America

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OF MANY THINGS

Jim Zogby is a friend. He, his wife, Eileen, and I were members of the same Christian Family Movement group. I have witnessed the marriages of their children, baptized their grandchildren and celebrated Mass for their 25th wedding anniversary. We are colleagues, too. We served together on the board of the American Committee on Jerusalem and took counsel together on supporting Christians in the Middle East, ending conflict in the region and defending the human rights of Palestinians—for which we both have paid a price.

Jim and I have worked for justice with different and overlapping communities, have faced common difficulties and bear the psychic scars inflicted by the organized defenders of injustice. The high points of his life story are fairly well known in Catholic Washington and among political activists, but until I read his new book, *Arab Voices: What They Are Saying to Us and Why It Matters* (Palgrave Macmillan), I had not realized how much he and his fellow Arab-Americans have endured from their fellow Americans.

Arab Voices presents an overview of Arab public opinion intended to correct Americans' stereotypes and redress our ignorance of the Arab peoples. Drawing from 14 years of polling Jim has done with his pollster brother, John, across the Middle East, the book addresses persistent myths about Arabs, such as their supposed anger and aversion to change, and it exposes the blunders and failures produced by American misperceptions and prejudices in country after country: Iraq, most of all, but Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Palestine.

Even for an experienced amateur like myself, there are surprises. For instance, only in Saudi Arabia is Islam listed as the number one source of Arab identity. Otherwise, the number one factor consists of political concerns, especially about Iraq and Palestine. Not surprisingly, the Arab language is the second-ranked factor binding people across national boundaries and cultures. For the most part, a majority of Arabs have a favorable attitude toward the American people and American freedom. (So much for the myth that "they" hate our freedom.) For me personally, however, the eye-opening passages were those in which Jim recounted his personal history to illuminate the hostility Arab-Americans meet in American society.

When I taught seminars on justice, I thought it important for the students to understand not just theories of justice or the details of particular remedies but also the history of struggles to advance racial, gender or economic justice. They needed to get a feeling for the personalities of leaders who labored and suffered to make this a more just world. Jim comes by his thirst for justice naturally. Both his mother, Saleemie, and his Aunt Lila Mandour were protesting anti-Arab prejudice in the 1920s. Jim, however, thought of himself as an American, not an Arab, but that is not how others saw him.

For some, including the right-thinking activists with whom Jim made common cause, he writes, "'Arab' seems to cancel out the 'American.'" In an anti-Vietnam protest, as he rose to speak, another protester jeered, "Why are they letting the Arab talk?" Time and again, Jim, who is a gentle, quiet-spoken man, found himself set aside by putative allies—Amnesty International, the Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy, the Democratic National Committee—because he was advocating justice for unpopular people. His biography puts on display the sacrifice, pain and disappointment men and women of every age must endure in the struggle for justice. If I were preparing a curriculum on justice today, I would include the chapter "Arab Americans: Bridging the Divide" as a case study in principle and courage.

DREW CHRISTIANSEN, S.J.

America

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

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

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

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Deborah M. Jones discusses why Catholics should care about **animal rights**, and Karen Sue Smith reviews the play "**The Pitmen Painters.**" Plus, an archive of **America** articles on **church and state**. All at americamagazine.org.

A Campaign Worth Waging

As in years past, the Catholic Campaign for Human Development is under attack, and its grantees are once again under the microscope of detractors. A handful of these have been especially virulent recently and have helped propel the "renewal" the campaign has endured in another effort to satisfy critics. We suspect they need not have bothered. For some of our fellow Catholics no amount of "reform" will be enough; it is the C.C.H.D.'s mission itself—helping low-income citizens through small grants to become agents of their own contribution to the common good—that they cannot abide.

Recent attacks have smeared C.C.H.D. personnel and tainted many of its grantees with dark insinuations that make the most of tangential associations with groups that are at odds with church teaching on abortion or gay marriage. A few grantees had indeed violated the terms of their awards and were defunded in 2009—five out of 270—but many of the other community groups were guilty of little more than having the slimmest of connections to organizations that opposed church teaching. The world inhabited by community organizations is inherently complicated; different groups can find themselves working together for a common purpose, even when on other issues they are at cross purposes.

But the critics of the C.C.H.D. have little patience for nuance and complexity. In their haste to tear down the good work of the campaign, they betray a fundamental misunderstanding of its calling or even naked hostility toward it. The critics see the church's efforts to support low-income communities as a dark, "socialist" plot or evidence of some outlawed variety of liberation theology. They implore other Catholics to support direct service groups instead. But the church already has Catholic Charities USA and Catholic Relief Services.

The Catholic Campaign's goal is altogether different. In a complex world of competing political and economic interests, the campaign helps breathe life into the concept of subsidiarity, so that low-income people are not kept out of the conversation, so that no Americans have to come hat-in-hand to the table where their future is discussed but can step forward in confidence to speak for themselves. That is just good common sense; it is as American as apple pie; and it deserves support again this year. It is worthy, too, of a re-evaluation from those bishops who have in recent years declined to participate in the campaign. They should reconsider their opposition and lend support to their fellow bishops in this essential work of the church.

Who Will Speak for Us?

Much is sad in the issue of Newsweek for Nov. 8—both its portrait of today's politics and its self-portrait of American journalism. Rush Limbaugh and "The Power 50" hog the cover, which proclaims "Our First Annual Ranking of America's Highest Paid Pundits and Politicos." The newsweekly seems to have fallen into the celebrity swamp with People's "most beautiful" men and women, Time's "most influential" 100 and Forbes's "world's richest."

The cover story gobbles up 13 pages, with Limbaugh as Number One ($58.7 million) and Glenn Beck as Number Two—while the People-magazine layout obscures the important message that the public agenda is being set not by the public's needs, nor by open dialogue, but by "pundits" who make millions reinforcing prejudices.

Most of Newsweek's best-known writers have jumped ship for new careers at The Huffington Post, Time and television shows. Its editor, Jon Meacham, a religious and political historian, published his last introductory column on Sept. 6.

One strong voice remains. Jonathan Alter warns that we have "returned to the bad old days when powerful interests could buy politicians without any way to trace it.... Bagmen operate in the dark, which is where the rest of us will be if we do not bring democracy out of the shadows."

Owls Under Siege

Species extinction is becoming a household phrase, and among birds a prime example once again is the northern spotted owl. Old-growth habitats are essential for its nesting sites in tree hollows. Huge swaths of old forest continue to be lost to the voracious logging industry. The fibrous, grainy structure of the old growth wood makes it desirable to logging interests. The result has been a standoff between them and conservationists.

The spotted owl is listed as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act, which requires the federal government to identify the kinds of habitat endangered species need and to help protect both the animals and their habitats. In 1990 the bird was officially listed as threatened. But Bush-era changes that favored business interests weakened needed protections, creating bureaucratic obstacles that limited the number of species protected under the act.

On Sept. 1, 2010, a U.S. district court judge ruled that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service must revise a recovery plan for the owls within nine months. Such protection is needed now more than ever.

Savor the Gifts

Gratitude is a hot topic in both the secular and religious worlds. In the psychological community, there is a renewed emphasis on "savoring," spending time consciously being grateful for what one has. This would not have surprised St. Ignatius Loyola, who used the words *savor* or *relish* (depending on the translation) in the Spiritual Exercises to describe dwelling with a powerful experience in prayer.

Several contemporary books point to gratitude as an essential element of a healthy relationship with God. Mary Jo Leddy's popular *Radical Gratitude* strives to move readers from the "perpetual dissatisfaction" fostered by Madison Avenue to an appreciative awareness of what we already possess. And this year Charles J. Shelton, a Jesuit psychologist at Regis University in Denver, describes the virtue in *The Gratitude Factor* as a quality that enriches love, contributes to both the individual and the community, fights negativity, relieves stress and limits our selfish desires.

The Thanksgiving holiday is a fitting time to revisit the virtue of gratitude. But are there reasons to be thankful? In the wake of persistent unemployment and financial woes, after an election in which the country seems more divided than ever, in the midst of continuing violence in Afghanistan and in view of terrorism here at home (even U.P.S. is not safe) and abroad (the carnage in the Syriac Catholic cathedral in Baghdad appalled even seasoned observers), gratitude may seem not only inaccessible, but a ridiculous thing to suggest.

Yet in times of struggle gratitude is critical, lest we move into despair. And we need not deny the dark to see the light. So what are some things for which we can be grateful?

To begin with, the elections transpired peacefully. Despite the over-the-top vitriol, new lawmakers were elected, old ones left the stage and in January the political landscape will change decisively. That this transpires without widespread violence marks our country as fortunate. Compare our experience with that of other democracies—Kenya, for example, whose last presidential election led to weeks of killings. As President Gerald Ford said after the Watergate crisis, "Our Constitution works." We can savor that.

And despite the stumbles of the Obama administration, there are many bright spots. Because of the passage of the health care legislation, millions of poor Americans have access to medical coverage. Moreover, we live in a country with potable water, functioning hospitals and well-trained doctors. Millions of others cannot say this. The economy, too, which seemed on the verge of complete collapse in 2008, is slowly on the mend. President Obama's recovery package was both flawed and politically costly but probably saved the national and international economy. Debates surrounding immigration hid the fact that many new immigrants do jobs, for substandard wages, that otherwise would not be done, like care of the elderly infirm. And a moment's thought about Afghanistan should prompt enormous gratitude for members of the armed forces, who put their lives at risk for the rest of our country.

But our gratitude for what we have should not blunt our zeal for justice for others; it should inspire us to struggle for those who have not.

In the Catholic Church things may also seem bleak. The sexual abuse crisis is now a worldwide one, and the stream of reports of decades-old crimes shows few signs of abating. But there was much hopeful news this year. The enthusiastic reception given the pope during his visit to England to beatify Cardinal John Henry Newman surprised most observers, who had predicted a tepid response. Besides Newman, several other colorful new saints, like St. Damien of Molokai, St. Mary MacKillop and St. André Bessette, gave Catholics something to relish. On the local level, priests continue to work hard in the face of declining vocations to ordained ministry; women and men religious toil in often thankless jobs; and lay leaders take on roles of increasing responsibility. Those who collaborate in parishes labor in ministries that touch almost every aspect of the spiritual life: adult Christian initiation programs, bereavement groups, spiritual direction, young adult ministries, religious education programs for children and adults, parish book clubs. The church is alive.

For many the causes for gratitude are more personal. Even in difficult times we can be thankful for our families, friends and co-workers. The cause of the greatest gratitude may be the hardest to describe in words: our personal relationship with God. And though Easter is far off, we can be grateful for the ultimate sign of hope: Christ is risen.

As we savor the turkey and stuffing and enjoy the cranberry sauce, Catholics are called to relish the gifts that God gives us every day, and to savor the sparks of light that illumine the dark.

SPECIAL TO AMERICA

Cathedral Attack Devastating, Says Ambassador

Catastrophe is the term Samir Sumaida'ie, Iraq's ambassador to the United States, used to describe the attack on Baghdad's Syriac Catholic Cathedral on Oct. 31, not only because of the loss of life at Our Lady of Salvation, but what the assault could mean in the near term for the nation. Fifty-two people were killed (along with six attackers) and 78 were wounded when Iraqi Security Forces stormed church offices where Al Qaeda-linked terrorists had trapped about 100 Mass-goers.

