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The Lessons Of Paris

PIERRE DE CHARENTENAY
THE EDITORS

I watched when the World Trade Center came tumbling down. And I watched in Jersey City, N.J., where thousands and thousands of people were cheering as that building was coming down,” Donald Trump told a crowd in Birmingham, Ala., on Nov. 21. While “the phenomenon of internalizing rank falsity on behalf of presumably greater goals is bipartisan,” as Daniel Henninger observed recently in *The Wall Street Journal*, Mr. Trump’s assertion that he witnessed “thousands” of people (mainly Muslims, one presumes) cheering as thousands more died in Lower Manhattan marks a new low in a campaign that seems to have no basement.

For starters, it never happened. The police chief and the mayor of Jersey City have repeatedly denied such an event took place. Not a single news report from the time recounts such an event. Chris Christie, the current governor of New Jersey and Mr. Trump’s fellow contender for the Republican presidential nomination, told the *New York Times*, “I think if it had happened, I would remember it.” Indeed, we all would remember it; thousands of people cheering the deaths of their fellow Americans would be an appalling scene.

On the other hand, perhaps Mr. Trump’s point is that these people who were supposedly cheering weren’t “real” Americans, even if many of them were “technically” U.S. citizens. If that’s the case, then this is political *déjà vu*. Questioning the patriotism and “true” allegiances of people is a proven political tactic. The most notorious example, of course, is the experience of 120,000 Japanese-Americans during the Second World War. Both U.S. citizens and resident aliens were taken from their homes and forcibly interned in remote camps simply because, the U.S. Constitution be damned, they were deemed insufficiently American.

“The broad historical causes” of that

manifest injustice, wrote the members of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians in 1983, include “race prejudice, war hysteria and a failure of political leadership.” Sound familiar? Rumors of subversion and sabotage abound. The demagogues, those cynical chaplains to the fearful and outraged, assemble their congregations and deliver their stem-winders. Suspicion leads to fear, which then metastasizes. The panic ends where it always ends: the mob finds a scapegoat and does the voodoo it does so well.

As my predecessor Joseph A. O’Hare, S.J., wrote in this column shortly after the release of the commission’s report in 1983, “the fever of war poisons our imaginations, inflates our assumptions and distorts our vision. Hindsight should not make us feel superior to those who went before us. It should, though, give us a few sobering second thoughts about our present imaginations, assumptions and visions.” Those sobering second thoughts should extend to our views of Mr. Trump, yet as of this writing he enjoys a comfortable lead among Republican primary voters nationwide.

Let me be clear: I don’t know who I’ll vote for next year. Most likely, I’ll do what I’ve done for the last several elections and write in a name, a kind of “pox on both your houses” from a faithful citizen. What I do know, however, is that Mr. Trump’s claim that he witnessed this “event” on the Hudson can mean one of only two things: Either he knows that it never happened and he is engaging in an odious form of demagoguery akin to shouting “fire” in a theater and then pointing the mob to a would-be arsonist; or he truly believes that it happened and that he witnessed it. If that is the case, then he is teetering on the brink of clinical derangement. Either way, he shouldn’t be president.

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Cover: People lay down flowers and light candles to tribute victims of Friday’s attacks in Paris in front of French embassy, in Berlin, Germany, on November 14, 2015. Reuters/Hannibal Hanschke

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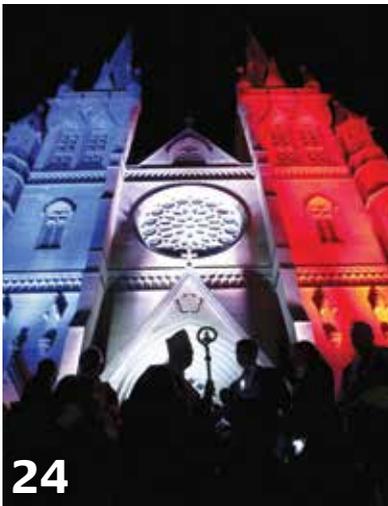
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ON THE WEB

Archbishop Blase Cupich, right, and Bishop Robert McElroy talk about "**Faithful Citizenship**," and Rafael Luciani and Félix Palazzi explore the **Latin America roots of Pope Francis' theology**. Full digital highlights on page 45 and at americamagazine.org/webfeatures.



‘You Were Once Aliens’

The clear linking of the horrific terrorist attacks in Paris on Nov. 13 to strongholds of the Islamic State, as well as the discovery of a Syrian passport at the scene of one attack (whether faked or not, whether held by one of the bombers or not), sparked a heated debate in Europe over whether to turn away Syrian refugees, or even all refugees. Some governors in the United States also declared that their states would likewise reject Syrian refugees. Targeting an entire foreign population for the crimes of a few is the textbook definition of xenophobia, which, sadly, has a long history in the United States.

Providentially, just two days after the attacks in Paris, Pope Francis marked the 35th anniversary of the Jesuit Refugee Service, praising the group in particular for its education of refugee children. Reflecting on the pope’s visit in a video interview, Thomas J. Smolich, S.J., director of J.R.S. International, reminded viewers of three important facts. First, it is important not to “globalize” blame—that is, not to say, “This is all Muslims, this is all immigrants.” Second, refugees, particularly from Syria, are fleeing the same type of violence that occurred in Paris. Finally, J.R.S. has for its long history worked for integration, as a way of welcoming refugees “into the one human family.”

The message, which may sound radical, is nonetheless at the heart of the Judeo-Christian tradition. “You shall not oppress a resident alien; you well know how it feels to be an alien,” says the Book of Exodus, “since you were once aliens yourselves in the land of Egypt” (23:9). Particularly in the United States, a country founded by refugees and immigrants, this command must be heard and heeded.

He Did Not Fear Death

Born in Dubuque, Iowa, in 1943, John Schlegel entered the Jesuits in 1963, studied at Heythrop College in London and Melbourne, Australia, taught political science at Creighton University and returned to Oxford to work on his Ph.D. His leadership talents were sharpened as dean of Rockhurst College in Kansas City and Marquette University, vice president of John Carroll University and president of the University of San Francisco, followed by a return to Creighton as president from 2000 to 2011.

A gentleman, he never dominated a conversation and listened respectfully when he did not agree. After his time at Creighton he served as **America’s** publisher and president and celebrated Mass in New York parishes. In 2013 he returned to Marquette to do pastoral work at the university, a long-held dream of his.

Not long after that he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. A panel of experts told him that medical treatment could not guarantee a significantly longer life, so he embraced the role God had given him, bidding farewell to friends in London and then in Rome, where he participated in an audience with Pope Francis. He died on Nov. 15.

Father Schlegel was teaching his public how to die well, as he embraced good friends with a final hug and wrote them letters like his February 2015 epistle: “I have taught you (and you me), married you, baptized your children, buried your loved ones, and picked your pockets; at the same time we skied, hiked, golfed, played racquetball, cooked, listened to opera and drank wine. God is indeed a gracious and generous God. Because of you I do not fear death.”

Reconciliation at Georgetown

The student protests at Georgetown University in early November looked like those at the University of Missouri. Both movements focused on issues of racism, called for action from university officials and had hashtags: #ConcernedStudent1950 and #BuiltOn272. But the students at the two schools were pointing to different issues and eras of historical memory: 1950 is the year the University of Missouri admitted its first black student; 272 is the number of enslaved persons sold to Louisiana plantations by Jesuits connected to Georgetown in 1838.

William McSherry and Thomas Mulledy, the Jesuits primarily responsible for the sale, were the first and second provincial superiors of the Maryland Jesuits and were also presidents of Georgetown. Until Nov. 14, buildings at Georgetown, including one whose construction debt was largely paid off by the sale they arranged, were named for the two men. Those buildings are now temporarily called Freedom Hall and Remembrance Hall. The names were changed after Georgetown’s current president, John DeGioia, bringing to an end a student sit-in outside his office, accepted the recommendation of a working group he had convened earlier this year. A choice of permanent names for the buildings is pending further consultation on campus.

Georgetown’s Working Group on Slavery, Memory and Reconciliation has plans for an ongoing set of events to help the community discuss how “to foster a creative response to this shameful part of our history.” As the broader conversation about race in U.S. society continues to unfold, this example reminds us that we ought to hope not just for the success of protests, or an end to them, but for energy for the ongoing work of reconciliation.

Staring Down Terror

After the nightmare of the attacks by the Islamic State in Paris on Nov. 13, the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of the Holy Land in Jerusalem called for a unification of “forces of good” to put an end to the terrorist rampage. It is impossible to argue with that exhortation except to ask how the “forces of good” should mobilize themselves without further contributing to the evils they oppose. There are no easy choices ahead in confronting the Islamic State (for which the bishops used the Arabic acronym Daesh) and unraveling the geopolitical disaster that is the broken state of Syria, but a few bad responses are already evident.

One is to surrender to hysteria. Though an apparently fraudulent Syrian passport was found at the scene of one attack in Paris, the members of this terror squad increasingly appear to be resident Europeans. That fact did not prevent some U.S. politicians from rhetorically turning over the life rafts of Syrian refugees. Their example was particularly disheartening in light of the refusal by President François Hollande of France to do the same.

U.S. bishops and other religious leaders likewise rejected calls to turn away refugees. Bishop Eusebio Elizondo, chair of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Migration, offered condolences on Nov. 17 to the families of the victims in Paris and expressed his dismay at calls to halt the resettlement of Syrian refugees who are themselves fleeing terror. Instead of “using this tragedy to scapegoat all refugees,” he said, U.S. public officials should work together “to end the Syrian conflict peacefully so the close to 4 million Syrian refugees can return to their country and rebuild their homes.”

These politicians do a disservice to an already fearful public. Syrian refugees are not crashing ashore on U.S. coasts or crossing its borders. Current policies already require rigorous and lengthy security vetting overseas.

Another misstep, the disproportionate attention to the suffering in Paris, perpetuated an alienating narrative of Western primacy. But the world is increasingly united in suffering at the hands of Islamist terror. Most of its victims are Muslims themselves. Increased attentiveness to these victims is important, both morally and strategically, to muster the “forces of good” for any collaborative campaigns to suppress ISIS terror.

A final, perhaps most treacherous mistake in the aftermath of the Paris attacks is to be deceived by the glamor of retribution. Many have reflexively demanded the familiar course of heaping more violence upon violence in emotional appeals for a campaign of “overwhelming” force to “crush”

the Islamic State. This may be the outcome welcomed most by ISIS recruiters, who have found resentment of Western aggression a powerful aid (see “Lessons of Paris” in this issue).

It is true that ISIS-controlled Syria/Iraq has been degraded into a vast, criminal enterprise of violence and oppression. But the painful experience of the United States in the region should by now have established that the promise of military power as a reliable agent of change, stability and security is a false one. America’s too-easy faith in the use of force is what brought it into this catastrophic muddle in the first place.

Lasting security, stability and peace will be achieved only through encounter and reconciliation with the sources of potential support for extremism bubbling under Western and Middle Eastern societies. That process must acknowledge how much Western intrigues and oil addiction have contributed to the current crisis. It requires a re-evaluation of U.S. relationships with allies and antagonists in the Middle East who contribute to regional instability in pursuit of their own goals. European powers—and other nations whose citizens provide martyr-fodder for ISIS extremism—should consider an examination of conscience in response to the home-grown disaffection of so many Muslim and other youth.

Accepting a patient, comprehensive campaign to isolate the Islamic State and its supporters means recognizing the possibility of other acts of terror; it does not mean acquiescing to them. All reasonable efforts should continue to diminish ISIS and protect the vulnerable, including U.N.-administered safe areas and no-fly zones enforced by NATO. Meanwhile, the international community must make a cease-fire in Syria, the epicenter of disorder, the highest global priority.

But rationalizations for yet another war in the Middle East cannot overcome just war appeals for proportionality and demands for noncombatant immunity. And after the experiences of the recent past, who can argue for a reasonable probability of success? A focus on limiting the scope of ISIS terrorism creates risks for the open societies of the West, but these pale in comparison with the suffering and broadened instability that would come from a vast new military adventure in the region, even one intended to “achieve peace.”



REPLY ALL

Out of the Spotlight

Re “The Big Dig,” by Maurice Timothy Reidy (11/16): As a priest and native of Boston who happened to be visiting family there when *The Boston Globe* began its “Spotlight” coverage, I am not sure I will be watching this movie. I hope I am wrong, but I am willing to wager that it will not include the material that makes it clear that upwards of 90 percent of all priests were not involved in this kind of activity or cover-up. Nor do I expect that it will have a crawler at the end that informs the audience of the steps the church has taken to ensure that there will be safe environments for all our children in parishes throughout the United States.

Let me hasten to add that I had telephone and email conversations at that time with one of the Spotlight reporters to provide some background perspective. What the *Globe* did was commendable and necessary; what this movie will do is to stir up great pain and some animus towards the church, not all of it deserved.

(REV.) JOHN FEEHILY
Online Comment

Focus on the Victims

I continue to be utterly confused as to why priests who were “not involved in this kind of activity or cover-up” make the situation about themselves instead of gravitating towards the victims and their families. As for this movie causing great pain—that pain is already there.

MOLLY ROACH
Online Comment

Strengthen Lay Involvement

In “Strategic Opportunities” (11/2), Dennis H. Holtschneider, C.M., outlines several excellent strategies to strengthen the U.S. church. And he does include areas where the laity can play an important role in executing these strategies. But, as usual, there is one major area where the laity is often

forgotten. He should have included a seventh strategy, namely, to strengthen the role of laypeople in church governance.

Too often, the role of the laity in parish councils and finance councils is given lip service. Furthermore, while diocesan synods are another mechanism for lay involvement, few of these are held in U.S. dioceses. Strengthening the church means more vigorous involvement of the people of God, and such a strategy speaks to the call of “*Lumen Gentium*” for an important and substantive lay role in the church.

(DEACON) BARTHOLOMEW J.
MERELLA
Bowie, Md.

First Priority

I totally agree with Father Holtschneider’s article, but I would put, in order of importance, preaching as the number one priority. Poor preaching drives people away from church. And just as any person must spend time on his or her craft, I hope that priests and deacons spend sufficient time preparing their homilies. It shows when they do and when they don’t!

BORETA SINGLETON
Online Comment

The Diesel Dilemma

Volkswagen indeed has a lot to answer for, and as the editors acknowledge in “The People’s Car Company?” (Current Comment, 10/19), there is some question about the company’s ability to survive, given the costs of fines, penalties and correcting the software in existing vehicles. The greater threat may be to the ability of Volkswagen and other makers of diesel autos to meet even the existing environmental standards. Lax enforcement has been standard behavior in European countries since at least 2011.

Some questions worth considering, even at this early date: Would/should the European Union or individual countries’ taxpayers bail out car companies that are financially unable

to survive under current E.U. environmental standards, once these are actually enforced? These automakers are major employers in several European countries. Should E.U. environmental standards, which the Europe-based manufacturers cannot meet, be softened to save jobs? Should the environmental standards be preserved and enforced, and the companies that cannot meet them be allowed to die off?

JOSEPH J. DUNN
Online Comment

The Parishioners’ Part

I have great empathy for young adult Catholics who struggle to find a parish they feel connected to. As a university chaplain, however, I found myself discouraged by Kaya Oakes’s “Church-Shopping” (10/19). It is the same discouragement we have to fight from week to week here. I encourage people all the time: if they feel put off or the liturgies are terrible, try another parish. Unfortunately that seems to encourage only more criticism: “This parish caters to young families”; “I’m the youngest person in the parish.” Yet I hear from other discouraged individuals looking for those very things!

I am not saying priests or parish staffs should get a pass on any of this—and I’m abundantly aware of the terrible experiences some have had when they have tried to get involved. But I keep trying each and every week, each and every semester to reach out to the people of God and build them up and our community. I just want to encourage all laypeople to do the same.

(REV.) JIM CHERN
Montclair, N.J.

Hail Mary’s

Re “Rhythm and Beads,” by Jeffrey Essmann (10/19): When we were growing up, we said the family rosary in May and October—while doing the dishes. One of us sat on the stairs to lead the rosary while the rest of us did whatever we were supposed to do to clean up from dinner. Years later, talking to my

mother about the format, she told us that it “kept us from fighting.” But it did more than that. We have a devotion to the rosary that brings us together, particularly in those times when we need the strength of each other.

Another story: A friend who was not Catholic and went to religious education with his friends was learning the rosary. The sister sent them all off to say a rosary. He finished early. She grilled him about having used every bead. He had. She asked if he said a Hail Mary on every one. “Yes, Sister.” Finally, she asked to let her hear him. He promptly began, “Hail Mary, Hail Mary, Hail Mary...” He has since entered the church and knows how to say the whole thing.

