Rite patriarch to be reported to the Holy See and the “metropolitan bishop”—that is, an archbishop who is also responsible for a broader geographic area than his archdiocese alone.

Unless the metropolitan bishop finds the claim “manifestly unfounded,” he must immediately ask permission from the Vatican to open a preliminary investigation and must hear back from Rome within 30 days. The metropolitan bishop then has an initial 90 days to conduct the investigation, though extensions are possible.

The law makes clear he can use lay experts to help, a key provision that is already used in many dioceses, and it recommends that a special fund be set up to pay for the investigations, particularly in poorer parts of the world.

Cardinal Seán O'Malley, the archbishop of Boston who heads the Vatican's child protection commission, said in a statement that it is “quite significant” that the new rule covers adults who “suffer sexual offenses through violence or intimidation or the abuse of authority,” noting that such victims can include “seminarians and religious.”

In recent months, both the secular media and the Vatican's women's magazine have reported on the sexual abuse of Catholic nuns around the world. In a statement to **America**, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious said it is “pleased that Pope Francis has taken a significant step forward.”

“We see these concrete actions as a positive step forward to increase the protection of children and vulnerable adults. We will be continuing study of the new document, along with canon lawyers, to understand the norm's impli-

cations for Catholic sisters,” the statement said.

There have been recent cases involving U.S. bishops that have been investigated by metropolitan bishops, which Cardinal Cupich said prove the model is effective.

He pointed to the handling by Archbishop William Lori of Baltimore of an investigation into claims of sexual misconduct against the retired Bishop Michael Bransfield of West Virginia and Cardinal Timothy Dolan's handling of claims against former Cardinal Theodore McCarrick. Allegations against Mr. McCarrick, who was removed from the priesthood last year, came to light after an investigation by the lay review board of the Archdiocese of New York found decades-old accusations against the former Washington archbishop to be credible.

“We already have here a proof of concept,” Cardinal Cupich said, adding “we have seen that it does work.”

If allegations of abuse are leveled against a metropolitan bishop, as in the case of Mr. McCarrick, the Vatican would decide which bishop would lead the investigation.

In a statement, Cardinal Dolan called the new law “another sign of the Holy Father's desire to institute reform, promote healing, and insure justice. It is a much-needed and tremendously important step forward for the Church universal.”

Bishops from the United States will meet in Baltimore next month, where they are expected to address the new law. Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said in a statement that U.S. bishops “have already begun the work of preparing implementation measures for deliberation” next month.

“The existing framework in the United States—including victim outreach, zero tolerance, reporting allegations to civil authorities, and lay expertise on review boards, among other measures—positions us readily to bring the Holy Father's instructions to action,” he said.

As for the long process in writing the new law, Cardinal Cupich said it “allowed time for everything to mature for the benefit of...the universal church.”

“The pope is serious,” he said. “In less than 90 days, we have this universal church law following on the heels of the February meeting [at the Vatican with bishops from around the world]. This is very fast.”

Michael J. O'Loughlin, *national correspondent*.  
Twitter: @MikeOLoughlin.

## In College of Cardinals, European dominance slowly wanes

Polish Cardinal Stanislaw Dziwisz, the former archbishop of Krakow and longtime secretary to St. John Paul II, celebrated his 80th birthday on April 27, ending his eligibility to vote in a conclave for a new pope and returning the number of electors in the College of Cardinals to 120. That is the maximum limit established by St. Paul VI, one that has been frequently set aside for months at a time over the past three decades.

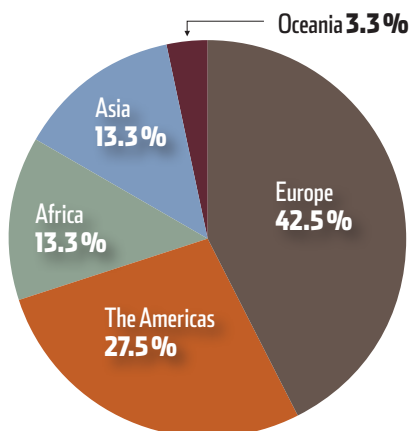
The Catholic Church currently has 221 cardinals, who come from 88 nations. The 120 cardinals under 80 years of age and, therefore, eligible to enter a conclave, come from 65 countries, a result of Pope Francis' practice of naming several cardinals from countries that have never had one before. His efforts, however, have not done much to make the percentage of cardinals from one geographical region match the percentage of the world's Catholics found in that region.

According to Vatican statistics published in February, 21.8 percent of the world's Catholics live in Europe, while 48.5 percent live in the Americas. In the current College of Cardinals, 42.5 percent of the cardinal electors come from Europe, while 17.5 percent come from Latin America. Pope Francis has, however, visibly shifted the college's makeup with fewer members coming from Europe and many more from African and Asia. In the conclave that elected Pope Benedict XVI in April 2005, after the death of St. John Paul II, 50.4 percent of electors were from Europe. Eight years later, when Pope Benedict resigned, 52.1 percent of the electors were from Europe, almost 10 percentage points higher than in the current College of Cardinals.

Cindy Wooden, *Catholic News Service*

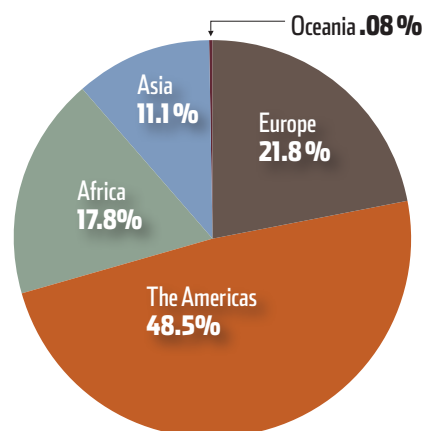
### CARDINALS BY REGION

Europe	42.5%
The Americas	27.5%
Africa	13.3%
Asia	13.3%
Oceania	3.3%



### CATHOLIC POPULATION BY REGION

Europe	21.8%
The Americas	48.5%
Africa	17.8%
Asia	11.1%
Oceania	.08%



### GOING TO THE PERIPHERIES



48 nations were represented by St. John Paul II's final conclave



52 nations were represented by Pope Benedict XVI's final conclave



65 nations are represented in the current College of Cardinals under Pope Francis

### THE CURRENT COLLEGE

- ▶ 221 cardinals from 88 nations; 120 cardinals from 65 countries are under 80 and eligible to vote for the next pope
- ▶ 10 percent of the world's cardinals come from North America.
- ▶ Pope Francis has created 75 cardinals from 50 countries, 15 of which had never before had a cardinal, including the first Scandinavian cardinal since the Reformation.
- ▶ 57 of the cardinal electors have been appointed by Francis; 45 by Pope Benedict XVI; and 18 by Pope John Paul II.

Sources: Catholic News Service, Press Office of the Holy See  
Photos: CNS photo/courtesy Torchia Communications, CNS photo/Paul Haring, CNS photo/Remo Casilli, Reuters



# The University of San Francisco goes 'carbon neutral'

On April 22, the University of San Francisco announced that it has achieved zero net carbon emissions, otherwise known as carbon neutrality. “As Pope Francis wrote in his challenge to the world, ‘Laudato Si’: On Care for Our Common Home,’ every one of us has a responsibility to participate in swift and united action to repair humanity’s relationship with the Earth,” said Paul J. Fitzgerald, S.J., the president of the university. “For U.S.F., this is both a matter of justice for the poor, who even now suffer greatly from pollution and climate change, and a matter of justice for future generations who will suffer the consequences of the deleterious changes to our environment.”

U.S.F. is not only the first Jesuit college or university to achieve this goal, but it is also one of only a handful of higher education institutions in the United States to have done so. Charlie Cross, U.S.F.’s vice president for business and finance, explained that reaching zero net carbon emissions is very difficult “unless you are sitting in a remote area, where you can burn wood chips or put up giant windmills.”

For many decades, U.S.F. has been working to diminish its carbon footprint. As early as 1981 it installed solar water heaters, and today it has one of the largest solar power projects in San Francisco. In recent decades it exchanged boilers for new units that are over 90 percent efficient and also replaced radiators, windows, lighting, insulation and water fixtures. Overall it has improved its energy efficiency by more than 40 percent over the last 30 years, all while the campus population has grown dramatically—by 28 percent in the last 15 years alone.

The university has also worked to create a broader culture of sustainability. It provides no student parking on campus, instead giving every student a public transportation pass. It also offers a monthly supplement to offset some of the commuting costs for faculty members who use public transportation, and it runs Backstage Bikes, a

program that allows students, faculty and staff to build their own bicycles at no cost. In 2017 the university bought Star Route Farms, which has been a leader in organic farming for over 40 years and sells produce not only at many farmers’ markets but to some of the best restaurants in the Bay Area.

Yet as Mr. Cross and others explored how the university could achieve carbon neutrality, they faced a seemingly intractable problem: Roughly half of the university’s emissions, or 27,000 tons of carbon in this academic year, come from mostly unavoidable travel obligations, like commuting and air travel to conferences.

The solution was to explore carbon offsets—investments in projects that reduce greenhouse gases elsewhere. The university partnered with the local firm 3Degrees, which manages a portfolio of greenhouse-gas-reducing projects around the world.

Many of the programs 3Degrees supports offer benefits beyond carbon reduction. Capturing gas emitted by landfills, for instance, has “water quality benefits,” explained Stephanie Harris of 3Degrees’ Carbon Markets Team, “because you don’t have gases or other materials leaking into the local water supply.” Cookstove credits can likewise lead to “improved air quality—no more of these particulates in the house from the burning of wood—and women’s empowerment because you’re freeing up time for women and children who no longer have to collect firewood.”

The university’s current slogan is “Change the World From Here.” Through its many-pronged efforts toward the practices and a culture of sustainability, the university seems poised to change what other Jesuit schools and institutions will consider possible when it comes to care of the environment.

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Jim McDermott, *Los Angeles correspondent.*  
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## Jean Vanier built community with people with disabilities

Jean Vanier, the founder of the L'Arche and Faith and Light communities, which support people with disabilities and their families, died on May 7 at the age of 90, surrounded by family. Mr. Vanier inspired countless people with his simple message that people with disabilities are teachers.

A former naval officer, Mr. Vanier resigned from a teaching position to form the first L'Arche community, where people with and without disabilities live and work side by side. He embodied an idea he often preached: that people best learn to love by climbing down, rather than up, the ladder of wealth and social success.

Randall Wright, the director of “Summer in the Forest,” a 2017 documentary about Mr. Vanier and L'Arche, said of Mr. Vanier: “He found a lot of answers through discovering, with joy, relationship with people at the bottom of society. And realizing that they have something which was on offer to him...a kind of ability to be truthful about being human and not needing to put on the act of importance and authority.”

Pope Francis told reporters on May 7 that he had phoned Mr. Vanier a week before his death “to express my gratitude for his witness.”

“He was a man who was able to read the Christian call in the mystery of death, of the cross, of illness, the mystery of those who are despised and discarded,” the pope said,

adding that Mr. Vanier stood up for those “who risk being condemned to death even before being born.”

Mr. Vanier was born in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1928 to a prominent Canadian diplomatic family. He grew up in France until his family fled the impending German invasion in 1940 and moved to Canada. Mr. Vanier served in World War II with both the British Royal Navy and the Royal Canadian Navy. In 1945, he joined his mother volunteering at the Paris railway station where survivors of the Nazi concentration camps arrived after their liberation. The experience inspired a desire to devote his life to peacemaking.

After completing his studies in Paris, he taught philosophy at the University of St. Michael's College in Toronto in 1963. Over the Christmas break that year, Mr. Vanier visited a mental institution in France where he encountered the harsh conditions under which the patients lived—dismissed as “idiots” and locked inside, given nothing to do but take a two-hour compulsory nap each day.

The encounter inspired Mr. Vanier to purchase a small house in Trosly-Breuil, a town in rural France, in 1964. Mr. Vanier invited two developmentally disabled men who had been living in institutions, Raphaël Simi and Philippe Seux, to live with him in the cottage, which became the first L'Arche community. L'Arche has today expanded to 149 communities in 35 countries on five continents.



Jean Vanier, founder of the L'Arche communities, in the documentary "Summer in the Forest"

James Martin, S.J., **America's** editor at large, said: "Jean Vanier showed us, like few people ever have, the overwhelming power of gentleness. Not only in his ministry with the disabled but in his voice, his demeanor, his very presence. During his life there was no one I thought more deserving of the title 'living saint.'"

In an interview with **America** in 2015, Mr. Vanier described the philosophy of the L'Arche communities as "very simple."

"The important thing," he said, "is that people who have been pushed aside and humiliated need to be shown that they are precious.... The wonderful thing is that when we live with people with disabilities, not only are they transformed because they discover they're loved, but we also are transformed. That is the secret of the philosophy of L'Arche: that we transform each other in helping each other to become more human and more like Jesus."

Colleen Dulle, *assistant producer*.  
Twitter: @ColleenDulle.

**A** For more international reporting, visit [americamagazine.org/dispatches](http://americamagazine.org/dispatches).



Rabbi Arthur Schneier and Dr. Mohammad Abdulkarim Al-Issa

Diane Bondareff/AP Images for Appeal of Conscience Foundation

## GOODNEWS: An interreligious call to protect houses of worship

Easter Sunday suicide bomb attacks at three churches and two hotels in Sri Lanka shocked the world. In a mosque in Christchurch, New Zealand, 54 people were gunned down at prayer in March; and one woman was killed and three others wounded when a gunman rampaged at a synagogue near San Diego, Calif., on the last day of Passover.

In response to these acts of extremism, some are determined to offer a counter-image of interreligious relationship and peacemaking. On April 29 in New York, Dr. Mohammad Abdulkarim Al-Issa, secretary general of the Muslim World League, and Rabbi Arthur Schneier, founder and president of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation and senior rabbi at the Park East Synagogue, signed a joint call for greater urgency in efforts to protect religious sites.