"It is an extremely painful experience not only for the Christians of Iraq, but for all Iraqis," the ambassador said. "Personally I was very shocked and saddened," he said. Ambassador Sumaida'ie fears that the steady departure of Iraq's Christians over years of conflict could now accelerate into an outright "stampede." Since 2003 Iraq's Christians, a community as old as the faith itself, have diminished from an estimated 900,000 to about half that number today. The loss of its Christians "would be extremely damaging for Iraq," the ambassador said, not only for the cultural devastation the departure of the community would represent but also because of the essential role of highly skilled Christians in Iraq's reconstruction and recovery.

The Syriac Catholic Bishop of Baghdad, Ignatius Metti Metok, told British media he has lost half his congregation since the attack on the cathedral. "My people say to me: 'You want us to stay after what's happened? It could happen again, and who's going to protect us?' We tell them, the church is against emigration, we have to stay here, whatever the sacrifices, to bear witness to our faith. But people are human, and we can't stop them leaving."

During a Mass in Great Britain on Nov. 7, Archbishop Athanasios Dawood of the Syrian Orthodox Church in London said the cathedral attack amounted to "genocide" and urged Christians in Iraq to flee. He accused the United States of empty promises of democracy and human rights and called on the British government to grant Christian Iraqis asylum.

According to Ambassador Sumaida'ie, Iraq's Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki has ordered significant security improvements around Christian churches. He said responses like the archbishop's were understandable after such a tragedy, but noted other Christian leaders were urging Iraqi Christians to stay put. "They are saying, 'This is our country and we will never leave,'" he said. "We have a common enemy here and this is also a mortal enemy of the United States, religious extremism as represented by Al Qaeda.

"Al Qaeda and those who travel in that orbit" have been extremely "resourceful and clever in selecting targets with the maximum impact," Ambassador Sumaida'ie said. Their attacks not only provoke social disruption within Iraq, they encourage international misgivings about the nation's future. After the most recent attacks, international media images "painted a picture of Iraq again descending into chaos." But according to the ambassador, for many in Iraq life is returning to something close to normal. As he spoke, however, bombings were reported on Nov. 8 in the normally calm holy cities of Najaf and Karbala, killing at least 22 people and wounding dozens more. On Nov. 10 bombs exploded outside Christian homes across Baghdad, killing four and wounding 10.

The ambassador said he was disturbed to hear voices in Congress talk of scaling back or cutting off aid to Iraq. "The United States should continue to help us strengthen our security forces in all aspects, from operations to intelligence to logistics," he said. At the same time, Ambassador Sumaida'ie did not believe the United States needed to reconsider its timeline for a withdrawal from Iraq, which, he said, remains "doable."

"It's not the number of [U.S.] combat troops that remain that are impor-

Mourners at a funeral on Nov. 2 for victims of a bombing in Baghdad

tant but the quantity and quality of U.S. support to the Iraqi forces…and also [providing] the resources we need to be more effective." The ambassador said Iraq is making progress on improving its security "but we are not there yet.... Attacks like these teach us that we can't relax; we can't become complacent. We must take the fight to this enemy until he is defeated."

ECUMENICAL DIALOGUE

Bishops Join Baptism Accord

As the U.S. Catholic bishops consider a common agreement on baptism with four Protestant church communities, they "stand at an important juncture" in the quest for Christian unity, according to the chairman of the bishops' Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs. Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory of Atlanta said the "Common Agreement on Mutual Recognition of Baptism," to be voted on at the bishops' fall general assembly from Nov. 15 to 18 in Baltimore, Md., would affirm "the unity that Christ has given to the baptized members of his body, a unity that is ever fragile and always in need of support from the pastors of the church."

While other bishops' conferences around the world have entered into similar agreements with Protestant communities in their regions, the proposed document is unprecedented for the U.S. Catholic Church. The agreement has already been ratified by the Presbyterian Church. If the U.S.C.C.B. approves it, any baptisms performed in either Catholic or Presbyterian churches after that would be mutually recognized, as long as the proper formula is used and documented. The other three Protestant communities are to consider the agreement at their national meetings in the coming months.

The proposed agreement was drawn up over the past six years by a team of scholars from the Catholic-Reformed dialogue group, made up of representatives of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Christian Reformed Church in North America, Presbyterian Church (USA), Reformed Church in America and United Church of Christ.

Calling baptism "the sacramental gateway into the Christian life," the agreement says baptism "is to be conferred only once, because those who are baptized are decisively incorporated into the body of Christ."

For baptisms to be mutually recognized by the five churches, the baptismal rite must use water and the Trinitarian formula, "Father, Son and Holy Spirit," the document says. It also encourages Reformed church communities to use baptismal registers, as Catholic parishes already do, and to document the liturgical formula used in the ceremony. Each church also will issue its own "reception statement," designed to explain the new agreement to its own members.

The agreement encourages continued dialogue between Catholic and Reformed leaders "about theology and pastoral practice from local to international settings." The common agreement on baptism was one result of the seventh round of the Catholic-Reformed dialogue that ended with a meeting in Henryville, Ind., in October. The dialogue also produced a report on baptism, titled *These Living Waters*, and a document on the Eucharist/Lord's Supper called *This Bread of Life*.

Baptism: a source of Christian unity

No Vocation Crisis for Melkite Archbishop

Heading a southern Lebanese diocese in a complex part of the world, the one problem Melkite Archbishop George Bakhouni of Tyre says he does not have is finding priests. The archbishop knows all the arguments against relaxing the celibacy requirement in the Latin church, but he said that ordaining married men is the most naturally pastoral response to every Catholic's need for regular access to the sacraments. "Christianity survived in the Middle East because of the married priests," the bishop said. Because they are married with families and homes, they tend to stay, even when conflicts and hardship send many celibate priests fleeing to safety. "We always propose this to the Latin church…but we always feel a lot of reticence when we mention this issue," he said.

Supreme Court Hears Tuition Challenge

U.S. Supreme Court justices recently debated questions about the constitutionality of Arizona's school tuition tax credit program and whether or not Arizona taxpayers even have legal standing to challenge the program. In a lively exchange on Nov. 3, discussion focused on whether the money that Arizonans contribute to scholarship tuition organizations could be considered government money because of the $500 tax credit participants receive. Most of the scholarships granted through the organizations go to students in religious schools. Opponents contend that is tantamount to government funding of religious schools. Acting U.S. Solicitor General Neal Katyal argued that based on previous court rulings Arizona taxpayers are barred from suing the government over how it spends money. "The key point is this: Not a cent of [the plaintiff's] money goes to fund religion," said Katyal. Two related cases challenging the program are being reviewed by the court, and a decision is likely before its summer adjournment.

A Vatican Meeting Without Speeches

By Vatican standards, it is a small revolution: A pontifical council is holding a major assembly without prepared speeches. Participants in the Pontifical Council for Culture's mid-November plenary meeting have been told to prepare for free discussion instead. The theme of the encounter is communication, and apparently the old model—hours of reading prepared texts—just was not working anymore. Those who have endured Vatican meetings will appreciate just how radical this innovation really is. Reading speeches has been the main activity at Roman Curia assemblies for as long as anyone can remember. There is no prize for brevity, either. Outside participants, especially those from the United States, have complained that such overly structured meetings left little or no time for significant discussion. Their protests are now being taken seriously, aided in part by the digital media explosion. Msgr. Paul Tighe, secretary of the communications council, said bluntly in an article earlier this year that the church relies too much on texts, often using a vocabulary that is "unintelligible and off-putting" to its audiences.

From CNS and other sources.

NEWS BRIEFS

Poland's giant Jesus

Cuba's President Raul Castro joined that country's Catholic bishops as they inaugurated the San Carlos and San Ambrosio Seminary on Nov. 3, the country's first major church-related construction since the revolution. ⬩ Addressing the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace on Nov. 4, Pope Benedict XVI said that **lay Catholics have a responsibility** to promote social justice and charity in a world often marked by injustice and inequality. ⬩ The Vatican has asked the world's bishops to be vigilant over the activities of **Opus Angelorum, a "wayward movement"** trying to revive banned practices that focus on angels. ⬩ Seventy-three percent of the British public think **banks should have ethics policies** that prevent them from doing business with companies with poor records on the environment and human rights or that are involved in arms manufacture. ⬩ Later this month a parish in western Poland will dedicate what it says is the world's **largest statue of Christ**, 35 feet taller than the statue of Christ the Redeemer in Rio de Janeiro. ⬩ Church humanitarian workers rushed aid on Nov. 8 to **thousands fleeing to Thailand** from Burma to escape fighting between the ethnic Karen militia and the Burmese military.

MARGARET SILF

Little Seeds, Little Deeds

Our economic troubles in the United Kingdom may soon be over. A 6-year-old girl heard our prime minister speaking of the hardships that lie ahead in the effort to bring the nation out of recession. She had just lost one of her baby teeth, and the tooth fairy had left her a pound coin in its place. Realizing the severity of the nation's economic plight, she taped her pound coin to a letter that she sent to David Cameron with the request that he should use it "to make the country better and pay for jobs."

The story touched all our hearts, and, of course, the pound was sent back to the sender, thanking her sincerely for her generosity but suggesting that Mr. Cameron would like her to spend it on something nice for herself. He was, however, reported to observe that if we all sent our tooth-fairy money, Britain would soon be on the road to recovery.

Would that it were so simple! Yet this story touches a deep truth. A 6-year-old gives away all she has so that someone else might benefit. She has it completely right. Miracles happen when we put the common good before our own personal gratification. The tiniest thing can be the start of a miracle. In fact the smaller the better, if Jesus' parables are an indication of the divine dynamic. Little seeds, little deeds are the almost invisible beginnings from which transformation grows.

Perhaps our problem with miracles is that we try to get at them from the wrong end. We strive to see the end of the miracle—the great transformation, the unexpected cure, the new life where there was none before. But we very rarely notice the start of the miracle. This is a great pity because, actually, these almost invisible beginnings of the miraculous are all around us. It is a bit like going through the countryside and, because we are in the right place in the right season, happening to see a tree laden with fruit or a field ripe with corn.

What we do not see is the puff of wind that blows a seed through the air to land in the place where new growth might begin or the moment when a little bird flies off with a berry in its beak and drops it in a place where it can germinate and grow into a whole new berry-bearing plant.

> Miracles happen when we put the common good before our own gratification.

Many years ago, I spent a morning in the Spanish Pyrenees meandering along the banks of a tiny mountain stream. That night in the apartment where I was staying, I was kept awake by the constant roar of the nearby power plant, which was keeping the entire region supplied with electricity. The trickle of clear mountain water that had delighted me in the morning had become the means of sustaining life for a whole community down in the valley.

I had witnessed the start of a miracle, and when you have seen one miracle beginning, you start to notice some of the many others gestating in the world around you. You may see, for example, how a word of encouragement turns a whole life around from despair to hope or how an apparent misfortune can open our minds to fresh perspectives and change the direction of our lives. The thing about miracles, of course, is that they usually take time. Perhaps that is the hidden gift of time—the opportunity to grow miracles in it.