MARGARET SCALLY
Online Comment

More Jobs, Less Work

In “Basic Justice” (10/12), Nathan Schneider reawakens the notion of a basic payday regardless of one’s employment status. This idea may sound great to most of us on the margins of the economy, but let us not forget St. Paul’s admonition: those who do not work shall not eat. I think there is an intermediate step to take before removing our human need to work. It is time for the six-hour workday, and the four-day workweek. Let Muslims have their Friday day of prayer, Jews their Saturday Sabbath and Christians our Sunday Mass. So many now are overworked, while others languish for lack of a decent job. Think of all the jobs that would be created this way.

MICHELE J. M. COSTELLO
New York, N.Y.

The Wrong Question

I am Irish pursuant to my heritage, and I am Catholic by choice. Not everyone in my family is Catholic; it’s a choice we are all given. Being of Irish heredity is not. In “Tribal Combat” (10/12), the reviewer William Boles refers to the author of “An Unlikely Union,” Paul Moses, as “a third-gener-

ation Italian American on his mother’s side (he’s Jewish on the paternal side).” Although I hope this was unintentional anti-Semitism, it still is just that. My children’s father is Russian. His parents were Jewish; he is not.

If you are referring to someone’s national heritage, like the author did with Moses’ mother, then you name the country. If you would like to refer to someone’s religion of choice, then you can do that. But it frustrates me when people refer to one person’s nationality and another person’s religion, which is sadly and almost exclusively done to those who choose to be Jewish. My daughters have been asked, “Are you Irish, or Jewish?” Could you imagine being asked, “Are you American, or are you Catholic?”

BRETON O’NEILL
Darien, Ill.

False Accusations

It was a matter of some interest to us folk in Boston to read Judith Valent’s “Accused in Peoria” (10/12) about the priest accused of sexual misconduct. We in Boston have seen many cases of devastation caused by false accusation of and abrupt removal of clearly devoted priests. It seems strange that our traditional understanding of justice is regularly violated in this area.

Perhaps there should be a prayer for true vindication for the priests chosen

to bear the cross of false accusation, which is ruinous to them, their families and all who love them. Would it not be good that Pope Francis’ tenderness and closeness might be applied to these priests whose hearts have been pierced with the lance of injustice?

MANUEL GOMEZ
Dorchester, Mass.

Modern Militias?

America has shown itself open to all viewpoints, seldom more than in the letter I just read from James Bannon, which concludes: “The Second Amendment is a protection against government tyranny” (Reply All, 10/12). The Second Amendment was written and adopted in order to assure that citizens who were obliged to help protect the country from its enemies could keep weapons for use when they were called into militia service. More than 220 years later we have a standing army and enlisted militias (the National Guard), and no longer are the unorganized able-bodied males of the country expected to be first responders in military emergencies. And in this 21st century it is to me inconceivable that the writer’s tyrannized citizenry would match with their AK-47s and Glocks the military expertise and firepower of our professional soldiery.

FRANK BERGEN
Online Comment



CARTOON: HARLEY SCHWADRON

ASYLUM POLICY

Terror No Reason to Abandon Refugees in Flight from Syria

In the aftermath of the Nov. 13 terror attacks in Paris, anxiety is understandable, said Bill Canny, executive director of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Office of Migration and Refugee Services. But governors and other politicians are not responding reasonably by calling for a "pause" or even the termination of efforts to resettle Syrian refugees in the United States. Refugees being selected for U.S. resettlement, he said, "are certainly not a credible threat by any way, shape, or means."

"The people who are fleeing ISIS are fleeing for the same reasons that anyone flees," he said. "They're being bombed. They're not being allowed to express their freedom of religion. There are Christians and other minorities involved." As a free, open society, it is not in America's interest, he said, "to shut the doors to folks who are fleeing persecution."

Beyond their legitimate asylum claims, he adds, people coming into the United States through the refugee resettlement program are the most vetted migrants now entering the country. "They go through an extensive security check," Canny said, that can take anywhere from 18 to 24 months.

The lengthy vetting process begins in refugee camps in the Middle East and Europe, where many have been "languishing for years." Many of those accepted for resettlement already have family connections in the United States, according to Canny, and many of the people accepted by asylum authorities come from among the most vulnerable of refugee populations, "the elderly and the sick, often unaccompanied children."

"It's a much different operation than what we [are seeing] for example in Europe, where people show up at the shores or at the borders."

He said the U.S. bishops are confident that the current "extensive" security protocol is more than adequate to guard against infiltration by ISIS or other terrorist elements. That confidence apparently is not shared in powerful quarters around the country.

Republicans in the House of Representatives on Nov. 19 earned a veto-proof majority, 289 to 137, on a bill that in effect would block Syrian and Iraqi refugees from entering the United States, and governors in at least 30 states have called for an end

to Syrian resettlement until security concerns can be addressed.

But that level of concern may not be justifiable against the nation's actual experience with refugee resettlement. Canny was unable to recall in decades of these efforts a single instance of an asylum seeker striking out in a terrorist act within the United States. Indeed, the State Department reports that of the 785,000 refugees resettled since Sept. 11, 2001, only 12 have been arrested or removed because of terrorism concerns, and none of those charges reflected concern about acts of domestic terror.

Up until the terrorist attacks on Paris on Nov. 13, the U.S. Catholic community had been showing great generosity to Syrian refugees, Canny said. His office had actually been expanding its resettlement network to meet the desire of Catholic parishes to be more "helpful and to welcome these



A DESPERATE WELCOME. Lisbeth Svendsen, a volunteer from Norway, embraces a Syrian Christian family on a beach near Molyvos, on the Greek island of Lesbos, on Oct. 30.

people who have suffered so much for the last five years."

He added, "We want to show them solidarity and we want to show them love, as of course Pope Francis told us to do during his recent trip to the United States." Canny points out that among the Syrians seeking refuge in the United States are Christians who had been facing a kind of genocide at the hands of ISIS. That does not mean the bishops conference at all intends to join some voices that have suggested that only Syrian Christians should be offered refuge in the United States. Ninety percent of ISIS victims are their fellow Muslims, he said. "Again, these people are fleeing terrorism. They're fleeing oppression." They want to get away from the war, he said, away from ISIS, to come to America as generations of people before them did "to establish new lives."

KEVIN CLARKE



CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

‘Humane’ Executions?

Since 2006, there have been no executions in California, after a judge ruled that the state’s three-drug cocktail could constitute cruel and unusual punishment if one of the drugs failed to work. On Nov. 13 the state announced that it has developed a new “humane and dignified” method for executing death row inmates.

The new protocol will allow officials to choose one of four different barbiturates for its executions, which should also prevent sentences from being postponed because one drug is not available. Last February Superior Court Judge Shellyane Chang ruled that the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation must provide a method for the execution

of death row inmates, in response to the arguments of victims’ families that state law mandates that such a protocol should be in place. California has 747 inmates on death row, more than the next two states—Florida and Texas—combined. Sixteen have exhausted every option of appeal, including one convicted for crimes that took place over 35 years ago.

The state’s description of its new procedure as “humane and dignified” is clearly an attempt to emphasize California’s efforts to avoid any question of being cruel or inhumane. The same language has been used in recent years in Florida, Oklahoma and Ohio.

Still, the state’s use of that turn of phrase is troubling; it is exactly the terminology used by Compassion and Choice, a group that advocates assisted suicide. In fact, the group’s first attempt to legalize euthanasia in the state was called the Humane and Dignified Death Act. Likewise in describing Oregon’s Death With Dignity Act, Compassion and Choices’ website explains the bill would enable terminally ill patients to obtain a prescription “to end life in a humane and dignified manner.”

The Oregon Death With Dignity Act is one of many documents the state of California cited as reference material it consulted in coming up with its new policy. When asked if the state’s language had been consciously drawn from that act or the assisted suicide movement, Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation representative Terry Thornton said simply, “What we wrote is our intention,” namely that the state’s procedures would be humane and dignified.

It would be going too far to say that the state’s new execution protocols, coming on the heels of its

recently passed euthanasia legislation, necessarily indicate the kind of slippery slope that the church and others have repeatedly warned will follow assisted suicide. By all accounts, the state has shown real reluctance to restart its executions. A state ballot to repeal the death penalty narrowly failed 52 to 48 percent in 2012, and there is a move afoot to put the question to voters again in 2016.

Still, there is also danger that this choice of language casts executions in a similarly reassuring, “it’s better this way” kind of light. Responding to queries from *America* about the state’s proposal, the California Catholic Conference issued a statement saying, “The proposed regulations are part of an ongoing legal effort to ‘fix’ the ‘cruel and unusual’ aspect of the death penalty. It can’t be fixed.”

The C.C.C. promised to speak out against the proposal during public hearings, as it has done before. “The bishops are committed to a restorative justice model in which we as a society care for victims, the incarcerated, their families and all those affected by the criminal justice system. Pope Francis made it very clear in his address to the U.S. Congress in September when he spoke of his and the church’s commitment to end the death penalty around the world.”

JIM McDERMOTT, S.J.



LETHAL TABLE. The execution room at San Quentin State Prison.

Pornography Deplored

The U.S. bishops approved a statement on pornography on Nov. 17 at their fall general meeting in Baltimore. “Producing or using pornography is gravely wrong. It is a mortal sin if it is committed with full knowledge and deliberate consent,” said the approved version of “Create in Me a Clean Heart: A Pastoral Response to Pornography.” According to the document, the sin of using or producing pornography requires “the Lord’s forgiveness and should be confessed within the sacrament of penance and reconciliation.” It adds, “Those who produce and distribute pornography harm the common good by encouraging and even causing others to sin.” Bishop Richard J. Malone of Buffalo, N.Y., chairman of the committee that prepared the statement, described pornography as a “dark shadow in our world today.” He said that it is a “particularly sinister instance of consumption” whereby men, women and children “are consumed for the pleasure of others.”

Mother Teresa To Be Canonized?

The Vatican calendar for the Year of Mercy deliberately set aside Sept. 4, 2016, as a possible date for the canonization of Blessed Teresa of Kolkata, if her sainthood cause is concluded by then, according to Federico Lombardi, S.J., the Vatican spokesperson. The canonization would be celebrated by Pope Francis in St. Peter’s Square at the end of a three-day pilgrimage of people who are engaged, as Blessed Teresa was, in the performing the corporal works of mercy. An Italian news agency reported on Nov. 18 that a panel of physicians convoked by the Congregation for Saints’ Causes agreed there was no medical or natural explanation for the recovery of a Brazilian

NEWS BRIEFS

The holy doors of Rome’s four papal basilicas **will be opened** on Dec. 8, beginning the Holy Year of Mercy. + On Nov. 20 a palliative care facility in Quebec became the first to announce that it will be **offering medically induced death** as the Canadian province’s new end-of-life care law comes into effect this month. + The Holy See on Nov. 21 ordered three Vatican officials and two Italian journalists, Gianluigi Nuzzi and Emiliano Fittipaldi, to stand trial for **leaking and publishing** confidential documents that exposed financial malfeasance in Rome. + A study issued on Nov. 4 by **Common Sense Media** reports that teenagers use media nearly nine hours a day and “tweens,” children ages 8-12, average close to six hours a day. + U.S. bishops on Nov. 17 endorsed **the sainthood causes** of Aloysius Ellacuria, a Claretian Missionary priest and mystic; Antonio Cuipa, a Native American—and his more than 80 fellow martyrs in the colonial era—and William Atkinson, an Augustinian priest. + **The Rev. Fredy Angel**, pastor of St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Ray City, Ga., was awarded Catholic Extension’s Lumen Christi Award on Nov. 19.



Rev. Fredy Angel holds the Lumen Christi Award, with the Rev. Jack Wall, far left, and Bishop Gregory J. Hartmayer

man suffering from multiple brain tumors. His healing after prayers for the intercession of Blessed Teresa was submitted as the miracle needed for her canonization. Father Lombardi urged caution, however. “The process is still underway and official communications will be given at the appropriate time.”

‘Faithful Citizenship’ Challenged By Bishops

Though the quadrennial “Faithful Citizenship” statement was in the end approved during the U.S. bishops’ fall assembly in Baltimore, the normally pro forma vote included a surprise expression of discontent. Several bishops suggested rejecting it and starting over this year. Bishops Gerald Kicanas of

Tucson and Robert McElroy of San Diego argued that the mandate given last year—to revise and extend the existing statement—may have been in error. “Too much has changed,” Bishop Kicanas said, questioning the current statement’s value as a teaching document for voters in 2016. Bishop McElroy criticized the lack of attention and emphasis to issues that Pope Francis has made the keystones of his pontificate—global poverty and the degradation of the environment. Pope Francis, he said, “has radically transformed the prioritization of Catholic social teaching and its related elements.... This document does not do that.”

From CNS, RNS and other sources.

The Saint of Laguna Beach

About 90 minutes south of Los Angeles, nestled amid the San Joaquin Hills, glistens an idyllic seaside community filled with artist studios and fancy restaurants with rustic names like The Driftwood Kitchen. You could easily miss Laguna Beach driving through the area's gray-green canyons; then you come around a bend and there it is, shimmering like an oasis before the Pacific's cobalt blue.

Each morning by the ocean a group of men and women meet for coffee and rolls. Linda, in a sky-blue hoodie and fabulous sunglasses, laughs as she recalls the Ferraris driven by her Pepperdine law school classmates. Nearby, roguish salt-and-pepper Walter explains his plans for a shelter for disabled women, while Michael, sporty in a duffer cap, discusses his recent hike in the Rockies.

Walter is also sending letters to the president. Linda is on disability, and someone nearby seems to be shouting at nobody. In fact, this isn't a Laguna Beach Chamber of Commerce meeting but a gathering of some of the town's homeless.

Near the coffee canisters that Starbucks provides, Jim Keegan chats with whoever is closest. Lean and brown, in a black T-shirt, shorts and a wide brimmed hat, he doesn't stand out. He's been helping convene morning coffee here five days a week since he and his wife, Christine, arrived "stalking grandchildren" some eight years ago. But while the java's flowing, he's just another part of the klatch.

Wikipedia has a whole page dedicated to Laguna Beach's famous residents, which include Judy Garland, Bette Midler and Douglas Fairbanks. Keegan himself was a highly successful lawyer. He and Christine live in a breathtaking house overlooking the ocean, filled with stunning works of art.

But the homeless of Laguna pre-occupy him. "If you don't go into this crazy, after a year you are," he explains,

Keegan talks bluntly about 'drunks' and 'crazies' and the cold indifference of passers-by.

describing the effects of being constantly shunned, harassed, ground down. "They have nobody. Everybody pisses on their shoes."

Sentimentality is not a Keegan trait. He talks bluntly about "drunks" and "crazies" and the cold indifference of passers-by. "If a guy panhandles and you don't have anything, you could at least respond to him like he's not a piece of [excrement]."

At the same time, he lets Linda store her mail in his car trunk; others get rides to court appointments, social workers, the V.A. Everyone has access to his phone.

He's had a few people live with him as they transition into homes, and he has offered to pay for one of them to go to graduate school. He and Christine have also endowed a social worker and a lawyer to help people get the services they need.

And he fights on their behalf. In 2008 Keegan helped get the A.C.L.U.

to challenge the police practice of ticketing homeless people for sleeping in public, knowing they couldn't pay and there wasn't any shelter, then arresting them for nonpayment on Thursdays, after the judge was done for the week. The city settled quickly and opened a shelter that provides floor space and showers for 45 people.

Today the police are back to those tactics and others, like forcing people back and forth between different sites. Again, Keegan has turned to the A.C.L.U., hoping the result will be real housing with social services staff. "It's been proven beyond a shadow of a doubt to be the solution."

It's people's lack of interest that stuns Keegan. At a city council meeting he showed police records detailing their harsh actions. "And no one was offended," he recalls with shock. "By the time I was walking out of the council chambers I was literally shaking."

He wonders at the online bickering in the comment sections of Catholic periodicals like *America* or *Commonweal*; "meanwhile, real people are right there."

"There's this deacon I know, he's always saying the Catholic Church is not a social service agency. I find that offensive. Before there was doctrine, there was your neighbor. If you can't love a person who's freaking out, smelling bad, wandering around crazy, who you can see is in need...." He shakes his head, as if it's obvious.

Except for most people that's exactly when it is hardest. Does Keegan ever struggle with all this? What keeps him coming back? He never has much of an answer: "It just always struck me as so unfair."

Then he shrugs and moves on to another story, as if to say, "Kid, when you get right down to it, what more do you need?" **JIM McDERMOTT, S.J.**

JIM McDERMOTT, S.J., a screenwriter, is *America's* Los Angeles correspondent. Twitter: @PopCulturPriest.