The agreement also encourages renewed efforts at mutual understanding among members of different religious traditions. It asks spiritual leaders, "to avoid, abandon and condemn hate speech of any kind, bearing in mind that children are not born with fear or hatred, but can be taught to fear and hate."

"People should not have to risk their lives when going to pray in churches, mosques, synagogues or temples," said Rabbi Schneier. "We call on all peoples, nations and their religious and political leaders to work for the protection of all religious sites as places essential to our common humanity and the preservation of faiths and cultures."

"Houses of worship must be sanctuaries of peace," said Dr. Al-Issa, a leading global voice for moderate Islam. "No one should be killed for daring only to pray. No one should be threatened for expressing his or her beliefs."

Kevin Clarke, *chief correspondent*.  
Twitter: @ClarkeAtAmerica.



# MEN OF GOD





# REIMAGINING CHRISTIAN MASCULINITY

By Jim McDermott

On a bright morning in Melbourne last December, Patricia Faulkner, A.O., chair of the board of Jesuit Social Services in Australia, stood before a room filled with press and members of the community and shared a simple message: “Men and boys need help.”

Since 1977, J.S.S. has been working for social change in Australia through a combination of delivering services to marginalized groups, like refugees and prisoners, and in-depth research and advocacy on their behalf. As part of the agency’s 40th anniversary, Julie Edwards, the group’s chief executive officer, asked the organization to “sniff the wind,” as she put it, to reflect on what they were seeing on the ground and consider what new efforts might be needed today.

“And what people kept coming back to,” says Michael Livingstone, executive director of The Men’s Project, which came out of that year of discernment, “was that the issues of boys and men persist. They’re overwhelmingly the people we see in our criminal justice programs and the perpetrators of family violence; they’re also a higher percentage for other issues around mental health, risk-taking and drinking.”



# IN THIS WATERSHED MOMENT, WHEN IT IS SO CLEAR THAT THINKING ABOUT MEN AND MASCULINITY IS EVOLVING, WHERE IS THE CHURCH? AND HOW CAN IT HELP? ●●

As former deputy commissioner of a state commission looking into family violence, Ms. Faulkner was intimately familiar with these problems and also the broader human web within which they exist. “It’s not just a matter of an individual,” she told the group. “Society has to change.”

From the #MeToo movement to the nomination of Judge Brett Kavanaugh to the U.S. Supreme Court, from remembering the kindness of the children’s television pioneer Mr. Rogers to examining the leadership of Pope Francis, the last year has witnessed the rise of an extraordinary international conversation around gender and power even as it has inspired an at-times vituperative pushback from some.

In this watershed moment, when it is so clear that thinking about men and masculinity is evolving, where is the church? And how can it help?

## THE PROBLEM OF CHRISTIAN MASCULINITY

The Catholic Church in the United States has long promoted notions of Catholic masculinity and offered groups and movements for men. Recent decades have also seen the rise of an entire industry of Christian men’s self-help books, with titles like *Act Like Men: 40 Days to Biblical Manhood*, *Manual to Manhood* and *Catholic Manhood Today*. Many are bestsellers. John Eldredge’s *Wild at Heart* (2001) remains No. 1 on Amazon’s list of titles about Christian men’s issues 17 years after its publication.

These books tend to follow a similar course. They begin with a declaration of the problem: “Men are in deep trouble with sin” (*Act Like Men*). Society is in crisis: “The conditions we find ourselves in have put us on a steady decline as a culture” (*Catholic Manhood Now*). And recovery depends upon a return to a “genuine masculinity” (*Catho-*

*lic Manhood Now*), to being a “quality man” (*Act Like Men*).

What generally follows is a mixture of straight talk and encouragement. “When we lay aside our selfishness out of commitment, we arrive at a place called contentment or joy,” writes Raylan Alleman in *Catholic Manhood Now*.

“If there is anything ‘Olympic’ about us, it’s our ability to lie to ourselves,” says James MacDonald in *Act Like Men*.

These writers typically speak with familiarity; these are their struggles too. “I have never met the dude who didn’t at some level want to be a quality man,” Mr. MacDonald says. “But for some reason in the pressure of the moment, we often cave in to behavior we despise.”

“Deep in a man’s heart are some fundamental questions that simply cannot be answered at the kitchen table,” writes Mr. Eldredge. “Who am I? What am I made of? What am I destined for?”

But within these quests for goodness a shocking degree of misogyny can lurk. The first subsection of the first chapter of *Act Like Men* is entitled: “Act Like a Man Means Don’t Act Like a Woman.”

Men are there to protect their women, Mr. MacDonald explains, and to oversee the family.

“We lead our families and instruct and advise our wives and children of what they are to do,” Mr. Alleman confirms.

“Where are all the real men?” is regular fare for talk shows and new books,” Mr. Eldredge writes. “You asked them to be women, I want to say.”

If you want to know how the diminishment of women continues, look no further.

Notions of “the genuine Christian man” are likewise riddled with stereotype and anxiety. Men are good with their hands; sports lovers; outdoorsy. Mr. Eldredge claims they have an “innate love of maps.”

And they are “real men”: “What would happen if we had effeminate or juvenile men in charge of national defense or police protection?” Mr. Alleman wonders. “These are the roles filled by genuinely masculine men.”

“We all know the guy who gets a pedicure and frosts his tips, but most men think that guy is wacky and only talk to him when forced,” writes Mr. MacDonald.

Even as these books may genuinely try to help men, they can function as Trojan horses, inserting cultural, political or social agendas that are neither pastorally helpful nor consistent with the tenets of Christianity. Such problematic themes are so prevalent, not only in the literature but within Christian and Catholic men’s movements, it





suggests that using masculinity or some notion of “the Catholic man” as a starting point for reflection could be a serious and potentially dangerous error.

### WALKING TOWARD A GOD OF LOVE

About a half hour outside the Twin Cities in Minnesota, a retreat house tucked away in woods overlooking a pretty lake has charted a very different course. The Demontreville Jesuit Retreat House has run “preached retreats” for men for 70 years. It seems like an idea out of another era of the church, but at a time when retreat centers around the country are struggling to stay solvent, Demontreville welcomes 70 men every weekend; 3,000 men a year. Many have been coming for decades; some are the third or fourth generation of their family to attend.

Patrick McCorkell, S.J., director of the retreat house, believes some elements of Demontreville appeal specifically to men. “I think men deal better when there’s a predictable structure and a certain discipline to it,” he says. The retreats, which begin on Thursday night and go until Sunday dinner, involve four or five talks a day, meals on a set schedule, strongly maintained expectations about silence and no computers or phones.

The retreat director Paul Lickteig, S.J., wonders if the amount that is asked of the men is not itself part of the at-

traction. “It almost seems like a spiritual feat,” he says, of doing the retreat. “You end up sitting there for eight hours of your weekend listening to someone talk to you, and they’re asking you to get to some spiritual depth. It’s an invitation, but I think there’s also something in the challenge of it.

“I wouldn’t say it’s a spiritual marathon, but it’s certainly a 10K.”

But the essence of the retreat house’s effectiveness, says Father McCorkell, is its attention to spiritual fundamentals. Demontreville takes seriously the notion of being a retreat: “We have a place that’s physically separate from all of the commotion of everyday life.” Even the most simple gestures matter. “We put as many cars as we can in the garage, so they’re out of sight,” Father McCorkell says.

“We say, ‘Let’s create an atmosphere of silence, but more than silence, solitude.’ You come here and there isn’t going to be anybody telling you who you’re supposed to be. We want you to be able to sit with yourself and listen to God tell you who you are.”

These retreats also include a strong emphasis on stability. “You get the same room every year, the same menu in the dining room,” says Father McCorkell. “The furniture is always in the same place. The guys even tend to sit at the same place in the chapel. It creates an environment

# SPIRITUALITY BOOKS MAY GENUINELY TRY TO HELP MEN, BUT THEY CAN FUNCTION AS TROJAN HORSES, INSERTING POLITICAL OR SOCIAL AGENDAS THAT ARE NEITHER PASTORALLY HELPFUL NOR CONSISTENT WITH THE TENETS OF CHRISTIANITY. ●●

that's in some manner timeless. It creates a sense of security, and you tap into your own history of retreats just automatically."

"The rigidity of it all becomes a connector to the past," says Father Lickteig.

Chris Francis, 53, has been going to Demontreville for 30 years. "I'd just gotten out of high school and my dad said, 'It's time for you to come and check this out.'"

"I had no idea what a silent retreat was all about," he says. "And it was not what I was expecting; it was a lot more enjoyable. I loved the structure."

Central to the retreats are the 14 talks given by the retreat director. And those talks, Father McCorkell notes, "are not about being men, but about being human."

"There is a sense that we're all on the journey. I happen to be up here giving the talks because I have slightly different training and experience, but the fact of the matter is we're all on the same journey."

Mr. Francis agrees. The best retreat directors, he says, have shared the wisdom that "everybody makes mistakes, and you need to put that behind you and go forward, try to do a better job tomorrow. They've given me compassion, [the reminder] to put yourself in someone else's shoes."

The Catholic writer and editor Tom McGrath, vice president for product development at Chicago's Loyola Press, has been involved with men's retreats and spirituality and written about them for decades. "A good retreat," he says, "begins with knowing that you are the beloved son of God and helps you find that. It doesn't start with saying, 'You're pretty bad and we're going to help put a clamp on that,' or 'Jesus is going to change you.'"



Men pray together at the Man Up Philly Men's Spirituality Conference at St. Joseph's University, Philadelphia, in March 2014.

"Jesus is not going to change you," he says. "He's going to reveal you to yourself."

"It's not about taming the guy because he shouldn't be left to his own devices too long," Mr. McGrath says. "It's really saying inside of you there is this really great man. It's about transformation."

Father McCorkell agrees. Demontreville's preaching, he says, "comes down to the director communicating a lived love for the Lord. That makes it attractive and possible for the retreatant to do the same."

## OF DYING, RISING AND COMMUNITY

Meanwhile, other prominent voices in the church work to create Catholic spiritual experiences that are both specifically for men and resist the entitlement and misogyny of others' agendas. Richard Rohr, O.F.M., has spent decades developing, teaching and leading rites of initiation for men, helping them to face both their willfulness and their fragility so that they may know new freedom and life in Christ.

"The whole notion of initiation," he explains, "was to critique the male power journey. The discovery of culture after culture is that if the young male doesn't make the journey of powerlessness, [he], and therefore the middle-aged





male and the older male, will always abuse power.”

He finds support for that insight in Scripture. “You go back to Jesus’ initiation rites for his Twelve; he’s always trying to get them to come down and they always want to go up. It’s all about power. If you take his own initiation rite in the desert, the three temptations in my opinion are all temptations of the misuse of power.”

Of course, the journey into humility and trust is hardly limited to men, a point Father Rohr acknowledges. “The Paschal mystery, that’s true across the board. That’s the shape of Christ, the shape of reality.”

Mr. McGrath, who has gone through Father Rohr’s “rites of passage” retreat, agrees: “Every man and every woman is going to face these times of descent in their life when they’re knocked off their horse, or they have an illness or lose a job or a relationship or a family member.” The rites of initiation retreat, he explains, offers a “dying before dying,” a place in which we can experience that essential fragility of our life and also “experience the redemption—God rushing in.”

But Father Rohr resists the notion that gender should be discounted. “Symbols, stories, archetypes are entrance points,” he explains. “There are different stories and symbols that open the male soul, the male psyche,

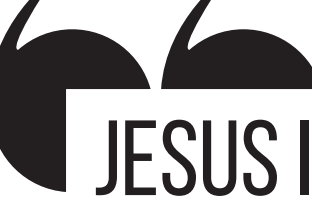
than open the female.”

He sees in the church oftentimes a lack of serious attention to what speaks to men. “Just take liturgy,” he suggests. “The whole liturgical style is too verbal for most men, is too priest-centered and also too feminine, ironically, in the sense that we try to make it so pretty with our vestments, with our colors and candles and incense and all the things we Catholics use.

“I’m not saying they all need to be thrown out, but it’s pretty apparent to me this whole symbol system does not engage the typical male. He’s bored by it.”

“I think men want and crave ritual,” says Mr. McGrath. “They want ritual that speaks to their guts. And what do we give them at Mass? It’s like the teacher in *Peanuts*: ‘Wah wah wah.’” He thinks the fact that many men spend their weekends watching sports instead is no coincidence. “Watching a football game, I’m offered a noble vision of life and challenges that echo the challenges that I face at work. The fight that’s going on in a football game, the strategy, that’s real to me.”

Andrew Hennessy, O.F.M.Conv., understands the problem in terms of community. “There isn’t as much social space for guys,” he says. “You don’t have the Elks Club or Knights of Columbus as much anymore.”



# JESUS IS NOT GOING TO CHANGE YOU. HE'S GOING TO REVEAL YOU TO YOURSELF. ●●

And the Catholic men's groups filling the gap today do not always seem to be thinking about the men themselves. He recalls one such parish group: "The whole thing was: 'We'll have a monthly meeting, an hour of adoration and confessions.' It was flat, nothing creative about it at all, just kind of 'Men, let's get together and do this stuff that Catholics keep saying that we should do.'"

Mr. Francis agrees. The Demontreville retreat is effective, he says, because it provides a space for men to share in "nonverbal camaraderie."

"You'll have 71 guys sitting there in silence [between sessions], someone's taking notes and somebody's reading Bible verses and someone's really in tune with one of the readings. It's a very unique opportunity.

"I don't think you're going to find another place that has nonverbal bonding like that. It's not going to happen at your local Mass, your local church."

In his work with young adults in southern Indiana, Friar Hennessy has organized unusual events like taking a group to an axe-throwing range in nearby Louisville or running an afternoon of wiffle ball, in each instance followed by some sort of experience of prayer and conversation. "A friar who works in H.R. once told me the thing that brings men together is working together and playing together," Friar Hennessy explains. "I think for guys you need to have enough activity, so people can get comfortable. If you ask guys to be real too fast, you won't get much.