I was spooning some cauliflower cheese into my baby granddaughter's eager mouth one day, when a sudden realization dawned. "Do you know what?" I asked her, "You and I are performing a miracle here. We are turning a cauliflower into a little girl!" She smiled her approval and went on with her part in the miracle as though it were the most natural thing in the world.

Perhaps it is. Perhaps the kingdom of God is the endpoint of the entire miracle we call life on earth, and each of us carries a seed of its beginnings, to plant and water or not as we choose. We may never see what it becomes, but time will.

The approach of Advent invites us to recognize miracles when they are still very small. The miracle of human transformation starts here, and almost no one recognizes it. Just an obedient Jewish girl and her betrothed, a few shepherds, an old man and an old woman in the Temple and a handful of visitors from the East. And the little child at the heart of it all invites us to come close, to see what a miracle looks like when it is just beginning and to be part of its growth and its fulfillment in our own lives in the precious time that we have been given.

MARGARET SILF *lives in Scotland. Her latest books are* Companions of Christ, The Gift of Prayer *and* Compass Points.

PHOTO: CNS/RAFAEL CRISOSTOMO, CATHOLIC STANDARD

A rally in support of a school voucher program in Washington, D.C., in May 2009.

CHURCH, STATE AND THE SURVIVAL OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Separation Anxiety

BY THOMAS CURRY

The textbook wars in Texas, which erupted over how religion, creationism and the religious origins of the American Republic should be presented in public school social studies classes, positioned a majority on the State Board of Education against critics both on and off the board. The two groups shouted at each other across a cultural ravine. The critics yelled "separation of church and state"; the board majority cheered for a "Christian nation."

Catholics for the most part have little to contribute to that particular debate. Catholic public policy on education is largely pragmatic, focused on obtaining as much governmental assistance for parochial schools as possible. For Catholics, a people who had to form their own schools to protect their beliefs and culture and then were denied all public assistance for their schools, the pragmatic approach is understandable. Yet as a major sponsor of education in the United States, the church needs to speak with a clearer voice not merely about textbooks, but about educational policy.

A Tired Ideology

With regard to ongoing church-state relations, neither the separationists nor the Christian nation advocates have much to offer. The tired ideology of separationism subverts the First Amendment, which deals with one entity, the state ("Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof…"). Yet separationists introduce two entities, the church and the state, and confer on the state the power to separate each into its proper sphere. The power to separate is the power to control. For more than a millennium Europeans struggled to determine the proper boundary between sacred and secular powers.

THE MOST REV. THOMAS CURRY *is auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles and chair of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Catholic Education.*

The framers of the Constitution and the first Congress tried to avoid that problem by creating a limited, secular state with no control over religion.

The First Amendment, therefore, does not apply to the church, and religious bodies cannot violate it. A government with no jurisdiction in religion cannot establish religion or impose beliefs or religious devotion on its citizens. Separationists return America to the historic problem that plagued Europe by defining a boundary between the two powers and granting government authority to maintain that boundary. In its important 1971 decision, Lemon v. Kurtzman, for example, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the "principal or primary effect" of a law "must be one that neither advances nor inhibits religion."

What aids or inhibits religion, however, is a religious question outside the jurisdiction of government, reserved to citizens and believers. Government is supposed to evaluate laws according to their impact on the state, that is, whether they involve the government in matters beyond its jurisdiction, not in terms of their influence on religion and the church. Yet almost every rule the Supreme Court has enunciated over the past 60 years for evaluating church-state issues addresses essentially religious criteria: what aids, hinders or is neutral in religion; what is "purely" or "completely" secular; whether colleges are "pervasively sectarian." In allowing the government to second-guess believers about their own religion and by endowing judges with authority to evaluate religious matters, the court restored to government the very power the First Amendment took away.

The Nonpreferential Option

Separationists now hold that the criterion for evaluating secular laws regarding church and state is whether they aid religion, and Christian-nation supporters accept the separationists' fundamental misassumption. While the separationists would prohibit all government aid to religion, however, Christian-nation supporters would forbid only "preferential aid" and would allow purportedly evenhanded government support to all. This latter position merely recycles the "Protestant nation" approach of the 19th and early 20th centuries, however, which kept Catholic schools from receiving government support because Catholicism was sectarian, while Protestantism represented the supposedly nonsectarian common currency of American society.

The argument for nonpreferential government support of religion goes back to colonial times—especially in New England—when the Puritans' Congregational successors argued that their governmental systems of church support were not establishments of religion because they included many different religious groups. Quakers and Baptists then and Catholics later knew from experience that the nonpref-

erential argument was a ruse for supporting the religion of the majority.

An interpretation of the First Amendment that confines government to its secular, limited sphere is best for government and best for the church. The free exercise of religion means freedom for citizens from government jurisdiction or interference in matters beyond its own specified secular powers. The "Declaration on Religious Liberty" issued by the Second Vatican Council recognizes religious freedom as part of the dignity of the human person and outside the power of government. It does not envisage government as having power to define the realm of the church and to construct a figurative "wall" to confine it within a government-assigned sphere.

In its First Amendment rulings the Supreme Court has not followed its rule of evaluating laws on the basis of whether they aid religion. It could not. The "not aiding religion" standard on education is awash with contradictions. Were the court to apply that test strictly, it would have to declare parochial schools unconstitutional because, by accrediting parochial schools, government aids Catholicism enormously. Churches also benefit from fire and police protection and many other services of civil society. To its credit, the court has upheld many practical aids to religious schools—government-funded textbooks, computers, remedial aid—all matters that can be supervised and evaluated by government agents without involving them in religious decisions.

The 'No Aid to Religion' Myth

Although the Supreme Court rarely adverts to the purported "wall of separation between church and state" language to justify its decisions, that image tends to dominate discussion of the First Amendment in the media and among Americans generally, including Catholics. The "wall" metaphor has proved meaningless, since no one can define or describe it. Its proponents attempt to mitigate that problem by inflating the metaphor into a "principle." Yet it is not a principle.

The "no aid to religion" myth has resulted in the creation of a Dickensian body of legal casuistry. And the disconnect between the rhetoric of the Supreme Court and the practical outcomes of its decisions has generated a thoroughly convoluted body of jurisprudence that has deprived citizens of a reasonable explanation of their most basic right of religious liberty. In the 1947 case that initiated the modern controversies about government assistance to religious schools, Everson v. Board of Education, the court's rhetoric advanced the "no aid" rule, but its decision aided Catholic schools anyway by upholding the reimbursement of parents for the cost of transporting their children to the schools.

The court can bring its legal arguments into harmony with the societal outcomes of its decisions by acknowledg-

ing that the First Amendment confines government to secular matters within its jurisdiction and that the evaluation of secular laws using religious criteria is beyond that jurisdiction. Indeed, in its actions the court has repeatedly had to fix the consequences of its rhetoric. In Good News Club v. Milford (2001), for example, the court required public schools that opened their classrooms for community use to allow religious groups to participate, thereby aiding religion but without involving public authorities in religious decisions.

ON THE WEB
An archive of articles on questions of church and state.
americamagazine.org/pages

While the First Amendment prohibits government-sponsored religious exercise, the separationists go much further and attempt instead to banish all religious practice from public places. Repeatedly the court has upheld the right of citizens and groups to exercise their religion freely in government-controlled areas, a right that certainly aids religion. Religious groups may use public facilities, parks, school classrooms and university centers for religious gatherings, and students can gather on public school property for prayer. None of those involve government sponsorship of or jurisdiction in religious matters, but they all aid religion.

Restoring the First Amendment

If the nation finally embraced the idea that government has no power in religious matters, how would that affect Catholic schools? Catholic or Catholic-sponsored schools might restructure themselves in new ways. For example a Catholic-sponsored charter school might receive complete funding from government with the understanding that the school would also be entirely subject to public policy and control. Schools supported by vouchers or other government grants might operate as Catholic-sponsored schools but with limitations on the practice or teaching of religion. The nature of these limitations is now being worked out by courts at the state and federal level. Traditional Catholic schools could continue to receive public school textbooks and other assistance that does not involve government in making religious decisions.

But government cannot be in the business of deciding whether teachers are living or teaching in accord with the beliefs and standards of a religion. If, as the bishops wrote in *Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium* (U.S.C.C.B., 2005), "faith and culture are intertwined in all areas of a school's life," then the church, not the government, will have to fund such schools substantially and pay their teachers.

Also, if the church is to play a significant role in the general reform of education, it will need to clarify its under-

standing of the relationship between Catholic education and government. Currently the church sponsors different kinds of schools, such as traditional Catholic schools and voucher-assisted schools. The latter schools are not controlled by church authorities in the traditional sense. They may not discriminate on the basis of religion and, in the words of the Supreme Court, "are required to accept students in accordance with rules and procedures established by the state superintendent."

The church rightly supports the call for choice for all parents in the education of their children, but such a system also presents a set of choices for the church to make. Catholic schools can continue to accept public support, although, in principle, the more public funds a school receives the more it must conform to public policy and control. As the latest health care and abortion debates illustrate, government funds cannot be transformed into something else by calling them vouchers.

In the future, therefore, the church should avoid associating itself with two positions: that laws should be evaluated on the basis of whether they aid religion (which I have discussed as the "no aid to religion" myth) and that the government may assist all religions equally. In 19th-century America, many public schools were supposed to be nonsectarian and equal in their treatment of all religions. That, however, was not the experience of many Catholics who attended those schools. Instead, Catholics had to form their own parochial schools—a reminder that supposedly even-handed government aid to religion is preferential and accrues to the benefit of the dominant religion or religions in society.

A secular government is not by definition anti-religious. But a secularist state that attempts to control the church (or any religion) by separating it into a government-determined sphere in relation to the state certainly is anti-religious. By regaining an appreciation of the First Amendment as a restriction on government, not on religion, the church can articulate a more vigorous public policy. By engaging in a realistic evaluation of the impact of public assistance on the religious mission of schools, the church may choose, on the one hand, to accept greater government control for more public aid for some schools or, on the other, to forgo certain government assistance in return for a greater degree of management over the religious nature and mission of other schools. A better understanding of the First Amendment and the limits it places on government will enable the church to move beyond the ad hoc and opportunistic approach that has dominated discussion of public assistance for Catholic schools for more than six decades. It will also enable the church to match in the future the enormous contribution to American education it made in the past. A

All God's Creatures

Deborah M. Jones argues for a theology of animal rights.

BY GEORGE M. ANDERSON

"Animal suffering has been largely ignored by the church for a long time," said Deborah M. Jones, general secretary of Great Britain's Catholic Concern for Animals. "There has been virtually no teaching at all on the subject," she said. "The church still thinks in an entirely anthropocentric way," as if it is afraid that "by giving animals attention, we may be dethroning humans from their position at the 'pinnacle of creation.'" But compassion is a seamless robe, which she insists should "extend to the whole of God's creation," not just to humankind.

Visiting the United States on a lecture tour that included a presentation at the Catholic Theological Society in Cleveland, Ohio, Ms. Jones said that she has been a strong advocate for animal welfare issues since childhood. When she saw a friend's parents (farmers who kept hens in their yard) starting to confine the hens in tiny cages for the whole of their lives, she first became aware of cruelty to animals. Animal cruelty is one of the concerns highlighted in her new book, *The School of Compassion: A Roman Catholic Theology of Animals* (Gracewing Publishing).