The Princess Next Door

It wasn't until I moved across the state line to what the sign at the top of my block tells me is "the most beautiful little city in Kansas" that I realized how carefully Jesus had chosen his words when he said, "Love thy neighbor." Previously, I had regarded the word "neighbor" as a metaphor for anybody and everybody. Now I think it possible that "neighbor," as it occurs in that phrase, is intended in the most literal sense. Not all and sundry, but the person who lives next door, across the street or behind you. The person whose property line adjoins yours.

My neighbor Mila died suddenly this weekend. She was the most frustrating, stubborn woman I've ever met. Also the most charming. But it was her stubbornness that defined her. It was monumental. Years ago I read *As I Lay Dying*, about the Bundren family's trip home to bury their dying mother. The father and husband in the novel, Anse, was shiftless, an adjective that was not positive, certainly, but the full dimensions of which I didn't grasp till I read William Faulkner's novel. In a similar way, Mila opened my eyes to stubbornness as a character trait.

Mila had many troubles, mainly but not exclusively financial. To any solution to her problems proposed by me or others, the word "No!" delivered in a heavy Bulgarian accent, was her answer. She was a rejectionist through and through. Also a maximalist. "Half a loaf is better than none" is not a notion she endorsed or understood.

I was a keen do-gooder, not easily dissuaded. "Do you think there is hope for me?" Mila tremulously asked me

in the first few years that I knew her. I assured her there was, for I assumed she was a sensible person who listened to reason. She did not. She was noble, proud, bound by rigid notions of honor and duty. She was a tragic heroine from the Old World, and I was the New World optimist eager to make her happier, healthier and more solvent. For her depression and loneliness I proposed walks, a visit to a doctor, more social interaction. For her financial problems I proposed a reverse mortgage, selling the fur coats she did not wear or the car that had sat unused in her garage for 18 years because she did not drive. These suggestions went unheeded. They were practical answers to practical problems, but they didn't address the wounded person at the core of the problem, Mila herself.

My past relations with neighbors had been polite and distant. Within one week of moving to where I live now, I'd met more of my neighbors than I had in the previous five years. They include the couple who send me harassing letters, channeled through the city clerk, about what they want me to do about the creek that runs through my property. I have not stood on their doorstep and screamed at them, as I have done with Mila, but I do draft occasional cold missives to them in my mind. Before relations grew strained, it was the male half of this couple who told me he'd heard Mila was a Bulgarian princess.

Lawn care is one of the chief sources of friction in community life. The princess in question loved plants and animals but despised grass. Instead

of it, she grew flowers in pots. These were distributed around her yard in a haphazard fashion. She did not recognize or regard weeds as such, and the overgrown condition of her yard was an ongoing source of irritation to the Homes Association. I was unfazed by the yard, but her eagerness to feed any and all animals by putting out food on her front walk dismayed me. "Do you not worry about attracting rats and possums?" I asked. I had, on occasion,

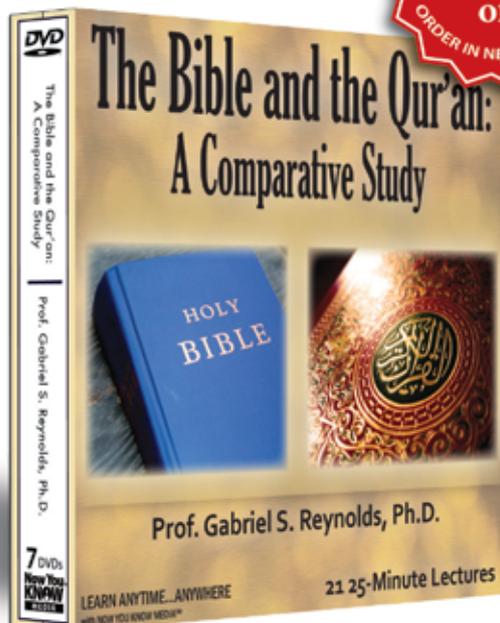
seen both in our shared driveway. I phrased my concern as a question, my attempt to use subtle psychology. But Mila had never met an animal she didn't like, including the spiders that spun cobwebs in the corners of her house, which she did not want disturbed.

I never succeeded in changing Mila's life for the better. Eventually

I stopped trying. She was hopeless, I thought. In every sense of the word. She was also broken-hearted and brave. After her husband died and she lost the means to live comfortably, she ate bitter salt every day of the seven years I knew her. The morning she died she told me she was afraid to take a shower for fear she'd fall. She'd stopped using her washing machine years before for fear of breaking it. Every appliance in her house either didn't work or she feared operating.

I will have other neighbors but none like Mila. None will be exiled royalty living next door in need of rescue. None will be so infuriating, so impossible or so endearing. To be a queen living incognito without resources is not easy, but she was magnificent to the end.

Mila opened my eyes to stubbornness as a character trait.



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Proclaim the Jubilee

Reviving an ancient biblical practice for the Year of Mercy

BY MARC TUMEINSKI

The declaration by Pope Francis of the Jubilee of Mercy, to begin on Dec. 8, 2015, and end on Nov. 20, 2016, provides the whole church a glorious opportunity for prayerful preparation and reflection. Accordingly, an understanding of the scriptural context of the jubilee is useful. Chapter 25 of Leviticus records the Lord's command that every seventh year Israel should neither plant nor prune their fields and vineyards, trusting that during this year the Lord would feed all of the people—both Israelite and non-Israelite—as well as the animals. Similar to the seventh day of rest during the week, this was known as the sabbath year.

After every seven sabbath years, also according to Leviticus, Israel was to practice a jubilee year. The jubilee was similarly a time to leave the fields fallow, but it was also a period of atonement, in which to forgive debts and to free those sold into slavery on account of debt. This 50th year of jubilee was an opportunity to restore social and physical conditions to a peaceful order more in keeping with the kingdom of God. It was meant to bring greater justice, redemption, liberation, safety and peace for the community, as well as rest for the land. The jubilee was truly a year of grace. Leviticus further describes the jubilee as a type of Exodus, that is, a divine liberation from slavery. Chapter 61 of Isaiah repeats this proclamation of a year of favor united with a promise of liberation. In Luke's Gospel, Jesus uses jubilee language to announce his own ministry. The Bible thus portrays the jubilee as good news—a visible sign of the Lord's favor and a concrete practice of solidarity that helps to restore peace and wholeness to the faith community and to God's creation.

In light of Pope Francis' declaration, the church is being called upon once more—in a formal and prayerful manner—to celebrate a jubilee as a way of growing together and being built up as a people of peace. Proclaiming and practicing the jubilee calls for deeply trusting the Lord who continually shows us his mercy and who provides us what we need. It is interesting to note that Francis' declaration echoes both his 2015 message for the World Day of Peace and the apostolic exhortation "The Joy of the Gospel."

The gift and responsibility of jubilee is meant to be lived

MARC TUMEINSKI *has done research on the works of the Menmonite theologian John Howard Yoder and Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI. He teaches at Holy Apostles College and Seminary in Cromwell, Conn.*

out within community. It is a matter not only for the individual disciple but also for the church, family, parish, religious community, Bible study, religious education program and prayer group. As the U.S. bishops pointed out in "Communities of Salt and Light," the biblical call to mercy and peace claims each and every Christian but also each gathered community of believers. Practicing the jubilee should bind us more closely together as disciples of Jesus, the people of God and the body of Christ in the world. The upcoming year of mercy is an invitation for Catholics to come together around a shared goal. This means that it will be easier to observe the upcoming jubilee when we are united. As the time set by the pope grows closer, we may wish to begin a group Bible study about the jubilee, make it the focus of our family prayer, teach about it as part of sacramental preparation programs, bring it to our prayer groups and discuss it within our parishes and religious communities.

Living out the jubilee can and should be practiced locally as well as globally. We are part of local parishes in local communities but also essential members of the universal church. Every parish and every religious community—from the smallest to the largest, from the most vibrant to those that are struggling—can join together in practicing the jubilee and thus strengthen and support one another as communities. This can bind the entire church together more deeply in faith. During the approaching jubilee year, how can we deepen our solidarity within parishes, dioceses and the whole church? How might we get to know one another better as fellow parishioners? Is there a struggling parish, nearby or far away, that we can provide help and resources to?

In Luke's Gospel, Jesus quickly extends his fulfillment of the jubilee beyond the borders of Israel. Pope Francis wisely and lovingly urges encounter and dialogue with other Christians and with those of other religions, including Judaism and Islam—even in spaces and situations of disagreement, struggle or outright conflict. With the declaration of this jubilee, the pope reminds the church that the Holy Spirit can bring unity in the midst of every tension and conflict. As we move toward the upcoming jubilee, whom might we be called—as Christian individuals and as communities—to reach out to? Is there someone in our family, a lonely neighbor, an isolated student or a solitary co-worker that we might approach in Christian fellowship? Whom can we seek out at the borders and margins? Where are the for-



FOR I HAVE SINNED. Pope Francis goes to confession during a Lenten penance service in St. Peter's Basilica on March 13.

gotten or even those we see as enemies? Francis is quite clear that Christ-like dialogue can open the door to understanding, healing, friendship and unity.

The pope teaches us that to become a people of peace is more a matter of time than of space or power. To understand salvation-time is to do what is right and to trust the Lord that good fruit will come. This calls for the virtues of patience and of hope. Grasping after space, control or power over others does not lead to liberation and peace. Paradoxically, letting these natural and understandable desires go, and trusting in the Lord's grace and power, can lead to *shalom*.

This teaching of Francis is true also for the jubilee, which helps to redeem time, to make it holy. The weekly Sabbath, the sabbath year and the jubilee year consecrate time. The jubilee is thus a time of new beginnings, of new doors opening, of fresh opportunities to receive grace. How can we as disciples and communities better accept the offer of a fresh start from God and from others and in turn make this offer

to others?

In the spirit of ecumenical dialogue, as noted above, we can learn about the jubilee from other Christians. The Mennonite theologian John Howard Yoder, for example, wrote compellingly of the jubilee in terms of time, and of how Christians are to live in the world today. In his seminal text *The Politics of Jesus*, Yoder prudently pointed out that the jubilee is meant to be a periodic renewal, not a perpetual social upheaval. Every 50 years, Israel was called to remember the bountiful providence of God and the gift of liberation from slavery exemplified by the Exodus. We still need these periodic reminders, circumstances and practices that invite and enable us to restore a measure of mercy to a fallen world.

Proclaiming and practicing jubilee together, in our own space and time, and in a spirit of dialogue, propels the church toward conversion, witness and action.

Conversion. Francis appeals to Christians to firmly reject the false temptations of gossip, greed, violence and cor-

ruption and to move toward justice and mercy. Indulging in gossip makes the practice of forgiveness and reconciliation within the community that much more difficult. The jubilee therefore may also be a good time for Catholics to study deeply the ecclesial process of reconciliation laid out in Matthew 18. How can we help one another to make amends? Whom can we ask for help in restoring a broken relationship? The pope warns disciples against the lure of greed and encourages Christians to reject the idolatry of money that generates debt, exclusion and violence. Giving in to these temptations weakens and disfigures the body of Christ.

The sacramental life of prayer and worship, particularly in the Mass, helps Catholics turn away from these temptations and toward the Lord. The jubilee can also become an opportunity to renew both personal and parish commitments to the sacrament of reconciliation. The sacrament is personal—between penitent and God, with the help of a priest—but is best sustained within a life-giving community of Christians, who can invite, nurture and encourage the practice of forgiveness and the accompanying acts of penance and restitution. As the jubilee approaches, how can we increase our own resolve to regularly participate in the sacrament of reconciliation? How can we help our family, friends and fellow parishioners to do the same? Are we as Catholics helping one another to practice forgiveness?

Witness. The jubilee is an invitation to witness to the forgiveness rooted in the cross and resurrection. We can forgive because we have been forgiven. This too can become easier, or at least less hard, when we are part of a close community of Christians. The example, support, encouragement and even demands of other Christians are essential. The forgiveness shown by the Amish community in Nickel Mines after a shooting in the schoolhouse there is one instructive example of a communal orientation to the practice of reconciliation and mercy that has also inspired others.

Furthermore, Pope Francis reminds the church and individual Christians that we are to publicly proclaim the liberation of slaves—which in our day includes exploited laborers, migrants, those forced into prostitution, child soldiers and the victims of kidnapping. In this way, the church becomes a needed and timely sign of Christ's mercy to and in the world. The church can put a spotlight on the darkness of slavery and structural injustice and call for greater justice. Coming together, Christians can take action to end such slavery—by working for economic and labor justice, for example, the protection of vulnerable children and the just treatment of immigrants.

Action. The jubilee is not meant to be an abstract idea but a concrete practice of love. For Christians, this centers on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, as illustrated so beautifully by the vision of hospitality to the poor lived out by Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker. How might we as families and parishes practice the works of mercy in our surrounding communities?

To draw once more upon ecumenical dialogue, John Howard Yoder in *For the Nations* wrote of the jubilee as incarnating new ways of using possessions and power. This idea remains a valid challenge for the church today. Do we serve our possessions or use them to serve others? Do we pursue power or do we seek the lowest place and to be the servant of those in need? Even our day-to-day decisions about what we buy or how we spend our time can provide opportunities to help others.

Rooted in humble obedience and divine trust, the jubilee allows Christians and Christian communities to forgive debts, economic and otherwise. Various Christian groups, for example, have tried offering interest-free micro-loans as one way of lessening the crushing burden of debt. As Christian individuals, families and parishes, what would it take for us to forgive debts or to lend to one another without interest, even in small amounts? The forgiveness of debt speaks also to the sins we commit, as we learn in praying the Our Father at every Mass. The practice of jubilee is an opportunity for us, hurt by the actions of others and hurting others with our actions, to be strengthened: to cease sinning, to accept forgiveness and to forgive one another as we have been forgiven by God. Who are those people against whom we have harbored resentments? With whom do we want to be able to celebrate the jubilee? The year of mercy can become an opportunity to go beyond our usual limits, and to forgive 70 times seven times.

Children of God

As we begin the Jubilee of Mercy, let us renew our commitment to Christian community, deepening our ties to fellow disciples. Let us prepare ourselves to accept forgiveness from others and begin to seek out those to whom we can show mercy and forgiveness. This is a time, as individuals and as communities, to begin discerning areas in our lives in which we need conversion. May we see this jubilee year as an invitation to put our possessions and power into carrying out works of mercy. In these and so many other ways, the upcoming jubilee will be a joyful opportunity for Christians to practice mercy, which is a sure sign that we are God's children. **A**

The jubilee is an invitation to witness to the forgiveness rooted in the cross and resurrection.

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OVERVIEW

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TIMELINE

Jan. 30, 2016: Application deadline.

Feb. 2016: Review of applications and notification of first round decisions.

March 2016: Online interviews with finalists; fellows announced.

Aug. 2016: Fellowship commences.

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Who Is He to Judge?

Magisterial authority in
the modern world

BY BRANDON R. PETERSON



FOLLOWING FRANCIS. Iowa Catholic and other religious leaders and clean energy advocates convene to urge action on environmental issues in light of “Laudato Si” on July 2.

Although the Second Vatican Council came to a close in December 1965, the exchange of constructive activity and sharp criticisms fostered over its four sessions did not. These interactions spilled out of the council into Catholic publications, universities and parishes in the decades that followed. One important contributor to this massive conversation was the Jesuit theologian Karl Rahner, a theological expert at the council who was involved with a number of its documents.

Father Rahner was aligned with the reform-minded majority at the council and involved with the early drafts of the “Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World” (“*Gaudium et Spes*”), yet he became highly critical

of the document in the last year of the council, penning a sharp critique of its penultimate draft. One serious concern was the document’s genre: a pastoral constitution. The genre itself, with its attention to the “signs of the times” and pressing concerns of the day, was not so much the problem. Rather, Father Rahner worried, it was not made clear exactly how the Catholic faithful, who had primarily known councils to define dogmas and to anathematize, were to process this pastoral constitution.

Father Rahner proposes that in order both to “be itself” and to serve a world which stands in great need of counsel, the church can and does issue what he calls instructions. The precise nature of an instruction will be explored in more depth shortly, but suffice it to say that he places “*Gaudium et Spes*” in this category. To understand an instruction correctly one must avoid two pitfalls.

First, instructions must not be understood as binding

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universal norms or dogmas. St. John XXIII's encyclicals, for example, make rather specific demands that do not flow directly from the deposit of faith. Such boldness startled specialists in economics and sociology during St. John XXIII's time, Father Rahner notes, but it should not be said that he irresponsibly exceeded his "doctrinal competency." The pope's job description is not simply to guard the deposit of faith but also to "shepherd" through the pastoral act of instructing.