"I don't think you sell the faith to people," says Friar Hennessy. "I always try to tell myself, I'm not going to pretend that I'm interested in someone's salvation unless I'm interested in them as a person first."

## MASCULINITY BUILT ON TENDERNESS AND FRIENDSHIP

One other topic that comes up frequently in discussions about the church and men is modeling. So often the church promotes priests and bishops as examples for other men

to emulate. And yet consider a typical Sunday Mass, says Father Rohr: "We priests dressing up in sometimes elaborate clothing; it differentiates us from every man in the room. [It says]: 'I am special; I am a unique man.'"

Such differentiation not only separates priests from other men, it diminishes their effectiveness as role models. Margaret Guider, O.S.F., associate professor of missiology and chair of the ecclesiastical faculty at Boston College's School of Theology and Ministry, says the priesthood "becomes kind of the exemplar of a virtuous masculinity that other men can't really embody or embrace. 'I could never be like Father so and so; he's such a great guy.'"

Meanwhile, she notes, "we can't seem to get traction in the mainstream press with the kind of Catholic men informed by Catholic social teaching, by a commitment to the Gospel and a sense of collaboration."

Historically, the church has long wrapped itself in images of male assertiveness and power, laying the groundwork for many of the issues we now confront. "In recent centuries, the pope has been both symbol and cipher for an authoritarian ruler," wrote Paul Elie in *The New York Times* last year. "As Western governments became more expressive of the will of the governed, the leader of the Roman Catholic Church has been seen, by contrast, as a figure vested in bulletproof pre-modern absolutes, immune to electoral or popular pressures, accountable to God alone."

Pope Francis, says Mr. Elie, offers the church a fresh alternative. "Francis has acted on his conviction that Catholic faith is less about the use of power to shape the social order—the stuff of present strongmen and past popes—than about straightforward efforts of kindness and generosity." He is "the anti-strongman," who resists "the 'Rome has spoken' approach of his predecessors."

Mr. McGrath likewise sees in the pope a model of a man who has faced his own dark side and allowed himself to be transformed. "If you've been on top all along, what are you going to say? 'Toe the line.' But if you've been to the bottom, in the mud and the ashes, then you're going to know the mercy of God."

When it came to the consistory that elected Francis, Sister Guider muses, "I think it wasn't that we wanted a new kind of pope, but we wanted a new kind of man as pope. We were looking for another way of being man and priest." In particular, she says, "we put a primacy on being a man in the sense of being a friend, being somebody worthy of trust."

Amid the larger social conversation about toxic masculinity, Sister Guider wonders if the church could not





A discussion break at Jesuit Social Services

vices gives women, men and children a chance to share their experiences and struggles in relationship, so they can learn from and help one another. And Julie Edwards wonders if it might be a model for church and society too.

“Any system that doesn’t have equality in terms of governance,” says Ms. Edwards, “is missing out on the insights, the wisdom, the intelligence and the gifts that could be exercised.

“And we know in these sorts of systems that the more gendered roles are, the more violence often there is, too. You don’t see your own privilege because you’re experiencing the world through a completely different lens.”

Many who work with men in the church want it to provide spaces where men can also be honest even about the messiest parts of their lives. In that sharing lies the key both to men’s own transformations and a healthier society for all, they say.

“What do we do in a culture where there’s no place for men to work with those aspects of ourselves we have not integrated yet?” wonders Father Lickteig. “It seems like the one option available to us is to ratchet things down; watch your behavior. If you’re religious it means you’re all buttoned up.”

“The church can help us see our lives in the most noble terms of all,” says Mr. McGrath. “But we have to get real.”

He proposes one further model for the church to consider—Greg Boyle, S.J., founder of Homeboy Industries, an antigang initiative in Los Angeles. “That guy gets so real,” Mr. McGrath says, “that he gets guys who have been taught their whole lives to be tough to share their real life. Their sadness, pain and anger—all that stuff can come in. He doesn’t say, ‘Keep that outside.’

“And I know Jesus didn’t either.”

*Jim McDermott, S.J., is America’s Los Angeles correspondent and a contributing writer for the magazine.*

promote conversation around this more “tender” or “virtuous” masculinity. “What kind of reflections can the church offer on friendship,” she asks, “on brotherhood, on what it means to be a neighbor and a companion with others. If you scratch the surface, in every man’s life you’ll find those relationships, maybe not lived perfectly, but experiences they can hang onto.

“Those relationships are there in the infrastructure of a virtuous masculinity.”

Mr. Francis sees that experience of friendship come to life on retreat. “You’re focused on the guy next to you; he’s a guy like you and you’re going through this together.

“There’s a bonding that goes on...that makes the group believe and become better men.”

The Men’s Project conducted by Jesuit Social Ser-



# TRANSFORMING SOCIETY



*Meet the women  
who run Jesuit  
universities*

By Emma Winters





Tania Tetlow, Linda LeMura  
and Jo Ann Rooney





Photos, cards and news clippings lie beneath a pane of glass on the surface of a conference table in an office in Syracuse, N.Y. Science textbooks and a Pope Francis picture book sit alongside a microscope, an old laboratory scale and a basketball on book shelves along the wall. And on a nearby windowsill are 28 hats, one for each of the Jesuit colleges and universities in the United States.

The office belongs to Linda LeMura, the president of Le Moyne College and the first laywoman to serve as president of a Jesuit college or university. She seems at home here, warmly confident and welcoming, but it was not a role she originally imagined for herself. “I thought that in my lifetime I would see a female lay president of a Jesuit college,” she said in a recent interview with **America**. “Honestly, it did not occur to me that it would be Le Moyne, and I can assure you I never, ever thought about being president of Le Moyne.”

It is only relatively recently in the history of Jesuit education that lay presidents of colleges and universities became a reality. In 2001, John J. DeGioia became president of Georgetown University, the first lay person appointed to the role. His was a historic appointment, but it left some alumni concerned. “There was a certain amount of horror among old-time alumni at Georgetown, because [they wondered] ‘How could the school succeed without a Jesuit as president?’” said Michael Sheeran, S.J., president of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities. “That was disproved very quickly.”

Today, 16 of the 28 Jesuit colleges and universities in the A.J.C.U. are led by lay presidents, three of whom are women. Since Dr. LeMura’s installation in 2014, Jo Ann Rooney was appointed president of Loyola University Chicago in 2016, and Tania Tetlow was appointed president of Loyola University New Orleans in 2018. Now, Dr. LeMura said, “It makes my heart sing that there’s three of us.”

Although these women make up a relatively small percentage of the university presidents, they already are making an impact at their own schools and beyond. Their perspectives as lay women professionals in leadership has brought needed skills to their institutions and created opportunities to clarify their institutions’ Jesuit mission and identity.

### The Need for a New Leadership Style

Colleges and universities today face increasingly challenging circumstances, as they try to prepare students for a changing job market while maintaining a free exchange of ideas. They must be diverse and inclusive and—

perhaps most challenging of all—keep a college affordable and accessible while providing the best education possible. Many small, private colleges have closed or consolidated, including several Catholic colleges. Wheeling Jesuit University announced in April that it will end its Jesuit affiliation after this academic year. It will remain open but with major cuts.

Responding to such challenges requires collaboration. Dr. LeMura is quick to say that solving these problems is a group effort, and she puts great trust in her staff. “My job is different from the first year I became president,” Dr. LeMura said. “In order to do what I have to do in the modern presidency, I can’t control all those things nor would you want me to.”

In 2016, Dr. LeMura appointed Karin Botto as the assistant vice president for Human Resources and Organization Development. Ms. Botto said this desire to share power and decision making is important for all leaders formed in an Ignatian model, not just college presidents. No leader will have all the answers, she said, but the best leaders in the future will be those who can “tap the potential of all the other people in the room” and discern together.

“I don’t know that that’s masculine or feminine, but I do think it touches on some probably more traditionally feminine qualities, like deep listening, emotional intelligence, connecting with others,” Ms. Botto said. Anyone can demonstrate these qualities, she said, but they are only beginning to be recognized and appreciated in leadership.

And Ms. Botto should know. She is a founder of the Ignatian Leadership Program, which trains educators, administrators and other leaders of Jesuit organizations to incorporate Ignatian spirituality into their work. Its foundational principles include using the examen (a way of praying that invites one to find God working in one’s daily life) to know oneself and discern, striving for the *magis* (the idea of doing more for Christ and neighbor) and working humbly within a wider community.

Having worked with Dr. LeMura for about three years, Ms. Botto said she has observed the warmth, connectedness, energy, positivity and passion that permeates Dr. LeMura’s leadership. And she says there is a particular mode of Dr. Le-





Mura's style, one she turns on in difficult situations, becoming "almost like a basketball coach" to really encourage staff, students and parents. This way of proceeding makes sense given Dr. LeMura's years playing basketball for Niagara University, where she studied biology and education. Now, teamwork is required to navigate a rapidly changing academy.

### Thinking Beyond the Jesuits

The number of Jesuits in the United States was cut by more than half between 1982 and 2010. Broadening the frame of who can be hired as president of a Jesuit school opens the door to more talent, more lay people with expertise in areas inside and outside education. David McCallum, S.J., is the vice president for Mission Integration and Development at Le Moyne. He said he has seen a shift in the way mission is expressed and experienced as more laypeople are hired for top leadership positions. He was first a student at Le Moyne (class of 1990) and returned in 2009 as an assistant to the president and a professor. In 2009, Le Moyne was led by a lay president, Fred P. Pestello.

"I was really lucky to have phenomenal Jesuit professors," Father McCallum said of his days as a student at Le Moyne. "But the funny thing was, except for a course I took on the Society of Jesus, we never talked about Ignatius. There wasn't a lot of attention to Ignatian spirituality per se.... There's something that is harder to name or to express."

He said that has shifted under lay presidents, and now people are more often called to look inward and think about their own place in the mission of the school. "Dr. LeMura...I would say, and the Jesuit community here agrees, is probably the most Jesuit leader we've had," Father McCallum said. "When we find the right colleagues in mission, who are not afraid to make this an explicit part of their leadership and are really inspired and mission-driven in the way that we operate, they ac-

tually have more influence in inspiring other colleagues to do the same."

### A Process of Discernment

Today about 30 percent of college presidents in the United States are women. By comparison, the U.S. House of Representatives is 23.4 percent women, and less than 5 percent of Fortune 500 companies have a female chief executive officer. Although the increase in lay and female presidents of Jesuit colleges and universities correlates with a decline in the number of Jesuits, the hiring of lay women to lead these institutions is not a back-up plan. "Each one has that job because she is simply the best that there is for that position," said Father Sheeran.

Jo Ann Rooney, president of Loyola University Chicago, said that when she learned that the job was open, her interest was piqued by the breadth of programs and the school's commitment to its Jesuit, Catholic identity. She wanted the job, but given that the university had only had Jesuit presidents, she wondered: "Were they ready for a layperson, first of all? And were they ready for a female layperson?" But, she says, her concerns were quickly allayed. "I talked to a number of Jesuits that I had known for many years," Dr. Rooney said. "I was met with great encouragement that, yes, the time was right."

"One of the geniuses of the Jesuits has been to develop a deeper talent pool," said Janet Sisler, vice president for Mission Integration at Loyola University Chicago. "And a talent pool that has been formed and informed by the Jesuit way of proceeding." Ms. Sisler has played a key role in that formation and is in the process of directing their Mission Priority Examen.

At the request of the superior general of the Society of Jesus, Arturo Sosa, S.J., all of the schools in the A.J.C.U. are undergoing this examen process. The goal is for each school

# Each one has that job because she is simply the best for that position.

to set a few concrete ways in which it will live out the Jesuit mission more fully. Ms. Sisler has organized over 80 focus groups involving 900 people associated with Loyola University Chicago, including members of the board of trustees, staff, faculty, students, alumni and volunteers to guide the school's mission in an act of communal discernment.

The Mission Priority Examen and Dr. Rooney's presidency have both been occasions to strengthen and clarify what it means to be a Catholic, Jesuit university. Dr. Rooney has made articulating the school's unique mission a priority. "I think we're on the brink of really creating a lived experience of the theology of the laity, and I think Dr. Rooney has taken that as a very serious part of her charge—that she should be not only a model of a Jesuit way of proceeding but also a model of leadership for the church to address some of the inherent downsides of clericalism," Ms. Sisler said. "She always starts everything with thanking people. St. Ignatius' prayer of generosity, it flows right through her veins."

And it is not just her Ignatian formation that makes Dr. Rooney well suited for her job. She previously served as president of Spalding University in Louisville, Ky. for eight years and helped the school turn a financial corner. "At Spalding we really did look at: Who are our students? And how can we meet them where they are?" Dr. Rooney said.

This led to more evening and weekend classes, accelerated adult learning programs that combined online and classroom sessions, year-round course offerings and block session scheduling, in which students took one to two courses at a time in five to six week blocks—allowing students to break from school, work seasonal jobs and return to school without losing momentum or missing a full semester. She is now looking for ways to innovate at Loyola Chicago.

In the fall of 2016, Loyola University of Chicago began offering a weekend program for students earning law degrees. Dr. Rooney said she sees these programs as vital to meeting Loyola students where they are, and she hopes the university can build on them and offer more certificate programs and "bootcamp" style workshops for people who are already in the workforce. "For me, it's about opening the doors to education and creating access," Dr. Rooney said.

Managing a university also means considering the needs of faculty and staff. In April 2018, the school's adjunct and nontenured faculty held a one-day walkout when the school and union representatives could not reach an agreement. The school reached an agreement later that month with faculty, who are represented by the Service Employees International Union Local 73. In April 2019, seven Loyola students were arrested protesting the university's decision not to recognize the graduate student union.

