America

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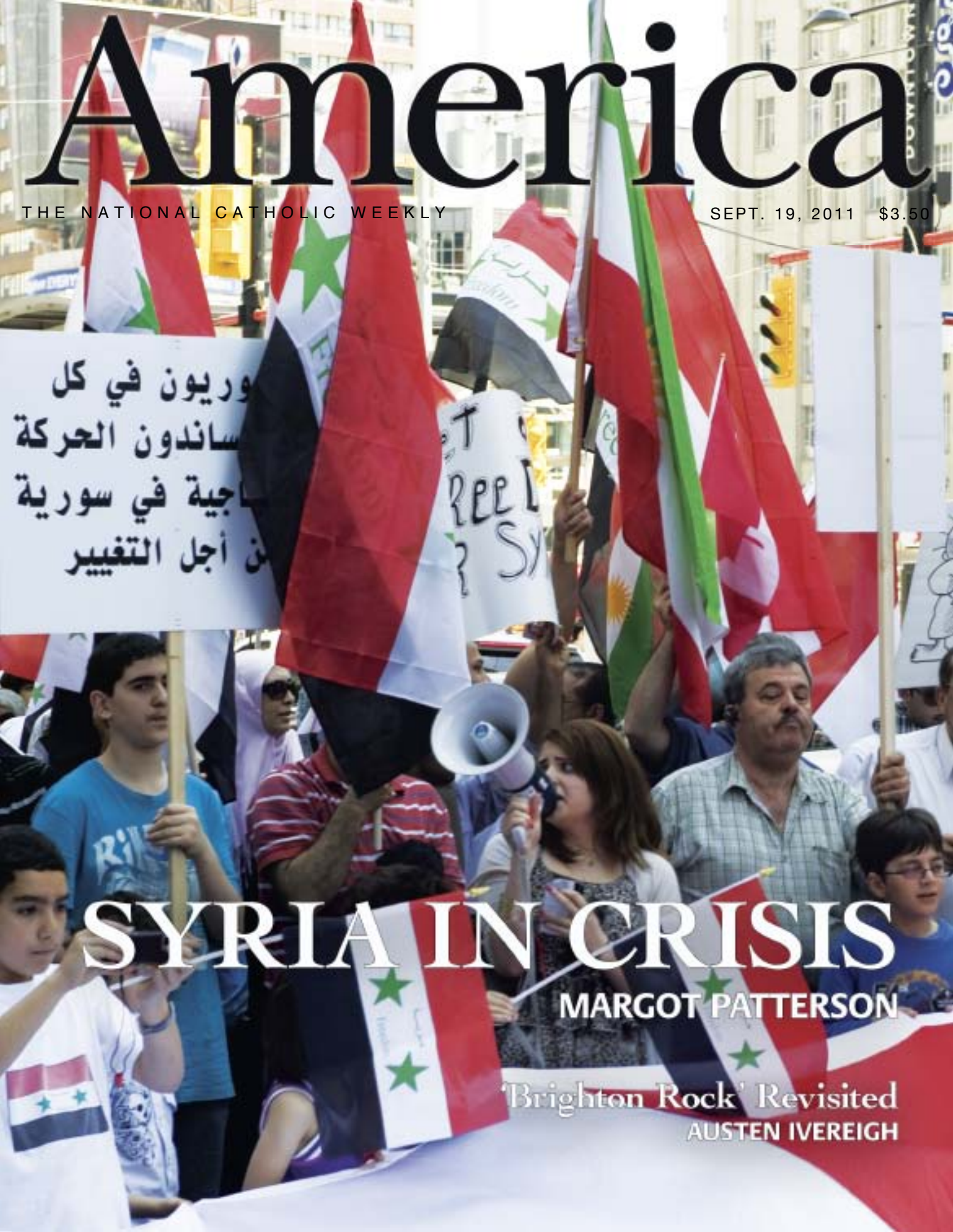

SYRIA IN CRISIS

MARGOT PATTERSON

'Brighton Rock' Revisited

AUSTEN IVEREIGH

OF MANY THINGS

Most people today think of social networking as an electronic activity, but long before I used a cellphone and an iPod Touch, reading formed my social network in one important respect. Reading connected me, often serendipitously, to friends—fictional, historical and contemporary.

As a high school freshman reading J. D. Salinger's novel *Franny and Zooey*, I found compelling Franny's obsession with a wandering Russian peasant who prays the Jesus prayer. Then I came across *Way of a Pilgrim* and realized (Eureka!) this must have been the book Franny read, for it describes that peasant. Years later while on a retreat, I picked up the *Philokalia*, a collection of Eastern Orthodox writings by the *starets*, or holy men, who taught that prayer. From Oz, I had landed in Kansas.

Since college, I have read about the Bloomsbury group, an intellectual community that coalesced in London in the 1920s and '30s. My attention fixed briefly on the life and writings of Virginia Woolf, then on the paintings by Vanessa Stephen (Virginia's sister) and Duncan Grant and the Omega Workshops of decorative art they founded with the art critic Roger Fry. Last year I discovered Susan Cheever's *American Bloomsbury*, which describes a group outside Boston, shepherded by Ralph Waldo Emerson, that included the family of Louisa May Alcott, Margaret Fuller, Nathaniel Hawthorne and Henry David Thoreau. That discovery was like finding Bloomsbury's lost relatives. I'm re-reading Alcott and Thoreau, armed with new insights about intellectual communities.

During my 20s, I binged on books by Thomas Merton, the Trappist monk whose writings introduced thousands like me to his literary dialogue partners. Through reading, I tracked down, among others, Julian of Norwich, Flannery O'Connor and Dorothy Day. But in pointing toward the Catholic Church, Merton linked me to a community much larger than Facebook.

In graduate school, I met friends of Merton's friends. In one class sat Robert Ellsberg, now publisher of Orbis Books, then completing *By Little and By Little*, a collection of Day's letters, and Sally Fitzgerald, editor of *A Habit of Being: Letters of Flannery O'Connor*. I could see that the faith of Day and O'Connor animated the lives, not just the books, of my two "classmates." That caused me to read Day and O'Connor more deeply, trying to discern what their example meant for me.

As a young editor at Commonweal, I hit a friends-of-Merton jackpot: Patrick Jordan, now managing editor, had lived next door to Day and had been her coworker as a former editor of The Catholic Worker newspaper; his children had grown up in her venerable arms. Anne Robertson, production editor when I joined the staff, was still exchanging letters with Merton's close friend Robert Lax, a poet then living in Greece. She and Lax had worked with the artist Emil Antonucci on Jubilee, a progressive Catholic journal now defunct. And because Antonucci was the designer at Commonweal and at Church magazine, it was my privilege to work with him for two decades. That changed me.

Knowing Jordan and Ellsberg, two committed young men whose lives were shaped by encountering Day, I could imagine Merton at the Worker decades earlier learning from her, observing her. Through Robertson and Antonucci, I felt party to the creative camaraderie they shared with Lax, and he with Merton. These friendships took place among peers, but they stretched across generations, and all of them were linked to reading Merton.

Reading can and does link people socially. A life of reading can lead one to community and lifelong friendships, some of which inspire and deepen faith.

KAREN SUE SMITH

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Cover: Syrians gather for a rally for Syrian freedom on May 21, 2011 in Toronto, Ontario Canada. Shutterstock.com/Paul McKinnon

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ON THE WEB

Kerry Weber profiles a Catholic mother who lost her husband on **Sept. 11, 2001.** Plus, clips from the original film **"Brighton Rock"** and a podcast discussion of Peter De Vries's novel, **The Blood of the Lamb**.
All at americamagazine.org.

Respect for Life?

Religion, in a variety of ways, has moved to the forefront of the Republican primary campaigns. The list of candidates includes several Protestant evangelicals, two Mormons and two Catholics. On "life" issues, all of these candidates proclaim themselves to be anti-abortion; but Catholic teaching emphasizes an extensive range of life issues beyond abortion—from stem cell research to hospital care to opposition to torture and to the death penalty.