The second pitfall awaits anyone who reacts too strongly to the first. It is good and healthy to recognize the boundary that distinguishes defined dogmas, which follow directly from the Gospel, from instruction. But one who does so, Father Rahner warns,

...should not straightaway start talking about the possibility of error or of the composers exceeding their competence, etc. (though admittedly even in a conciliar constitution which is precisely *not* intended to be a definition this is possible)... [W]e should not be too hasty in speaking of the finite nature and the limitation of even the Church's pronouncements.... It may be that behind it lies the summons of the Spirit in history, that Spirit whose will it is to have *both* enacted in the Church of today, demands as well as doctrinal statements.

But even 50 years after "Gaudium et Spes," there are clear signs that the pitfalls about which a troubled Father Rahner prophetically warned loom as large as ever. Especially when it comes to issues that divide Catholics in the United States, there is a discernible tendency to regard church instructions about such issues in the extreme terms of either unassailable *de fide* principles or the harmless commentary of a naïve church authority that has exceeded the bounds of its expertise.

This tendency is on full display in a slew of comments about Pope Francis' environmental encyclical, "Laudato Si." Maureen Mullarkey, writing for *First Things* months before the encyclical's release, makes clear in "Francis and Political Illusion" (1/5/15) that she has no qualms about "conscientious concern for the environment" (a norm), but how exactly to exercise such concern remains an open question. I imagine that Father Rahner would agree with the content of this evaluation, but that it was offered in the mode of pre-emptive damage control speaks volumes about how instructions themselves are regarded. It steers directly into the

second pitfall: the evisceration of the instruction's authority and an implicit rejection of ecclesial competence to speak about such matters in the first place. In Ms. Mullarkey's case, however, the matter hardly remains implicit. Pope Francis, she states, "is an ideologue and a meddling egoist.... Megalomania sends him galloping into geopolitical—and now meteorological—thickets, sacralizing politics and bending theology to premature, intemperate policy endorsements."

This same questioning of competence was on display during Pope Francis' recent visit to the United States. On the website *Time.com*, Paul Gosar, a Catholic Republican Congressman from Arizona, published an article titled "Why I Am Boycotting Pope Francis's Address to Congress." Like Ms. Mullarkey, Mr. Gosar questions the pope's competence to speak on climate change, but in his critique Gosar actually collides with Father Rahner's first pitfall, which automatically styles papal exhortations on moral matters as binding universal norms. "If the Pope wants to devote his life to fighting climate change," Mr. Gosar opines, "then he can do so in his personal time. But to promote questionable science as Catholic dogma is ridiculous." Taken together, Ms. Mullarkey and Mr. Gosar demonstrate that Father Rahner's concern is hardly a thing of the past. Many Catholics see magisterial teaching either as universal, binding and dogmatic or as uninteresting and duly forgettable.

Of course, the pitfalls Father Rahner described are not a problem for only one group of American Catholics. Some Catholics have dismissed with similar swiftness the magisterium's concerns about religious liberty. And without equating the two, it is worth noting that there are remarkable similarities between someone of one mind-set who asks, "What gives an old celibate man like St. John Paul II any authority to weigh in on my particular sex life?" and one of the converse mind-set who asks, "Who suddenly made Francis an expert in climatology and economics?"

Neither attitude conforms to the approach Father Rahner advised some 50 years ago when he warned that a pastoral constitution and instructions like it were in danger of being safely ignored. The current state of affairs is not greatly improved from 1973, when Father Rahner made the following remark (of which I cannot help but think Pope Francis would approve):

We are not yet accustomed to the "concrete directives" I have in mind. The average Christian has the false

Even 50 years after 'Gaudium et Spes,' there are clear signs that the pitfalls about which a troubled Father Rahner prophetically warned loom as large as ever.

impression that the church must either offer absolutely binding norms in the name of a moral-dogmatic Christianity, or remain quiet. For example, in a consumer society a priest surely cannot say that anyone owning a Mercedes 300 is no longer a Christian. But priests or bishops too must manage to issue an imperative or an initiative to a certain lifestyle. Otherwise, the church finds itself in the situation in which its theoretical principles become always more abstract and their applicability to concrete lives more modest. All this presupposes that, on the one hand, such a directive will be taken seriously and, on the other, not wrongly understood as if it were an absolute norm of moral theology.

An Ecclesiastical Theory of Knowledge

Although Father Rahner was involved in early drafts of “*Gaudium et Spes*” in 1963, his direct contributions were diminished as the drafting commissions went through a series of reorganizations, during which his enthusiasm for the text began to wane. Though Rahner was not able to attend the meeting in Ariccia in January 1964 at which the main contours of “*Gaudium et Spes*” as we know it now took shape, he offered to evaluate the results in writing. The fruit of this evaluation was a highly critical 20-page commentary that touched on items ranging from the draft’s sloppy systematic theology to its “barbaric” Latin. This essay, though never published, was widely circulated among the council fathers and ended up having a substantial impact in several respects on the promulgated version of “*Gaudium et Spes*.”

But one of Father Rahner’s complaints had relatively little impact. This concerned the lack of what he called a “theological gnoseology,” or an ecclesiastical theory of knowledge; this was in fact the first objection he listed in his evaluation. It was also the most detailed, equal in length to a combination of six of his next seven points of criticism. In it, Father Rahner observes that the draft fails to give an account of the basis and authority out of which the church speaks on matters particular to the day and age.

Making clear that much of the text’s presentation of the current human condition and state of the world is “to be praised,” as are many of the church’s concrete solutions contained in the schema, Father Rahner nevertheless warns that the faithful need an account of why the church is speaking on such particular realities and how to classify its proposed remedies. Are they morally binding norms or principles? They do not seem so, he notes, but neither are they mere suggestions. Father Rahner then begins sketching a proposed gnoseology to accompany the schema, stating that the faithful have to respond to concrete situations but cannot always directly deduce precisely what to do from universal moral norms. Such decisions are caught up in their historical particularity. The

schema needs to make clear, he insists, the relationship between morally binding universal principles, its own teaching on more particular matters and the final “concretization” that occurs in the actions of individuals.

While some amendments were made to the constitution’s conclusion in light of his remarks, Father Rahner himself deemed the final product to be insufficient. Accordingly, he took matters into his own hands and wrote his own accompanying “theological gnoseology,” which was published within two years of the council’s conclusion and later included in the 10th volume of *Theological Investigations* as “On the Theological Problems Entailed in a ‘Pastoral Constitution.’”

Father Rahner begins this essay by considering the unique title of “pastoral constitution” that was given to “*Gaudium et Spes*.” It is “not easy,” he remarks, “to say what a pastoral constitution really is.” The fact that it is one of four constitutions (in contrast to declarations and decrees) promulgated at the council attests to its importance, but how should *pastoral* be understood? It cannot mean simply “intended for members of the flock,” since such a designation would be superfluous—what document of the church would not be pastoral? A better meaning, Rahner suggests, is that “pastoral” signifies the council fathers’ wish to shed light on the present situation of the world and issue warnings, admonitions and directives to help people shape their lives. He goes on to classify such issuances under the category of “instructions” (in German, *Weisungen*).

True to character, Father Rahner gives a lengthy definition of “instruction” chock full of subordinate clauses. But perhaps it is helpful to clarify what an instruction is not. First, it is clear that instructions are not binding laws or enduringly valid dogmas. They are not infallible principles contained in the Gospel, though, importantly, they are certainly supported by such principles. Neither are they norms deduced directly from the principles of the Gospel that have unambiguous binding force and are meant to be applied more directly to concrete situations. Such binding norms, he explains, are not entirely sufficient in and of themselves, because no collection of such norms will ever cover the complexity of particular states of affairs, for which a range of genuinely moral actions can exist even after combining a set of relevant norms.

A Shepherding Church

The particularity of each concrete state of affairs does not mean, however, that the church cannot say anything meaningful to individuals who make decisions within them. The church is not, Father Rahner insists, simply a repository of revealed universal truths; but like the Christ whose body and sacrament it is, the church has the pastoral function of shepherding. Such a task is not limited to general commandments or prescriptions but includes the instructions under discussion here:

If it were not that the Church had the power and the authority to issue such instructions, it would be quite inconceivable how she could apply her pastoral function in the concrete. Laws and commandments taken by themselves would never achieve what has to be achieved and done in the Church.

Political events, cultural shifts and developments in the technology of warfare are just the beginning of phenomena that can demand the response of the church's prophetic voice, the message of which cannot always be purely deduced from Gospel principles but that stands in accord with them nonetheless. Although deducing a particular action from a set of norms and principles may run into difficulties, the church can certainly offer people counsel in their efforts to discern right actions.

It is worth noting that since the instruction is not derived directly from any universal norm or principle, it likewise lacks the binding force possessed by such a category. If this is the case, then, what gives such an instruction any authority at all? As Father Rahner puts it,

Whence does instruction derive its unique character as having the force of a demand, since this force is manifestly attributed to it (albeit in a different way than in the case of a universal norm, which is binding as a

matter of moral duty)? For evidently the instruction is not intended to sink to the level of a mere expression of opinion or of the sort of wish on behalf of the other which imposes no obligation on him whatever.

Father Rahner's answer is twofold: the authority of an instruction arises out of the nature of the church that issues it and the activity of the Holy Spirit.

Once again, the church cannot satisfactorily be understood simply as a guardian of the deposit of faith. It must, Father Rahner insists, be a "subject" having the pastoral power to guide its members in more concrete ways than those for which simply reiterating binding norms and principles would allow. The church has the duty to "act in and on history," for such action belongs to its very nature. In fact, he identifies several papal encyclicals, especially those of St. John XXIII, along with the charismatic utterances of St. Catherine of Siena, as instances in which the church has already exercised this duty.

The basis for such action is the work of the Holy Spirit. Father Rahner's appeal to the Spirit, however, must not be understood as rendering church authorities impervious to mistakes, even sinful ones. The church is, as the "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church" states, "always in need of being purified" (No. 8). Nor should the Spirit be understood as granting the knowledge and summons underlying instructions in sudden and miraculous bursts of insight. That charisms of the Spirit can operate in the church in unspectacular, sober and ordinary ways is no reason to think less of them.

Father Rahner insisted on the importance of instructions for the life of the church, and his defense of the need for them is compelling. "Gaudium et Spes," with its groundbreaking treatment of thorny, specialized topics within a conciliar document, is an inaugural pastoral constitution worth celebrating.

The risk we run in ignoring this constitution and other instructions like it has two particularly disturbing elements. First, it further marginalizes the third and so-called "forgotten" person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, about whose operation Father Rahner has, I think at least on this matter, a healthy regard. Second, ignoring a category like instruction diminishes the prophetic voice of the church in the public square, transforming it into a voice that can be safely confined to personal and doctrinal matters. Whichever way one leans in the church, such confinement quickly loses its appeal when applied to issues held close to the heart. One of the themes in "Gaudium et Spes," whose urgency has not diminished since the years following the council, was its insistence on "reading the signs of the times." Reading these signs, an endeavor in which I think a wide range of Catholics will be keenly interested (if for differing reasons), turns out to be a rather fruitless effort if, in the end, the church cannot say anything authoritative about them. **A**

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The Lessons of Paris

The language of war will not help fight terrorism.

BY PIERRE DE CHARENTENAY

The terrorist attacks in Paris on Nov. 13 have justly provoked great emotion. All over the world, people have expressed solidarity and friendship toward Paris and the victims. The French people are grateful for this outpouring of support. But a time of reflection is also necessary in order to understand the importance of the event and to avoid quick and easy explanations that are misleading, especially in an election season. We must think about what motivated the authors of these acts and look closely at the roots of terrorism. We must also carefully consider what actions to take in the future.

Paris was on the top of the list for terrorist attacks by the Islamic State (also known as ISIS and ISIL). President François Hollande of France had said only a day before the attacks that terrorists could strike at any time. A strike in Toulouse had been avoided some days before. The reason appears to be the involvement of France in the bombings in Syria, but also in Africa against ISIS in Nigeria, Mali and other places. The attacks followed various declarations that ISIS would strike directly in the West at any time.

This attack is very different from the assault on the offices of the periodical *Charlie Hebdo* in January. At that time, the two terrorists had a precise target and did not wear explosive belts, while the latest attacks sought to inflict the greatest damage possible. In that sense, it is new in Europe. The reaction has also been very different: in January, there was a huge demonstration with millions of people and more than 40 heads of government in Paris in order to protest what was considered an attack on freedom of speech. This time, the reaction is closer to silence and desolation. On the day after the attack, a Saturday, everything was closed in Paris; streets and cafes were empty, not only for mourning but out of fear and uncertainty about the future.

This type of attack is new in Western Europe. The coordination of several groups of individuals shows a high level of preparation and planning, without using the normal electronic means of communication (otherwise they would have been detected). The authors of the attacks acted against anonymous people and not against a specific target. This is clearly a stepping up of terrorism in the heart of Europe, what specialists are calling mass terrorism.

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It is also a change of strategy for ISIS. ISIS forces are stymied in their fight in Syria and Iraq by multiple U.S., Russian and French air strikes. The Kurds have taken back an important city, Sinjar. The scenario in Yemen and in Nigeria with Boko Haram is the same: ISIS-affiliated groups have been contained. Since it has been stopped on the battlefield, ISIS is switching to international acts of terrorism, more in the style of Al Qaeda: the Russian plane in Egypt, the attack on Beirut and now on Paris. They have demonstrated their capacity for destruction, but the attacks in Paris are also a way for them to keep pressure on the West, a way to say they are still active. This is very important for the recruitment of new fighters. The number of new recruits for ISIS arriving in Syria has been declining in recent months. After Paris, ISIS hopes to be more present in the minds of possible radicalized jihadists. In the future we should expect more acts of mass terrorism by suicide fighters on big, anonymous targets.

It is important to be very clear that this is not a war of Muslims against Christians. Muslim leaders in Europe have denounced this type of terrorist act. There is no more justification in the Koran than in the Bible for this kind of attack. Why would Islam employ this type of violence when it did not do so for 13 centuries? In that sense, this is not a “clash of civilizations” but an act of terrorism against a particular government. The theory of a clash of civilizations prevents us from understanding the reality of terrorism. It also leads us to wrong answers, like the increasing number of Islamophobic acts against mosques and Muslims that are now occurring in France.

Terror, Not War

We must remember that this is not a war. These acts are terrorist acts. It is very important to be clear on this question because the interpretation one gives to an event will have an impact on strategy for the future. A war is a conflict between two identified and visible enemies. They know who they are and where they are and why they fight. The actors may use various means, but their weapons are employed against specific and known targets. The armies will fight each other until one is completely defeated. One knows when the war starts and when it ends. With terrorism, the enemy is invisible. It can strike anytime, anywhere. You will not be able to destroy it until you have dried up the source of its anger. And yet the reason given for its actions is often confused and vague, lost in



CNS PHOTO/PAUL HAFING

AFTERMATH OF AN ATTACK. An imam at a local mosque talks to people at a memorial near the Bataclan music hall in Paris on Nov. 16.



CNS PHOTO/REUTERS, JASON REED

A mass for the Paris victims in Sydney, Australia.



CNS PHOTO/REUTERS, CHRISTIAN HARTWANN

French special police forces secure the area in Saint-Denis, France, Nov. 18.

a highly ideological discourse.

The language of war also implies that targeted strikes on ISIS camps will solve the problem. This is misleading. Such air strikes might weaken ISIS, and they have done so. But that does not end terrorism. The language of war is often employed for popular consumption in an electoral campaign; it does not solve the problem. New fighters will come out of nowhere and strike again.

So we have to look more closely at the causes of terrorism. Among the individuals fighting for ISIS, there are global reasons and personal reasons.

On the global side, a preliminary question arises: why is ISIS in Syria and Iraq? This involves the long story of extreme radicalism in the Muslim world that gave birth to Al Qaeda. More recently, this radicalism gave birth to ISIS, which seeks to apply an extreme and distorted version of

Islam on the territory it controls. The strength of ISIS relies on its geographic localization, which allows it access to many sources of money (like illicit traffic in all kinds of goods, including works of art, along with oil and natural gas). An identifiable location has also helped them to attract thousands of foreigners, mainly from Europe. But localization also has its weaknesses, and ISIS has become an easy target for foreign aerial bombardment.

The second question is about the recruitment of ISIS members. Who are the fighters in this conflict? Where do they come from? Let us look first at those who are coming from the Arab countries. A whole set of factors is pushing young people to radicalization. This region has been greatly destabilized over the last 20 years: the war in Iraq, the dismantling of Libya, the war in Syria after the Arab spring, the war in Yemen, which many people forget. This created

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a huge open space for propaganda and recruitment by ISIS.