Loyola Chicago officials say that they will not recognize the graduate student's union because their primary status with the university is as students and unionizing would change relationships between students and professors. "Catholic Social Teaching requires that organizations, including colleges and universities, find methods to achieve their social ends and protect the common good," Dr. Rooney said. "We work diligently to make sure aid packages for graduate student assistants are equitable and market competitive, and we have made a number of enhancements to aid packages in recent years."

## All for Mission

Several people I spoke with who work in mission said that no matter how strong the connection of a lay person may be to the Jesuits, when the leader of a Jesuit institution is not a Jesuit, there is a renewed need to define the mission, to articulate the school's Jesuit identity. "There is no substitute for the transformative power of Jesuits in the classroom or in student life," Tania Tetlow, president of Loyola University New Orleans said. "In terms of how we handle that, it's got to be about formation."

As an order, Jesuits have intentionally sought to provide formation for lay leaders, both men and women, through programs like the Ignatian Colleagues Program and the Magis Program. But Ms. Tetlow arrived at Loyola New Orleans having already had the sort of immersion in Jesuit and Ignatian life that can't be taught. Although she never studied or worked at Loyola University New Orleans prior to her presidency, Ms. Tetlow has attended Mass at the university's Ignatius chapel since she was 6 years old and sang in the choir there. Many in her family, including both her parents, studied and taught at Loyola. "My guess is that she has heard at least 10,422 Jesuit homilies," said Joseph Tetlow, S.J., of his niece. Loyola New Orleans "was like home to her," Father Tetlow said, and serving as president "was a spiritual call."

In addition to being steeped in the mission, Ms. Tetlow is well qualified to deal with one of the most pressing con-



cerns at universities today: sexual assault. Ms. Tetlow is a graduate of Harvard Law School and previously worked to improve the New Orleans Police Department Sex Crimes Unit. She also directed Tulane University's Domestic Violence Law Clinic and has advised law clinics in other countries on domestic violence policy.

In November 2018 Betsy DeVos proposed changes to Title IX that would require cross-examinations for sexual assault accusations and prevent universities from handling cases of sexual misconduct that involved students but took place off-campus. Ms. Tetlow offered insight into some of the problems with these proposed changes, which the A.J.C.U. addressed in a letter in January. "The investigatory model, which much of the world uses in its criminal justice systems, is a better way to really find out what happened," she said. "Adversarial models and cross-examination often test more about a witness's emotional state and how they handle stress than they help to determine the truth."

Ms. Tetlow has faced difficult choices in her first year as president. Loyola University New Orleans was put on a one-year probation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges in December 2018. Loyola New Orleans is still accredited, but the school will need to maintain a balanced budget for the fiscal year to get off probation. The school's budgeting issues stem from a particularly weak year of enrollment in 2013 followed by several years of deficit. The regional accrediting body wanted the budget balanced last year, which the school failed to do, but Ms. Tetlow said the school is on track to operate within a balanced budget for the current year. "We've already done the hard work to get off probation quickly," she said.

Moving forward, she wants Loyola New Orleans to build on its roots: Jesuit social justice and New Orleans creativity. "We're going to build on our strengths in the creative industries—like music

and design—and try to harness the power of innovation and entrepreneurship that's really driving New Orleans right now," she said.

### The Way Forward

Back in Dr. LeMura's office, the groundbreaking president describes herself as someone who likes to "move fast" and "try new things," qualities that sometimes bump up against the often slower pace of the academy and the church but are essential for meeting the demands of a college presidency.

Fundraising to keep up with the rising cost of higher education is always a challenge, but it is especially difficult at a "young" school like Le Moyne. Le Moyne was founded in 1946, so the school has had less time to grow its endowment. The college's early classes of alumni are now reaching retirement, so Le Moyne is beginning to have alumni include the school in their estate planning. The demands on the president to travel for fundraising have also expanded, as alumni spread out across the country. "I try as best I can to spend time with students. That's the one area that's suffering the most. I have to do other things. I have to raise money now, especially because our college is coming of age," Dr. LeMura said.

Dr. LeMura said she expects Jesuit schools, institutions of the church and the academy, to continue embracing women leaders and for that to make a difference: "It probably won't be long before there's four of us, and then there's a critical mass where, when we're sitting around the table, we can really have some conversations that integrate a whole new way of thinking and collaborating."

Emma Winters is a Joseph A. O'Hare, S.J., fellow at *America*.

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## IN THE BEGINNING

The first woman to serve as a college or university president in Jesuit higher education is Sister Maureen Fay, a Dominican, who served as president of the University of Detroit Mercy from 1990 to 2004, directly following the consolidation of the Jesuit-run University of Detroit and Mercy College of Detroit.

Michael Sheeran, S.J., president of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, served alongside Sister Fay on the A.J.C.U. board while he was president of Regis University in Denver. He described her as crucial in breaking the glass ceiling and changing the culture in Jesuit higher education. He recalled, in particular, a time all of the Jesuit presidents got in "a rather petty argument" about the strengths of their respective schools. "All of sudden, in that tone of voice that only a nun can have when she is correcting third graders," he recalled, "she just broke in and said, 'Now boys, it's time that we started focusing on what our schools are trying to achieve.'" And they did.

# Priestly Celibacy Today

## *Challenges and Hopes*

By Louis J. Cameli



Celibacy in the priesthood is once again up for discussion. The diminished number of candidates for ordination and the abuse crisis have prodded the discussion, which seems mainly focused on the elimination of celibacy as a mandatory discipline for priests in the Western church. But a more foundational concern, in my estimation, needs our reflection before we consider any change. That concern has to do with formation *for* celibacy and formation *in* celibacy.

To resolve or even address the problem of sexual abuse in the Catholic Church, many people insist that the church must do away with mandatory celibacy for priests. If you give priests a healthy outlet for their sex drive, the thinking goes, they will not abuse minors. It sounds simple. And it echoes an ancient take on the purpose of marriage as *remedium concupiscentiae*, a remedy for concupiscence. Here it doubles as a remedy for abuse as well.

The elimination of priestly celibacy, however, would not eliminate abuse. Noncelibate and, in many cases, married men are overwhelmingly the perpetrators of sexual abuse against minors.

First, let me state the obvious. Sex—in its various dimensions: physical, emotional and even spiritual—is a powerful force. It is a gift of God, and it also carries the burdens of our wounded human condition. Everyone, no mat-

ter their gender, orientation or marital status, needs to integrate their sexuality. Ultimately, in the Christian vision, this transformative process leads to self-acceptance and self-gift. The transformation and integration of sexuality represents a universal human task. It does, however, take on a specific shape in the instance of priests who commit themselves to celibate living.

### **The Situation of Priests**

For celibate priests, there are three specific and essential elements of formation for sustaining their commitment: they need *a meaningful reason* for celibacy, they need *skills* for celibate living, and they need *a supportive community*.

Given the challenges and obstacles for priests to live the celibate life well, it might seem better to change the current discipline of the Western church and make celibacy optional. But much more reflection is needed to understand the positive value of the current discipline. The church's persistence in maintaining this practice, in the face of great difficulties and even its nonobservance in certain historical contexts, suggests something that deserves careful spiritual discernment to detect the promptings of the Holy Spirit. A consideration of the three indispensable elements that make celibacy possi-





CNS photo/James Ramos, Texas Catholic Herald

Priests wait to join the procession for the Chrism Mass on March 27 at the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Houston.

ble and real can actually contribute to a fuller reflection and discernment.

Celibacy is not an ordinary choice. Making the choice for celibacy requires a very deliberate decision based on a clear and even compelling reason. That reason, motivation or rationale may take on different shapes, as we will see, but it must be in place for the decision to be made and to be sustained over a lifetime. At the same time, although a motivating and meaningful reason for celibacy is essential, by itself it is insufficient.

Knowing how to live out this commitment is also necessary. In other words, celibates also need to be in possession of those life skills that enable them to stay faithful, productive and joyful in their way of life. To summarize: Celibates need a reason, skills for living and a supportive community. A quick historical survey can help us understand these elements more deeply and identify today's challenges more precisely.

### Historical Context

The history of celibacy for the sake of the kingdom of God begins in the New Testament. Celibacy and consecrated virginity stretch across the whole trajectory of Christian history. The more specific history of celibacy attached to holy orders has had many complex turns for both

the Eastern and Western churches. For our purposes, I will limit myself to the Western church and the last 500 years, from the time of the Council of Trent (1565) to our moment today.

One of the great reforms that followed the Council of Trent was the establishment of seminaries and, with that, the possibility of consistent training and preparation for priesthood, including training or formation for celibacy. For some 500 years, until the turning point of the early 1960s, the practice of celibacy depended on a reason (a higher call), a set of skills (vigilance and self-control—in effect, psychological suppression) and a community (expecting and demanding fidelity). Although these dynamics did not work perfectly and there certainly were breaches, they did maintain a basic consistency in the observance of the discipline of celibacy for clergy.

A dramatic shift took place in the 1960s with the Second Vatican Council, the sexual revolution, the pill and the rise of gay rights. Whatever had been tightly wound around celibacy to hold it together seemed to unravel. There was great disruption in the church and in the culture. Anyone who lived through those tumultuous years can attest to that. Suddenly, there seemed to be no good reason for priests to be celibate, certainly not because it made them

# Inadequate formation has led to tragic situations, shattered lives and crises of faith. 💧💧

better than married lay people. In other words, gone were the reason, the skills and the supportive community.

In the years following Vatican II, the church (through the popes and others), began to offer a response to “the problem of celibacy.” In 1967 Pope Paul VI issued the encyclical “*Sacerdotalis Caelibatus*,” which defended celibacy for priests. The Synod of Bishops of 1971 took up the same cause and reaffirmed the discipline of celibacy for the Western church. The Congregation for Catholic Education addressed the needed skills for living out celibacy in *A Guide to Formation in Priestly Celibacy* (1974).

Seminaries struggled to find their way. The ongoing formation of priests, often a marginal concern and effort in church life in any case, certainly did not serve the celibate cause well in this moment. Consequences followed in the ’70s and ’80s. Far fewer candidates came forward to begin studies for the priesthood. Large numbers of those already ordained abandoned ministry. Acting out sexually and in other unhealthy ways seemed to be on the rise. And, of course, this time period also saw the largest number of cases of clerical sexual misconduct with minors.

Under the leadership of St. John Paul II, the church tried to open a new chapter in its efforts to address the challenges of priestly formation, including formation for celibacy. In 1990 Pope John Paul II summoned the Synod of Bishops to take up the questions surrounding priestly formation. With that meeting as a foundation, he issued a very significant post-synodal apostolic exhortation entitled “*Pastores Dabo Vobis*” (1992). This exhortation offered a large and challenging vision of priestly formation based on four pillars: human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral.

“*Pastores Dabo Vobis*” underscores the foundational necessity of human formation, so that priests can be men of communion and integrally connected with the community of faith that they serve. The exhortation, with some further development and elaboration, could serve to re-anchor cel-

ibacy’s reason, skills and community connection. Finally, the exhortation links formation *for* priesthood (seminary) with formation *in* priesthood (ongoing formation). This linkage has important implications for celibacy. It is not enough to be prepared for the celibate commitment; it is also essential to continuously engage in celibate formation across the span of a lifetime, that is, in the different seasons of one’s life.

These last decades have marked some progress in celibate formation. Certainly more attention is paid to this formation in, for example, the 2016 document from the Congregation for Clergy, *The Gift of the Priestly Vocation: Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis* (“The Basic Plan for Priestly Formation”). Other examples might also include the various programs of priestly formation developed by national conferences of bishops to address specific national and cultural circumstances.

Still, even with all this, I do not think we have arrived at a coherent and consistent formation for celibacy or formation in celibacy. These recent decades have also produced some puzzling approaches to priesthood and celibacy that try to fuse the old and the new but fall short of fostering real integration. These models can be found in some seminaries today, in ancillary formation programs and in recruitment materials.

They tend to be neoromantic, highlighting, for example, the dramatic figure of the “heroic priest,” which does not match the day-to-day reality of priestly ministry and life. In the same neoromantic line, there is also the priest who funnels his sexuality into “spousal love” for the church or who learns to “grieve” his lost physical generativity. These models risk unreality, and they are generally not effective for a genuine formation for celibacy.

The stakes are high when we consider formation for celibacy. Inadequate formation has led to tragic situations, shattered lives and crises of faith. On the other hand, an adequate formation for celibacy would surface those persons who lack human and sexual integration, the very ones who might harbor psychopathologies that could lead to abuse and other aberrations. And that would be protective for the whole church.

## Reasons for Celibacy

I would suggest three kinds of motivating rationales for the celibate commitment. An individual might share in one, two or all three. It may also happen that across a lifetime one or another may gain prominence in a person’s life.



The first rationale can aptly be called *mystical*. Yves Raguin explored the mystical rationale in his 1974 book, *Celibacy for Our Times*. Persons experience in a direct way the overwhelming love of God with such power and force that their response to that love must be direct and unmediated. Unlike the experience of most people, who return God's love in mediated ways, for example in marriage, this direct celibate response means a comprehensive and exclusive love. This rationale might most often belong to those called to the contemplative life.

The second rationale has to do with *apostolic availability*. The commitment to marriage and family life is powerful, and it evokes Trinitarian love. That same commitment can also restrict the mobility of those who live married life or limit their reach. This rationale clearly belongs to members of religious institutes of consecrated life who embrace a missionary vocation.

The third motivating rationale belongs in a particular way to diocesan priests, even though they may not be entirely consciously aware of it. This rationale is *ministerial reliability*. I am drawing, in part, from the language and thought of the British psychiatrist and psychoanalyst D. W. Winnicott, who carefully observed and studied the most foundational and comprehensive human relationship that we have: the relationship between mother and child. The key to that relationship, as he describes it, is reliability. If priests want to enter into foundational and comprehensive relationships with their people, moving closely with them in the extraordinary realms of sin and forgiveness, grace, redemption and hope, then they will necessarily need to locate themselves in that relationship with as much reliability as they can muster. The ministerial relationship must simply be what it is supposed to be. When I relate to you in and through my celibate commitment, you should clearly know who I am for you, and you should be able to rely on that.