Ms. Jones, a former high school teacher of English and classics and also a Catholic convert, studied theology for a year in Rome at the Regina Mundi Institute. After returning to England, she worked as a diocesan director of adult education and then as the editor of The Catholic Herald, a national weekly newspaper. Later she became involved with Catholic Concern for Animals and earned a doctorate in animal theology at the University of Wales.

Like other activists in the area of animal theology, she was encouraged by a statement made by Pope John Paul II during a public audience in 1990. "The pope said on that occasion that animals do have souls and, as fruit of the creative action of the Holy Spirit, merit respect."

Animal Rights in the Catechism

Ms. Jones has found little in the church's other statements to promote what she calls a more "animal-positive" way of thinking. "The church is terrific when it comes to social justice, the rights of the family and poverty in developing countries," she said, but there is "a silence about animals." Animal rights advocates are not saying that animals are equal to people, she explained, "but the catechism itself says that they [animals]

PHOTO: COURTESY OF GRACEWING PUBLISHING/DEBORAH M. JONES

are God's creatures and man thus 'owes them kindness.'" She applauds that particular paragraph (No. 2416) as "superb": God "surrounds them with his providential care. By their mere existence they bless him and give him glory. Thus men owe them kindness. We should recall the gentleness with which saints like St. Francis of Assisi or St. Philip Neri treated animals."

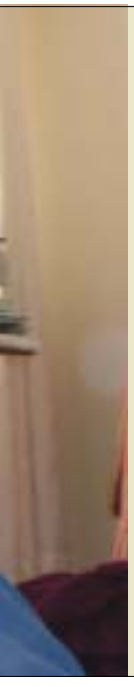
She is not a fan of the catechism's next two paragraphs, however, which, as she puts it, "muddy the waters" with their references to the use of animals for food and clothing and for medical experimentation, an expression of the dominance of humankind over animal life that may have grown out of the understanding of "dominion" over animals suggested in Genesis. She has a different take on that notion. "Dominion is service," she said, "taking Christ's example. Our duty is to protect, nurture and cherish—to enable the flourishing of creation in all its aspects. In the modern context that means in the way we live, including our dietary choices and pastimes."

Notwithstanding the catechism's approval of animal experimentation with what she referred to as "undefined limits," Ms. Jones finds the use of animals in medical experimentation disturbing. "There's a debate in our organization about whether the opposition to it should be based on the cruelty aspect or the damage to humans; but in principle," she said,

GEORGE M. ANDERSON, S.J., *is an associate editor of* ***America****.*

"we're against it. We [humans] have no right to use animals that way, especially when it causes them immense suffering." She also pointed out that some drugs, tested on animals, subsequently caused problems in humans—like thalidomide, which caused many thousands of birth defects in babies around the world.

"How are we imaging God to [the animals], when they look at a person in a white coat who's going to put probes in their brains or chop their skulls in half?" she asked. "This is certainly not the God of the first chapter of Genesis who brought them into being and…'saw that it was good.'



Compassion is a seamless robe that should "extend to the whole of God's creation," not just the creation of humankind.

"I do foresee a time," she said, "when the instrumentalization of God's creatures will be considered as abhorrent as, say, human slavery or child labor." Ms. Jones finds encouragement in recent papal statements that talk "more about creation in an inclusive way," but she concludes, "There is a long way to go yet before teaching on animals catches up with other concerns."

Ms. Jones observed that a recognition of the rights of animals has been ongoing in Britain for much longer than it has in the United States. "We were the first to pass animal cruelty laws and the first to have a national society for the prevention of cruelty to animals, which was given a royal mandate by Queen Victoria," she said. So far, too, England has not resorted to huge factory farms like those in the United States, which, in addition to being cruel to animals, produce foul runoff that has caused serious water contamination. Speaking of her organization, she said: "We prevented one proposed mega-farm in England that would have allowed for 8,000 head of cattle. The planning application was withdrawn because of opposition. Everybody was against it, even the farmers' unions—everyone except, of course, the retailers." The factory farms that exist in England tend to include grazing areas for cattle. "We don't yet have zero grazing, thank goodness," she noted, adding that laws throughout Europe are phasing out the use of tiny cages for chickens.

Ms. Jones describes reliance in the United States on industrial-modeled animal production as "sin on a large scale." "It insults the Creator of all life by treating creation in such an abusive way. Christians need to mobilize to be a 'sign of contradiction' in the face of this gigantic-scale horror." Education at all levels, preaching, writing, campaigning, "all lawful means," she insisted, "should be used to prevent animal industrialization for the sake of the animals and the health of the nation and the planet."

She is familiar with U.S. animal rights groups, like People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, and has been in touch with one of its leaders, Bruce Friedrich. "I've crossed swords with Bruce," she said, referring to what she called PETA's shock-tactic use of religious imagery, "which we find distasteful and counterproductive." She gave an example of a picture of the Madonna cradling a piglet. "I've nothing against piglets, just the inappropriateness of the image, causing scandal rather than changing minds and hearts." Although she acknowledged that PETA's tactics do appeal to young people, "we in Catholic Concern for Animals take a more orthodox approach to efforts aimed at opposing animal cruelty." But, she admitted, "it is good to have both approaches" in order to achieve similar goals.

Gender issues also play a role in how people regard animals. "Maybe because women have evolved to be more nurturing, all animal welfare societies have a gender imbalance," said Ms. Jones. If the church were not so "gender imbalanced" in its governance, she suggested, perhaps concerns more often held by women might be higher up on the hierarchy's list of priorities.

The fur trade is an area in which advocates have made significant progress in both the United States and England, she said. The demand for fur is shrinking, but she warned: "It may come back as fashions change. All it takes is a few designer label names to bring fur back." While some people may not want to know where their fur is from, others think they are wearing faux fur when it is actually real, as in fur trimming, she said. "China knows of our antipathy to fur and so they might be using real fur, like cat fur, while calling it faux."

Extinguishing Creation

Ms. Jones also addressed the issue of the extinction of certain wildlife species. "Because of war, habitat poaching and the whole degradation of the environment, there will be no more big cats in a few decades," she said, meaning that lions and tigers will be wiped out, along with other species, "except for the few kept in wildlife refuges."

"As religious people," she concluded, "we should see this situation as blasphemy: we are betraying God's creation." Regarding ways of countering this betrayal of God's creation, she spoke of liturgy as a means by which the church might present a more positive view of animals and their place in creation. For example, "Liturgies could be developed for people grieving over the loss of a cherished pet," she said. "Blessing services, too, could also serve a useful purpose, praying not just for pets, but for farm animals, too. But at present, I find little in the church that is helpful."

ON THE WEB
A conversation
with Deborah M. Jones.
americamagazine.org/podcast

She had other practical suggestions: "Reverence animals by not eating them," she said, adding that a reduced- or no-meat diet also "will enable all the world's people to eat" by returning grazing land to agriculture. Consumers can also reverence animals "by not treating them as units of production or means of entertainment, by not causing them to suffer or be killed unless for absolute necessity…by rendering obsolete the term *vermin* and by learning to cooperate with nature instead of trying always to conquer and overwhelm it."

Avoiding prescription drugs that have been tested on animals may prove difficult, she noted, but consumers have a role to play in animal welfare. "Where choices can be made in the purchase of any product, consumers can influence manufacturers to produce cruelty-free products," she said. "Individuals can feel helpless in the face of mass markets, but collectively they are more powerful than they realize. If all Catholics chose humanely produced goods, the world would change."

In addition to her work with Catholic Concern for Animals, Ms. Jones also portrays them in her own painting, which is virtually an "obsession" with her, she said. Among artists whose work she admires is the 18th-century American Quaker Edward Hicks. His various representations of what he called the "peaceable kingdom" illustrate the prophet Isaiah's vision of the lion and the lamb co-existing in peaceful harmony—"the realization," Ms. Jones said, "of what we should all be working to bring about in the world."

Ms. Jones's book concludes with a poem by an English Jesuit scholar, Robert Murray, called "The School of Compassion," which suggested her book title. The poem tells of a passerby who has "learned in the school of compassion" to find the holy in the animal kingdom. Coming upon the torn remains of a squirrel beside a country road, the passerby reverently places the lifeless form among "the roots of a wayside oak" and makes the sign of the cross over it, asking it to "remember me in the peaceable kingdom." The gesture reflects a sense of the holy that Ms. Jones perceives throughout the whole of animal creation. It is a sense that informs all her work. A

Losing My Religion

Do digital self-portraits resemble our authentic selves?

BY ANNA NUSSBAUM KEATING

Facebook, the social networking juggernaut created by Mark Zuckerburg at Harvard in 2004, is now a much-documented cultural phenomenon. Currently, it is the second most popular Web site on earth after Google. Facebook has 500 million users—400 million of whom spend more than an hour on the site per day—and the company continues to grow at a rapid pace, having doubled in size since 2009. This particular online forum is increasingly the place where Americans share their views, from the mundane to the exotic.

Facebook began on Ivy League campuses as a way for students to flirt, join clubs and share information. It has since become available to anyone, anywhere, and it is still free. The site allows users to create profile pages where they can post articles, play games, share photos and music and chat with friends and acquaintances using status updates. In return, the company allows targeted ads to appear on the site and has attempted to share user information with corporations. The last move caused an uproar from users, who threatened to leave.

Despite the recent controversy, Facebook remains the worldwide leader in social networking. Part of its success derives from the fact that it is many things to many people, from a way to advertise one's business to a diversion from work to a more interactive form of e-mail.

As people live farther away from one another and are increasingly connected to mobile devices, they seem to take pleasure in creating blogs and profiles that allow loved ones to view a fit-for-public-consumption version of their lives. In that way, Facebook is not unlike family Christmas letters; no loving parent posts pictures of their kids fighting, but most share pictures of birthday parties and backyard barbeques. Only this Christmas letter is available every day of the year and around the clock.

In a recent column for The Wall Street Journal (5/21), Peggy Noonan claimed that in the Facebook age, people will share anything about themselves and as a result most of what is shared is fabricated or only half-true. "An odd thing is that when privacy is done away with," she writes, "people don't become more authentic, they become less so. What replaces what used not to be said is something that must be said and is usually a lie."

Is it possible to live an authentic life in a digital room crowded with people from every part of one's life? Probably not, and most certainly not unless one is willing to confound or even offend by saying things that one's old college roommate may be surprised to hear—for example, that the formerly free-spirited and unattached college version of yourself has since gotten married, had kids and become an Episcopal priest.

Profiling With Courage

In one lifetime a person inhabits a vast number of worlds, of selves even. Our 16-year-old selves will likely have little in common with the 57-year-old versions. Likewise, the way we speak necessarily changes depending on whom we are speaking with, the ability to code-switch being integral to fluency. So, how to act when people from one's childhood, adolescence and adulthood all inhabit the same virtual space? What parts of one's life are fit for pub-

ANNA NUSSBAUM KEATING *writes and teaches in South Bend, Ind.*

ART: SHUTTERSTOCK/TERRY CHAN

lic scrutiny and which should be kept private? And what role should one's spiritual commitments play in the virtual world?