For the people in Europe, it is different. The reasons for radicalization are related to the social unrest in many suburbs of Europe, especially in France, where there is no employment and where great numbers of frustrated young people are concentrated in the suburbs. Three thousand Europeans (some say 6,000) have joined the ISIS army (among them at least 1,400 from France). Some of these have returned to France from Syria (some 300 of them) and are acting under ISIS influence. Their frustration is augmented by extreme political and social anger provoked by globalization, Western domination of the economic realm, and against Western values like democracy and individual freedoms. Terrorism is the answer they find because a political answer seems impossible for them.

Fertile Ground for ISIS

The propaganda of ISIS travels through various channels in Europe. Some ISIS fighters are recruited in prison, others through the Internet, others by radical preachers. They enter into contact with ISIS members in Syria. The recruitment is followed by sectarian indoctrination, up to an extreme radicalization in which people are ready to die for their cause. Jihadism is a very strong ideology, dangerous and powerful, with a real attraction to elements of our societies. Radicalized people are not open to debate and discussion. They are immune to rational discourse. Such people should be confronted by the use of force. This does not mean that other attempts should not be made to reach out to ISIS members. Some programs of deradicalization have worked in various instances. That is why it is very important to clarify the roots of the radicalization process that leads to terrorism.

Thus, for some Europeans, terrorism is a bad answer to serious problems—frustration, unemployment, outrageous inequality. How do we solve those problems? This is a question for the international community. But there are also local issues that each government, each community has to face: what do we do with our younger generation? Is our education system adequate? Is our way of organizing the cities respectful of the diversity and the need for communications between communities? Is there enough dialogue between religions so that extremism cannot flourish? Do our democracies give a voice to all, including people who feel marginalized because they have no job? In the case of France, its *laïcité* should be more open to real dialogue with religions instead of expelling them from the public space.

At the same time, there is a need for action at the international level. The Syrian crisis represents a total failure of the international community for four years. This cannot go on. It is essential to reach a political agreement, with or without President Bashar al-Assad. The apparent impossibility of finding agreement with Russia on any important question

is part of the reason for inaction. Yet the situation in Syria is so complicated that even with an agreement with Russia, it may not be possible to bring peace to the region. Over 20 years the precarious balance of power has been destroyed in Iraq, Syria and Libya, indeed throughout the Middle East, which was already a very unstable region. The old way of governance, through tribes and regional powers, has been destroyed and nothing has replaced it.

A Worldwide Threat

The attacks in Paris reveal once more a worldwide threat touching the Western world. The world will have to live for some time with terrorism. So what can we do?

Military intervention is certainly necessary against ISIS in Syria and Iraq. Everything should be done to prevent it from getting more financial resources on the ground (natural gas, oil and so on). Meanwhile, protection at home is crucial: Europe is far less protected than the United States. Anybody can come from neighboring countries without hindrance. Free circulation is great for law-abiding people in Europe, but terrorists will take advantage. And the security budgets in Europe are very low compared with the United States. The U.S. security budget is \$46 billion per year; all of Europe spends less than 5 percent of that figure. It is incredible that the authors of the Paris attacks were able to go from one country to another with bombs, grenades and other heavy material without being noticed.

Meanwhile, we cannot leave the burden of response to each country separately. Europe must act in a unified manner. But many nations refuse to accept a common policy in order to face a common crisis. A simple coordination of intelligence would have avoided a blunder that was made by the French police: they stopped the car with the only surviving author of the attack, Salah Abdeslam. Since he was not in their files, they let him go, although he was known to the Belgian police.

A just response must also include a fair policy for refugees. It would be far too easy just to say "Security, security!" and to refuse the millions of people flocking to Europe. We have a duty toward this population, which is paying a very heavy price for a war they never wanted and that the international community is not able to solve. They should be screened like any other people entering Europe, but they should not be targeted unjustly.

Protection is essential. But protection alone is not sufficient to prevent young people entering the deadly circle of ISIS. Terrorism is created by people, not by governments. The agents of ISIS are free people entering freely into a deadly dynamic. One of the duties of government is to prevent people from entering that deadly circle. Changes will have to be made in the West, in our own management of marginalized people and in our globalized world, if we want to destroy the roots of terrorism. 

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Singing About The Dark Times

A writer's Advent journal

BY PHILIP METRES



CNS PHOTO/TOM MCCARTHY, JR., CATHOLIC REVIEW

Denise Alexander and Madison Craig put the finishing touches on an Advent wreath at the Shrine of St. Anthony in Ellicott City, Md., Nov. 30.

During Advent a few years ago, I composed meditations each morning on the day's scriptural readings as I experienced the season. This Advent journal was my experiment, my practice as a writer and a seeker, to anchor myself before each day pulled me in all its directions. I began with Scripture, with my bodily attention to my immediate surroundings and with words as they emerged. The following are thoughts adapted from that journal.

PHILIP METRES is a professor of English at John Carroll University in Cleveland, Ohio, where he teaches literature and creative writing and lives with his wife, Amy, and their two daughters. He is the first recipient of the George W. Hunt, S.J., Prize for Excellence in Journalism, Art and Letters.

Day One

*Open my lips
With your lips,
My lashes
With your lashes,
Unleash
My tongue
With your
Invitation,
Your inhalation
Before my song.*

This is my invocation. Steady, slow rain, punctuated by wind. Semicolons of calm.

The thirst to swim only partially quenched by weather, we went to the pool. The building was sauna-hot, the water inviting.

My wife Amy and I took our girls—Adele, age 9, and Leila, age 5—to the pool. We splashed around the diving well, bobbing above the ear-aching depths, our voices clattery and large against the drum of the water.

It's the end of Thanksgiving, the beginning of Advent. We're about to dive into the hide-dark and ice of winter.

"Be watchful! Be alert! You do not know when the time will come" (Mk 13).

How else to keep awake, to keep an abiding heat inside, Isaiah's coal in the bone-cold season, but to move one's body, to pull one's limbs through the surfaces?

Day Four

Our girls, awake now, bound down the stairs, with the words that they see snow outside.

Their words bringing me the world.

St. Paul: "how beautiful are the feet of those who bring the good news." (Rom 10).

And: "their voices have gone forth to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world."

When Gregory the Great writes, "let us despise what is earthly," when he writes, "let us leave behind what is temporal and purchase the eternal," I reach for Blake: "Eternity is

in love with the productions of time."

We are the productions of time. The rain has thickened, bloomed into flake.

Day Eight

This is the day before the day, the waking before light.

Outside, the wind winds around everything, as if it were a huge exhalation, more constant than the cars accelerating on the dark street outside.

The wind, like a messenger, preface to a book being written about winter, about enduring the dark.

How to hear a voice without a mouth?

Isaiah:

A voice cries out:

In the desert prepare the way of the Lord!

Make straight in the wasteland a highway for our God.

While the girls slept fitfully in the dark of their shared bedroom, we spent a couple of painstaking hours last night choosing photos from the past year to send to grandparents.

I grew impatient. In the digital age, photographs proliferate like overprinted currency—each one less precious because of the abundance.

So often, we are restless for conclusion, holding our breaths until the end.

The forced-air heat clicks on, mimicking the wind outside.

Lest we feel the cold that awaits us.

Day Twelve

The Feast of the Immaculate Conception

The clouds, pregnant with rain.

Yesterday, it was, as Wallace Stevens wrote: "evening all afternoon."

No light, but the hint of light, an inkling of light.

If Advent is a time of waiting, of joyful anticipation.

If we need to be reminded to not be afraid.

And we are often troubled at the news, "greatly troubled at what was said."

We all are living with Mary, the rising globe of her belly, the future it holds.

How terribly frightened Mary must have been, even to be told she was "full of grace."

Day Fifteen

Gaudete Sunday

The Gospel of John: "He came for testimony, to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him."

When I was a young boy, I became afraid of going blind. I couldn't stand to be in a totally dark room, for fear that I'd

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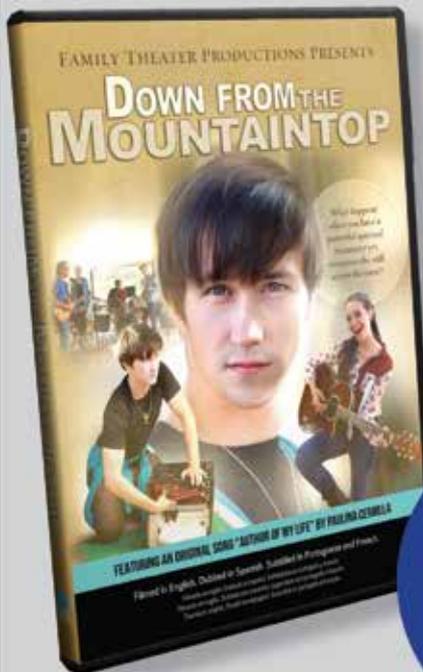
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already gone blind.

To this day, if I wake in a perfectly dark room, I fling myself up and swing my face from side to side, for any glimpse of a shade of light in the general dark.

We are full of darkness, each and all. Brecht: "In the dark times/ Will there also be singing?/ Yes, there will be singing/ About the dark times."

Day Twenty-three

Open my lips.

Yesterday, in Mass, I watched a baby press his soft fingers against his mother's lips, then place his entire hand into his mother's mouth, as if probing for her voice. I think of how our girls once fussed endlessly with my wife's mouth. Now Leila says, "I can't hug you hard enough."

*Can a mother forget her infant,
be without tenderness for the child of her womb?
Even should she forget,
I will never forget you.
See, upon the palms of my hand I have engraved you;
your walls are ever before me.
(Isaiah 49)*

In other translations, the verb is that we are "written" or "inscribed" on God's hands. "Engraving" feels more physical, more permanent. O to be graven or engraved, to be sculpted and published.

Day Twenty-five

Every morning it takes a bit more work to unwind my limbs from my beloved's—as if, overnight, we've grown further to-

gether, our roots tangling.

We'd stay tangled ever longer at the expense of soreness, of staying in one position too long—the softness of the breast, the hardness of the hip, the sweet aroma of the head of hair.

Is what we know of God grounded in metaphors of what we love on earth, or is what we love on earth metaphors for God?

Day Twenty-eight

Christmas Eve

I sing of time, of time and its lordship.
The day before the day.

When I was young, on Christmas mornings, presents revealed, I always felt that something was missing. Sometimes this feeling was focused on a particular failure, when a gift did not work as advertised. I remember crying over the latest video game console, ColecoVision, which wasn't working, no matter how I tried.

As if Christmas were about ColecoVision.

In Psalm 79, "forever," "through all generations," favor, forever, forever.

We want things to last—our houses and thrones, our bodies and favors, kindness and our names.

Yet does even David's throne last forever?

We are given this small span.

What are we to do? In John 4:7-11, two words recur.

Love and God.

God and Love.

I'd forgotten the camera at home, but decided it was more important to hear Adele sing with the choir than to go back to the house for the camera.

Day Twenty-nine

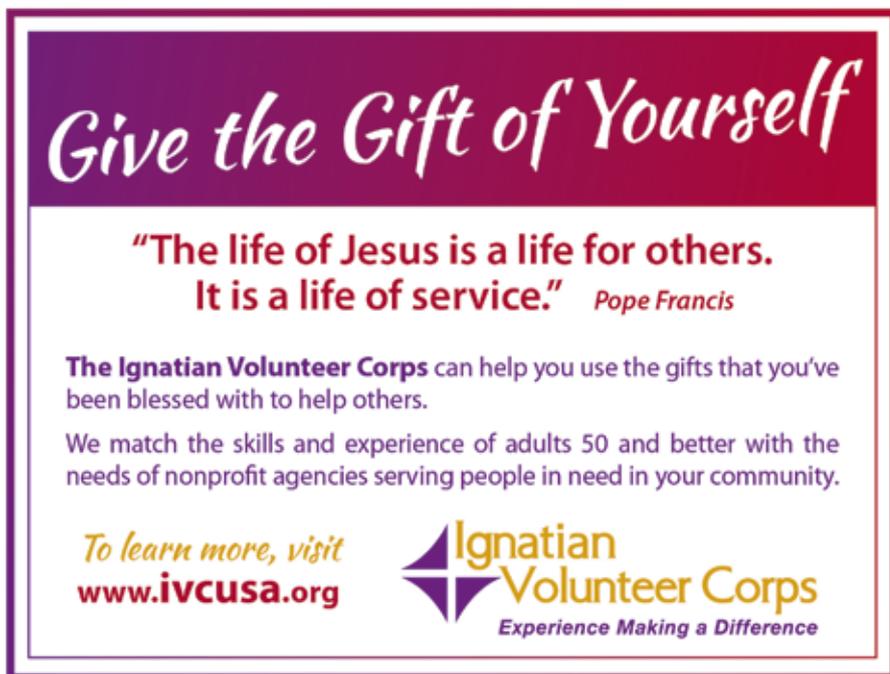
Christmas

This year, Adele's desired item was a donation to be made in her name to the National Wildlife Federation.

Leila wanted all of us to have wings. Real wings.

Adele gave me two fingernail-sized presents, and assured me that I would use it "at least twice a day." I laughed, but I was skeptical. Until I opened two guitar picks.

Leila gave me a colored paper baseball. When I opened it, I could see in her face that great desire to have one's gifts welcomed. I welcomed it. 



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The Votes Are In

At the end of every ordinary general assembly of the Synod of Bishops, the participants elect 12 of their members to the post-synod council, three from each continent (Asia and Oceania are counted as one). The pope appoints three more members from this same gathering to the council, a body that has taken on greater significance under Pope Francis.

This year the synod elected the following members: from Africa Cardinals Sarah (Guinea), Napier (South Africa) and Turkson (Ghana); from the Americas Archbishop Chaput (U.S.A.), Cardinals Maradiaga (Honduras) and Ouellet (Canada); from Asia-Oceania Cardinals Tagle (the Philippines), Pell (Australia) and Gracias (India); from Europe Cardinals Schönborn (Austria), Nichols (England and Wales) and Archbishop Forte (Italy).

It should be noted, however, that in the ballot for the third slot in both the Americas and Asia-Oceania the synod fathers actually voted for Archbishops Cupich (U.S.A.) and Coleridge (Australia). But since the synod rules allow only one person from each country to be elected to the council, the council's secretary general, Cardinal Lorenzo Baldisseri, announced that Archbishops Cupich and Coleridge had to be eliminated. They were replaced by the next most-voted-for person in those areas, namely Cardinals Ouellet and Gracias.

Pope Francis appointed as the three additional members His Beatitude, Louis Raphaël I Sako, patriarch

of Babylon of the Chaldeans and head of the Synod of the Chaldean Church (Iraq); Archbishop Carlos Osoro Sierra of Madrid (Spain); and Archbishop Sérgio da Rocha of Brasilia, president of the Brazilian Bishops Conference.

The task of the post-synod council is to assist the pope in the follow-up to the synod. It provides him with assistance, in particular, if he requires it, in the drafting of the apostolic exhortation that has traditionally been issued by the pope after every synod since 1974. The council also makes proposals to the pope regarding the theme for the next synod and assists in the preparation for that assembly by overseeing the drafting of the guidelines (*lineamenta*) and the working document (*instrumentum laboris*), as well as by suggesting the names of persons for the key roles in the next assembly.

The election to the council is always followed with great interest, and the results are scrutinized for several reasons. To begin with, they reveal the balance of forces within the assembly. This year that balance was between those perceived, on the one hand, as uncompromising defenders of the church's traditional doctrine and against any opening on the three vexed questions, and those, on the other hand, who, while reaffirming this same church doctrine, are considered more open to exploring new horizons and new ways of understanding and presenting the Gospel message in a world that has changed radically, particularly in cultural terms, over the past quarter-century.

The election is watched closely also

because it indicates which bishops have won the esteem of their peers at the synod. It is worth noting that three future popes emerged with strong votes at the synods in which they participated: Karol Wojtyla, Joseph Ratzinger and Jorge Mario Bergoglio.

There was one clear winner this year: Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, the archbishop of Manila and president of Caritas Internationalis. With 79 votes, he came at the top of the Asia-Oceania

The task of the post-synod council is to assist the pope in the follow-up.

list, 19 votes ahead of the next most-voted-for prelates in all the continents—namely Cardinal Pell, who was elected in the number two position of that same list, and Cardinal Sarah, who topped the African list. Each received 60 votes. Archbishop Chaput came in the number one position for the

Americas, and Cardinal Schönborn for Europe. Each obtained 53 votes.

The new council of the Synod of Bishops reflects the results of the voting on the final report of the 2015 assembly, where each of its 94 paragraphs was approved by more than a two-thirds majority. The final paragraph of that report asked the pope to consider writing a magisterial document on the family, and Pope Francis is now doing so. He writes quickly; and since he followed carefully the discussions at both the 2014 and 2015 assemblies, one can reasonably presume that he has a very clear idea of what he wants to say. He is under no obligation to consult the new synod council as he writes; but given his collegial style of government, one can expect him to do so.