Among the candidates, Gov. Rick Perry of Texas is the one who in his speeches and writing has most publicly identified himself with Jesus Christ. At the same time, although most politicians support the death penalty, Mr. Perry's record stands out for its severity.

Governor Perry has overseen the execution of 234 persons in 11 years, more than any other governor in modern history. And he is proud of this. "If you don't support the death penalty and citizens packing a pistol, don't come to Texas," he once wrote. He vetoed a bill that would have spared the mentally retarded and criticized a Supreme Court decision that ruled out executing juveniles. His most controversial decision was to allow the execution in 2004 of Cameron Todd Willingham, who had been convicted of killing his three daughters in 1991 by burning down his own house. An independent investigator concluded that the initial examination of the fire was based on junk science and shoddy techniques and that Willingham could not be guilty. But when the investigator presented the report to Governor Perry, he ignored it and allowed the execution to proceed that very day.

That is not the moral or religious leadership expected of a president.

Family Matters

In advance of Hurricane Irene, government officials began using an unfamiliar phrase to describe preparations for the storm. Press releases distributed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency highlighted the "Federal Family's Preparation and Response." On Aug. 28 Janet Napolitano, the secretary of homeland security, announced that "the entire federal family is working as one to support the affected states."

The administration's critics were quick to respond. Ed Henry, the White House correspondent for Fox News, tweeted: "Branding alert: Interesting how WH dropped word 'government'...calling it 'federal family.'" "If my 'family' was $14 trillion in debt I'd put myself up for adoption," Michelle Malkin sneered. The phrase may be part of a rebranding campaign, but it is not new. Both George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush used the term at different times. Even the now infamous Michael D. Brown, the director of FEMA in 2004, referred to the "federal family" in remarks before Hurricane Katrina.

Catholics know, of course, that the government is not a family and cannot pretend to be one. Pope Benedict XVI recently reiterated the church's teaching that family and marriage are the foundation of society. Yet sometimes, especially in times of emergency, the nuclear family needs support. That support can come from the church or other charitable institutions, but also from the government. For some people—elderly widows, abused children, the disabled—public institutions are the only entities that can provide the help they need. This simple but contentious fact was confirmed in the wake of Hurricane Irene, when government workers played an essential role in rescue and recovery. Call them family, neighbors or civil servants; the name does not matter. What matters is that they were there.

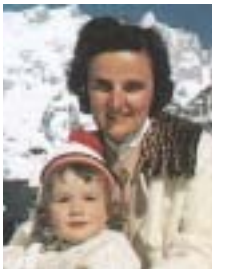
An iBishop?

On Aug. 24 Steve Jobs announced his resignation as the chief executive officer of Apple Inc., which he co-founded in the 1970s. Much laudatory commentary followed. Mr. Jobs changed the world of movies and music and books. He did not supply new plots and images but changed how the people watched what they wanted to see. He did not compose new tunes and lyrics but changed how the world received, stored and played music. He did not write new books but changed how the world read and kept and reread those books. The entrenched music and publishing industries felt threatened and resisted but eventually came around, seeing that Mr. Jobs was ultimately working with them.

"Mr. Jobs did not so much see around corners; he saw things in plain sight that others did not," wrote David Carr in The New York Times. Steve Jobs saw what modern people wanted before they knew they wanted it. And he knew how to make it available and attractive. The Apple store on Fifth Avenue in New York is open 24 hours a day.

One hears that young people want what the church has to offer, but they cannot find it in that church. The delivery system fails. Imagine a Bishop Steve Jobs. What would his diocese—the Diocese of Appleton, perhaps—look like? How would entrenched interests react to his challenge? What is out there in plain sight that he would see and point out to fellow church leaders? How would he change not the message, not the content, not the words but the delivery system? The human side of the church could use the energy of new vision.

The Universal Call



ST. GIANNA BERETTA MOLLA WITH DAUGHTER LAURA FROM CNS

Ever since the Second Vatican Council spoke of the "universal call to holiness," there has been a move to recognize more lay men and women as saints, as models of sanctity for lay Catholics. Several contemporary lay women and men have already been raised to the "glories of the altar," among them St. Gianna Molla (1922-62), an Italian mother who carried a child to term rather than consent to an abortion and died in the process. Others on their way include Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati (1901-25), the charismatic Italian social activist who said, "Charity is not enough; we need social reform." In that same vein, the cause for canonization of Dorothy Day, the American-born co-founder of the Catholic Worker movement, has just been advanced. And in 2008, Louis and Zélie Martin, the devout parents of St. Thérèse of Lisieux, were beatified, a rare instance of a husband and wife recognized together.

But when it comes to recognizing saints, the church still tends to favor popes, bishops, priests and members of religious orders. In June Pope Benedict XVI released the latest list of 27 candidates for sainthood, which included martyrs in the Spanish Civil War, among them a bishop and 13 Daughters of Charity; an Austrian priest killed in Buchenwald; the Mexican foundress of a women's religious order; an 18th-century Italian diocesan priest and a French Dominican priest who founded the Bethany community. While there are plenty of holy Fathers and Mothers on that list, where are the holy mothers and fathers?

Fifty years after the council, in the midst of the church's continued invitations for laypeople to lead holy lives, why are there still relatively few role models for the laity? Surely there are many who fit the definition of holiness: men and women who, aware of God's love for them, return that love through service to their neighbor, specifically in their humility, charity and self-sacrifice.

Though the logistics may be difficult, the church should find a way to recognize models of holiness in men and women who lived "ordinary" lives. These would include: someone other than a saint from the very earliest days of the church (like St. Joseph), someone who was not royalty (like St. Elizabeth of Hungary), a married person who did not found a religious order in later years (like St. Bridget of Sweden), a couple who did not initially plan to live as "brother and sister" while married (like Louis and Zélie Martin), someone who did not found a religious community or social movement (like Dorothy Day) and someone who did not die in terrible circumstances (like St. Gianna Molla).

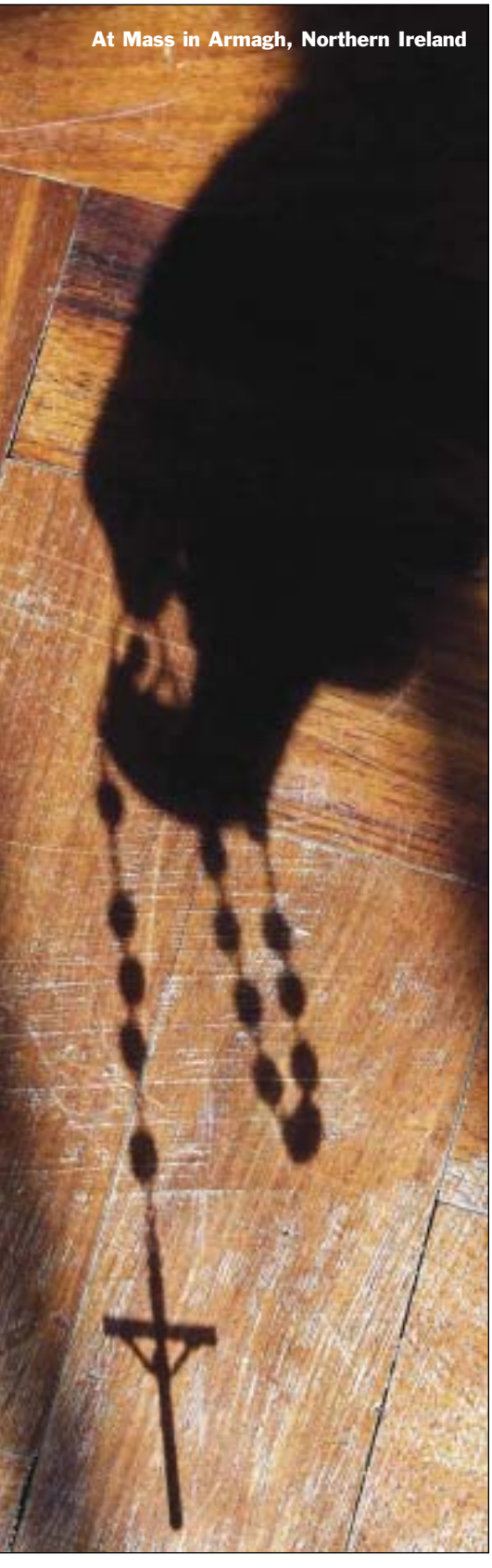
While Catholics recognize that the canonized saint needs to have led a life of "heroic sanctity," many lay Catholics long for someone they can emulate in their daily lives. Which raises a question: Who is holier—Mother Teresa or the church-going mother who for decades takes care of an autistic child? Pope John Paul II or the pious man who serves as a director of religious education while holding down two jobs to support his family? The answer: they are all saintly in their own ways. "Heroic sanctity" comes in many forms—and it includes both those whose faith inspires them to found a religious order and those whose faith enables them to care for a sick child for years on end.