Facebook users are given the option of listing their religious views on the site. Most decline to do so; some choose from a drop-down menu of traditional religious categories such as Roman Catholic or Protestant Christian; and others fill in the box for themselves with a wide range of answers. Here's a sampling of religious views from my friends' profiles: atheist, Jedi, Cubs fan, "Yes, I have religious views," "none of your business," Calvinist, "be still and know," "not all who wander are lost," vegan, Catholic Worker, mixed media, "I swim in the many rivers that lead to the same ocean of Love and Being," homo empathicas, Stormin' Mormon, Buddhist–Mahayana, Seventh Day Adventist, spiritual, "it's all good," Uber-Catholic, agnostic, lapsed Catholic and Roman Catholic Tridentine rite.

In this instance Peggy Noonan's suspicions appear well-founded. A lot of people are not honest about their beliefs online, religious or otherwise, but some are—usually those on the fringes. When it comes to religion, I have noticed that many of my conservative religious friends and my nonreligious friends, people who feel less ambivalence about their religious or antireligious status, are comfortable sharing their real spiritual perspectives online. When one says that the closest he comes to having religious views is being a "Cubs fan," I think he means it. Likewise the woman who writes "Roman Catholic Tridentine rite" is clearly putting her cards on the table.

Catholics Anonymous

More surprising are the friends who fall somewhere in the middle, who actively practice their faith—which means, in the case of my Catholic friends, going to Mass—but who choose not to identify themselves online as Catholic or otherwise for fear of what others may think. Some with developing religious views often cannot relate them in a few words and so essentially put something unintelligible up for display.

Still others are concerned about what co-workers might think. One liberal Catholic woman told me, "I don't list my religious views because I don't normally tell anybody my religious views. I guess I just don't want it to change anybody's perception of me. They would think I was weird, archconservative, hated gay people, or wasn't open-minded. Once they know me, it's harder to write me off."

Another young person, this one a libertarian, expressed similar reservations about being "out" as Catholic online. He told me, "My actual friends know I'm Catholic and are willing to have that conversation with me, but I think it's better to have an in-person conversation about that kind of thing."

Perhaps their reticence is understandable, since many of the loudest religious voices on the Internet often come across as belonging to people who are not always the most careful of thinkers. It also seems this reticence reflects, at least in part, the politicization of religion. According to a 2009 survey by LifeWay Christian Resources in 2009, 72 percent of millennials (ages 18 to 29) consider themselves spiritual but not religious and feel that none of the traditional religious categories are a good fit for them. Indeed, "spiritual but not religious" has its own Facebook page.

Andrew Sullivan writes on his Atlantic magazine blog, "The Daily Dish," about the fast-growing, spiritual-but-not-religious crowd: "The politicization of organized religion... has caused so many who are interested in the spiritual to abandon it. Because that politicization is mainly on the right, many of the SBNRs come off as liberal or libertarian in their views."

Many of my friends perhaps feel that declaring themselves Roman Catholic online means being erroneously associated with the Republican Party or the religious right. Ironically, when they do not acknowledge their faith they may be contributing to the very misperception that they are concerned about. Likewise, by not claiming any tradition at all they may play into a perception that religious belief is foolish, that smart people don't believe in God.

Others fear their religious views will be misinterpreted on the Internet or are cowed into believing that religion should be a private matter, thus entirely removing their religious identity from their public life. As a result, fundamentalist voices fill the void and those on the fringes take over the conversation.

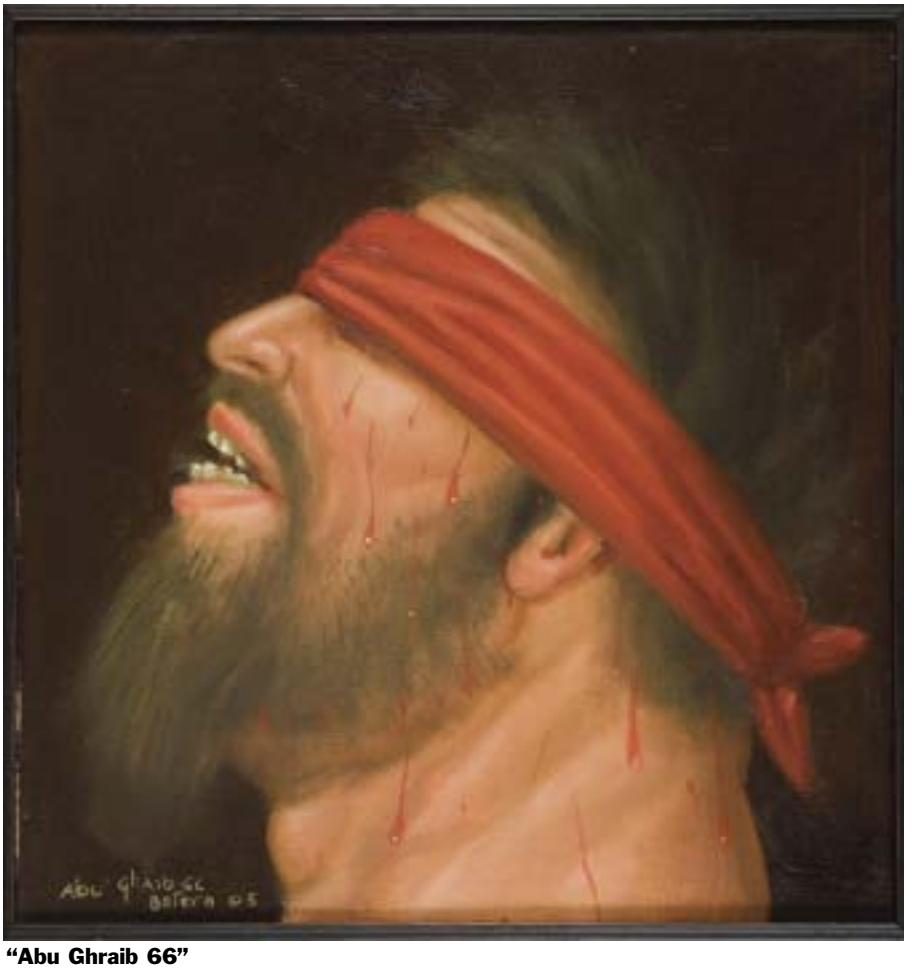
Perhaps if ordinary people were publicly Catholic or Christian in their daily lives and online, that would dispel some of the stereotypes and make the civic discourse on faith more fruitful, more authentic, more varied or nuanced. I spoke to one Catholic woman who told me she viewed her Facebook profile as an "apostolate." She shares musings about her love of the church right alongside her love of kickboxing. The transition, for her, was seamless. She is not aggressive in her posts, but it's clear that she is deeply committed to her local parish.

If you find my page on Facebook, it will not take you long to discover that I am Catholic, but I do sympathize with friends who are reluctant to make such electronic declarations of faith. Surely it is not ideal to "discuss" religion or politics in the decidedly anti-Socratic setting that is Facebook. Still, when religion is one of the few things that remain private in our carefully constructed, very public, online universe, then religious voices at the extremes will profile us all. A

ART | KAREN SUE SMITH

AN ARTIST OUTRAGED

Fernando Botero's 'Abu Ghraib' Paintings



"Abu Ghraib 66"

PHOTO: SIBILA SAVAGE

The popular work of Latin America's most celebrated living artist, Fernando Botero, is instantly recognizable. His smooth, corpulent forms in paintings, sculptures, drawings and prints have been exhibited around the world. Two of Botero's monumental bronze nudes decorate the entrance hall of the Time-Warner Center in New York City, and a multi-ton cat of his prowls outside an apartment building further uptown. Several major museums have purchased his works for their permanent collections, and his paintings of circus life were displayed in Venice and in Zurich during summer. Critics have praised Botero's art, which warmly and whimsically depicts the life of peasants and aristocrats, clowns, dancers in motion, families and children at play.

Botero, 78, was not widely known as a political artist. So the art world was stunned in 2005, when he produced a series of 80 paintings, sketches and finished drawings based on the abuse of prisoners at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. Photographs of the mistreatment by some U.S. soldiers stationed at the prison had flooded the media just months before with images so shocking and sexually degrading that they have since become modern icons of abuse.

The artist found himself obsessed by the episode after reading an article by Seymour Hersh in The New Yorker in May 2004. He continued to follow the news and became incensed, he said, because he had expected better of the United States. "These works are a result of the indignation that the violations in Iraq produced in me and the rest of the world," Botero told Juan Forero of The New York Times in 2005.

It took Botero 14 months to complete his series of works on paper in graphite and charcoal and on canvas in oil. Some of the images directly refer to the photographs from Abu Ghraib. They show naked, blindfolded, hooded and handcuffed prisoners, bruised and bleeding, being kicked or piled up, some wearing women's underwear. In many of Botero's paintings, however, the figures are life-size, a scale that magnifies both their suffering and their humanity. The artist also focuses attention on the prisoners themselves, rather than on those who inflict the harm, and so presents them as artistic subjects, an honor once reserved for deities, royals and historical or literary personages.

Botero based other images on a passage in Hersh's article that listed abuses found by the U.S. military after an investigation of the prison. That list included sodomy and the use of military dogs to threat-

ON THE WEB
Karen Sue Smith reviews the play "The Pitmen Painters."
americamagazine.org/culture

en the prisoners. Botero depicts both. He also illustrates waterboarding, or simulated drowning, a practice not shown in photos or listed in the investigation findings but that lies at the heart of the controversy over the use of torture in Iraq.

A traveling exhibition of Botero's "Abu Ghraib" series was shown widely in Europe between 2005 and 2006. In the United States, by contrast, the works appeared only briefly, at the Marlborough Gallery in New York in November 2006. The works have still not been shown at any major American museums, though some universities, including the University of California, Berkeley, and American University, in Washington, D.C., have exhibited them.

In her review of the Marlborough exhibition, Roberta Smith, an art critic for The New York Times, judged the images to be "among Mr. Botero's best work" and added, "In an art world where responses to the Iraq war have been scarce—literal or obscure—they stand out."

Indeed, individual artists, not just museums, have steered clear of the explosive subject. But Botero, born in Medellín, Colombia, and educated by the Jesuits, is steeped in Christian iconography, which often depicts the violent sufferings of the saints by arrows, flaying, crucifixion, beheading, burning at the stake and the like. As a contemporary artist, he follows Francisco Goya, who drew torture scenes and painted an execution by firing squad ("The Third of May"), and Max Beckman, George Grosz and Otto Dix, whose images of the pervasive brutality and tortures of the Nazi period still rivet our attention.

Botero hopes that his images might affect the public as Pablo Picasso's "Guernica" has. Picasso's mural, based on the German bombing of a Basque town in 1937, not only publicized the horrors of the Spanish Civil War, but also made a visual antiwar statement. In Botero's own memorable phrase, "Art is a permanent accusation."

The "Abu Ghraib" series was preceded by Botero's only other venture into highly charged, political subject matter. Heartsick about the violent drug wars in his native country, the artist produced "Violence in Colombia," 67 paintings of kidnappings, massacres, priest-led funeral processions and death-squad fighters. He even painted "The Death of Pablo Escobar," an image of a notorious drug lord. The war had stricken Botero's own family. One son, who served as Colombia's defense minister, was jailed for accepting drug money on behalf of President Ernesto Samper. Botero's family became a target of kidnappers; the artist still travels with bodyguards when in Colombia. He later donated the series on violence to the National Museum of Colombia, saying it was improper to earn money for the work.