GERARD O'CONNELL

GERARD O'CONNELL is *America's* Rome correspondent. *America's* Vatican coverage is sponsored in part by the Jesuit communities of the United States. Twitter: @gerryrome.

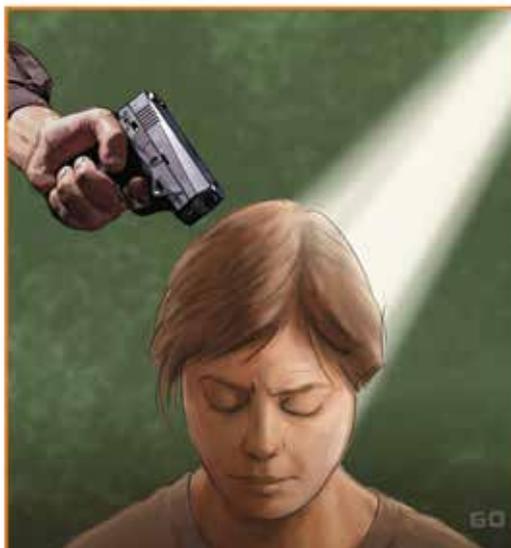
Under the Gun

New life after a home invasion

BY BRITTANY CONKLE

These days, when I am among friends at a dinner party or spending time with family members, I find myself looking at each one and thinking how blessed I am that these unique individuals are knit into my life. When I'm outside, I remember to keep an ear out for the birds singing. I was not always this present, nor was I so grateful. It took the barrel of a gun at the back of my head to bring me to life.

The day everything changed was the most ordinary of August days. I drove to my hometown to visit my mother. As I sat at the kitchen counter, watching my mom make grilled cheese sandwiches, I directed our conversation into familiar territory. I went over my unhappiness with my career and my feelings of despair and anger at where my life was currently plateaued. I was an unhappy lawyer who had no love, or even affinity, for law and its practice. I couldn't tell you why I had gone to law school. I was single with zero dating prospects, while my friends were in one of two camps: busy having weddings and adorable children or leading exciting ex-pat lives abroad. In comparison, I was living in Pittsburgh, unable to see beyond my own self-pity. After a full hour of listening to my litany of complaints, I am sure my mother exhaled when I left to go back to my tiny apartment in the heart of Pittsburgh's



North Side.

I got back in time to sit in my small yard and watch the sun set behind the protective hills that surround my city. Despite the beauty of the fading summer day, I was still deeply preoccupied with my unhappiness. The dimming sun drew me inside my apartment where I made buttered noodles and settled into my favorite chair to wait for a friend to come and walk our dogs together. I dejectedly turned the pages of a book that I wasn't really reading.

What I didn't know was that I had forgotten to lock the door.

I heard the slightest of noises, nothing more than a movement in the air. I got up and looked down the hall. At the top of the stairs stood a masked man holding a handgun pointed directly at me. He walked steadily down the narrow hallway, gun leading the way.

By the time you are in your 30s, you think that you have felt every feeling

and emotion on the spectrum of human experience. But the instantaneous fear and disbelief that let loose in my body upon seeing this stranger with a gun in my home was something entirely new. Total fear screamed in every part of my body.

I went into my galley kitchen, knelt down on the floor and covered my face with my hands. "Give me the cash," he said.

"I don't have any," I said, and it was the truth. I rarely ever have cash, relying always on my debit card.

The gun was right behind my head.

"Give me the cash," he repeated.

"I don't have any," I said to him, willing myself to turn around so he could see my eyes and see that I wasn't lying. It took everything I had to make my eyes meet his. "I'll go with you to an ATM, but I don't have any cash. You can take my computer," I pleaded. He didn't even look at it.

One sentence kept playing in my head: *You don't have the one thing that he wants. You don't have the one thing that he wants.*

I turned back around and stared at my hands. Tension buzzed in the air between us. I realized all I could do was wait. Wait for this stranger to determine how the rest of this event was going to play out, now that he had invaded my home for money that I did not have. I seemed to feel my whole life at one time—the beauty, the love, the darkest moments. Does it sound crazy to say that I saw every sunset I had ever witnessed in one moment? Because I did.

BRITTANY CONKLE, an alumna of John Carroll University, is an attorney by day and a writer by night.

That moment of looking back over my life was so important that I will probably spend the rest of my life unpacking it. I stared at the bracelet of the Virgin Mary that I wear every day. The fear in my body quietly dissipated, replaced with a resignation. I came to terms with the idea that my life might end on the floor of my kitchen. I remember that I did not ask God to save me, but I did ask for a quick and painless death.

In a Moment

And then it hit me. The one regret, the unfinished business I had with this life of mine. My mother would always think of our conversation and believe that her only child had died a miserable person, unfulfilled and greatly at odds with life. That is what brought tears to my eyes. I realized what a beautiful life I had actually lived; I just hadn't always appreciated it.

As I knelt on the kitchen floor and contemplated the big picture, I knew that I should have taken my mother's advice and focused on everything that I had been given. I should have spent more time serving others and less time serving my own selfish introspection. *I'm sorry, Mom*, I thought.

A second later, the intruder turned and ran.

A meaningless act of violence. That's what people say when they hear about what happened to me. I do not agree. Everything that happens to us—both the good and the bad—has meaning. The blessing is that we get to determine the meaning, as well as the story we tell about our lives to ourselves and others.

Every day, I have the option to decide: Is my story going to be one of anger, fear and unhappiness? Or can my story be about peace, forgiveness and walking a new path of gratitude and

compassion? Even though it seems a clear pick between the former and the latter, it is never an effortless decision. After all, anger can be intoxicating, especially righteous anger. It is a cheap, easy emotion and as addictive as an opioid. It's often much harder to find the love and forgiveness inside. It is only by God's grace that I am able to locate those virtues at all; but they are there, bubbling along like an underground stream beneath the stony ground of my heart.

The clarity that I've received, as well as the gratefulness that I feel, is inextricably linked to a moment of violence. When I look at the night sky and marvel at the thought of the millions of miles that the light traveled through the darkness to reach me, I realize that there were months, even years, when I never took the opportunity to look up. I am alive, just in a different way than I was before. For that, I thank God.

GENERATION FAITH

People of the Street

Christians must pave the way to peace.

BY MAGGIE McCONNAHA

Main Street is usually just like any other small-town boulevard, empty but for a few cars and lined with shops and businesses. Two streetlights at either end direct what little traffic there is. A few people walk along the sidewalk. When they pass one another, heads go down in hopes that the other person will not try to initiate conversation or perhaps in fear that a kind gesture will be ignored.

But a few summers ago, the street was transformed. My small town rallied around a group of talented artists who came to paint murals all over our city. The Walldogs are a group of traveling artists whom cities contract to paint murals—usually of old advertisements, but also of nostalgic town memories. People joined volunteer groups, children painted on the mural near the library and patrons supported the effort at a town auction where one could purchase a replica of a mural.

On the night of the unveiling, families walked out to take a tour of the downtown art gallery. It was surreal—

everyone outside after sunset, talking amiably instead of passing each other by. I didn't want the magical bubble we were in to burst, though I doubted even the murals would let the town maintain its vivacity. So I committed the moment—almost religious in its fleeting sacredness—to memory. And though the streets are back to the quiet ones they once were, Plymouth, Wis., now boasts the largest collection of Walldogs murals ever created, and tourists from all over the country come and take self-guided tours, catching glimpses of our town's history and character.

MAGGIE McCONNAHA is a sophomore at St. Norbert College in De Pere, Wis., where she studies English and peace and justice studies.

Those memories came back to me during a humanities course on the topic of streets I took my first semester at college. My classmates and I asked and discussed: What makes a healthy street? Why are they important at all? One lecture, led by the Rev. Jim Neilson, explored these questions by looking at the intersection of faith, art, beauty and community.

For a healthy street to exist, Father Neilson explained, it needs to have three features. It needs to be safe, it needs to be interesting, and there must be other people. Being social animals, if these three elements exist, we will flock out of doors to be part of it. One slide in his presentation showed a video of an orchestra sitting in the middle of a sidewalk with a sign posted on the conductor's stand that read "Conduct Us." People stood up and began waving their arms to conduct the band, which played—following the movements of the amateur. Who wouldn't come out to watch a performance like that? A healthy street can bring a community together where relationships can happen and thrive.

If even one of the characteristics is missing, however, life on the street suffers. And if the streets within a community or between communities are broken, human connection cannot happen. Instead of taking a risk on a potentially unsafe street, people stay inside, away from others. And if people keep to themselves because of broken streets, prejudices and mistaken beliefs remain unchallenged by human encounter. When community has broken down, often the first step toward healing is reclaiming streets. From the civil rights movement to Occupy Wall Street, activists have raised up social injustice and changed hearts and minds by taking their message to the pavement.

Hearts Wide Open

When Jesus taught, it was often outside, near a road, where members of

the community could all gather and listen. Zacchaeus, the short man who wanted to see Jesus, was drawn to the road because he knew the Master was there and was rewarded with meeting him face to face. The hemorrhaging woman, too, was drawn out for the same reason; and by following Jesus on the road, she was cured of her dis-



ease. He was the event that drew people outside, and what a reward those who followed received for meeting him there.

Today, Christians everywhere follow in the footsteps of Jesus and other itinerant saints, like Francis of Assisi, taking their talents in education, medicine and craftsmanship to the streets of impoverished areas. When I volunteered on a medical mission trip with my aunt, a physician's assistant in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, much of our time was spent riding along the busy, dusty streets in a white pick-up truck. The streets were alive with the activities of the poor: bathing, begging and

hurting. But there were also moments of joy on those streets. One man ran to our truck to speak with my aunt and her friend because he recognized them from years before. He was overjoyed to see them. There, I could see how when people are touched by a kind word or a small act of service, the connection between the served and the server remains strong for years.

The streets represent the heart and soul of a community: a strong, safe, cared-for road reflects the feelings and relationships of the people within the city. The challenge for us Christians today is to move to the streets. It is our moral obligation to take ourselves entirely—our joys and sorrows, accomplishments and failures, and most importantly our senses of empathy and justice—out to the community.

Like the streets, our common humanity connects each of us to the other. When we meet people, no matter what their faith or creed, it is important for each of us to maintain the road of connection and relationship. Like the attractive roads that bestow a sense of safety, a well-maintained relationship makes people feel safe to open up about their inner struggles, insecurities and needs. If we are able to create a world where all these roads of human connection are comfortably paved and wide open, the work of Jesus Christ can flourish everywhere.

It is not an easy task that God gives us. The potholes of prejudice can make the road bumpy. Litter of grudges and misunderstandings makes the way ugly and difficult. Bridges of peace and understanding have broken down. Some of our sisters and brothers live far away, separated from us by oceans or jungles of poverty, race or creed. To rebuild the roads will take the help of the Holy Spirit. It will take prayer and practice together. But it is not impossible.

Let's fix the potholes. Let's rebuild the bridges. Let's make connections all over the world. And let us walk along the road together.

MUSIC | BILL MCGARVEY

SINATRA'S CENTURY

The legacy of a tough guy with a heartbreaking voice

I saw them as they marched by my front window. A small group of what appeared to be approximately 15 retirees making their way up my block in Hoboken, N.J., this past October. Normally this happens only when parishioners from nearby St. Francis Church process through the neighborhood during their annual feast. But this group was heading in

the opposite direction, so it caught my attention.

I stepped outside to take a look and found them standing up the street listening to a tour guide. They were congregating in front of an empty parking lot at 415 Monroe Street, but the average passerby would not know that, as there isn't any sign. A parking lot doesn't generally have an address sign—even when it is the site of the birthplace of an American icon like Frank Sinatra.

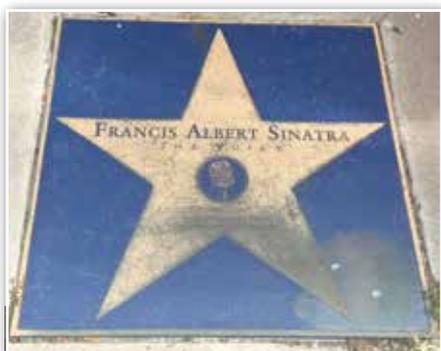
Nothing remains after a fire in 1967 destroyed the four-story tenement building where Sinatra was born a century ago on Dec. 12, 1915. A scuffed and fading gold and blue star in the pavement—paid for by a local

businessman in 1996—and the “From Here to Eternity” museum next door (closed since 2003) are the only indications that one of the 20th century's greatest artists was born and lived the first 12 years of his life there. The whole scene is sadly indicative of the complicated relationship between Sinatra and Hoboken: slightly discarded, slightly ambivalent but set in concrete.

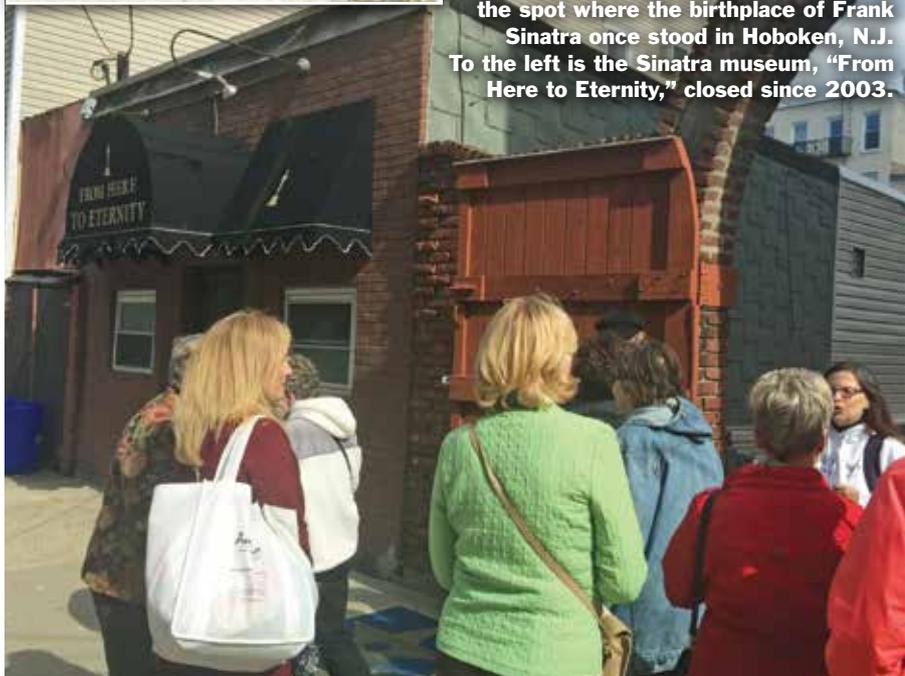
When I moved to Hoboken from Brooklyn over 20 years ago, it was for musical reasons that had absolutely nothing to do with Frank Sinatra. A thriving music and arts scene had flourished in Hoboken since the late 1970s and helped turn around the fortunes of this Mile Square City after it had fallen on hard times in the mid-20th century. For a newer generation, the town's cultural life centered on Maxwell's, a legendary club that helped nurture countless artists like R.E.M., the Red Hot Chili Peppers and Nirvana. It was an alternative and indie hub long before those words became part of the cultural lexicon.

My knowledge of Sinatra at the time was pretty much limited to parodies of the aging legend on “Saturday Night Live.” Both Phil Hartman and Joe Piscopo did hilarious impersonations that portrayed the latter-day Chairman of the Board as a tough-talking, no-nonsense artifact from a less culturally sensitive and politically correct time.

As a struggling young musician, artifacts like Sinatra were not particularly interesting to me. The truth is, anything recorded before Buddy Holly or Little Richard might as well have been ancient history. But that, of course, is the blessing and the curse of pop culture. At its loftiest it can erase distinctions between high and low culture as well as entertain, educate and nourish



A small tour group stands in front of the spot where the birthplace of Frank Sinatra once stood in Hoboken, N.J. To the left is the Sinatra museum, “From Here to Eternity,” closed since 2003.



us. At its worst, it flattens time and history and reduces everything to a series of disconnected, disposable moments. Without sufficient time and context, we have no perspective and no ability to assess something's lasting value.

And yet Sinatra has stayed with us. This year alone there have been a four-hour HBO documentary, "Sinatra: All or Nothing At All," a traveling exhibit called "Sinatra: An American Icon," as well as album reissues and a number of film festivals. If the retrospectives marking the centennial of his birth have done nothing else, they have made the case for Sinatra's lasting greatness and cultural impact. Over the intervening years since his death, the sensational aspects of his life that made headlines—the womanizing, the marriages, the supposed mob connections—have receded in

importance, and what we are left with is the only thing we can judge him on: his music.