Three factors frustrate the desire for more lay saints. The first is the persistent belief that ordination or taking religious vows represents a higher level of holiness than does, say, raising a child. But even the saints disagreed with this idea. "Holiness is not the luxury of a few," said Mother Teresa. "It is a simple duty for you and for me."

The second factor is the public nature of the lives of the priests and members of religious orders who are canonized. It is easier to see the personal impact of a founder or foundress than it is to know about a parent's care for an autistic child. This kind of hidden lay holiness will be less likely to attract the devout simply because it is less well known. So, in the case of the ordinary layperson, the church's requirement that a local devotion spring up around the person will be frustrated.

The third factor is the arduous, time-consuming and expensive canonization procedure, which only religious orders and dioceses have the financial resources and technical know-how to navigate. Not many children of holy parents can manage the complex process required by the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. Once the mother of the autistic child dies, who will advance her cause? Few might know of her holiness, yet her example might speak to more Catholics than even that of a pope.

If the church hopes to offer relevant models of holiness for laypeople, it is time to make the canonization process far more accessible and far less expensive for those who knew a holy husband, wife, mother, father, friend or neighbor.



At Mass in Armagh, Northern Ireland

SEXUAL ABUSE CRISIS

Vatican Calls Claims of Irish Interference 'Unfounded'

The Vatican forcefully denied undermining efforts by Irish bishops to protect children from sexual abuse in an 11,000-word response to the findings of an Irish judicial panel on the handling of abuse allegations in the Diocese of Cloyne. According to the response, released on Sept. 3, the Vatican recognizes "the seriousness of the crimes" detailed in the Cloyne Report and "has sought to respond comprehensively."

"The Holy See is sorry and ashamed for the terrible sufferings which the victims of abuse and their families have had to endure within the church of Jesus Christ, a place where this should never happen," the response said.

The Cloyne Report, issued on July 13, had provoked harsh criticism of the Vatican from Ireland's Prime Minister Enda Kenny. In a row that shows little sign of abating, Kenny said he did not regret his accusation on July 20 before the Irish parliament that the Vatican attempted to "frustrate an inquiry in a sovereign, democratic republic as little as three years ago." Kenny said then that the report "excavates the dysfunction, disconnection, elitism and the narcissism that dominate the culture of the Vatican to this day."

The Vatican communiqué described Kenny's claim of interference as unfounded. The Vatican also said it "understands and shares the depth of public anger and frustration at the findings of the Cloyne Report," saying those feelings were reflected in the prime minister's speech. "In this regard, the Holy See wishes to make it quite clear that it in no way hampered or interfered in the inquiry into child sexual abuse cases in the Diocese of Cloyne. Furthermore, at no stage did it seek to interfere with Irish civil law or impede the civil authority in the exercise of its duties."

The Cloyne Report charged that then-Bishop John Magee of Cloyne paid "little or no attention" to safeguarding children as recently as 2008. But the report also accused the Vatican of being "entirely unhelpful" to Irish bishops who wanted to implement stronger norms for dealing with accusations and protecting children.

The Vatican said the report "brought to light very serious and disturbing failings in the handling of accusations of sexual abuse by children and young people by clerics," but it said the local bishop and his vicar general were to blame. The Vatican response emphasized three points: that the Congregation for the Clergy's concerns with the Irish bishops' 1996 child protection guidelines did not nullify the guidelines nor prevent local bishops from adopting them in their dioceses; that church officials, including bishops, are required to follow their nation's civil laws regarding mandatory reporting of crimes; and that the sexual abuse of children is a crime both in civil law and in church law.

Ireland's Deputy Prime Minister Eamon Gilmore expressed disappointment on Sept. 5 with the Holy See's response. "There was the most horrific sexual abuse of children perpetrated by clerics," he said. "The Catholic Church did not deal with that as it should have dealt with it. Let's not be distracted. Let's not miss the point."

In its response, the Vatican showed cautious openness to proposed legislation in Ireland making it a criminal offense to withhold information about child sexual abuse but specified that information conveyed within the seal of the confessional would have to remain secret.

AUSTRIA

Cardinal Meets With Reform-Minded Priests

Cardinal Christoph Schönborn of Vienna is not playing "a game of chicken" with priests calling for reforms in church practice. He is interested in getting the priests to work with him to bring new life to Viennese parishes, his spokesman said. "The situation is not as dramatic as the Austrian media make it seem," said Michael Prüller, archdiocesan spokesman on Sept. 6. "There has been no discussion of sanctions, no ultimatum, no talk of punishment," Prüller said.

The leaders of the Initiative of Parish Priests launched a Call to Disobedience in late June, urging priests to join them in saying a public prayer for church reform at every Mass; giving Communion to everyone who approaches the altar in good faith, including divorced Catholics who have remarried without an annulment; allowing women to preach at Mass; and supporting the ordination of women and married men. The initiative's membership has grown from about 300 priests to about 400, and polls taken among Austrian Catholics showed overwhelming support for the changes the priests support.

Cardinal Schönborn met on Aug. 10 with the four priests of the archdiocese who are on the presiding council of the initiative, and he plans to meet with them again soon. In late June, in a written response to the priests' Call to Disobedience, Cardinal Schönborn said he was shocked by the idea of urging priests to disobey church discipline, but he wanted to discuss with members of the initiative ways to meet the needs of Viennese Catholics. He also said that if the priests really believe they have a profound conflict of conscience in following church teaching, they should consider whether or not they want to continue as Catholic priests.

Cardinal Christoph Schönborn at prayer in St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna during a Mass last year for victims of abuse.

Many people read the cardinal's statement as an ultimatum, but "this is nothing like that," Prüller said. "There will be an ongoing debate, and there has to be an ongoing discussion of the underlying issues." The cardinal's intent in meeting with members of the initiative "is more a game of convincing and winning them over, and not a game of chicken," he said. "We don't send spies to all the parishes to make sure all the rules are kept," Prüller said, but he added that if a priest is violating church law, the situation will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Meanwhile, the president of the Austrian conference of superiors of men's religious orders has called for a "church summit" to involve all Austrian church leaders—not just Cardinal Schönborn—in discussing ways to respond to the priests' initiative and consider possible reforms. But the cardinal remains convinced that his plan for renewal and reform, aimed at helping each Catholic discover his or her mission as a member of the church, is "more likely to solve the problems in the long term," Prüller said.

In the Archdiocese of Vienna many priests are pastor of three or four parishes "and have no time for pastoral work."

"People need to recognize that everybody is called to pastor others, to serve," Prüller said. "We have to address the real needs of people in the 21st century," he said, and that probably will mean larger parishes where people are encouraged to form small groups, "which are more vibrant and better at supporting each other in the faith" and at reaching out to others.

Vouchers Boost Catholic Schools

Catholic elementary schools in Indiana are experiencing increased enrollment, in part because the state's new school voucher program has enabled more than 3,200 students to attend religious or private schools this year. The educational scholarship program, perhaps the nation's broadest voucher experiment, was passed by the state legislature in the spring. The program converts a portion of funds that would have gone to the public school system into a scholarship for use at a qualifying private school. About 70 percent of the approved state vouchers are for students opting to attend Catholic schools. The state's education department approved about 250 religious or private schools for the program, allowing them to enroll students who are given scholarship aid based on family income. The program faces a court challenge from a group of teachers and religious leaders who claim it violates separation of church and state.