Formation for celibacy in seminary life and formation in celibacy for those already ordained must regularly return to the motivating reason for embracing this unusual commitment. It is not an ordinary way of life. For that reason, special attention needs to be paid to what grounds it.

### Skills for Celibate Living

Having a motivating reason for making and sustaining a celibate commitment is essential, but it is also insufficient. It is necessary to learn how to live that commitment well and how to navigate the challenges that it entails. Here,

by way of indication, we can begin to see some of these necessary skills for celibate living. They include:

- a developed capacity for self-reflection; that is, honest introspection focused on personal encounters, relationships and feelings;
- a capacity for prayerful imagination and prayerful reflection that links all one's activity with the abiding commitment to bring the Lord to his people;
- an ability to establish personal-relational boundaries and parameters and, at the same time, allow for genuine and generous closeness with others;
- a capacity to maintain healthy balances, for example between work and play, investment in ministry and detachment from results, self-care and care for others;
- a learned ability to find necessary and helpful resources, especially in challenging situations;
- ascetical skills of self-denial, moderation and prudential control, for example in eating, drinking, acquiring things, online activity and entertainment.

### Supportive Community

Besides a reason and a set of skills, someone who wants to follow the way of celibacy needs a supportive community. It is important to note that a supportive community not only supports and affirms but also, at times, raises questions and challenges. Different forms of community contribute to the life of the celibate priest. Some examples are:

- the people of God in the church, particularly the community that the priest serves;
- other priests, who along with the bishop, are brothers and fathers to the priest;
- the unique community-partnership forged in a relationship with a spiritual director and/or confessor;
- a prayer group or support group;
- the personal sphere of friends and family.

Priests are formed *for celibacy* in the initial formation of the seminary, and they need ongoing formation *in celibacy* across the years of their priestly ministry. This is the way it must be if the celibate commitment is to be real. When this formation unfolds adequately, priests will have a reason for their celibacy, possess the skills to live it out well and have a supportive-sustaining community.

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Rev. Louis J. Cameli, a priest of the Archdiocese of Chicago, is Cardinal Blase J. Cupich's delegate for formation and mission.



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# THE PATH OF PENANCE


*As a soldier I was loved for my sins.  
Now I must repent for them.*

By Peter Lucier

How do you come home from war? The physical journey itself is long. You leave the combat outpost or patrol base you have lived in for the last six months by helicopter—Hesco walls you’ve lived inside, the cami-netted chow hall tent, the rusted dumbbells in the makeshift gym yard, the burn pit where you have thrown your trash all fading away to a brown spot of land you’ll never see again. You fly with all your gear back to one of the larger camps where everyone is wearing clean camis instead of salt-covered, fire-resistant combat gear and where they carry pistols instead of rifles.

From there you catch a military cargo plane to a nearby country. For me it was Manas Air Base in Kyrgyzstan. You’ll acclimatize there for a few days, maybe have a beer for the first time since you deployed, then take the long flight back to the United States, with a stop for fuel somewhere in Europe. Half the plane drinks Nyquil and passes out; the rest stay up watching movies that came out while you were away.

We stop in Maine before making the last leg back to California. We deplane, and folks are there to greet us, shake our hands. We make awkward small talk as folks thank us for our service and buy us beer at the



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# When I returned from Afghanistan, I needed to find a way to go from being a Marine who is loved for his sins to being a sinner who is loved. 🔥🔥

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airport bar. We are allowed to have two. We board again. The beer mixes with the Nyquil and everyone sleeps. We land a few hours away from our duty station, and after loading all of our gear onto trucks, hop into buses. A large group of patriotic bikers escorts us on the drive back to Camp Pendleton.

It is late now. We are late. We were supposed to be back hours ago. Our families have been waiting. We pile out of the bus. We search for faces in the crowd. There are children who were born while we were gone. Wives we have not seen in months. Mothers, fathers, brothers, fellow Marines. There are tears, but we are in a hurry, so we quickly wipe them away, save the small talk for later. We carry our gear toward waiting cars and drive home.

That night I couldn't sleep. My body had not caught up with the time change. The bed was too comfortable. My rifle wasn't slung at the end of it. I was in an apartment I had never been in before. None of it felt right. The bikers, the handshakes in Maine, none of it squared with what I had just come home from.

How can I come home from war?

...

Before night patrols, members of the squad gather up in the makeshift command post, their blanket-like poncho liners wrapped around their shoulders, casting a strange silhouette. The proportions are all wrong, bulging around coyote flak jackets loaded heavy with magazines full of 5.56-millimeter

rounds and all sorts of miscellaneous gear. We sip bad instant coffee, chunky from the number of hot chocolate packets added to sweeten the acrid, lukewarm brew.

We step into the cold Afghan night, bulky, clumsy, like knights weighed down by too much armor, trying not the trip over our own feet, guided by the pale green glow of our night vision devices, which rob us of our depth perception and create an uncomfortable five feet of dead space directly in front of us.

The purpose of those night patrols was always to observe. What we were supposed to be observing was rarely clear. Vague, disembodied abstractions like "movement" or "activity" tried to give order and purpose to our late night fumbblings through canals and the hours spent, poorly concealed, on the front slopes of small hills overlooking single-room farmhouses with their tin doors and mud walls. A few nights a week we would venture out to watch nothing, probing into darkness with our rifles at the alert, and then return, rifles unfired, magazines still filled with rounds, to try to catch a few hours' sleep before morning post.

And so onward we trudged, each day bleeding into the next—a cycle as grey and dusty as the landscape traversed. Wake in the middle of the night for post. Climb out of the tower and back into a sleeping bag. Wake. Eat. Don flak jacket and Kevlar helmet. Rack your weapon, put a round in the chamber. Walk. Try not to step on any bombs. Re-enter the wire. Unload the round from the chamber. Pop a muscle relaxer. Watch a movie. Sleep. Wake up for post again.

...

The Catholic faith tells us that we are sinners loved by God. I am a sinner who is loved. I struggle with both halves. I don't always want to admit I am a sinner. What I went over there to do felt righteous. I believed in the cause, and even if I didn't, I believed in my brothers. I believed in America, and even if I didn't or didn't know what America was, I believed in the Marine Corps. I believed in violence, in purpose, in our community, our brotherhood. I wanted to receive the sacrament of confirmation in the military service. I prayed for the opportunity to kill.

I believed in the redemptive power of violence. I was young and golden and fit, on fire with the zeal of a convert. On the firing ranges at the school of infantry, in the mountains of Camp Pendleton, I fell in love with the rhythms of squad fire and maneuver—the geometries of fire, crisp left and right lateral limits, the steady drumming of an M249 machine gun zipping rounds into



targets. I was born again. I felt clean and right. I slept peacefully at night, tired from an honest day's work of training to visit violence upon others. Some days, it is hard to admit I am a sinner.

Other days, it is hard to accept that I am loved. I have not earned it. We went out all those nights and never came back with anything to show for it. The war I fought, I didn't win. What have I done to deserve love? I have certainly done enough to deserve contempt, to deserve condescension, to deserve belittlement, to deserve hate, even. Pick your sin: pride, anger, despair, selfishness. I am guilty. I went to war feeling entitled. To what exactly? To save. To kill. It didn't occur to me how arrogant that was until I came home. I carried that self-centeredness into a marriage after I got home and wrecked it. The uniform I wore reminds others of service. It reminds me of all the wrongs I've done and continue to do. Some days it is hard to accept love.

As a Marine veteran of Afghanistan, I am a sinner who is loved—and loved in a way I am not always comfortable with. Being a veteran means being venerated here at home. Before every college basketball game I go to, we take a moment to be grateful for our nation “and those who keep it safe.” I am loved with every flyover at a football game, every Fourth of July, every Veterans Day. I feel America's love for me and for veterans in every “Thank you for your service” and in every “Support the Troops” bumper sticker.

The oftentimes adoring American public does not talk much about my sins, but I feel them acutely. St. Augustine talked about *animi dolor*, “anguish of the soul.” *Animi dolor* is the soul's natural response to war, to killing. I feel viscerally the stains that entering into the morally complex arena of war has left upon my soul. In the American culture, I am loved for my sins. I am loved for being a Marine who went to war.

When I returned from Afghanistan, I needed to find a way to go from being a Marine who is loved for his sins to being a believer who is a sinner but who is loved. I needed to find a way to come home. The church has always offered a path for soldiers coming home from war: the path of penance. It is a hard path, both for veterans and for the families and communities to which they are trying to return. But if we really believe in the message and truth of the cross, and if veterans are to truly become again members of the community, we are compelled to take this route.

...

That penance is required to scrub the stain of violence from my soul is nowhere more clear to me than in the central symbol of our Catholic faith, Christ crucified on the cross. My struggles with faith and war led me to talk with David Peters, an Episcopalian priest who served as both an enlisted Marine and an Army chaplain. Over the phone, he told me, “The military will give you a [messed]-up relationship to violence, and the power of violence is destroyed upon the cross.” Later he pointed me to a book by Michael Griffin, *The Politics of Penance*, whose final chapters focus on how a Catholic penitential ethic can help repair those who have been shattered by war.

I knew Michael Griffin. He was a family friend. He was involved with the Catholic Peace Fellowship, originally founded in the mid-1960s by John Heiderbrink, Jim Forrest and others (including Eileen Egan, James Douglass and Dan Berrigan, S.J.). The fellowship focused on helping conscientious objectors during the Vietnam War. The program was relaunched during the height of the Iraq War. I had exchanged emails with Griffin before I enlisted, at my mother's urging. He said that if I did decide to enlist and later struggled with the implications and experience of war, I should reach out. But I lost touch and had mostly forgotten his offer for help.

Through Peters and Griffin and others, I found the beginning of answers and an intellectual tradition that I had been searching for since I had returned from Afghanistan.

The Catholic understanding of reconciliation has three parts—lament, penance and reparation. Lament: Veterans needed to air the wrongs they had done and to do so publicly. A Jesuit scholastic I talked to, a veteran, put it another way: Because we had participated in war, the public we returned to needed to indict us veterans, needed to know and see and in some ways pass judgment on what we had done.

While this seems an incredibly difficult process—how can you judge a soldier returning from war?—it was crucial to the relationship of the veteran to his or her community. There cannot be lies or glossing over. A public accounting is needed, so that the community and the veteran together can lament war. The community the veteran returns to needs to see war through the witness of the veteran and ask honestly: Why do we have war?

The next step is penance. Penance for acts done in war have a long tradition in Catholic theology. St. Basil, almost 2,000 years ago, recommended that soldiers return-

# The community the veteran returns to needs to see war through the witness of the veteran and ask honestly: Why do we have war? 🔥🔥

ing home from war abstain from Communion. "Homicide in war is not reckoned by our Fathers as homicide," the saint wrote, referring to the early church fathers. "I presume from their wish to make concession to men fighting on behalf of chastity and true religion. Perhaps, however, it is well to counsel that those whose hands are not clean only abstain from Communion for three years."

After the Battle of Hastings, the bishops of Normandy issued the "Ermenfrid Penitential" listing penances that soldiers who had participated in the battle ought to undergo, depending on their motives and actions in the battle. What is perhaps most striking, David Peters has said, is that even though the Norman Conquest had papal sanction, penance was still required by those who had participated.

Having gone through the act of truth-telling about war, I needed to do something to begin to try to scrub the stain of war from myself, if I ever want to be in the right relationship with my community again. This can take the form of fasting or, even better in the case of veterans, of pilgrimage. Peters explores the idea of physical and spiritual pilgrimages at length in his book *Post-Traumatic God*. Going on a journey, through physical time and space, like those patrols I went on in Afghanistan, can fundamentally reorient the veteran who comes home and mark his spiritual journey as well.

The last part is reparation: slow works of infused grace. Having tried in some measure, through fasting, prayer and penance, to perfect my own soul, it is now time to go out into the world and try to repair some of the hurt I caused. We killed some teenage kids while I was in Afghanistan. I now teach kids who are about the same age. I cannot bring back those killed in war. But I

have got to do something to try to repair the world.

I came home from war, physically home at least, and felt treated like a priest of the American civil religion. No one ever indicted me or lamented the war. I was celebrated, venerated and sought out for wisdom. But I am not a priest, I cannot be, I don't want to be, and I shouldn't be. I am a penitent. I am a sinner—who is loved. I cannot ever earn the love that is poured out upon me; I will never be worthy of grace. But there is a path to reconciliation. As a country, we often avoid it, embracing a theology of justification, sidestepping questions about the costs of war. We can avoid it no longer. A theology of penance: That is how I come home.

*Peter Lucier is a Marine veteran. He currently teaches English at St. Louis University High as an Alumni Service Corps volunteer.*

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## *The Road to a Tidy (and Examined) Life*

By Elizabeth Grace Matthew

Twenty years ago, American women watched the fictional Carrie Bradshaw traipse through New York in an ever-expanding collection of pricey stilettos on “Sex and the City.” Many aspired to buy (and walk as gracefully in) similarly chic outfits. Today, a similar demographic watches “Tidying Up With Marie Kondo,” starring the titular best-selling author and “tidying” guru.

In the show Kondo counsels real clients through a rigorous home organization process that involves going through every blessed item

they own, discarding it if it fails to “spark joy” and putting it in its place if it does. Many fantasize about (and sometimes attempt to achieve) similarly ordered homes.

Why do so many people today—particularly we urban and suburban women in our 20s and 30s, who in a previous generation would have been the “Sex and the City” target audience—watch this wholesome Netflix show about other people tidying their homes?