"Sinatra slowly found a way to allow tenderness into the performance while remaining manly," wrote Pete Hamill in *Why Sinatra Matters* shortly after the singer's death. "He perfected the role of the Tender Tough Guy and passed it on to several generations of Americans. Before him, that archetype did not exist in American popular culture. That is one reason why he continues to matter; Frank Sinatra created a new model for American masculinity."

One of the most astonishing aspects of HBO's Sinatra documentary is the audio and television interviews with Sinatra himself. Drawn from every phase of his long career, they

St. Brendan Celebrates

It is still Easter, though we are aground
this monster's back, tethered to its tail.

This is still an island, as it rises in swells,
falls in troughs, follows wanton tides.

Still a mooring, a port enough
for our feast. Our Lord is still risen.

Still our hearts that burn and yield
a Sabbath. A sun pierces overhead.

Still our basket of a boat, shearwater
seeking the Isle of the Blessed. And

here at the foot of the rood we planted,
between the scales, a silent nest.

RUTH SAXEY-REESE

RUTH SAXEY-REESE teaches creative writing and mythology at Boise State University and nonprofit organizations in Southwest Idaho. Her poems, reviews and essays have appeared in Boise Weekly, Chiron Review, Calyx, Nerve Cowboy and The Healing Art of Writing; her work has been nominated twice for a Pushcart Prize.

are peppered liberally throughout. Listening to Sinatra speak—his attitude, rhythm, diction and language—it is as if an archetypal mid-20th-century American male has sprung from the pages of a Damon Runyon story. AMC's "Mad Men" in many respects felt like a love letter to Sinatra's style and postwar model of American manhood.

"Rock and Roll people love Frank Sinatra because Frank has got what we want: swagger and attitude," said U2's Bono when introducing Sinatra at the Grammys in 1994. "Who's this guy that every city in America wants to claim as their own?... This singer who makes other men poets. Boxing clever with every word. Talking like America. Tough,

straight-up, in headlines."

The swagger of course would mean nothing were it not for his singing. His vocal style and ability were definitive enough in his own time to earn him the nickname The Voice. Armed with the finest music from the Great American Songbook, Sinatra could crawl inside a song and make it his own, conveying heartbreak and strength in the same moment. So prodigious was his gift that his impact extended beyond singers. Jazz musicians selected him as "the greatest-ever male vocalist" by an overwhelming margin in a 1956 poll, and no less a legend than Miles Davis cited Sinatra's vocal phrasing as an influence on his trumpet playing.

New Jersey's other favorite son, Bruce Springsteen, said of him, "While Frank's music became synonymous with black tie, the good life, booze, women, sophistica-

tion...it was the deep blueness of Frank's voice that affected me the most."

Perhaps that is what we continually return to? Maybe on some level we see behind the man in black-tie sophistication and realize that he is ultimately just like us: wounded and lonely but still alive and on his feet. Sinatra invites us to participate in an act of the imagination in which we are aware of our limitations and yet, at the same time, believe that we are not defined by them. It is an act of transformation not all that unlike conjuring life out of battered pavement and an empty lot.

BILL MCGARVEY, a musician and writer, is the author of *The Freshman Survival Guide*, owner of *CathNewsUSA.com* and was the longtime editor in chief of *BustedHalo.com*. Twitter: @billmccarvey.

PATHFINDING IN SPAIN

I sit with my feet up on the empty bus seat beside me, my head resting against the cool window, as the Izarraitz Mountains of northern Spain roll behind me. I have at last cracked open the assigned reading for the trip, St. Ignatius' *Autobiography*. It seems my procrastination has paid off: I need only lift my gaze from the page to see the very foothills through which French soldiers carried the young Íñigo López back to Loyola after his fateful, and nearly fatal, encounter with a cannonball in the battle of Pamplona.

It is the first sentence that will stick with me as I travel in the footsteps of St. Ignatius on America Media's pilgrimage this November: "Up to his twenty-sixth year the heart of Ignatius was enthralled by the vanities of the world." It strikes me that with the exception of one fellow millennial, all of the pilgrims on this bus can, like Ignatius, look back at their 26th year from a comfortable distance. I envy them. At age 25, my vanity remains largely intact and the prospect of a cannonball moment looms large.

Google "20-somethings" and you will be bombarded with countless lists of things my peers need to know, do, purchase—now—if we want to be happy, to be successful, to be married, to be...(fill in the blank). A small sampling of these so-called listicles includes: "The 100 Things Every 20-Something Needs to Realize," "20 Things Every 20-Something Woman Should Own," "15 Smart Things Every 20-Something Should Do to Get the Most Out of Life."

Judging by the frequency with which these articles pop up on my Facebook news feed, there is clearly a

hunger for some guidance. The problem is, I am fairly certain these creeds are for the most part written by other 26- to 29-year-olds working out of a warehouse-turned-office space somewhere in Brooklyn. Not exactly the best way for readers to gain a broader perspective.

It is an unfortunate fact of modern life that we are increasingly sorted by age; a 20-something can easily go through her week without deeply engaging with someone a decade or two older, beyond her parents or colleagues. For the shrinking pool of millennials still attached to organized religion, even going to church, a traditional mixing ground, means the Sunday evening young adult Mass and fellowship.

The wisdom that was once passed organically between generations in everyday interactions and social gatherings is siloed and often replaced by feelings of bewilderment or distrust. Baby boomers look aghast at the casual encounters among "kids" these days facilitated by dating apps, while young people create "safe spaces" to shield themselves from what they see as the unevolved attitudes toward race and gender held over from their parents' generation. The spaces where people of all ages can spend time together, and hopefully learn from one another, are few and far between.

Which is one of the many reasons my time in Spain was such a blessing. For 10 days I helped my fellow pilgrims connect to shoddy hotel Wi-Fi and to share their experiences with friends

and family back home through social media. In exchange, they shared with me the wisdom that can only come from many years navigating the peaks and valleys of life. I pried and probed the details of their education, careers and family life—You were how old when you went back to school? What brought you back to the church? How old was your daughter when she had her first child?—hoping to come away, perhaps, with the "Five Things Every 20-Something Needs to Be a Happy, Successful, Married Catholic."

What I got was something much more complicated and far richer. They offered no checklists to follow, no "life hacks," no guarantees of certainty about the path ahead. Instead there was the perspective of people who understand themselves as pilgrims, who could tell me how things look from a bit higher up the

mountain. And what I heard them saying was this: You're looking at the cannonball all wrong. For many people my age, the luxury of choice can feel more like tyranny; if only something would hit us, we think, even something painful, that would make our direction and purpose clear.

And the pilgrim, as St. Ignatius called himself until the end, responds in his *Autobiography*: Keep reading. Ignatius' conversion might have begun with Pamplona; but the still-unfolding story of the Jesuits began with the 38-year-old pilgrim moving in with a couple of 20-somethings at the University of Paris.

For many people my age, the luxury of choice can feel more like tyranny.



THERE'S NO BUSINESS LIKE...

JOY RIDE

Show People and Their Shows

By John Lahr

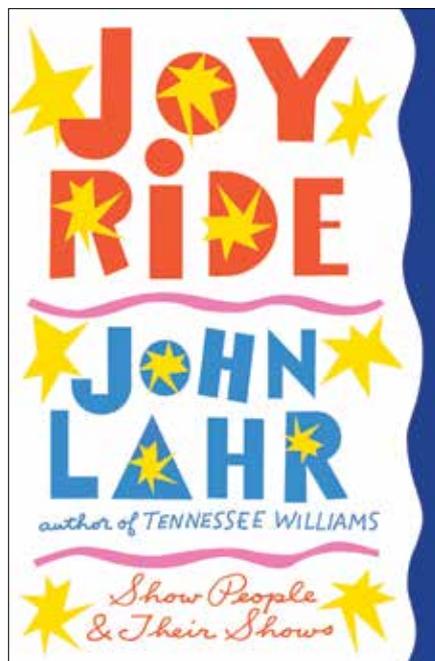
W. W. Norton & Company. 592p \$29.95

For 21 years, John Lahr served as the senior drama critic for *The New Yorker*, the longest run in that post in the magazine's history. He stepped down from that position in 2013 and, quite appropriately, has now compiled a collection of his extensive profiles of contemporary playwrights and directors as well as his reviews of some of the best Broadway productions of those 21 years by an assortment of other playwrights and directors. And in a somewhat whimsical chapter in the section on playwrights, he includes reviews of recent outstanding productions of the work of a less contemporary playwright, William Shakespeare.

Preparing this book must have been a piece of cake for Lahr, who needed only to gather together his already published material, a far easier task than his last magnum opus, the 600-plus pages of *Tennessee Williams, Mad Pilgrimage of the Flesh*, which combined his analysis of Williams's entire dramatic output with a quite revealing account of the playwright's personal and sexual experiences (with a bibliography and end-notes of over 100 pages.) Lahr spent 12 years writing it while he worked on other projects. The book won the National Book Critics Circle Award in 2014, and it may very well prove to be the most definitive study of Tennessee Williams ever.

Part I of *Joy Ride* presents his profiles and interviews with a variety of playwrights, including Arthur Miller, August Wilson, Tony Kushner, David Mamet, Sarah Ruhl, Clifford Odets, David Rabe, Harold Pinter, Wallace Shawn, Neil LaBute and Sam Shepard. He states in his introduction to this

section, "By the time I meet my subjects, I've read all their press, I know their work, and I know their official stories." That becomes obvious in the lengthy profiles, some of them 20 to 30 pages long. Each one ends with a review of one or two of the writer's most successful works. In his treatment of Shakespeare, he reviews outstanding



recent productions of "Hamlet," "The Winter's Tale," "Othello," "Macbeth" and "King Lear."

A major highlight of the book is the opening chapter, a profile of Arthur Miller, which includes Miller's explanation when Lahr asks him what Willy Loman is selling in "Death of a Salesman": "Well, himself. That's who's in the valise. You sell yourself. You sell the goods. You become the commodity." Lahr then offers his own remarkable insights into the play as a product of the spirit of self-aggrandizement of post-war American society and America's Puritan heritage. He then recounts Miller's own description of the debut of "Salesman" in Philadelphia in

1947: "The curtain came down and nothing happened. People sat there a good two or three minutes, then somebody stood up with his coat. It was like a funeral.... The cast was back there wondering what had happened.... Finally, someone thought to applaud, and then the house came apart."

His treatments of various other playwrights offer many a surprising revelation and the occasional delightful anecdote. He summarizes the eight-page letter Tony Kushner wrote when asked by Bill Clinton to submit some ideas for his forthcoming State of the Union address in 1995, which is nothing short of a manifesto of the rights of the working class and the poor and a list of social programs that would radically transform the United States we now know. He points out that David Mamet is the only major American playwright ever to succeed as a screenwriter. He repeats Sarah Ruhl's account of her response to a poison-pen letter she received in third grade: "I corrected the grammar and sent it back." In his study of Neil LaBute, who has been called "the angriest white male," Lahr compares the "moral and emotional nonchalance" of LaBute's characters to the "amorality and privilege" of the Restoration fops whom LaBute has described as "well-to-do people with time on their hands who go around hurting each other, doing things that are pretty unpleasant, just because the opportunity presents itself." He points to the "sense of sin" in LaBute's work. LaBute defines sin as "the inability to imagine the suffering of others."

Part II offers Lahr's reviews of specific theatrical productions that "rocked my world." Reviewing a recent revival of Sondheim's "Company," Lahr responds to one critic's question, "What happened to the good-time musical?" by saying, "Vietnam is what happened." He writes of the mutation of the musical-theater formula in 1943 in "Oklahoma" as follows: "Anarchic, freewheeling frivolity that traded in joy—in other words, the

comedian's resourcefulness—was re-nounced for an artful marriage of music and lyrics that traded in narrative. Seriousness replaced sass."

In Part III Lahr focuses on great theatrical directors with two of his best profiles. He recounts the outstanding career of the director-choreographer Susan Stroman, especially her work with Mel Brooks in his mega-hit, "The Producers," and her amazing creativity in the Broadway version of Woody Allen's "Bullets Over Broadway." He also describes the effect on Stroman's life and work of the early death of both of her husbands and her work on musicals as her "Rx for heart break." He quotes Stroman's remark: "Tapping into joy—it saves you."

Finally, Lahr closes with a 45-page profile of the hugely successful theater and film director Mike Nichols, with what turns out to be a mini-biography

of the man. He includes an account of Nichols's boyhood escape from Nazi Germany, his early sketch-comedy career with Elaine May (and its break-up), his move into his true calling as a triumphant theater director, especially in his work with Neil Simon, and finally his outstanding career in film, beginning with "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" and "The Graduate." Lahr comes full circle as he concludes his book with a review of Nichols's direction of the 2012 revival of "Death of a Salesman."

Relying on his extensive research and experience, Lahr offers a brilliant combination of dramatic criticism, personal revelations and Broadway history, which takes his readers on a "joyride" to remember.

MICHAEL V. TUETH, S.J., *who taught at Fordham University for many years and is the author of several books, is now at St. Louis University.*

CLAIRE SCHAEFFER-DUFFY

UNITED IN DEATH

WE ARE ALL CHILDREN OF GOD

The story of the Forty Young Martyrs of Buta-Burundi

By Zacharie Bukuru
Pauline Africa Press. 175p \$6

I had anticipated a simple, straightforward interview on that afternoon, back in April. My subjects were two Xaverian nuns, members of an Italian missionary order with a community here in my home city of Worcester, Mass. Nine months earlier, three Xaverian sisters were gruesomely murdered in their convent in Kamenge, a suburb of the Burundian capital of Bujumbura. I wanted to know how the Worcester nuns, friends of the deceased, were coping. Did they struggle with bitterness, or rage? Had they experienced a crisis of faith?

The brisk Q&A I imagined never

occurred. Instead, I was introduced to a mystery as ominous and opaque as any John le Carré novel. The victims, Lucia Polici, 75, Olga Raschietta, 82, and Bernadetta Boggian, 79, were frail, Italian missionaries with years of service in Congo and Burundi. On the afternoon of Sept. 7, 2014, Olga and Lucia were murdered, their heads crushed. Twelve hours later, Bernadetta met a similar fate, her head severed from her petite body.

The killings shocked Burundians for the nuns were well known and well loved. Some Western observers mistakenly assumed they were victims of Islamist violence, un-

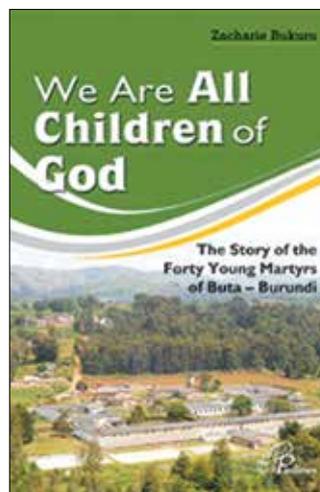
aware that Muslims are the minority in Burundi, the most Christianized state in Africa. Catholics account for 60 percent of the population and Protestants 25 percent. During the country's recent civil war, some Muslim communities, remaining neutral in the interethnic violence, provided sanctuary to families displaced by warring Christians. Within days of the crime, the police arrested a mentally handicapped man from Kamenge, an improbable perpetrator of a triple murder that appeared to be the work of professionals.

Last February, a radio confession by a man claiming to be one of three people hired to kill the nuns implicated a government official, who was later gunned down by men carrying military weapons during the turmoil that followed Burundian President Pierre Nkurunziza's controversial re-election to a third term.

"We realize that we are in something that is bigger than us, but we do not know why," the Worcester sisters told me.

After the interview in April, I became intrigued with Burundi, a poor and geographically beautiful country located in the Great Lakes Region of central Africa. Bedeviled with ferocious conflicts between its Tutsi minority and oft-oppressed Hutu majority, Burundi is also a place of extraordinary faith, as evidenced in Zacharie Bukuru's book, *We Are All Children of God: The Story of the Forty Young Martyrs of Buta-Burundi*.

Here is a tale of mystery, the mystery of faith in fraternal love that perseveres beyond the brutalities of the day. The book tells of an attack on a Catholic boarding school where Bukuru served as rector. During Burundi's civil war (1994-2005), St. Paul Minor



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Seminary, popularly known as Buta, is both a beacon of hope and place of desolation. Bukuru works devotedly to cultivate a culture of peace among his Hutu and Tutsi students, and many come to embrace wholeheartedly his message of co-existence. When marauding Hutu rebels invade the school and order the students to self-segregate—Hutus on one side, Tutsis on the other—the youths refuse. Forty are killed and many are wounded.

Bukuru is a dispassionate and poetic storyteller. The distance of years and his own deep faith enable him to tell a tale of wanton violence and loss without bitterness. Instead, a nourishing tenderness runs throughout his story, a tenderness for the youth whose lives ended prematurely, for Burundians, so desperately in need of examples of reconciliation, and for all who hunger to know if love really can outlast violence's devastation.