Why had Botero painted such subjects? He said he wanted people to "remember this horrible moment in our history." The painter called his work a "testimonial to a…time of insanity." That sentiment may also explain Botero's "Abu Ghraib" series, much of which he has donated to the University of California, Berkeley.

Above left: "Abu Ghraib 68"; above: "Abu Ghraib 64"

Botero's pictures have been published in a book, *Abu Ghraib*, by Botero (available online). On YouTube one can watch the video made at Berkeley in January 2007, when Richard Hass, a former U.S. poet laureate (1995-97) interviewed Botero for the opening of the exhibition. The artist describes what it was like to paint the suffering subjects. He said the figures in the paintings "immediately became mythic and generalized, not particular," and that the series shows "what man is capable of."

Serious works always have critics. Why didn't Botero paint the acts of terrorism committed against innocent Americans on Sept. 11, 2001? Critics have asked that question, dubbing Botero's outrage "empty." Botero answered: "You expect it in Africa, Latin America, Asia. But the country that represents democracy and human rights…the idea of compassion that conveys America—it [the abuse] was a shock because it was unexpected."

Fernando Botero's "Abu Ghraib" series raises important issues about the role of art not merely to inform or inspire, but also to enrage. It asks viewers to distinguish between art (including photography) and documentary snapshots and to reflect on the differences between the two. How is it that Botero, who does not live in the United States, produced a major commentary on Abu Ghraib, while U.S. artists have remained largely silent? Perhaps distance, especially concerning a national scandal in wartime, helps an artist to see more clearly. It also lessens the political risks, though that did not stop Botero in Colombia.

"I know I'm not going to change anything; art does not have that power," Botero told the audience at Berkeley. "The power of art is to help people remember something; I hope that will happen with my work."

KAREN SMITH *is editorial director of* ***America****.*

Seeds

A young woman in her flimsy medical gown
squirms frightened on the table
like a kitten laid on its back. See her stomach's

stretch, small but taut as a cantaloupe. For months
her body has slept curled up—a peach
wrapped soft around its pit.

Bulbous and feeding, her boyfriend described it. Just a dangling
ripeness, shaken by the wind at the edge of its branch.
But on nights there was no wind,

still it stirred: rose up within her like an extra breath,
her body twice alive. Now the needle numbs, but not enough.
Still she hurts, gasping small caskets

of tears. Favorite names fall from her mouth
in high, loose notes like handfuls of rolling coins.
A nurse brings a prescription notepad

so she can bite down—the taste of paper forever recalling
this trade of what is, for what once
was not. This sound of suction and the redness

of spilled pomegranate pulled through a tube
to slowly fill the basin. The doctor counting to be sure all the pieces
are there—one open, tiny hand

clamping his throat shut as tight as a fist. A sudden quiet
focuses its lens. The woman falls back, withered
with relief, the white walls sheening

like the sweat across her brow. Soon the fragments will be tossed
into the plastic shroud of a trash bin.
Soon the nurse, too, will cry,

scrubbing out fingerprints the size of strawberry seeds
from the inside of the basin. She knows
only one set remains, ferried inside

the woman being led to her car:
small swirls of toe prints pressed into her womb
one windless hour of the night.

COURTNEY KAMPA

COURTNEY KAMPA, *a published poet, is pursuing a master of fine arts degree at Columbia University.*

FAITH MATTERS

AMERICAN GRACE
How Religion Divides And Unites Us

By Robert D. Putnam and David E. Campbell
Simon & Schuster. 688p $30

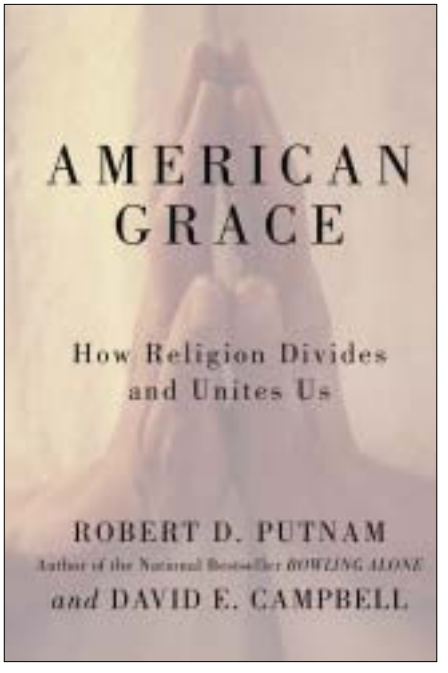
From the 1930s through the 1990s, many leading social science theorists claimed that religion was a spent historical force. The faith-enervating factors included modern science, which had begotten new physical, chemical and biological laws; ever cheaper and faster mass communications technologies; and the political and social democratization of most nations. And the secularization thesis had a subtext: "good riddance." For throughout human history, religion had been more a social toxin than a social tonic, more a cause for war than a prod to peace, had it not?

But a funny thing happened on the way to religion's prophesied demise. Nearly everywhere except Europe, old religions including Catholicism and Islam expanded, and newer religions like various Pentecostal faiths burgeoned. Today nobody claims that religion, either in America or elsewhere, is headed for history's junk heap. Instead, many top social science scholars are studying religion in all its complexity and concluding that, on balance, religion benefits people and nations.

Exhibit A is the amazing new book *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us*, by Robert D. Putnam and David E. Campbell.

Putnam, the eminent Harvard University social scientist who became famous for his 2001 book *Bowling Alone*, is someone I have revered since I was among his adoring graduate students 30 years ago. Campbell, a brilliant statistics whiz, teaches political science at the University of Notre Dame.

"Any discussion of religion in America," Putnam and Campbell preach, "must begin with the incontrovertible fact that Americans are a highly religious people." Amen; but "highly religious" how, and with what social and civic consequences?



Based on two of the largest and most comprehensive surveys ever conducted on religion in America, and drawing expertly on just about every credible empirical study relevant to the subject published in the last 50 years, the authors' answer centers on two sets of major findings.

The first findings concern how religious Americans relate to people of other faiths or of no faith.

Over the last half-century, most Americans, including millions on each side of today's left-right religious divide, became ever more prone to prize relationships with people of other faiths or of no faith. For example, today about 70 percent of Americans have at least one extended family member who is of a different religion than themselves; 75 percent have closest friends of other faiths or of no faith; 85 percent have neighbors of a different religion; and nearly 90 percent profess that all good people go to heaven.

Putnam's own story is hardly atypical. Raised with a sister as an observant Methodist in the 1950s, he converted to Judaism at marriage. One of his two children married a practicing Catholic who (together with 17 percent of all other Americans) is now secular. His other child married a secular soul who later converted to Judaism. His sister married a devout Catholic and she converted to Catholicism. His sister's three children, however, are Protestants of different types.

The second major findings concern the fact that religious Americans, though by no means free from intolerance of dissent, are by any historical or cross-national standards highly tolerant and given to behaving in ways that foster social and civic good.

As Putnam and Campbell report, "religiously observant Americans are more civic and in some respects simply 'nicer.' " Religious Americans volunteer more, give more time and money to secular causes and join more community-serving groups than do their secular counterparts.

But here is the book's novel twist: the civic power of religion is determined less by an individual's faith orientation than it is by his or her friendships and participation in communities of faith. Thus, for instance, a committed atheist who shares a pot luck supper on occasion with lukewarm believers at the local church is more likely to give generously to charities or offer a bus seat to a stranger than is an otherwise comparable devout believer who attends Sunday services alone and participates not at all in the church's communal life.

Putnam and Campbell are especially astute when it comes to parsing intergenerational differences and dynamics, like the finding that even the most religious 20-something adults are as likely to support gay marriage as the least religious senior citizens.

Putnam and Campbell can be tough on other researchers. For instance, they admonish the American Enterprise Institute's president, Albert C. Brooks, for asserting that political conservatives "really are more compassionate and more generous than liberals." Brooks's argument is "fundamentally misleading," they aver, because once you "hold religiosity constant," there are no data that show "a positive effect of political conservatism on compassion." It is, they insist, the religiosity, not the conservatism, of religious conservatives that explains their civic good works. They are probably right on the merits, but the criticism of Brooks, buried though it is in an endnote, seems just a bit harshly worded.

Then again, Putnam and Campbell are hardest on themselves. For all their efforts at testing interpretations against all available data sources ("convergent validation" they call it), they admit that "the pervasive robust correlation between religion and good neighborliness" (and, by extension, between religion and every other variable they relate to it) is just that, a correlation—which does not prove causation.

Memo to the John Templeton Foundation, which wisely backed the first two "Faith Matters" surveys: A third Putnam-Campbell national survey is needed to resolve the methodological questions that are left lurking in the shadows of this monumental work.

Still, as it is, *American Grace* is an instant classic, as academically authoritative as it is brilliantly entertaining.

And for those who pray that religion can do more to unite than divide over 300 million Americans, *American Grace* is both a blueprint and a blessing.

JOHN J. DiIULIO JR., *professor of political science at the University of Pennsylvania, is the author of* Godly Republic: A Centrist Blueprint for America's Faith-Based Future.

FRANCO MORMANDO

ECCENTRIC SHOWMAN

SALVADOR DALÍ
The Late Work

By Elliott H. King. With contributions by William Jeffett, Montse Aguer Teixidor, and Hank Hine
Yale Univ. Press. 176p $39.95

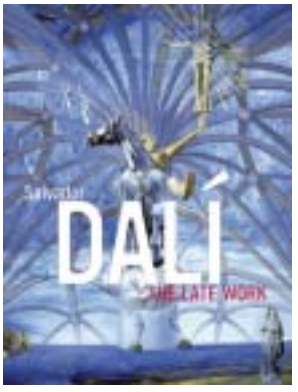
It is impossible to be a Catholic in the Western world without knowing the art of Spanish artist Salvador Dalí (1904-1989). Walk into any Catholic institution—school, rectory, convent or chancery—and you are likely to find a reproduction of one of his religious paintings, like the "Christ of St. John of the Cross," the "Corpus Hypercubicus" (Mary kneeling before the crucified Jesus) or "The Sacrament of the Last Supper." Indeed, the original first version (1949) of the equally beloved "The Madonna of Port Lligat" is in the collection of a Catholic university, Marquette's Haggerty Museum of Art in Milwaukee. All of these brilliantly executed and stirringly pious canvases long ago reached their secure status as virtually universal icons within the Catholic world.

Dalí's patently "Catholic" paintings were all done in the second half of the artist's career, which began in 1939, a decisive turning point in Dalí's artistic development and persona. In that year the artist publicly rejected the Surrealist movement that had made him world famous. (Nonetheless, Dalí's perhaps most famous and critically acclaimed painting remains the quintessentially surrealist "Persistence of Memory" [1931]—melting clocks on a desolate landscape—in New York's Museum of Modern Art.) Publicly supporting Generalissimo Franco's fascist regime and converting to Roman Catholicism (opportunistically, some suspected), Dalí declared himself now a "classicist" in art—that is, one who was, ostensibly, devoted to the principles of and sought to emulate the achievements of the Old Master painters, especially of the Renaissance. All of this seemingly reactionary ideology, together with Dalí's shameless and ever more eccentric showmanship, did not sit well with the artistic establishment, which was thoroughly modernist and avant-garde and disdainful of artists who made vulgar commercial display of themselves and their art work.