When I picked up Marie Kondo’s best-selling book from 2014,

*The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up*, and started watching her show this year, I was almost immediately a rather bored spectator as the KonMari method of tidying unfolded (pun intended). But I was a fascinated observer of what felt like the refreshing assumption behind that method. The assumption is that reducing a wardrobe by half or figuring out where to store spoons is no mere mindless endeavor. It is a rigorously pursued contribution toward a domestic order that radiates out to a broader order.





“When you put your house in order, you put your affairs and your past in order, too,” says Marie Kondo.

vided sufficient catalyst for the sprawl of McMansions, the residential equivalent of Carrie Bradshaw’s supposed \$40,000 worth of shoes. In 2007, before the recession hit and home sizes declined, the average size of a new American home was 2,277 square feet, up from 1,525 square feet in 1973. In the same 34-year period, the average family size declined from 3.48 people to 3.13.

People had extra space to fill with stuff, and in many cases the funds with which to do it. Many consumer goods, including clothing and toys, had become far cheaper relative to people’s incomes than they had ever been before. It seems doubtful that people ever consciously-

ly decided to fill their space with unneeded, unwanted items. They just slid into clutter because, for the first time in history, ordinary people could often own a lot of mass-marketed material things.

Meanwhile, in the ’90s, women continued to enter the workforce in ever-higher numbers. Those who did stay at home began to call themselves not “home makers,” but “stay-at-home-moms.” Any conspicuous consumption glorified in the era’s television shows and movies ran toward clothes, shoes and purses, not domes-

tic decor. Tidying, like domestic work more generally, seemed, at least in popular culture, to take a backseat in prestige and cultural focus to all other possible ambitions, whether a competitive career, nurturing motherhood or pleasure seeking self-actualization.

Today’s trend toward intentionality in domestic order may seem groundbreaking, but the equation of domestic order to moral order is not new. It is certainly not new in Japan, Kondo’s home country, and where she served for five years as a Shinto shrine maiden; nor is it new in the United States, where order was the prevailing assumption of 19th-century domesticity.

In 1869, Catherine Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe published *The American Woman’s Home*. The most widely read domestic handbook of the 19th century, the volume offers a dizzying number of minutely detailed home management tips on topics ranging from laundering clothes to gardening to cooking. But undergirding the authors’ wide-ranging and largely outdated advice is one unifying principle: practical domestic work (in the 19th century, “women’s work”) is important for reasons that go beyond the practical. “Every woman,” write Beecher and Stowe, “should imbibe, from early youth, the impression that she is in training for the discharge of the most important, the most difficult, and the most sacred and interesting duties that can possibly employ the highest intellect.”

Like Beecher and Stowe, Kondo treats the home as a sacred space that requires seriousness of purpose to run correctly. The Shintoism that influences her tidying method also leads her to enter the home of each client

As Kondo spells it out in her best-selling book: “When you put your house in order, you put your affairs and your past in order, too. As a result, you can see quite clearly what you need in life and what you don’t, and what you should and shouldn’t do.” In this framework, tidying is something to be taken seriously—not just practically, but also intellectually and spiritually.

Equating household order with a deeper sense of order feels new and exciting to many of us who grew up while the economy boomed in the 1990s and early 2000s. That era pro-

# The overwhelming response to Kondo's show reveals how starved people are for any area of life in which to definitively decide or believe anything. ●●

with a display of the same reverence with which she would enter a Shinto shrine. (In the first episode, she begins her tidying by kneeling down on the carpet, greeting the house and thanking it for protecting the family that lives there.) In that space she deems sacred, Kondo demands of her clients the tools that create order: work ethic, discernment and self-examination.

The KonMari method of tidying is a strict program that requires significant work over several weeks. Upon finishing the tidying of their homes, multiple younger clients featured on Kondo's Netflix show muse that Kondo has helped them become adults. One 20-something man says of his partner and himself: "It wasn't easy for him letting go of stuff, but now I feel like we're both finally on the road to adulthood." A 30-something father of two preteens reflects upon completion of Kondo's method: "We're growing up.... I'm growing up." This newly achieved feeling of adulthood is not just because their homes appear better kept (though they do). It is, more fundamentally, that they *earned* that tidy home through a systematized approach that brooked no allowance for indecision. Each item goes, or it stays in its selected place. No exceptions, no do-overs.

When clients in their 20s and 30s meet the high bar Kondo sets for them, they have something far more im-

portant and far harder to obtain than their newly tidy homes: new self-respect. Not because the space is now organized, but because they perceive themselves as having had to achieve adulthood in order to organize it. Orderly space is nice, and something enjoyed by clients of all ages. But it seems like tidiness is a mere byproduct of the self-actualized maturity that Kondo, 34, is really selling to her contemporaries.

Rehabilitated and updated by Kondo to include men as well as women, this very old belief—that adulthood is earned through the rigorous construction of domestic order—feels revolutionary. And for some people who grew up in a culture of material excess that reinforced the spiritual emptiness of a culture in which nothing is sacred, it is revolutionary.

Kondo's systematic approach to order in physical space stands in stark contrast to the soft lack of resolution in discerning between goods—practically, personally, morally—that many young people today are carrying with them into adulthood. As organized religion, traditional religious belief and marriage rates all continue to decline, there are fewer and fewer culturally sanctioned opportunities to believe in or accomplish something that requires definitive, irreversible choice. Organizing a home by getting rid of every item that does not "spark joy" is one.

But that organization is not meant to stand alone. The absolutism that Kondo evinces about the proper way to tidy up, like the firmness of Beecher and Stowe in their domestic prescriptions, is rooted in the connection between her method and her faith. Kondo emphasizes how tidying can enhance other aspects of people's

lives. This demonstrates her belief that clearing clutter makes room in one's home for actual people, not just their physical bodies, but their spiritual beings as well.

In the absence of belief in any such spiritual being, tidying is just another materialistic end in itself. Without a prevailing belief system that makes "tidying" important, anyone could "KonMari" her home and wind up with nothing but today's fashionably minimalist version of that spiritually vacuous, culturally insidious "Sex and the City" shoe collection: a statement of conspicuous (non)consumption indicating high status and revealing hollow ideals. In such a framework, a clutter-free home is more of a status symbol than a spiritual harbor.

Yet it seems unlikely that Kondo is now a cultural touchstone merely because of her method's outcomes. The overwhelming response to her book and show seems to reveal how starved people are for any area of life in which to definitively decide or believe anything.

The queen of tidying is captivating audiences with this invitation to determine in a tangible way one of the most important questions available to anyone. It is a question that too few people have been encouraged to answer: What do you truly value?

Perhaps the excitement around Kondo's method will give some occupants of newly tidy homes the courage to find meaningful answers.

---

Elizabeth Grace Matthew works in higher education. She holds an M.A. in English literature from Penn State University and an Ed.D. in educational leadership from St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia.



# Searching Out Walt Whitman

By Peter Bethanis

I am searching you out, Walt Whitman,  
for I've lost all confidence.  
If you were here, could you find  
the same hope in Camden, New Jersey?  
A pulsing red light warns  
jet after jet; the bridge, like a dinosaur's back,  
casts dark shadows on the water.  
On a night when any poor schmuck  
could do violence to himself,  
Walt Whitman, your voice is a light glowing  
against the rocks  
where love and desire slap themselves silly.

Are you walking the streets tonight,  
muttering to yourself under the cold night sky,  
where like some ancient Buddha  
you know how to turn the stars  
back to wonder? I know your ghost  
still drifts like a dirty angel through this town.  
We need you again, Walt Whitman, your voice  
rising like smoke after a war,  
your wild beard headed down to the river, maybe,  
a whole continent held gently under one arm.

---

*Peter Bethanis is a writer and artist whose poems have been published in Poetry, Tar River Poetry and other literary journals. He was a finalist for the National Poetry Series and has written two books, American Future and Dada & Surrealism for Beginners. May 31 is the 200th anniversary of Walt Whitman's birthday.*

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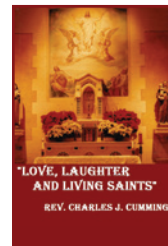
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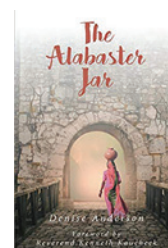
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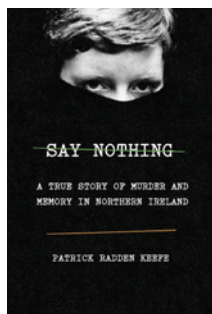
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## The past, present

By Terry Colway



**Say Nothing**  
A True Story of  
Murder and  
Memory  
in Northern Ireland  
By Patrick Radden  
Keefe  
Doubleday  
464p \$28.95

They were out in the streets of Derry during Holy Week this year, as locals from the city's Creggan neighborhood hurled petrol bombs at the police and hijacked their vehicles. The police were searching homes for weapons and explosives, for they had reason to believe a terrorist attack of some sort was imminent.

Then there were gunshots. A 29-year-old woman from Belfast fell. She was standing near police officers, raising her phone above her head, recording images of the chaos, and dispatching them digitally to the world outside Derry. She was a journalist named Lyra McKee. She died that night, on the eve of Good Friday, slain by two teens linked to a paramilitary

group called the New I.R.A.

You will be forgiven for thinking that the Troubles in Northern Ireland are over. It was on a Good Friday 21 years ago that its political leaders signed an agreement that seemed to relegate violence and terrorism to the province's past.

But as Patrick Radden Keefe implicitly reminds us in his new book, *Say Nothing: A True Story of Murder and Memory in Northern Ireland*, William Faulkner's famous quote about the American South applies to the north of Ireland as well: "The past is not dead and buried. In fact, it isn't even past."

Keefe, a writer for *The New Yorker*, spent four years researching and writing a book that focuses on one of the most shocking crimes of the Troubles in Northern Ireland, the kidnapping and disappearance of a woman named Jean McConville just before Christmas in 1972. She was a 38-year-old widow with 10 children, the oldest a teenager.

The Irish Republican Army's Provisional wing saw itself as fight-

ing a war of liberation against British troops and their allies. They concluded that McConville was an informer. Those who were even suspected of informing during the Troubles were at risk of ending their days in a shallow, unmarked grave. And that was indeed McConville's fate, although decades would pass before the mystery of her disappearance was resolved. People at the time knew they should say nothing—a code commemorated in a Seamus Heaney poem and repurposed for the book's title.

But Keefe has written something more than a murder mystery. As the subtitle indicates, this is a book about the battle over how memory is preserved and transmitted. That battle is ongoing. From the moment the I.R.A.'s political leadership, led by Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness, entered into peace talks in the early 1990s, various parties have sought to shape how the conflict is to be remembered, and whose memories would inform the narrative. Keefe's book is as much about that battle as it is an account of the Troubles.



Helen McKendry holds a family photo showing her mother, Jean McConville, in Killyleagh, Northern Ireland, in 2012. Decades would pass before the mystery of McConville's disappearance was resolved.

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Into this maelstrom, Keefe writes, strolled several administrators at Boston College with admirable intentions. Two years after the Good Friday Agreement, with the Troubles seemingly relegated to the old millennium, they set out to create an oral history of the conflict, told in the words of protagonists—the mostly Protestant Unionists and Loyalists (who were divided by class but united in their resistance to the I.R.A. and its allies) and the mostly Catholic Irish nationalists. The initiative was kept secret, at least for a while, and in Keefe's description, it

seemed to address an obvious shortcoming in the Good Friday Agreement. In their effort to bring about peace, the negotiators had focused on the future rather than the past.... [There] was no provision for the creation of any sort of truth-and-reconciliation mechanism that might allow the people of Northern Ireland to address the sometimes murky and often painful history of what had befallen their country over the previous three decades.

Such was the intention. That's not how it worked out, in large part because of the unsolved disappearance of Jean McConville. People who claimed to know what happened to her spoke with Boston College's researchers with the understanding that their interviews would remain sealed until they died. But when the author-

ities in Northern Ireland heard about the project and the possible clues the interviews might contain, they demanded access to the tapes.

That unanticipated development put Boston College in a difficult situation, leading to a trans-Atlantic legal battle that involved high-minded concepts like privacy and academic privilege. But ultimately, it was about contested memories. (Eventually, a beleaguered Boston College offered to give back the tapes to interview subjects.) Two I.R.A. members, Dolours Price and Brendan Hughes, said in their oral histories that Adams ordered McConville's murder, a highly inflammatory assertion and one that became public several years ago. Adams, who refused to participate in the Boston College project, has long insisted that he was never a member of the I.R.A., an assertion that Price and Hughes deeply resented and that helped turn them against him.

Price, Hughes and Adams are central characters in this tale of murder and memory. Price's story is perhaps the most mesmerizing. She and her sister, Marian, were reared on the family's tradition of violent resistance to Britain's presence on the island. In one of the book's more haunting passages, the two sisters (just young girls at the time) are sent to visit their Aunt Bridie, who had been left with no eyes, no hands and a scarred face when explosives she was handling for the I.R.A. went off by accident in 1938. She was 27 at the time. More than a quarter-century later, "Dolours was given the job of lighting Bridie's cigarettes, gently inserting them between her lips." On more than one occasion,

"she would ask Bridie, 'Do you not wish you'd just died?'"

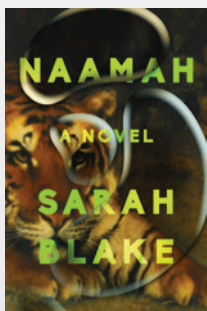
Their aunt's fate did nothing to deter Dolours and Marian Price from carrying on the family legacy. They went on to become hard-edged soldiers for the I.R.A., and their stories overlap with those of Hughes, Adams and Jean McConville. Keefe seeks to explain what drove these women to put their lives on the line—and to be willing to take the lives of others—in his dark and skillful description of the despair in the Catholic neighborhoods of Belfast and Derry circa 1975.