Hardliner in Hebei?

Zhang Qingli, the Communist Party official who was in charge of Tibet during the crackdown on Buddhist protesters in 2008, is now the new party chief in China's Hebei Province. Hebei, which surrounds Beijing, is a stronghold of Catholic communities that have not registered with the government. Scott Flipse, deputy director at the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom and the organization's China specialist, said predicting what Zhang's appointment would mean for the Catholic Church is like "reading tea leaves." But Qingli, he said, is "known for his persecution of religious communities and his attempts to curtail foreign influence," and "his experience is such that it doesn't necessarily portend well for Vatican-Beijing relations." These relations worsened in recent months after China ordained bishops without Vatican approval and the church announced the bishops were automatically excommunicated. China also has increased pressure on unregistered Catholics.

'Shortcomings' in Abuse Procedures

An independent report commissioned by the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph to examine its policies and procedures for assessing allegations of sexual abuse of children found "shortcomings, inaction and confusing procedures," said Todd P. Graves, the former U.S. attorney who headed the investigation. The key finding of the report, released on Sept. 1 by the diocese, was that "diocesan leaders failed to follow their own policies and procedures for responding to reports" relating to abuse claims lodged against two priests. The 138-page report faulted Msgr. Robert Murphy, the diocesan vicar general, who "waited too long to advise the [diocesan] Independent Review Board…of the allegations." While still vicar general, Monsignor Murphy has been relieved of duties relating to clergy sexual abuse allegations. One issue was his delayed decision to contact police over the suspected misconduct of the Rev. Shawn Ratigan, who was eventually arrested.

From CNS and other sources.

NEWS BRIEFS

Havana's Ladies in White

On Sept. 3 **Sheila Gilbert** became the first woman president of the National Council of the St. Vincent de Paul Society. ✦ Havana's **Ladies in White** asked the Catholic Church on Aug. 31 to mediate on their behalf with Cuba's President Raul Castro to counter rising political harassment of their movement to free political prisoners. ✦ About 1.4 million people showed up for **World Youth Day's overnight vigil** and closing Mass on Aug. 20-21 at Cuatro Vientos Airport in Madrid; but organizers had planned for only about a million, and more than 250,000 pilgrims were turned away. ✦ Australian bishops welcomed a High Court decision on Aug. 31 that granted a permanent injunction against the deportation of 800 asylum seekers to Malaysia. ✦ The **Catholic Conference of Ohio** declared itself "neutral" on a November referendum on a new state law that seeks to diminish union collective bargaining rights. ✦ The California Catholic Conference has asked Californians to call Gov. **Jerry Brown Jr.** to urge his veto of a bill that would allow children 12 and older to be vaccinated against sexually transmitted disease without parental consent or knowledge.

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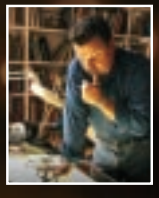

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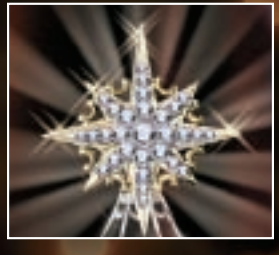

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Mr. Smith vs. Washington

Some seasoned political analysts in both parties believe that the Tea Party movement will soon be a footnote to political history. In recent months, several polls by various survey research organizations have bolstered that prediction.

Gallup polls, for instance, found that the percentage of Americans who identify with the Tea Party fell from 33 percent in November 2010 to 25 percent. The movement's strong supporters (25 percent) were outnumbered by its strong opponents (22 percent). When asked whether a Tea Party endorsement would make them more likely or less likely to support a candidate, 23 percent of Americans said more likely; 42 percent said less likely. Similarly, a Pew Research Center poll found that more people (43 percent) had a negative view of the Tea Party than had a positive view (36 percent) of it.

But whether or not the Tea Party movement fades into the political woodwork, the fact remains that anti-Washington sentiment runs wider and deeper than ever before.

In other recent Gallup polls, a record-low 13 percent of the electorate (9 percent of Independents, 15 percent of Democrats and 17 percent of Republicans) approved of Congress. This pox on Congress came on the heels of a survey asking whether, compared with how Washington has "dealt with the nation's problems in the past," President Obama and the current Congress are doing better, worse or about the same: "worse" beat "better" by nearly 4 to 1, and 39 percent labeled today's national government the "worst ever."

And in a just-released Gallup poll concerning how people perceive 24 business sectors plus the federal government, a record-high 63 percent expressed a very negative or somewhat negative view of Washington (the only worse rating was for the oil industry, at 64 percent).

Even more revealing (and chilling), a Rasmussen poll in August found that a record-low 17 percent of voters "feel the federal government has the consent of the governed."

Several Republican presidential hopefuls sound anything but hopeful regarding our national government. For instance, Rick Perry, the Republican governor of Texas and as of this writing his party's front runner, has rejected former President George W. Bush's "compassionate conservatism," denounced Bush's record as it relates to expanding Medicare and other federal programs and said he wishes to render the national government as "inconsequential" as possible in Americans' lives. Another Rasmussen survey in August found that a plurality of Americans (38 percent) share Governor Perry's wish.

Public opinion is more positive when pollsters ask about particular federal agencies or programs rather than about the Congress or Washington in general. But only a handful of federal agencies now receive approval ratings above 50 percent, and only a few, like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, NASA and the F.B.I., routinely exceed 50 percent approval.

Mass public disaffection for state and local government has also been increasing. Over the last quarter-century, the fraction of citizens who express a "great deal" or a "fair amount" of trust and confidence in state and local governments fell by 11 percent and 5 percent, respectively.

> Few federal agencies receive approval ratings over 50 percent.

A decade ago this month, Americans mourned lives lost to terrorist attacks and marveled at how so many good citizens, including so many public-spirited federal, state and local government officials and workers, risked all and rose to the occasion. It was not long, however, before the partisan political infighting, bureaucracy bashing and cynicism about our democratic institutions resumed and reached new highs.

In the 1939 movie classic "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington," Jimmy Stewart plays the young U.S. Senator Jefferson Smith, a sentimental patriot who combats political corruption that stretches from his small town to Capitol Hill. In his Senate floor filibuster, he pleads with his listeners not to lose faith in their government: "Get up there with that lady that's on top of this Capitol dome, that lady that stands for liberty.... And it's not too late.... Great principles don't get lost once they come to light. They're right here; you just have to see them again." Amen.

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

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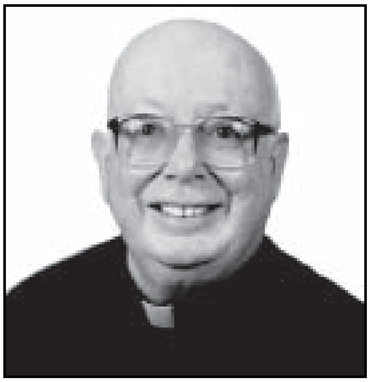

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Professor Emeritus, St. Mary's Seminary

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Syrians protest against the regime of Bashar al-Assad in front of the Syrian consulate in Istanbul, Turkey, on May 13.

As protests continue, the specter of sectarian strife looms.

Syria In Crisis

BY MARGOT PATTERSON

Six months after the Syrian uprising began, the protesters and the regime of President Bashar al-Assad remain locked in a protracted struggle. The regime has not been able to suppress the protests, and the protesters have not been able to topple the regime. The outcome is still uncertain, but time is not on the side of the government. The economy is crumbling, and the regime is increasingly isolated by the international community.

A French member of a religious order who has lived in Syria for many years describes this fraught period in the country's history: "Information is very contradictory, and each person recounts what he has seen and heard and has a tendency to generalize: an incident or attack is presented as if it is like that everywhere. There is nothing clear, either in the news or in its interpretation. Who shot first? Who responded? Who is aiding the conflict from outside?"