A desire to set the record straight, as well as inspire, motivates this narrative. As with so many events in war, there are partisan versions of the attack at Buta. (One account actually claimed seminarians fired on fleeing soldiers!) Bukuru gives context with a brisk history of Burundi, a former monarchy under Belgium rule for much of the 20th century. The country's independence in 1963 was followed by a succession of military coups among Tutsi elite that provided little benefit for the excluded Hutu majority. In 1972, after a fierce anti-Tutsi rebellion in the south, the government killed an estimated 300,000 Hutu males and members of the Hutu elite. Burundi has yet to reckon with this massacre, Bukuru notes.

The 1993 assassination of a democratically elected Hutu president pitched the country into full-scale civil war. Hutu and Tutsi militias, many of them refugees from 1972 and the war in neighboring Rwanda, roamed the countryside wreaking havoc on the population.

Amid this convulsion of inter-ethnic violence, Bukuru strives tirelessly to cultivate fraternal harmony among youth from both communities. He offers cultural and recreational activities, and, most significantly, carefully facilitated evenings of dialogues where students, burdened with deformed understandings of the past, could pour out “all the hatred mixed with fear” held deep in their hearts.

“This dialogue gave us relief,” Bukuru writes. “It healed us.” Reading of his approach, I thought of the many divided communities around the world that could benefit from such honest unburdening.

For all his striving, the good rector cannot keep the war at bay. Early on the morning of April 30, 1997, Hutu rebels fire on the school from the surrounding hills, then swarm the senior dormitory, shooting at the students within for several hours. The teacher, who once promised to protect his students “whatever arose,” is trapped in his house behind a fireproof, hiding beneath a grass mat.

The pathos of this story—an account of trauma as well as sacrifice—is inescapable: a rector recalls the ignominious murder of the students he devoted himself to and ultimately could not protect. Bukuru’s anguish is revealed in the care he takes to include, through testimony of survivors and his own recollections, as many details about his boys as he can. Within the dormitory, the seminarians endure a brutal, persistent and terrifyingly intimate violence. Survivors describe machete-wielding militants smacking the youths, pointing guns to their heads and repeatedly demanding they separate. Amid the bloodletting, faith’s pushback is equally personal. Some students risk their lives to tend to the wounded and dying. Others console each other with calls for courage and prayers. “Holy Mary our Mother, why all this bloodshed?” cries one student, before asking the Lord “to forgive

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Pilgrimage

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them, for they know not what they do.”

We who know war remotely can delude ourselves into thinking death is somehow less horrible for those who live in places of constant violent conflict. It is not. The terror felt at Buta is amply recorded here, which makes its example of faith all the more compelling.

In the Christian tradition, a martyr is one who gives witness to the truths of the faith at the cost of his or her life. Citing the observations of an Italian theologian, the American writer Lawrence Cunningham once noted that unlike the ancient martyrs who died in *odium fidei* (because of hatred for the faith), contemporary martyrs like Maximilian Kolbe and Óscar Romero, killed by fellow Christians, died in *odium amoris* (because of hatred for love). The latter category applies to the martyrs of Buta, whose assailants energized themselves for killing sprees with hymns to Jesus. Refusing to segregate, the seminarians gave witness to the truth that we are all

children of God. They gave witness to the durability of love.

But tales of martyrs invariably confound and sometimes feel suspect. Are they narratives we construct to cope with unfathomable cruelty? Who knows, for sure, if all 40 students killed on that fateful April morning “chose” death? Maybe in those final moments, as blood and breath seeped from their bodies, some desired desperately to live.

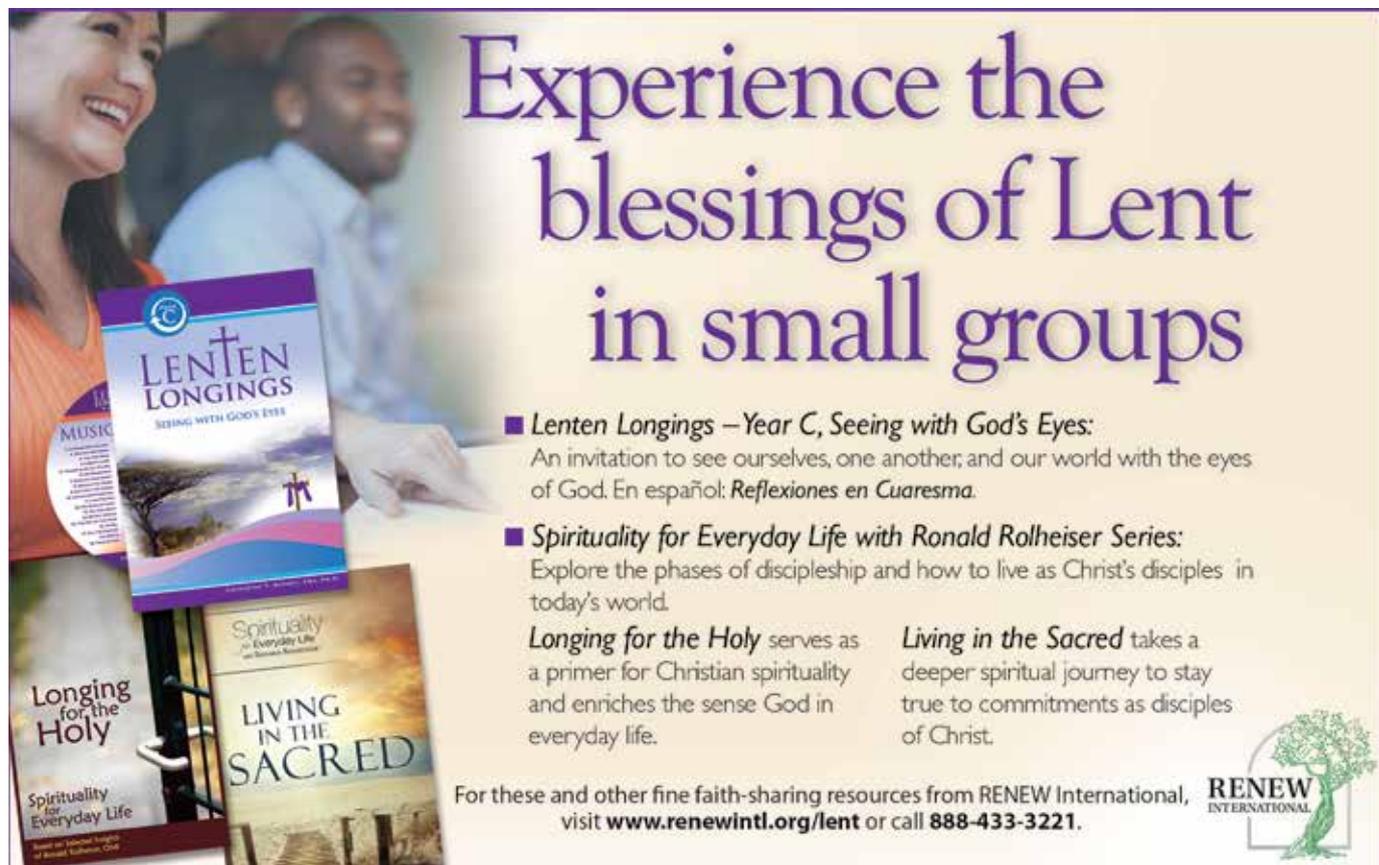
And yet, significant witness continues to emanate from Buta. Remarkably, the assault did not shutter the seminary. Bukuru and his students returned to finish the school year and build a shrine to the Martyrs of Fraternity, a sight of pilgrimage for Burundians and internationals alike.

And what of the witness of the former rector, the survivor forced to see the vicious undoing of his project in fraternal love? Commissioned by his bishop to give a “full account” of the events at Buta, he first wrote his sto-

ry in Kirundi, the native language of Burundi, in 2003 when the country was still in the grip of a civil war. The book’s French translation appeared in 2004. An English translation was released last summer. At the time, Burundi was tense from the violence that preceded the controversial presidential elections and took the lives of 200 people. (Some observers believe the killing of the Xaverian nuns was a precursor to these events.) Despite the difficult climate, 100 people showed up and asked penetrating questions about forgiveness. Of course, Bukuru was there. He had come up from Mary Queen of Peace, the monastery he established at Buta, where he continues to cultivate young men of peace, prayer and fraternal love.

The good rector has not left his students, after all.

CLAIRE SCHAEFFER-DUFFY, a writer, lives with her husband at the Saint Francis and Therese Catholic Worker in Worcester, Mass.



The advertisement features a background image of a smiling woman and a man. In the foreground, there are three book covers: 'Lenten Longings: Seeing with God's Eyes' (Year C), 'Longing for the Holy: Spirituality for Everyday Life', and 'Living in the Sacred: Spirituality for Everyday Life'. The text is in purple and black, with a purple header.

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Prepare to Rejoice

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT (C), DEC. 13, 2015

Readings: Zep 3:14–18; Is 12:2–6; Phil 4:4–7; Lk 3:10–18

“He proclaimed the good news to the people” (Lk 3:18)

Throughout the biblical tradition, in both the Old and New Testament, there are prophetic denunciations of sin, personal and corporate, that call people back to the ways of God. What often gets lost is that these exhortations are not intended primarily as threats to condemn but as wakeup calls for people lost in the false promises of the world. The prophetic call to repent is a gift of forgiveness, an invitation to freedom, a promise of love. It offers the hearer to come and see that God is good, and what God intends is for your benefit and flourishing. Repentance is the path to rejoicing. At the very heart of the promise of the Messiah is a call to get ready to experience what it means to be fully human. God does not condemn but waits to offer forgiveness. Prepare to rejoice!

The prophet Zephaniah asks the people of Israel to “Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem!” But why? “The Lord has taken away the judgments against you, he has turned away your enemies. The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall fear disaster no more.” God’s promise is joy, gladness, love, exultation. Our lives are intended for a festival.

Yet this offer of festivity is not blind to the reality of suffering and death or to the sinfulness that courses through us. And it is not an offer that pretends

every day in this world has been joyous. But the offer and the promise resonate with us and with what we were created for. We mourn the suffering, the pain and the sin of this world—including our own—because we were made for more. We are being invited to more. Sing, Zion, sing! Shout aloud, Zion! God is with you, and there is a festival God has prepared for you and for the whole earth.

John the Baptist continued to tell the story of the prophets before him, though, in his rough camel hair clothing, he could not be mistaken for a party person setting out a spread of locusts and honey for the desert glitterati. Yet in John’s self-abnegation, his asceticism is a call to focus—the opposite of today’s constant self-distraction—on God’s message of promise. John’s sharp critique of the marriage of Herod Antipas and Herodias is a condemnation of an “anything I want goes” culture, which amuses itself as a sedative from reality. Wake up, says John; face God’s truth. This is not fun when you are caught up in the silliness of trivialities and trinkets, but a bracing slap to the face to seek true joy. Sing Zion, sing! Shout aloud, Zion!

You do not need the newest clubs or thousand-dollar champagne to sing and dance; you do not need the newest clothes and designer drugs to shout aloud. The ephemeral draws us away

from recognizing true joy. Paul from his prison cell wrote to the Philippians telling them to “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.” Not because Paul had the things of this world but because God was with him in his prison cell as he wrote to the Philippian church.

Paul, in light of his encounter and life with the risen Lord, asked that joy be placed at the center of the Christian life, encouraging the Philippians to live their lives in gentleness, without worry or fear, because the Lord, who had come, was coming again. Paul experienced that the heart and mind turned to God were always ready to rejoice, protected by “the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding.”



PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Reflect on John the Baptist’s call. Where does John’s call to repentance strike you most deeply? How are you rejoicing now in the promises of God? How are you preparing for the coming of the Messiah?

It was to prepare the people for this joy that John the Baptist came, calling on the people to act with love and righteousness to one another, to turn from sin, in order to accompany a people prepared for the Messiah. Was John the Messiah? No, John said; he was preparing the harvest for the Messiah, who had “his winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.” This is good news, a promise of joy to the people who will hear God’s call and await the Messiah’s coming. We are the people being prepared to rejoice always.

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Embrace the Smallness

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT (C), DEC. 20, 2015

Readings: Mi 5:1–4; Ps 80:2–19; Heb 10:5–10; Lk 1:39–45

“Blessed is the fruit of your womb” (Lk 1:42)

The coming of the Messiah seems to be so small, so little, that it is breathtaking when you recognize the truth of the incarnation as God’s majesty coming to live among lost humanity. God chose to be born as an infant among us, one like any other, the Messiah Jesus coming as a baby boy to a world so rough and cruel. He was a child utterly dependent upon his parents for his care and sustenance. He was so small, so little.

Bethlehem, far from a city, was itself a small, insignificant town. The prophet Micah tells us that the Messiah would be born in “Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah.” Ephrathah is here associated with a region or clan of Judah, which is itself designated as “little.” Micah, however, promises that from this town “shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days,” a messianic prediction from the little town that also gave to us Jesse and his son King David.

The smallness of it all extends to the mother of Jesus, Mary, a young woman or girl. In antiquity girls and women were accounted as small in many ways, but she is called to be the mother of the Lord. We also encounter here the vulnerability of women in antiquity, for there is another mother associated with Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who faced the reality of ancient childbirth. In Genesis 35, Rachel, a wife of Jacob, went into “hard labor” after they had left Bethel, and while her son Benjamin survived

childbirth, Rachel did not: “So Rachel died, and she was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem), and Jacob set up a pillar at her grave; it is the pillar of Rachel’s tomb, which is there to this day” (Gn 35:19–20).

Women knew the reality of childbirth and the vulnerability of womanhood, so Mary does not run to priests, scribes or scholars, to tell of her encounter with God but to her relative Elizabeth. Elizabeth was open to God and “filled with the Holy Spirit” said, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.” Mary and Elizabeth, shocked and startled as they might have been that God was working through them, were nonetheless open to God in them and among them.

God came into the world as an infant; and the Incarnation was entrusted to women, who would not only bring the child to us but care for him among us. They were willing to see and embrace the smallness of us all in light of God’s mighty work. They were open to the love necessary and due to any child and open to God’s saving power in their midst. The Messiah was entrusted to the natural processes of human life, in the most vulnerable of hands, in the most vulnerable of ways, so that God’s glory and salvation would not overwhelm us, but accompany us in solidarity with the suffering of all of us small and little people, in order to teach us the value of human life and the greatness of each of life. By each of her

actions, Mary is telling us: Prepare to adore him.

For this is how God chose to come, not had to come, to humanity. From a human point of view, the Incarnation is a crazy plan, choosing people too little and too vulnerable. But as a result, it is the best for us: being born among us, being raised among us, he came as one of us, but as God among us, he shone a light on our true dignity and God’s might in humility.

In this way, says the prophet Micah, the Messiah would “stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his

PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Do you ever feel too small or insignificant to share in God’s plan? Do you think of yourself as too vulnerable to participate in God’s plan? How does Jesus’ incarnation help you to understand God’s love and care for you?

God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth.” By allowing us to embrace our littleness, our smallness and vulnerability, God also allows us to grasp our eternal value. For the Messiah, Jesus Christ, born as a little one to protect and save us, is here to manifest God’s greatness and majesty for all people. No one is too little, too small, too insignificant to share in God’s plan. He comes to share God’s love for us. Oh come, let us adore him.

JOHN W. MARTENS

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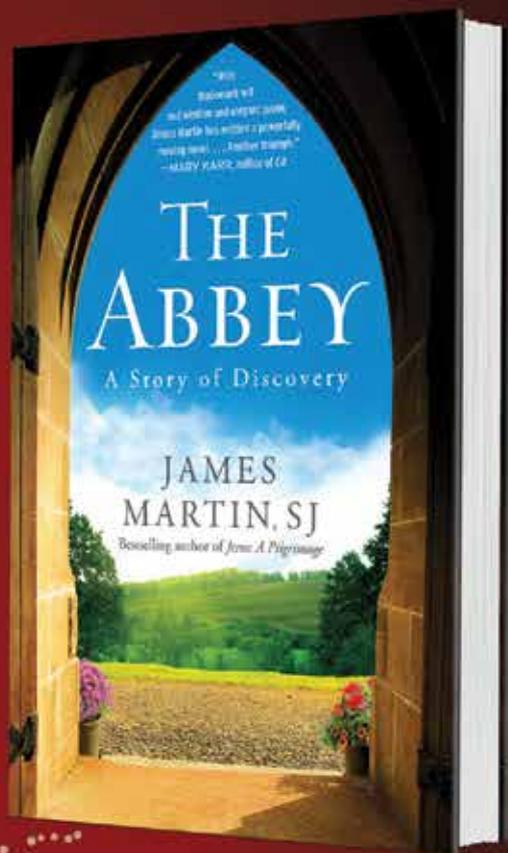
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