The result, as far as Dalí's critical fortune is concerned, has been a general discounting of the works of these many decades of production, with a tendency simply to ignore them in official surveys—textbooks or exhibitions—of modern art. Instead, at this point, enough time has passed since Dalí's death, the political passions of the World War II generation have cooled, and artistic attitudes have changed sufficiently for there to be a re-assessment of the late but supposedly not great Dalí.

This brings us to the volume under review, a handsome, generously illustrated catalog of a well-conceived, comprehensive, multimedia exhibition at Atlanta's High Museum of Art (until Jan. 9, 2011) that focuses specifically on the Dalí of the long second half of his career. The volume and the exhibition include, but of course are not restricted to, Dalí's "Catholic"

works, enlightening them and all the works in question by placing them in the well-researched, specific personal and historical context in which they were produced. The exhibition and companion volume explicitly seek to undertake a re-evaluation of the late Dalí and thus, by implication, draw a new appreciation for what he was then striving to express in his art. But they do so with complete intellectual honesty, making no attempt to hide or explain away that which might be deemed unseemly, bizarre, contradictory, inauthentic or mediocre of this second Dalí. All of this is accomplished in the long, well-documented introductory essay by Elliott King ("Dalí After 1940: From Surreal Classicism to Sublime Surrealism") and a shorter but equally valuable one by William Jeffett ("Publicity, Propaganda, Provocation: Dalí's Mustache in the Press").



Whether or not the late Dalí will also be rehabilitated, and not just re-evaluated, in the eyes of the larger and more critical public as a result of this exhibition and catalog remains to be seen. What they do show is that the discontinuity between the first and second periods of Dalí's career is in reality not as great as the artist's own statements would lead one to expect. (For example, just shortly after painting all the aforementioned "Catholic" canvases, he produced his shockingly erotic and still surreal "Young Virgin Auto-Sodomized by Her Own Chastity" [1954]).

They show, furthermore, that, whether or not one likes his new post-1939 ideology or subject matter, Dalí's marvelously fertile imagination, studied pursuit of visual experimentation and extraordinary technical skills remained unabated. This is why even the late Dalí influenced the subsequent development of contemporary art. It is also difficult not to admire the pains—both physical and mathematical—that Dalí continued to take to achieve the sometimes stunning effects of his compositions. The extreme foreshortening of his "Christ of St. John of the Cross" (1951), for instance, was achieved by drawing a live model seen through a glass floor upon which the artist stood at his canvas.

The volume and exhibition also show that, again, politics and subject matter aside, credit must be given to Dalí for attempting to do what every serious artist must do: make a sincere effort at truly understanding and then accurately reflecting in the medium of art the most authentic reality of his or her age, especially its latest and most attitude-changing, spirit-shaking developments and discoveries—scientific, philosophical, political, etc. In taking seriously the revolutionary new insights of modern psychology and physics and allowing his artistic style to be transformed in the process, Dalí—both before and after 1939—was true to his calling as an artist in the highest sense of that term.

An acute observer of his times, Dalí, for all his self-proclaimed "classicism" and (often bizarre) "Catholicism," well understood there was no going back to understanding and hence depicting the world as before, not once Freud had definitively disabused us of simplistic notions of the human psyche, not once the atom bomb had been dropped, and not once modern physics had exposed the utter relativism of what we once considered the hard, fixed material universe. Moreover, and finally, Dalí, for all his deplorably commercial showmanship, understood that art must viscerally provoke and gratify the senses, and there is no denying that even the latest Dalí succeeds in accomplishing this.

FRANCO MORMANDO *is associate professor of Romance Languages and Literatures at Boston College.*

J. ROBERT BAKER

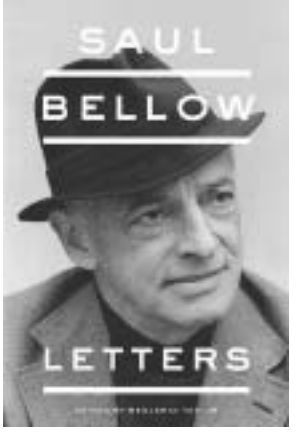
THE CORRESPONDING LIFE

SAUL BELLOW
Letters

Edited by Benjamin Taylor
Viking. 608p $35

In these letters of the literary giant Saul Bellow—winner of the Pulitzer and Nobel prizes, among others—which span most of his life, the author emerges as an intellectually ambitious writer, whose essential optimism carried him through repeated woes in his marriages. That optimism was intimately connected with his craft as a writer. He was a man of passion, both positive and negative—concern for his sons, affection for his friends and animus for critics. As he grew older, he suffered a flagging of energy and a growing recognition that the pattern of his life was increasingly beyond him. He knew life's ineluctable griefs, and yet he persevered in his work, writing 11 novels, a couple of plays, short stories and innumerable forewords, speeches, lectures and essays. In these letters, he does not mention his prizes and awards, and he rarely refers to his teaching; but he was always soldiering on making the kind of life he wrote so often about—one that was moral even in the face of struggle and setback.

Just starting out, Bellow was full of enormous energy. In the 1940s, he laid aside a manuscript he called "The Crab and the Butterfly" and began *The Life of Augie March*; it was as if his creative vigor was so incandescent that he could scarcely express it quickly enough. He was also aware of his weaknesses, particularly a propensity toward didacticism. He wrote to John Berryman as he was finishing *Henderson the Rain King*: "I suspect that in the middle I was maybe too business-like and earnest. But I'm trying to give earnestness the sack. I think I'm going to be able to do it. Laying down the law too much. A bad trait ever since Moses started it." Still, he was driven by a desire to "do the thing purely a few times before I stop," but he worried that he would not come up to the mark. In 1978 he confessed, "What does distress me is the thought that I may have made a mess where others (never myself) see praiseworthy achievements." Though he often wrote to meet expenses, he asserted, "I did not become a writer in order to make money, nor shall I stop being one because everything is confiscated." Instead, writing was his vocation, and he remained faithful to it throughout his life.



This fidelity was a part of Bellow's optimism. In the mid-1950s he wrote to his friend Samuel Freifield, "I have great confidence in our power to recover from everything." His optimism was sobered by an awareness of the unavoidability of pain and the ubiquity of misery. "If Mr. Einstein, Albert, declined to believe that God was playing dice with the universe, I—we—can't believe, ugly as things have become, and complicated, that human life is nothing but the misery we are continually shown."

Even near the end of his life, Bellow preferred to be cheerful rather than to give up hope: "To fall into despair is just a high-class way of turning into a dope. I choose to laugh, and laugh at myself no less than others." In his late 70s he admitted that he could not keep up with the tide of books, magazines, letters, requests and unsolicited manuscripts, and yet he went on reading manuscripts and writing letters almost up to the end, in what was certainly an act of hope.

He wrote in 1960: "The only cure is to write a book. I have a new one on the table and all the other misery is gone. This is the form any refusal to be unhappy takes now, and I suppose it saves me from a merely obstinate negative. But it isn't merely for oneself that one should refuse a certain alternative. It's also because we owe life something." He could make the sordidness and stink of life beautiful and funny, as when he wrote about Puerto Rico:

> The dog population is Asiatic—wandering tribes of mongrels. They turn up in all the fashionable places, and in the modern university buildings, the cafeterias—there are always a few hounds sleeping in a cool classroom, and at night they howl and fight. But with one another, not with the rats, another huge population, reddish brown and fearless. You see them in vacant lots downtown, and at the exclusive tennis club at the seashore. I won't be surprised to see them at the crap table, watching the game.

Bellow's optimism and devotion to his craft were matched by his affection for his sons and his friends. He worried about his sons and their growing up without a father. As the deaths of his friends mounted, his letters expressed his grief over those he had lost and his concern for those who remained. He noted at one point that his friends who had died constituted "a road map" of who he was.

Bellow's animus against critics comes through again and again. Describing his first flight over Europe, he writes to his agent, "I saw a little dot shoveling manure in a field and recognized a critic...." Bellow's loathing of critics was both general and specific. He wrote John Cheever that he could nominate critics only for crucifixion and proposed to the poet Karl Shapiro a club of Hugh Kenner (Canadian critic) haters. He had little use for the literary theorist Paul de Man and, inexplicably, for John Updike.

Most of all, though, what comes through in these letters is Bellow's humanity. He found himself surprised at middle age, realizing that he had "not as yet adjusted myself to certain changes, or even grasped them, and that my self-image is about twenty years behind the real object." He recognized his "own unsatisfactory character" as the source of his troubles. He admitted as he approached 70 that he had been absorbed in his own work and troubles and not been as attentive to his friends like John Berryman, Delmore Schwartz and Robert Lowell as he might have been.

Letters reveals Bellow as remarkably human, tragically undone by his uxoriousness and foibles. Yet because he went steadily on, undaunted in his affection for those he loved and faithful to the writing he chose, these correspondences are gripping; they remind us of what is best about ourselves.

J. ROBERT BAKER *teaches in the department of language and literature at Fairmont State University, Fairmont, W.Va.*

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SEARCH FOR PRESIDENT. The Vatican Observatory Foundation, which is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing material and financial support to the Vatican Observatory, is accepting applications for President. The role of the President is to actively lead and manage the Foundation and its board of directors, particularly its fund-raising initiatives and activities. As President of the V.O.F. he would also be on the staff of the Vatican Observatory and would work out of V.O.F. offices in Tucson, Ariz. Applicants should have proven leadership skills and administrative/development experience as well as an appreciation of the importance of and active interest in promoting the church's scientific and educational apostolates. Those interested in applying can check the V.O.F. Web site at http://vaticanobservatory.org/VOF for further information about the V.O.F. and its fund-raising efforts. Applicants should submit their C.V.'s, along with a brief letter outlining their reasons for interest in this position, and a list of four names of people (along with their positions, affiliations, and contact information) whom the V.O.F. search committee can contact for letters of recommendation. These should be sent to: Search Committee, Vatican Observatory Foundation, c/o Brother John Hollywood, S.J., at jbhgu@aol.com, or to 2017 E. Lee Street, Tucson, AZ 85719. The deadline for applications is Dec. 15, 2010.

Retreats

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

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LETTERS

Women Suffer

Your editorial, "A Saint for Our Time," and John Anderson's film review, "The Seer" (both in 10/18) concern two women in the church who lived centuries apart: Mother Mary MacKillop and Hildegard of Bingen. They had in common that they had to work hard and suffer to do what they considered right. They were both under the jurisdiction of a male hierarchy who were sure that they could judge and dominate women. Mother MacKillop was even excommunicated.

So what is different today? The male hierarchy still thinks it has the right and duty to control and at times condemn what women do. It isn't hard to find many examples of this. I have often wondered whether the reason the church is so quick to condemn abortion (even, for example, in the case of the very young Brazilian girl who was raped by a family member) is because only women can have abortions. I agree that abortion is an evil, but it is certainly not the only evil. Need I give examples of evils committed mostly by men?

The only hope women today can have is that some day in the future, some other men will want to canonize or at least rehabilitate some women who are suffering today in the church. I fear, however, that those men will find some other women to condemn.

LUCY FUCHS
Brandon, Fla.

Wow!