If people in Syria find it hard to discern what is going on, observers outside the country are at an even greater disadvantage. Western news media have focused on the courageous defiance by the protesters and the violence of the government crackdown but have paid less attention to the context in which the protests are taking place and to their effect on a country that has prided itself on its secular government and its tolerant, pluralistic society. Inside and outside of Syria, some wonder if it will remain so.

Fawaz Gerges, the director of the Middle East Centre at the London School of Economics, visited Syria recently and reports that many Syrians are "terrified of the morning after."

"The silent majority, more than 50 percent, remain on the sidelines,"

MARGOT PATTERSON *is a freelance journalist who visited Syria in March. A longer version of this article is available at americamagazine.org.*

he says. "The silent majority worries about descending into all-out war, like neighboring Iraq and Lebanon. That's what the Assad regime is capitalizing on...that the silent majority will not only remain passive but basically support the existing power structure."

Assad and Religious Minorities

Syria is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious society; it includes Arabs, Kurds, Circassians, Armenians and a variety of faiths and sects. Concerns about the future are particularly keen among religious minorities, who, together with a prosperous Sunni merchant class, have supported the Assad regime since it came to power in 1970. The Assad family is Alawite, a historically poor and disenfranchised minority in Syria comprising about 12 percent of the population. Another 10 percent of the population are Christian, who range from Greek and Syrian Orthodox to Melkite Catholics, Armenian Catholics, Assyrian Catholics, Maronite Catholics, members of the Armenian Apostolic Church and a smattering of Protestants. Druze account for about 3 percent of the population, with smaller numbers of Shiites and Yazidis. About 74 percent of the population are Sunni Muslims.

ON THE WEB
Kerry Weber profiles families of victims of 9/11.
americamagazine.org

With protesters calling for an end to the Assad regime, religious minorities are nervous about what would follow should the regime fall.

"The regime has positioned itself as the protector of minorities. There are fears among Christians, Druze, Alawites that if the regime falls, there may be vengeance," says Mohamad Bazzi, a fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York. "There may be Islamists or Islamist-leaning figures who take power; there may be score-settling."

Members of the Syrian opposition say such fears are unfounded. They point to the fact that the opposition draws from all sects, including Christians and Alawites. They emphasize Syria's long tradition of religious pluralism and speak of the spirit of unity prevailing among the demonstrators. The Friday protests have been given different names to express the inclusivity of the protesters and the diversity of their backgrounds. Thus, Azadi Friday was named for the Kurds, after the Kurdish word for freedom. The Friday protest on Easter weekend was called Azime Friday, Good Friday, in honor of Christians. Protest organizers have been quick to suppress signs of sectarianism among the demonstrators. At one point the Facebook group The Syrian Revolution 2011, which has more than 200,000 followers and has played an important role in the uprising, listed a code of ethics against sectarianism.

Like other Arab countries roiled by protests this year, Syria has a young population and high unemployment. Since coming to office after his father's death in 2000, President Bashar al-Assad has liberalized Syria's socialist economy, a move that has led to increased corruption and a growing gap between rich and poor.

Since the protests began, Mr. Assad has made some concessions to demonstrators' demands, like lifting emergency rule, and has promised more, even as his government continues to respond to the protests with lethal force. When addressing Syrians, he emphasizes unity, security and stability, warning that if Syrians divide along sectarian lines, they will fall prey to Saudi fundamentalists or to the "Zionist agenda," to civil war and to manipulation by outside powers. The choice he outlines is between Syria becoming a political football kicked around by others, like Iraq and Lebanon, or remaining an independent player on the regional and international scene. It is an argument that still holds sway with many Syrians.

In response, members of the opposition accuse the government of promoting the very sectarianism it condemns. "The regime is playing on sectarian fears, especially among the Alawite community," says Radwan Ziadeh, the founder in Syria of the Damascus Center for Human Rights Studies and the executive director of the Syrian Center for Political and Strategic Concerns in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Ziadeh says the diversity and unity of the protesters guarantee that Syria will not fall into sectarian conflict after the Assad regime falls: "The uprising in Syria is across the sects. Christians have been killed in the uprising. Alawites have been killed. This is why it is clear there will not be any religious clashes."

But fears of sectarian strife remain. While members of the opposition play down this possibility, many observers do not.

"I think the risk is real, particularly for the Alawites, in terms of vendettas and retribution for the crackdown in recent months and for past actions," says David Lesch, the author of *The New Lion of Damascus: Bashar al-Asad and Modern Syria*. "It could be potentially dangerous for other minorities, Christian minorities and Druze, who have tended to side with the regime and whom the regime has courted over the years and co-opted into supporting the government."

The Fate of Christians

Those who work with Christian communities in Syria report that Christians are anxious. Vivian Manneh, the emergency regional manager for Catholic Relief Services, works with churches in Syria to provide assistance to Iraqi refugees living there.

"It's very sensitive, the whole situation for Christians," she

says. "They feel that minorities are protected under the current regime. They are worried about what is happening and how this is going to affect them. A lot of people I talked to were saying the demonstrators are not coming with a clear agenda of what they want. If they want to change the regime, O.K. Who is the alternative? What is the request?"

Christians cannot help but be troubled by the example of neighboring Iraq, says Michel Constantin, director of the Catholic Near East Welfare Association's programs for Christians in Lebanon, Egypt and Syria. In Iraq, Christians were protected by Saddam Hussein, he notes. When his regime was toppled, Iraqi Christians were viewed as collaborators and targeted accordingly.

An old saying in Syria, that the Christians run between the legs of the Sunnis and the Alawites, describes the cautious behavior Christians usually have adopted in steering their path through Syrian society. But the middle road is not necessarily a safe one in revolutionary times. That some Christian bishops and clerics in Syria have expressed public support for the Assad regime has already evoked criticisms from some Syrians, warning that the Sunni majority will remember Christian support for Assad's "misrule."

The Muslim Brotherhood and other political parties are banned in Syria. How Sunnis would treat Christians in a post-Assad Syria is an open question.

"On the surface, we say there are excellent relations between all Christians and Muslim groups, but if the regime is not there anymore, would that be sustainable?" asks Mr. Constantin. "We don't really know the feeling of the Sunnis toward the Christians. We know relations between Christians in general and Alawites will sustain because they are both minorities."

On both sides of the conflict, views have hardened. Six months ago, Bashar al-Assad was seen as a young, popular leader whose country was unlikely to see the kind of turmoil that is affecting Egypt and Tunisia. The initial demands of the protesters were for reform, not revolution. But the many killings and arrests by the government have radicalized the demonstrators. The ongoing turmoil has had a similar effect on regime supporters.

Radical Divide

Polarization along sectarian lines is growing in Syria. "The rhetoric is growing really nasty," says Joshua Landis, director of the Center for Middle East Studies at the University of Oklahoma. The opposition accuses the government of using Alawites to kill Sunnis, a charge that is incendiary but not without truth, as the Alawites hold key positions in the military and security forces and the regime has often used predominantly Alawite forces to confront the protesters. With Iran and Hezbollah supporting the government, the opposition has turned against both and burned the flag of Hezbollah as well as the Russian flag—an attempt by the opposition to demonstrate it rejects the entire foreign policy of Syria.

Particularly alarming to Christians and Alawites was a

chant heard among protesters on the outskirts of Damascus: "Christians to Beirut and Alawites to the grave," a slogan that could not fail to send a shiver of apprehension through both communities.

In fact both the opposition and the regime, though they decry sectarianism, seem at times to be playing to sectarian undercurrents. As a minority regime, the government cannot risk offending the Sunni Muslim majority; but in a move that seems aimed at scaring secular Sunnis and religious minorities, the government has highlighted the presence of extremist Islamists among the protesters. The opposition, for its part, sometimes makes use of freighted language that plays on anti-Alawite or anti-Shiite sentiment, thus capitalizing on Sunni-Shiite hostility that has worsened throughout the Middle East since the U.S. invasion of Iraq.