His portrayal of Adams as a shrewd and calculating operative intent on rewriting his past is not particularly flattering. But ultimately, as Keefe suggests, it is Adams—who declined to be interviewed for the book—who emerges on the right side of history. Dolours Price and Brendan Hughes opposed the I.R.A.'s decision to give up its armed struggle, joining a small band of dissidents. They are dead now, but people who share their belief in the power and righteousness of the gun and the bomb remain very much a presence in the north.

Patrick Radden Keefe delivers a searing portrait of Irish women and men struggling to make sense of their past and their memories. Those who wish Ireland well can only hope that it gets sorted out quickly, for the future depends on it.

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**Terry Golway, a former columnist for *America*, is a senior editor at *Politico*. He has written several books about Irish and Irish-American history.**



**Naamah**  
By Sarah Blake  
Riverhead  
Books  
304p \$26

### Humanity's second-chance Eve

Stories from the Bible serve as a springboard for novelists' imaginations in part because they are so spare. We know from Genesis that in a world full of wicked people, "God found favor with Noah." But we have no idea how God felt about Noah's family, including his wife. The title and protagonist of Sarah Blake's dream-like and intriguing first novel is Noah's wife, Naamah. Generations of Genesis readers have probably imagined Noah's wife as obedient, chaste and reverent, so unobjectionable she does not merit much mention. Blake depicts Naamah as someone much wilder. She is a practical, capable worker—it is Naamah who mucks out animals' pens and kills newborn lambs to feed to large predators—but is also sensual and fanciful. Naamah swims in the floodwaters and explores. She is also bisexual, adulterous and prone to seduction by an aquatic angel.

Naamah is the only one aboard the ark who is comfortable with every aspect of living in a body—including sex, childbirth, nursing and death. The others, fearing they will find bodies, do not venture into the floodwaters, but Naamah dives in because she has to know. "It feels

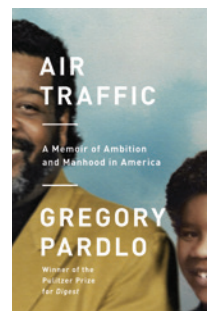
freeing, to swim, to be a part of the flood," she tells Noah. "We've been so separate from it, from everything." She asks Noah why the ark hasn't sunk with all the heavy animals inside, and he insists he does not know. The mystery of this situation suffuses *Naamah*. Noah takes everything on faith, but Naamah is not able to. She has to see and touch and learn. Naamah's dreams mingle with reality and transport her to other times and places.

Blake writes in concise, honed prose, leaving abundant white space. In one of the most beautiful scenes, Naamah communes with a thousand atlas moths. When they die, she gathers their bodies to feed other creatures and waits for their eggs to hatch and fill the room again.

"When the rains began, Noah's doubt left him," Blake writes. "When the rains continued, his guilt left him." But Naamah's doubts and guilt endure. It seems she commits some moral transgressions out of despair that she is not worthy of having been saved from the flood, as a sort of challenge to God. She eventually tells God, "I'm starting to accept that You will not judge me.... You determined me not wicked, even if I feel otherwise."

Blake's vivid imagining of a woman the Bible left unexplored takes some unexpected turns but in doing so plunges readers more deeply into the mystery of God's relationship with humanity's second-chance Eve.

Jenny Shank's first novel, *The Ringer*, won the *High Plains Book Award*. She is on the faculty of the *Mile High M.F.A. in creative writing at Regis University in Denver*.



**Air Traffic**  
A Memoir of  
Ambition and  
Manhood  
in America  
By Gregory Pardlo  
Knopf  
272p \$26.95

### A father in flight

Gregory Pardlo's new book about his complicated relationship with his father, an air traffic controller fired by President Ronald Reagan in 1981, is a clinic in storytelling. There is a reason Pardlo won a Pulitzer Prize in 2014 for his book of poems, *Digest*. The man can write.

"By some concoction of sugar, nicotine, prescription painkillers, rancor, and cocaine, my father, Gregory Pardlo, Sr., began killing himself after my parents separated in 2007," Pardlo begins, and the prose never lets up.

The son was shaped by a man whose life was dramatically shaped by his job. Being an air traffic controller shaped how Pardlo had to talk when on the job—blunt, emotionless, no nuance—which led in some ways to how he talked to his kids. Work was intense; he came home and wanted to be left alone.

Pardlo Sr. could manipulate the son at will. When he was in high school and wanted a car, he received a Hot Wheels toy car instead. And then he was showed his actual car. "My dad believed that the greater the depth of disappointment he could provoke in me initially," Pardlo writes, "the greater my experience of joy would



be once he rescued me from that disappointment.”

The key historical event in the book is the 1981 strike by the union of air traffic controllers who were demanding better pay and benefits. Pardlo’s father became a spokesperson for the cause in the Northeast. It was an illegal strike according to the strictures of the Taft-Hartley labor bill, but the illegality of similar strikes had usually been overlooked by authorities before. It had always been in everyone’s best interest to find common ground between workers and owners and resolve their differences. This time the workers, federal employees, were fired by Reagan.

*Air Traffic* clips quickly along and burdens the reader with almost no slow moments. Pardlo has a way of perfectly summarizing an entire social problem in just a few words. Speaking of his mother’s attempts to keep his brother Robbie in the world’s good graces, Pardlo writes, “My mother knew that, unprotected, black boys could get lost like a marble in the Rube Goldberg machine of public education, only to be quietly collected in the eager baskets of the criminal justice system.” Writing of his father’s final days, Pardlo shows us his father decamped to Las Vegas, addicted to opioids; he has a view of the Strip as if it were an airport runway.

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Joe Hoover, S.J., *America’s poetry editor, a playwright and an actor.*



**Original Prin**  
By Randy Boyagoda  
Biblioasis  
224p \$19.95

### Canada’s undivine comedy

How do you write a comedy about listening to God? In Randy Boyagoda’s *Original Prin*, the answer lies in God’s silence and the attempts, by a man, to fill it.

The titular Prin lives a tested but mostly pedestrian life. He “is a forty-year old associate professor of English with early-stage cancer” who works at a financially endangered Catholic university in Toronto. And the unexpected return of his ex-girlfriend, along with the promise of travel to a Middle Eastern country called Dragomans, threatens his relationship with his “Catholic everything” wife.

He inhabits, in short, a modest existence touched by massive forces but one that has unfolded (at least at first) undramatically. Much of the novel’s humor arises in Prin’s response to this state, a constant and almost bottomless capacity for self-inflation that can find prophetic significance anywhere. Naturally, as we learn, Prin makes an obsessive, almost dangerous reader. Boyagoda, an English professor himself, deliciously eviscerates Prin’s academic “presentations on the penis shaped like a sleeping seahorse...in Michael Ondaatje’s *The English Patient*.”

But for all its campus-novel punches, *Original Prin* most succeeds in limning the ways Prin’s faith bends to his needs. While ignoring the advice of priests and his wife, he reads “signs” everywhere he wants them to appear. “God use[s] a winter weather event to tell him this was the perfect day” to tell his daughters about his diagnosis. Letting his wife sleep “across his small, bony midriff” is “an opportunity for solidarity with Christ.” As the novel continues through Prin’s slow (but for now incomplete) radicalization, it becomes clear that he came to it already a bit fanatical.

That Boyagoda can take on faith, global capitalism, religious terrorism, upper-middle-class preciousness and self-delusion—all the while implicating Canada in traditionally “American” problems—attests to his talent. It also manages to be a taut and funny novel throughout, if maybe too arch.

Jokes fly almost unsustainably, exhausting not just the reader but often their own vitality. If we get the sense that Boyagoda respects our time—and wants it to be a good one—we cannot help but feel, when he overplays his hand, that he may not trust our patience.

Prin’s journey, Boyagoda makes clear, does not end with this book. This is the first volume of a planned trilogy. If I could hazard my own divination of signs, I would bet Boyagoda could take him anywhere. Sadly (or funnily) enough, it looks like Prin’s faith could, too.

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Peter Morgan is a graduate student in English literature at Stanford University.

## A portrait of the artist as a young scholar

By John Anderson

In "Tolkien" Nicholas Hoult plays the precocious student who went on to become J. R. R. Tolkien.

"Tolkien," an impressionistic, mosaical portrait of the author, linguist and protofantasist J. R. R. Tolkien, will be far less appealing to those seeking a dose of *Lord of the Rings* or *The Hobbit* than it will be for fans of such classic British schoolboy novels as *Tom Brown's School Days* or *David Copperfield*—or even *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, even though the Tolkien of "Tolkien" is less of an artist than a collection of parts being assembled.

As played both convincingly and charmingly by Nicholas Hoult, the John Ronald Reuel Tolkien of Dome Karukoski's film has, from the outset, all the raw ingredients he needs—curiosity, passion, determination, erudition and a God-given gift for languages—to become J. R. R. Tolkien, the Oxford don, author and forger of tongues and worlds. He also has the kind of near-Dickensian childhood that is the stuff of a dramatist's dream.

When the banker father of the family dies in South Africa, the remaining, destitute Tolkiens—Mabel (Laura Donnelly) and her young sons, Ronald and Hilary (Harry Gilby as the young J. R. R. Tolkien)—relocate to grimy Birmingham, where Mom, who also is not long for this world, entrusts her boys' education to the Rev. Francis Xavier Morgan (Colm Meaney). This brings the teenage Ronald to the distinguished King Edward's School, where he becomes one of a quartet of high-minded youth who vow to "change the world" through "the power of art."

That the entire story is a flashback—from the battlefields of World War I, where Tolkien saw action and his friends would die—enshrouds the story in bitter irony: The adventurous boys, who dreamt of quests, would find theirs in the trenches of the Somme.

For the director, Karukoski ("Tom of Finland"), and the writers, David

Gleeson and Stephen Beresford, it's all fodder. The Tolkien-to-be is visited by otherworldly visions and otherworldly creatures, from the dragons that invade his waking dreams to a saddled white stallion that Ronald hallucinates, amid the blood and the mud of the Somme, and which might have been dispatched from Middle Earth.

"Tolkien" is also a love story, one with some curious omissions. Lily Collins plays Edith Bratt, the future Mrs. Tolkien, who is not only the writer's intellectual match but a gifted pianist in her own right and who, like Ronald, was not born to privilege. The two are well suited not just temperamentally but also economically and even musically. Their trip to hear part of Wagner's Ring Cycle (another obvious influence on Tolkien) is one of the more tender scenes in this sometime romance. Father Morgan, however, discourages the courtship, seeing Edith as a distraction from Ronald's



studies. In real life, the fact that Edith was Anglican was at least as much of an issue.

Tolkien's identity as a Catholic is a curious thing to leave out of a film so devoted to identifying influences on the author. His mother had been a Catholic convert from the Baptist Church. Tolkien insisted on Edith's conversion before they married, and he was a major influence on the decision by C. S. Lewis to convert from atheism to the Church of England, though Tolkien found the Christian allegories of the "Narnia" chronicles too obvious. (Tolkien and Lewis were both members of the Oxford discussion group the Inklings.)

Still, there are lovely moments in "Tolkien," the best being about Tolkien's education, an intellectual up-by-the-bootstraps kind of tale: his silencing of a dismissive professor by reciting Chaucer from memory in perfect Middle English; his epiphany about changing his course of study from "greats" (classics) to philology; and, the most fun, the way he persuades the daunting Oxford professor Joseph Wright (a wonderful, as usual, Derek Jacobi) to allow him into Wright's already closed classes, partly by speaking to him in Finnish.

"Give me 5,000 words on Gawain," Wright barks after their initial meeting, and Tolkien, of course, will comply. Like Sir Gawain himself, Tolkien is on a journey, and while the film may deprive us of an arrival, it does give us a rather exhilarating travel itinerary.

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John Anderson is a television critic for *The Wall Street Journal* and a contributor to *The New York Times*.

## Upstaging male leaders

Is the future really female, as a popular T-shirt slogan has it? Two new Broadway productions centered on female leaders offer occasion for both despair and hope that we can break the chains of the toxic male behavior that dominates the present.

In a strange and strangely watchable new revival of Shakespeare's "King Lear," Glenda Jackson—stage royalty in her own right, as well as a former member of the British Parliament—doesn't play the aging Lear as a woman, though she's not quite playing the character as a man, either. The results are as confounding and fascinating as that may sound. And in Lucas Hnath's brittle new play "Hillary and Clinton," the title character's failed presidential bid in 2008 comes off as a minor tragedy of internalized self-limitation. The very tools she has used to survive prove useless, even antithetical, to a bid for national office.

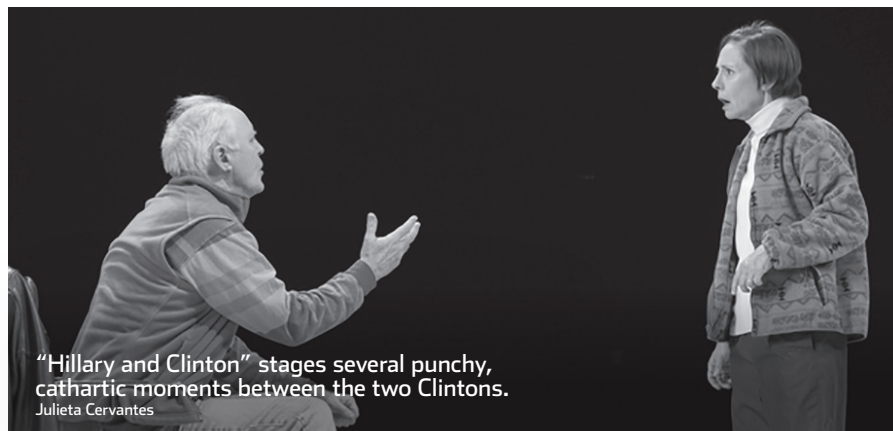
Clinton is the paradigmatic example of what some scholars of female leadership have identified as the "double bind," which sees competence and charisma as mutually exclusive in women. In Hnath's play, Hillary (Laurie Metcalf) has clearly put all her bets on competence, while

her husband, Bill (John Lithgow), unsurprisingly presses her to show more humanity and "authenticity." Set over a few nights in a New Hampshire hotel room during Hillary's 2008 primary campaign against Barack Obama, the play stages several punchy, cathartic moments between the two Clintons. We get to hear her lay into him for his infamous infidelities and to openly contemplate divorce. We hear him bluntly represent voters put off by her ostensible chilliness and self-possession. "People don't vote with their brains," Bill tells his wife. To which she replies, in one of the evening's applause lines, "People should grow the [expletive] up."