I just want to tell you that John Anderson's review of the film "Vision," about Hildegard von Bingen, in Books and Culture is excellent! This is one of the best-written reviews I've had the pleasure of reading.

NORMAN COSTA
Poughkeepsie, N.Y.

Under the Rug Again

Bernard P. Dauenhaur's letter (10/25) commenting on "A Conspiracy of Bishops and Faithful," by Drew Christiansen, S.J., (9/27) is right on target when he suggests that the church resembles a "global monopolistic corporation." Pope John Paul II promoted an agenda of preferential conservatism through his appointment of similar-thinking bishops, whose chief qualification was a pledge to adhere to the closed policies of the corporate board. One of the greatest manifestations of the failed policies of the church was the willingness to sweep the sexual abuse charges against the clergy under the rug and, sadly, in many cases unwillingness to give an audience to victims. The accusations continue today as recent reports from Chile indicate how Cardinal Francisco Errazusiz has refused to acknowledge the problem.

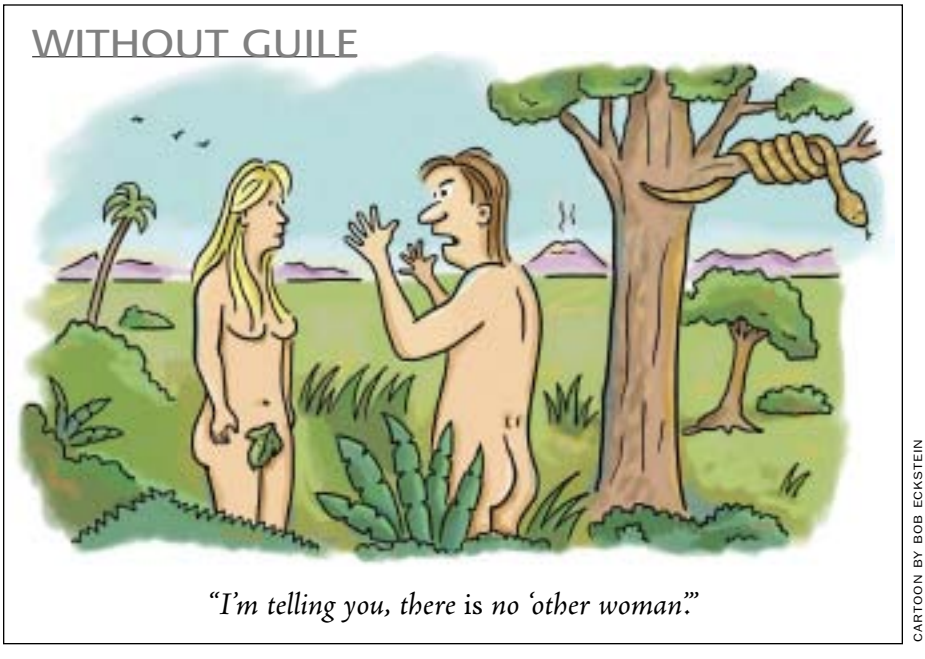
As long as we have a clerical club that considers that the church is exclusive rather than inclusive, then the work of the Holy Spirit will be deterred. Benedict XVI's policies seem to echo the past.

JACK ARTALE
Lititz, Pa.

Face Reality

Thanks to M. Cathleen Kaveny's "Catholics as Citizens" (11/1) for her moral guidance for the conscientious voter. In light of her article I suggest: 1) Some pro-life groups seem to think that if pro-life Supreme Court justices were appointed, Roe v. Wade would be overturned and abortion would go away. But see where this foolishness has gotten us: the Citizens United decision, decisions against a just economic system and justifying the execution of mentally retarded people. 2) Kaveny rightly points out that were Roe overturned, the states would simply decide. As Justice O'Connor noted, people have become accustomed to having this option available. Here is the reality: You can pass laws until you are blue in the face. People are still going to sin. Period.

So how do you deal with that reality? I offer some suggestions: 1) Do not



"I'm telling you, there is no 'other woman'."

CARTOON BY BOB ECKSTEIN

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condemn; stress forgiveness, comfort and help from the church for those who have made misguided decisions. 2) Continue to stress that the fetus in the womb is a human being. Once the humanity of the fetus is established, many minds are changed. Human beings, at least in the United States, are entitled to 14th Amendment protection. 3) Offer hope to the women and make it possible for them to keep their children. I wonder how many women would change their minds if they knew that they had health care for themselves and their children. 4) Now that we have DNA testing, I wonder how many fathers would behave more responsibly if they knew their wages would be docked for every child conceived until the children turned 18 years.

CHRIS BRUNE
Glenwood, N.J.

Slave Labor Is Common

"Catholics as Citizens" (11/1) is the kind of article that makes **America** worth subscribing to. I am interested in the pro-life cause and in papal statements, but the use of slave labor in the global supply chain is more common than you think. There is no need to pick on big-box stores alone. Probably most Americans have bought products made by slave labor. Brazil manufactures car parts that are made from steel that is made using charcoal mined by slave labor. In the manufacture of cellphones, rare minerals are often used, like tantulum, mined by slave labor in the Congo. The manufacture of rugs from South Asia is notorious for the use of child slave labor. Cotton in Central Asia is picked by slave labor and ends up in the clothes worn by Americans. The U.S. Department of Labor has a global report that names products from each country.

STEPHEN M. BAUR
Hazlet, N.J.

Confront the Bullies

As a gay man, I heartily concur with your editorial "Bullying, a Deadly Sin" (11/8), as far as it goes, and will pass over in silence the complicity of the churches in the bullying problem. I would like to see more emphasis on attending to the character development of the bullies, however. They are the problem here. The persecuted gay kids are victims. Focusing on the victim's ability to cope does not address the root causes. Homophobia is alive, well and thriving among our young people. If the church wants to address the problem of bullying, it needs to address the bullies and the false values and insecurities that lead them to treat their fellow teens with such disrespect.

CHRIS BUTLER
San Francisco, Calif.

Gay Identity

Re "The Bronx Eleven" (Current Comment 11/1): To suggest that Catholic teaching on homosexuality has a role in violence against gays, as some discussions of the case have done, is simply a way to try to silence that teaching.

The reason that no person should be subject to violence is his or her status as a person made in the image and likeness of God. That dignity is not predicated on the fact that a person claims to be gay. That is part of the gay ideology. The gay tag is a conscious decision by someone to predicate that person's entire worth and existence on those attractions and demand that others do so.

The church is pretty clear that no person should be subject to violence, whether he claims to be gay or not.

FRANK TANTILLO
Howell, N.J.

The Two-Step Cure

Your editorial "A Saint for Our Time" (10/18) is certainly appropriate for today. Although St. Mary MacKillop lived in Australia over 100 years ago, she ran into issues we face today: sexual abuse by clerics, the role of women in the church, excommunication as punishment and others. What is most telling is to find a documented case of priestly sexual abuse in Australia in the 1870s. Just think: What if the scourge of sexual abuse had been stopped in its tracks back then?

As a postscript, many Americans may be more familiar with another new saint, St. André Bessette, who was canonized the same day. I was told that back in the 1920s and 1930s my grandparents used to travel by car from Connecticut to Montreal to see Brother André. I had an uncle who was born with a disability. In those days people in the Northeast used to travel to Boston hospitals for medical healing and to Montreal to Brother André for spiritual healing.

JOSEPH P. NOLAN
Waterbury, Conn.

Some Hope

The commentary by Raymond A. Schroth, S.J., on Israel-Palestine, "Two Peoples, One State" (11/15), offers the best solution I have seen. Thanks for offering some hope.

RON PATNODE
Yakima, Wash.

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Preparing to Wage Peace

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT (A), NOV. 28, 2010

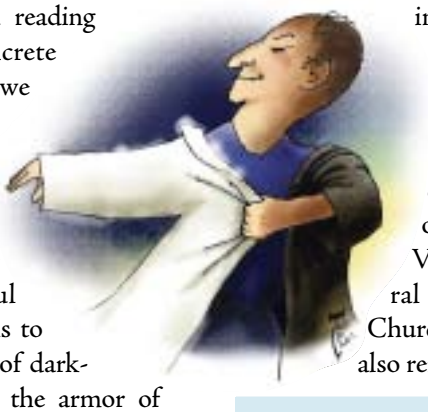
Readings: Is 2:1-5; Ps 122:1-9; Rom 13:11-14; Mt 24:37-44

"They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks" (Is 2:4)

Ever since the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York on Sept. 11, 2001, there have been nonstop warnings to be alert to possible terrorist attacks. In U.S. airports repeated public announcements from Homeland Security advise whether the level of alert is yellow, orange or red. People are asked to be aware and wary.

Today's second and third readings want us to move to red alert. Paul says it is time to wake from sleep. The Gospel warns us to stay awake and not be caught unaware. The images of what happens to those who are unprepared sound frightening: a thief in the night breaks in; one man in a field is taken and the other one left; one woman grinding at the mill is taken and the other one left. "Be prepared," Jesus warns.

As we enter into Advent once again, we are not preparing for the coming of the Christ Child; that already happened more than 2,000 years ago. Rather, in Advent, we break our normal routine and move into heightened alert to perceive more intensely the ways in which Emmanuel, God-with-us, is moving us toward that vision of peace and unity that Isaiah so eloquently describes in the first reading. The prophet dreams of how all people stream toward the city of peace, all dwell in unity, swords are beaten into plowshares, spears into pruning hooks, and there is no more training for war again.



In the second reading Paul gives concrete advice about how we might do this intense preparation for the coming fullness of the peaceable kingdom. Paul exhorts Christians to "throw off works of darkness and put on the armor of light." He recognizes that the peace of which Isaiah dreamed, and which the coming of Christ brought about in a new way, does not come without a struggle. It takes more than just wishing and longing to make it a reality. He imagines Christians going into battle, metaphorically speaking.

To prepare for the struggle, Paul would have us polish up our body armor of virtues. He speaks of the kind of training one must undergo to be able to be the bearer of light. He warns against excesses and indulgences that make one sated and sluggish. Instead, traditional practices of prayer and fasting can hollow out inner space to tend the light we are asked to bear. Paul also warns against rivalry and jealousy. By putting on Christ, we don armaments of forgiveness and community building.

The readings for this Sunday urge us to go beyond defensive preparations. Readying ourselves for the full expression of the peaceable kingdom also entails initiating nonviolent action to dismantle weapons of war and transform whatever there may be in our hearts that is not yet able to wage peace. Swords are not beaten into plowshares without intentional acts to dismantle the stockpile of weapons. The Second Vatican Council's "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern Word" also reminds us: "While extravagant sums are being spent for the furnishing of ever new weapons, an adequate remedy cannot be provided for the multiple miseries afflicting the whole modern world" (No. 81).

The Gospel today impresses upon us the urgency of engaging in the struggles for peace. The images of the unprepared ones whose homes are broken into or who are left behind are not meant to frighten us, but they remind us that there will be an end time when all our preparations, all our attempts to be alert and all our efforts to disarm our hearts and wage peace will, in a critical moment, reach fruition. And we will be ready.

BARBARA E. REID

PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

- How do you put on the armor of light?
- What spiritual practices prepare you for the struggle to wage peace?
- How does your faith community take actions to beat swords into plowshares?

ART: TAD DUNNE

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

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