As hopeful signs, Syrians can point to both the remarkable discipline and unity the protesters have shown so far and to Syria's history as a welcoming community to many different sects and faiths. A large Armenian Christian community lives in Syria, the descendants of refugees forced out of the Ottoman Empire during the Armenian genocide a century ago. Since the U.S. invasion of Iraq, about one million Iraqi refugees have found safe haven in Syria, including most of the Iraqi Christians forced to flee. Syrians point out that Syria's first post-colonial prime minister was a Christian.

"Syria does not have any history of sectarian violence or religious conflict," Mr. Ziadeh says. While true, Joshua Landis notes that sectarianism is never buried too far below any political question in Syria. While Syrians may wish to see themselves as superior to their Iraqi and Lebanese neighbors, whose political conflicts have spun into sectarian civil war, the same sectarian divisions threaten to tear at the communal fabric.

Why is sectarianism on the rise now? Syria has always been one of the most nationalist and least religious societies in the Middle East, Mr. Gerges notes. But in moments of tension, people fall back on familiar affiliations, whether with the church or the mosque. The sectarian divide in Syria is real but masks the greater fault lines that are economic and political—divides that in the last six or seven years have become particularly pronounced.

"One of the major blunders of the current regime is that it has allowed a tiny business minority to suck the blood out of the veins of the Syrian economy. This has fueled the current tensions," Mr. Gerges says. "The sectarian tensions are also fueled by the economic and social tensions. There are many poor Alawites, but most of the poor tend to be Sunnis."

A Missed Chance

Is a dialogue between the protesters and the regime still possible? Opposition members say a prerequisite for dialogue is an end to violence against protesters. Some opposition leaders say it is too late for dialogue; too much blood has been spilled by the government. Between an emboldened opposition and a government that has acted brutally and clumsily, prospects for dialogue seem tenuous.

"At this stage, I really doubt that there is anything the Assad regime can do to satisfy the appetites of the opposition. The more he offers, the greater the appetite of the opposition, because the opposition now is no longer interested in tinkering with the system. They want to overhaul the system," Mr. Gerges says.

Reports of arms flowing into Syria from Iraq and Lebanon raise concerns that violence could escalate. Sectarian killings in July are a disturbing sign of where the conflict could go. On both sides, there is fear. Demonstrators believe that if they stop their demonstrations, the regime will crack down even harder on them, tracking them down and punishing them.

The supporters of the regime have their own fears, from worry about political and economic uncertainty to fears of social upheaval, economic collapse, ethnic cleansing and war.

Can Syria escape the worst of these fates? Opposition members say it can. Revolutions are unpredictable, and the end game is still not in sight, but they may have the chance to prove their case. A

Joan's Journey

BY B. G. KELLEY

While attending Catholic grade school and high school in Philadelphia, my sister, Joan, was an ardent, practicing Catholic. Then she started to slip away from the church. I urged her to come back with John the Baptist's words, "One more powerful than I is to come after me." She would sometimes embrace those words and attend Mass and go to confession. But not often. Now Joan, at 45 years of age, was dying of pancreatic cancer.

When she was a little girl, maybe 9 or 10, our family used to go to the beach in Wildwood, a working-class family resort tucked into the southern end of New Jersey. She would build sandcastles and say, "I'm going to live in a castle some day." She wanted to become a princess. At 12, I just smiled.

Years later on an autumn day, Joan pulled away from her row house in Philadelphia in a beat-up Chevy Impala on her way to Los Angeles. She was an original hybrid: a Philly row-house girl with L.A. style. She never came back. The dream she harbored while building sandcastles on the beach in Wildwood came true. She married well and wealthy; her husband, an interior designer, bought her a magnificent house—a castle, really, with a pool designed by the Walt Disney Corporation. The house sat on the highest point of Beverly Hills, overlooking the City of Angels. She settled in with what seemed to be a lasting smile on her face.

And why not? She lived in a castle; she was rich; she was beautiful in an L.A. kind of way—often mistaken for the actress Natalie Wood. Once, when my wife and I traveled to the island of Maui in Hawaii, we dined with Joan and her husband in a high-end restaurant where the tables laced the edge of an indoor pond inhabited by live flamingos. Suddenly, three of the hot-pink birds strode through the water, ignoring all the other elegant, bejeweled women seated around us and stopped at our table to stare at her.

Joan's inner beauty, though, far exceeded her outer beauty. She was an enormous giver, an enormous sharer, selfless. That trip was her gift to my wife and me: a week in Maui in a room overlooking the ocean, a room where maids turned down the bed and left a poem and an orchid on the pillow each evening.

Once, when she returned to Philadelphia for a visit, I picked her up at the airport in a car that was falling apart. "You need a new car," she said. I told her I could not afford one. Several weeks later, after she had returned to Beverly Hills, she called to say, "I'm going to buy you a new car. Go pick one out." Of course, I didn't.

Her largess did not extend to me alone. She showered gifts and money and love on everyone—parents, sisters, brothers, nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles, friends, even people she did not know well. Oh, the glow she could put on you!

Still, I sensed that she was not completely happy. Being away from the church seemed to be eating at her insides like termites. I knew she firmly believed that "once a Catholic, always a Catholic." When we visited the Santa Monica beach, she would

B. G. KELLEY *is the author of* The World I Feel, *a book of poetry.*

DIGITAL IMAGE: SHUTTERSTOCK/AMERICA

build a sand church that resembled the parish church in our old home neighborhood.

Then, on a cold, slate-gray day, my telephone rang. The conversation was brief. Joan had died. It was not as if I was unprepared. For months, the cancer in her pancreas had spread to other vital organs; her weight had dropped to 80 pounds; her eyes had sunk into her face and her voice had fallen to a whisper. Even so, I slammed down the phone, angry and confused. I wanted to place God on a witness stand to explain her death, yet I knew he had his reasons. I went on a seven-mile run to shake things out. During the run, tears filled my eyes, yet those tears did not blur my memories of her goodness. At one point I looked to the sky and envisioned Joan's face peering down on me, smiling and putting a glow on me.

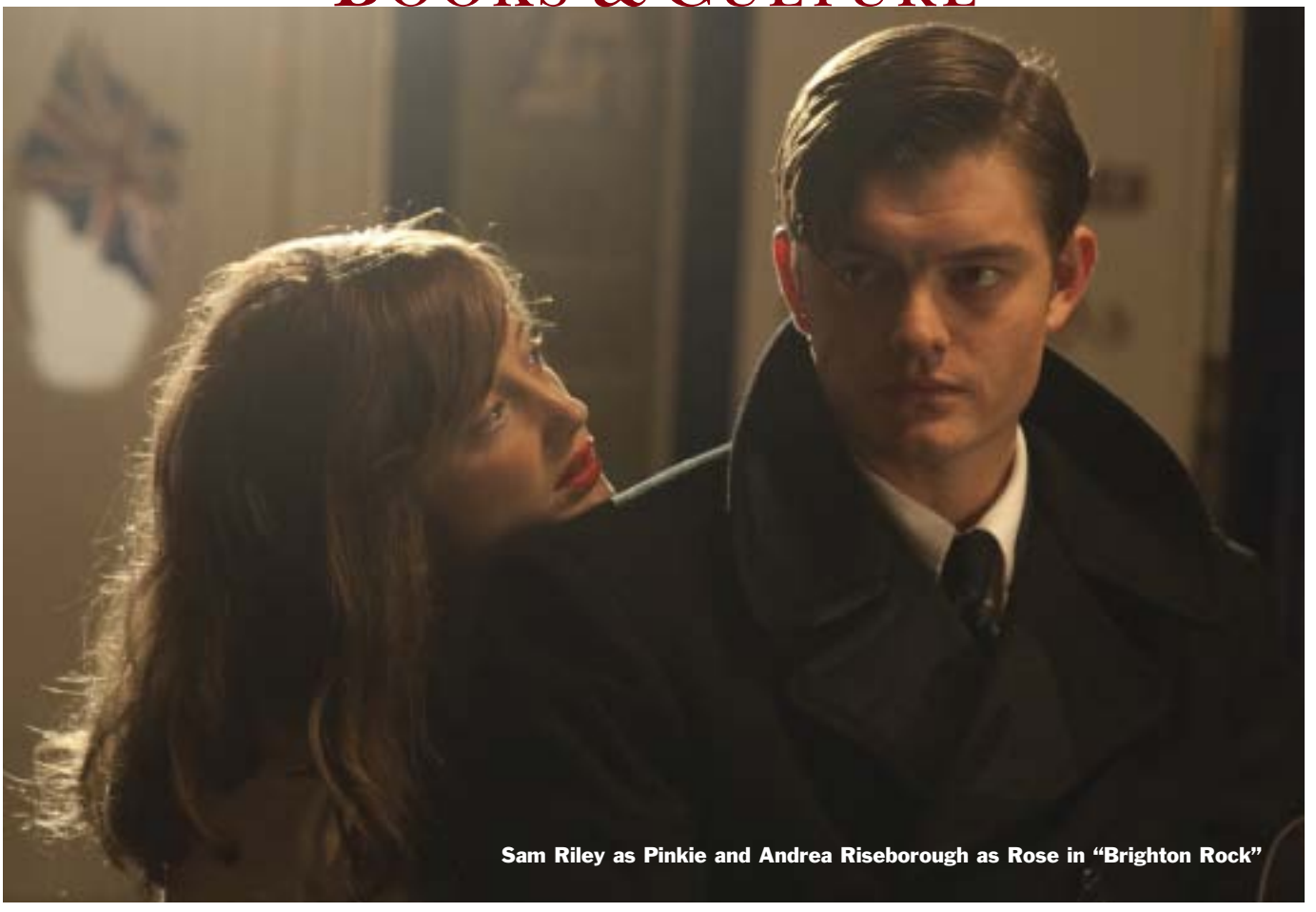
As death approached, she experienced a range of emotions: anger, denial, fear, confusion, love, peace. The peace came when she called for a priest. A Jesuit from a parish she visited on her occasional trip to Mass or confession came to her bedside and administered the sacrament of the sick.