While Hillary's more recent presidential campaign (not to mention the current occupant of the White House) is not part of the play's text, it is most definitely part of its subtext. Metcalf's Hillary squirms under contradictory male expectations—fight back, but don't be a b—. She seems to contemplate how she might be complicit in living down to these norms, even as she struggles to defy them.

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Rob Weinert-Kendt is an arts journalist and editor of *American Theatre* magazine.



"Hillary and Clinton" stages several punchy, cathartic moments between the two Clintons.  
Julieta Cervantes

# Thus It Is Written


Readings: Acts 1:1-11, Ps 47, Eph 1:17-23 or Heb 9:24-10:23, Lk 24:46-53

Of all the episodes in the life of Christ, the Ascension is among the most difficult to make sense of today. A literal understanding of the account would have Jesus being asphyxiated in the thin air around 7,500 feet above sea level. The saving message of this narrative lies in its symbolic message, that God's invincible grace remains available to all.

All four Gospels recount that at a certain point after the resurrection, the risen Christ ceased to appear in the flesh. Only Luke recounts how this final departure happened. In his telling it resembles the biblical story of the ascension of Elijah (2 Kgs 2:11-12) and nonbiblical accounts of the ascensions of Enoch, Abraham, Moses and Isaiah that were popular among the Jews of Luke's time. In these narratives, a summons from above results in a chosen character ascending through multiple heavens. These celestial spheres are home to angels, spirits and other heavenly beings who have power over the worlds below them. Each higher level of being has power over everything in the lower spheres, and all these heavens are under the power of God, whose throne is above them all.

It was likely that this was the context in which Luke read Daniel's prophecy of a mysterious savior called "one like a son of man" (Dn 7:13). Ascending on a cloud, this being approaches the throne of God, where he receives divine glory and honor and eternal kingship. In Luke's mind, Jesus embarked on this journey at his ascension. After Jesus left his disciples at the Mount of Olives, he came ultimately to the Father's own throne on high. Luke says as much when he describes Stephen's death. The dying martyr looks into the sky and declares, "Behold, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God" (Acts 7:56). In Luke's account, Jesus' ascension is both a fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy and the climactic event of the incarnation. In the risen Christ, humanity has taken its place at God's side, and the Father has placed every power in heaven and on earth under Christ's feet.

*'Stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.'* (Lk 24:49)



## PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Have you felt the risen Christ mysteriously at work in your world?

What power has Christ given you to continue his mission?

Luke ends his Gospel account with an image that reflects its opening episode. Gabriel said to Mary, "The holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you" (Lk 1:35). Now that same power is at work again. Jesus tells his disciples, "And behold I am sending the promise of my Father upon you; but stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high" (Lk 24:49). The power of God on high has been at work throughout Luke's Gospel. Just as that power worked through Mary at Christ's incarnation, so now it works through Christ's disciples as they continue his mission.

Their mission is now ours, and Christ is ready to share the same power with us. Any who commit their lives to Christ's saving mission can trust that their efforts will be supported with a strength even death cannot conquer.

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# And Dwelt Among Us

Readings: Acts 2:1-11, Ps 104, 1 Cor 12:3-13 or Rom 8:8-17, Jn 20:19-23 or Jn 14:15-26

The earliest Christians believed that Christ, although no longer present in the flesh, remained among them. Many words described this presence, but one of the most common was *Spirit*. New Testament writers, although they came from a variety of backgrounds and wrote at different times, spoke of two important roles for the Spirit. It drew the individual into the eternal life of Christ, and it drew the risen Christ into the earthly life of the individual.

The Spirit is a well-known power in the Hebrew Scriptures. It is the divine “breath” that animated Adam and Eve. The Spirit of the Lord inspired any who served God’s mission. It gave speech to Israel’s prophets, wisdom to its kings and valor to its warriors.

The best-known New Testament account of the Spirit appears in this Sunday’s first reading. Amid imagery reminiscent of God’s appearance on Sinai, the disciples received what Luke calls “holy Spirit.” Luke’s phrase, not common in the Hebrew Scriptures, refers certainly to the “Spirit of God” found in ancient texts but also possibly to the “Spirit of the Holy Place,” i.e., the divine presence in the Jerusalem Temple. In Luke’s mind, the Spirit that had once dwelt in the Temple had now taken up residence among Christ’s

disciples. God had drawn Aaron and his sons into the divine presence once yearly; now Christ’s disciples dwelled permanently in the Spirit. Although they were one in Christ, the Spirit did not abrogate their individuality. The disciples spoke in many languages to communicate the story of God’s mighty deeds.

Paul likewise understands a twofold role for the Spirit, as both options for the second reading describe. Baptism draws Christ’s disciples into one Spirit, which is Christ’s own life. Christ has conquered death, so participation in his Spirit is salvation from death. But participation in this Spirit does not result in an army of disembodied clones. The Spirit gives each believer a different gift to share. It will also raise each individual body to new life on the last day.

John, too, understands the Spirit as mediator of a twofold relationship between Christ and his disciples. In one of this Sunday’s Gospel options, Jesus literally “breathes” his Spirit into the disciples, mirroring the life God shared with Adam and Eve. Christ’s gift conferred the ability to forgive sins on God’s behalf. In this Sunday’s other Gospel option, Jesus promises that whoever loves him and keeps his commandments will become a dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. In John’s mind this indwelling Spirit is the very presence of the Father and Son united in love for each other.

The seasons of Lent and Easter turn our attention to this twofold gift. During Lent, we put aside the habits that hinder our ability to share Christ’s life. The joy of Easter, meanwhile, allows the vigor of Christ’s life to thrive anew within us. Like the first Christians on Pentecost, we have new gifts with which to communicate divine love to all we meet. Through the work of the Spirit, God draws near to creation and breathes life into it anew.

*‘I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always.’ (Jn 14:16)*

## PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

How has God drawn you closer to divine life?

What gifts has God given you to share with others?

Michael Simone, S.J., teaches Scripture at Boston College School of Theology and Ministry.

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# Mary Our Model

## *A bridge between Christians and Muslims*

By Blase J. Cupich



*He said, 'I am but a messenger from your Lord, [come] to announce to you the gift of a pure son.' She said, 'How can I have a son when no man has touched me? I have not been unchaste.'*

—Quran, Sura 19:19-20

It might surprise some Christians to learn that the excerpt from the Annunciation narrative above comes not from the Gospel of Luke but the Qur'an, the holy book of Islam. In fact, the Qur'an contains not one but two Annunciation stories. (The other is in Sura 3.) Mary, the only woman mentioned by name in the Qur'an, has an entire chapter named after her (Sura 19, "Maryam") and is honored by Muslims as the Virgin Mother of Jesus.

In an era when Islamophobia is on the rise, it seems especially important for Catholic Christians to know that in addition to sharing our belief in the one God, Muslims also share a reverence for Mary. While contrasting ideas about Jesus have long been a dividing line between Christianity and Islam (Christians call him the Son of God, while Muslims call him a prophet), his mother Mary can more easily be seen as an interreligious bridge.

This is exactly how she is viewed in the Second Vatican Council's document on the relationship between the Catholic Church and non-Christians,

"Nostra Aetate," which explicitly mentions Mary as a point of agreement between Catholics and Muslims: "[Muslims] also honor Mary, [Jesus'] Virgin Mother; at times they even call on her with devotion."

Like Catholics, Muslims believe Mary to be pure, courageous and faithful. They also believe that she was free from sin. The Qur'an calls her an example for believers, a woman of truth, a sign for all peoples and chosen above all women. Some medieval Muslim scholars even argued that Mary was a prophet. (This was a minority position, however.) The famous Muslim poet Rumi devotes a full chapter of his magnum opus, the *Mathnawi*, to the Visitation—when John the Baptist leaped in Elizabeth's womb at Mary's greeting in Lk 1:41. Rumi described Mary as a "woman with a silent heart" and "a lovely branch which when touched by a sweet breeze gave birth to Jesus the rose."

Not only can Christians and Muslims gain insights into each other's faiths by comparing their images and stories of Mary, but they can also visit several Marian shrines throughout the world that are frequented by Catholics, other Christians and Muslims alike. Some of the more popular shared Marian shrines include Our Lady of Saidnaya Monastery in Syria, Our Lady of Africa in Algeria and Meryem Ana Evi in Turkey, the latter

of which was visited by Popes Paul VI, John Paul II and Benedict XVI. In Lebanon, a Muslim-majority country with a significant Christian minority, March 25 (the feast of the Annunciation) has been declared a national holiday. The idea originated with a Muslim, who also created the day's motto, "Together around Mary, Our Lady."

Yet despite the similar Annunciation stories, common attributes, shared shrines and the acknowledgment in "Nostra Aetate" of Muslim Marian devotion, the Virgin remains largely underutilized as a resource for Christian-Muslim dialogue and understanding. Aside from Bishop Miguel Ayuso Guixot, the secretary of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, who recently held Mary up as a "model of dialogue," few church leaders today have highlighted Mary's potential role as a bridge between the two religions. This seems like a missed opportunity.

If Muslims and Christians in Lebanon can come together around "Mary, Our Lady," why can't we?

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**Cardinal Blase J. Cupich, archbishop of Chicago, is the Catholic co-chair of the National Catholic-Muslim Dialogue, sponsored by the Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.**





## APPLICATIONS FOR THE NEXT GENERATIONS IN DIALOGUE COHORT

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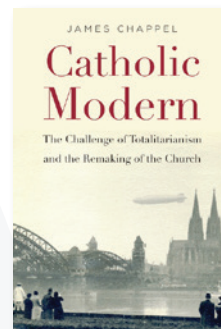
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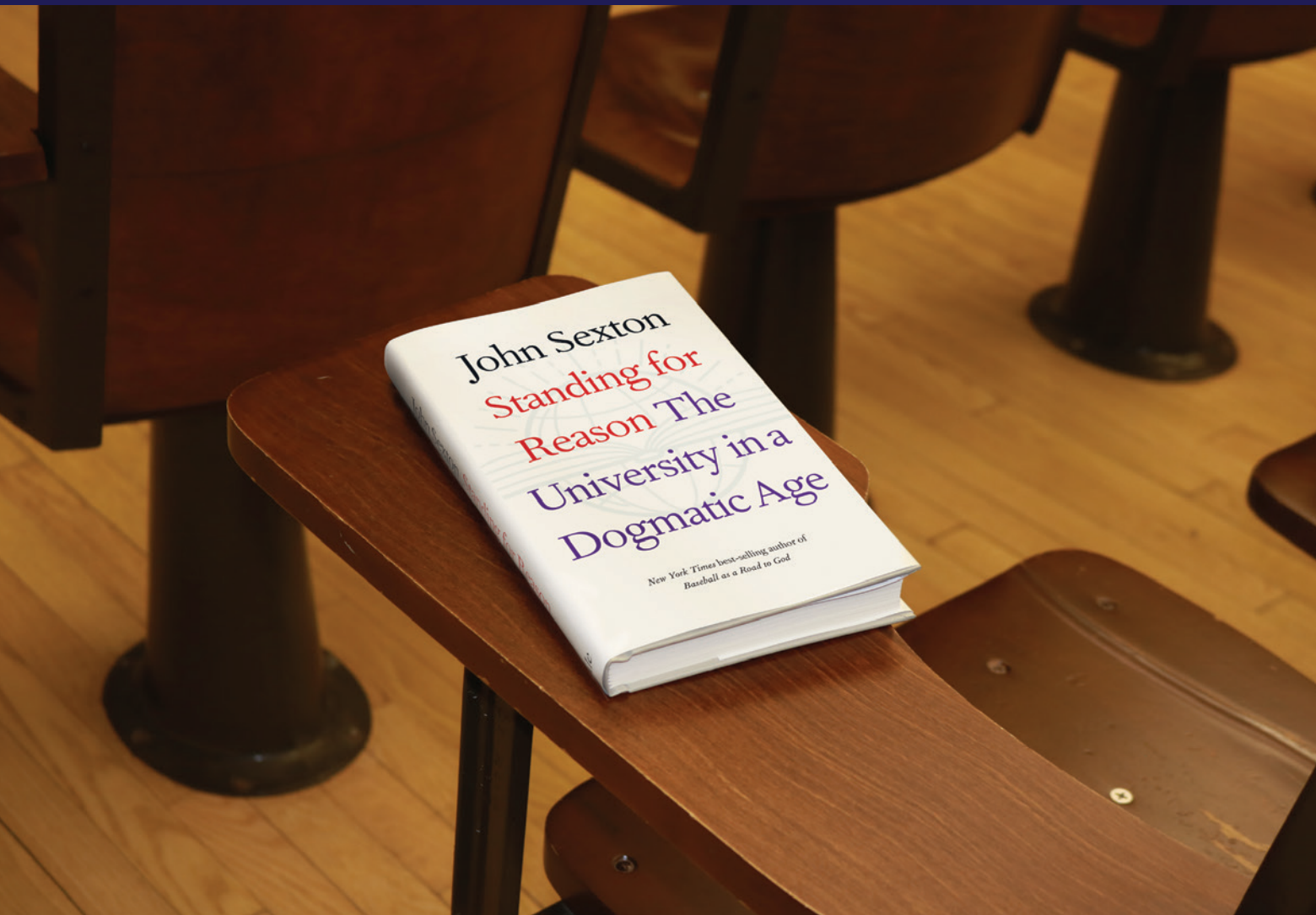
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