Afterward, with a surge of energy, she said to him, "You had garlic for lunch." Caught off guard, the tall, distinguished Jesuit instinctively covered his mouth, "Oh, I'm sorry; yes, for lunch." She smiled at him and whispered, "You're cute." The 70-year-old Jesuit blushed. "Nobody has told me that in 50 years," he said. Then he heard her confession and gave her Communion. Not long after that she shut her eyes for the long sleep, but not before pinning her hopes on seeing the light of God's eyes.

At the funeral Mass I knew my face was a rumpled mess, as if I had tossed and turned in memories of her all night. That day the sun shone in blinding brilliance; it reminded me that the goodness of her life will be felt amid her sudden, blinding absence. The eulogies at Mass were a perfect scrapbook of stories filled with rays of her human sunshine. I locked my eyes on the casket framed by 200 red roses, and these words from a poem I had recently written came to mind:

Someone
who sought no private end
who lost no friend:
If there is a path to be taken,
not taken before
take it where the prize
of His life will reside,
clear and fresh
as the light of His eyes.
No longer
does time need to be conferred
to this earthly world,
but to a more
heavenly other view.

In his homily, the Jesuit, in his baritone voice, addressed the gathering: "Be comforted, my friends. When I saw Joan for the last time, she had a glow around her that I hadn't seen on anyone in a long time." A



Sam Riley as Pinkie and Andrea Riseborough as Rose in "Brighton Rock"

PHOTO: IFC FILMS/ALEX BAILEY

FILM | AUSTEN IVEREIGH

GREENE WITHOUT GOD

Rowan Joffé's 'Brighton Rock'

Rowan Joffé, the screenwriter son of Roland (director of "The Mission" and this year's "There Be Dragons"), seems to have inherited his father's penchant for films with Catholic themes. His directorial debut, "Brighton Rock," is based on an early (1938) novel by Graham Greene, which was made nine years later into a thrilling film noir with Richard Attenborough as the notoriously evil Pinkie Brown. Greene himself wrote that script with Terence Rattigan.

So all praise to Joffé *fils* for gumption. His remake is destined to be held up against one of Greene's greatest novels and what many consider the best-ever British film; and it is nearly impossible, in practice, to disassociate his version from the earlier film and book. Joffé has said he has returned to the novel, at least to its spirit. But he cannot escape the earlier film's shadow and makes liberal use of it; some scenes are almost identical.

Brighton, the English novelist Keith Waterhouse once wrote, looked like a town that was helping the police with its inquiries. Joffé's innovation is to picture the town in 1964, when it was still seedy and the threat of the death penalty—essential to the novel's theme of damnation—still hung over the criminal underworld. This allows the director to set the petty "gangster violence" of Pinkie, Colleoni and their respective thugs against a backdrop of the "gang violence" between Mods and Rockers, which adds to the air of menace. It also offers an aesthetic excuse to exploit 1960s biker movies like "Quadrophenia." (In one magnificent scene, Pinkie, in a green parka, rides a blue Lambretta along the seafront at the front of a swarm of scooters.) But locating it here also indicates where Joffé thinks the tension lies: in the

VOWED TO THIS LIFE

We face each other across the choir
in the night cathedral of our married lives
summoned by an infant's hungry wail
to chant the hours after Compline.

Hush, little baby, don't say a word....

We recite the old antiphonies
that keep at bay the terrors of the dark:
"I checked. You're safe. I'm sure.
There are no monsters under the bed."

We rise for the Nocturnes, the watches
of the night, observe the mercury rising,
proffer cool ablutions. "...a hundred and four.
Yes, certainly, we can bring him in."

Sent for the doctor / The doctor said....

Through the night the porch light burns in vigil.
Past midnight we sleep lightly, half waiting
for a ring that cracks the stillness of the hour:
"This is Officer Olsen. Are you the parent...."

We are caught up lifelong in the liturgy
of the hours, called to Matins by the ringing
in the dark, groping for the phone.
"Mom, the baby won't stop crying."

Hush, little baby, don't say a word....

When the birds begin their chorus
and the sun lights up the east
we're back to bed for consolation
and then we rise for Lauds.

MARY KAY SCHOEN

MARY KAY SCHOEN *of Alexandria, Va., is an editor and freelance writer. This poem was the second runner-up in this year's Foley Poetry Contest.*

throes of social change rather than theological drama.

This narrative supplies the film's strengths, but also its fatal weaknesses. On the plus side are its attention to detail, atmosphere, accents and clothes. The film opens with a lingering shot of bright moonlight on a swelling black sea and a menacing Brighton Pier, a place of deception and violence. By day it is all fairground music, pop guns and targets, flashbulbs, sudden shouts and aching loneliness; underneath, among the pier's iron supports, gangsters slash their foes with razor blades. This new "Brighton Rock" may not be shot in black and white, but the drab clothes, leaden skies and forbidding sea drain it of light and color.

The novel's antihero is Pinkie, a teenage gangster who, to cover up a murder, courts Rose, a wide-eyed waitress who has the power to destroy his alibi. The kind-hearted Ida, Rose's boss in this version, tries to protect her by relentlessly pursuing Pinkie. The cast is strong, with Helen Mirren as Ida and John Hurt as Mr. Corkery, while Sam Riley plays an older Pinkie, brimming with bravado and sexual insecurity, full of grimacing contempt, nerve twitching in his cheek like the tongue of a serpent. His menace and nastiness are the foil to the loving-kindness of Rose, played by Andrea Riseborough, as the lonely, intelligent girl drawn ever deeper into Pinkie's malevolence without ever being changed by it.

The relationship between the two fascinates Joffé. Rose has unknowingly witnessed accessories to a murder by Pinkie's gang; Pinkie needs to marry her to ensure she will not testify against him. His malicious intent and her hunger to love draw them closer. She adores; he hates. Yet what lies between them is more complex than a wide-eyed innocent deceived by a heartless cynic, and Joffé explores that ambiguity. Rose exhibits strength and determination in choosing to love Pinkie; and Pinkie, even while he loathes her and is unremittingly cruel, is almost caught, at moments, on the point of surrendering his guard, as if he knows that love offers another path, which he must continue to refuse.

Because it rejects the theology underlying the original novel, this film fails to deliver. The drama of salvation that Greene wove into his taut, cinematic thriller gave it its punch. Capturing the significance of what appears insignificant—the eternal destinies played out in the lives of a petty gangster and his girl—shows Greene's greatness as an artist. That was retained in the early film version but is almost entirely absent here. A scene in a church and the harsh words of a Catholic sister at the end of the film feel tacked on, incidental, part of a cultural background rather than an inescapable reality—the secularist's view, essentially, of faith.

In the original novel and film, however, Catholicism takes center stage: Pinkie and Rose are both "Romans"; it is the one thing they have in common. For Rose, a Mass-goer, heaven and love are vividly attractive; for Pinkie, who has rejected God in full knowledge,

the reality is hell ("These atheists, they don't know nothing. Of course there's hell. Flames and damnation, torments...."). In opposite ways, therefore, they are both tuned to the eternal; they know their lives are written on a bigger canvas. Pinkie has chosen damnation, consciously and with forethought; Rose is willing to embrace hell for love of him.

In the novel, Greene sets the macabre, distorted faith of Pinkie and Rose against the anodyne humanism yet obvious goodness of Ida: big-hearted, compassionate, fond of a cuddle and a glass of port with her men friends. Ida acts, paradoxically, as the vehicle of God's grace in seeking to rescue Rose from Pinkie. But her actions, like her world, are essentially mundane. Mirren gives an excellent performance that captures the character exactly. But Ida ends up being the reasonable parent who intervenes in a dangerous children's game.

This misses the importance of what Pinkie and Rose are engaged in. Pinkie may be malice itself, but he has brought Rose out of loneliness into self-giving love. Rose embodies good, yet out of love she is prepared to do evil—to cover up a murder—and even to commit suicide to keep from being parted from her lover ("She hadn't been afraid to commit mortal sin—it was death, not damnation, which was scaring her"). The thrill of the novel, captured in the earlier film, is precisely in these ambiguities, these characters and their choices cast against a transcendent horizon.

This mood is never absent from the 1947 adaptation—a sense that, as in a medieval morality play, the flames of hell are lurking just beyond the stage. What people do and choose matters. This new "Brighton Rock," however, lets the theological tension drain away. Without that it is hard to know what the drama is really about or what it is for. My wife, who had no knowledge of Greene or the novel, thought Rose a masochist and the film pointlessly, unremittingly bleak.

Yet in a strange way, it is not bleak enough. The novel's pitilessly harrowing ending, leading Rose to what the novel calls "the greatest horror of all," was softened for the 1947 film by Greene and Rattigan in order to get it past the censors. Joffé could have used the novel's ending, but preferred the Greene/Rattigan alternative. It is a "deviously brilliant ending," Joffé told Sky TV; "it's dark and ambiguous—so I felt I couldn't better that."

ON THE WEB
Clips from the original "Brighton Rock."
americamagazine.org/culture

Fair enough; that is his choice. But Joffé misses out on a crucial scene that gives both previous endings—the novel's and the 1947 film's—their power and poignancy. After Pinkie's death, Rose confesses to a priest that she wished she had killed herself and had been damned along with Pinkie. The priest, noting that *corruptio optimi pessima est* —Catholics are more capable of evil than others because of their knowledge of what they do—nonetheless speaks to her of "the appalling… strangeness of the mercy of God." In the novel and original film, then, the possibility that Pinkie could love signals that his damnation was not inevitable, and that the lovers might have been reunited, after all, in heaven. But without that scene, the drama vanishes; we are left not with theological hope but with naïve self-delusion.

Even at close to two hours, this "Brighton Rock" never feels slow or awkward. It is expertly acted and a feast for the eyes, if not the heart. But the overall effect is depressing. It leaves behind a foul taste. Instead of the reckless possibility of grace, the audience is left with a nagging doubt: that perhaps the world really is like this Brighton—a seedy place of transient cheap thrills, leading out to nothingness, like a pier stuffed with arcade games. Onto it stray psychotics and naïfs, but normality—loveless and mundane—is eventually restored and tedium resumes. Joffé's "Brighton Rock" ends up approving that secular humanist ideal and betrays what Greene, as a Catholic and an artist, intended.

AUSTEN IVEREIGH *is the author of* Faithful Citizens.

ON THE RISE

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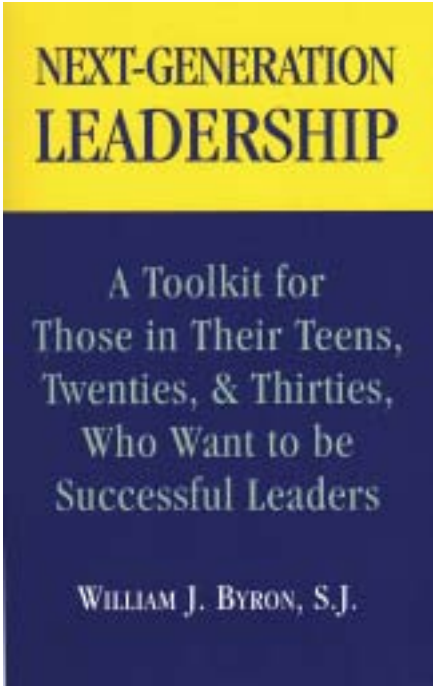
By William J. Byron, S.J.
Univ.of Scranton Press. 291p $25 (paperback)

We all assume that we know what a leader is and what leadership entails. The theme is prominent in the Taoism of Lao Tse (604-531 B.C.), in Thucydides' portrait of Pericles, in Niccolò Machiavelli's *The Prince* (1513, 1532), in Max Weber's writing on charismatic authority. The Bible offers foundational stories of Moses the liberator, the valorous if flawed King David, the surpassingly wise Solomon. But once you ask what leadership really is (is it a position or a function, for example?), clarity vanishes.

In fact, serious studies of leadership first developed disciplinary and methodological focus only at the turn of the 20th century. (The very term "leadership" came into popular English usage only then.) Until about 1930, leadership was identified with the influence of "great men." In the 30s and 40s social psychologists began to concentrate on how leadership emerges in groups (at first small groups, but then, puzzlingly, in large groups or organizations as well). In the 40s and 50s, the key question became what traits might be discovered to be universally present in leaders. When responses to that question became inconclusive and even contradictory, emphasis shifted in the 50s and 60s to the identification of key behavioral patterns (leadership as a form of behavior). In the 60s and 70s, many studies focused on developing situational theories of leadership, emphasizing the contingency that is unavoidable in all organizational life.

The most significant single study of leadership late in the century was undoubtedly James MacGregor Burns's *Leadership*, published in 1978. Whereas social psychologists and students of management had previously dominated the field, Burns



approached it as a political scientist concerned with moral values and common purposes. Distinguishing two forms of leadership, transactional and transformational, he advocated the latter especially and understood it to occur "when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality."

Burns significantly influenced the explosion of leadership studies published in the 1980s. Most of these shared a focus on excellence, entailing a covert return of the "great figure" theory of leadership. (You studied the "best" companies and the "best" C.E.O.'s.) They were also marked by an increasing realization that a multidisciplinary approach was necessary. In the probing vision of Joseph C. Rost, they were all also beholden to an industrial view of society that centered on management. Rost pleaded "for a new leadership narrative with revised myths and rituals that fit the postindustrial paradigm…in the postmodern world of the twenty-first century."

In the continuing flood of leadership programs and literature, young people beginning their first jobs (or vocations) have been generally overlooked. It is just this population that William J. Byron, S.J., effectively addresses in this book. It is many things in one: an anthology of insightful and inspiring business stories; an annotated bibliography of the vast literature; a manual of leadership opportunities (how to run meetings, how to write an op-ed); and, throughout, a sustained reflection on how faith can influence leadership.

Byron, former president of the University of Scranton and The Catholic University of America, has also taught economics and social ethics at three other universities and is the author of numerous books known for their practical wisdom and cogent prose. *Next Generation Leadership* offers a typically direct understanding of leadership as "the art of inducing others to follow" or "the art of inducing change." Its first three chapters offer a kind of foundation for future leaders, explaining the dimensions of leadership, surveying a range of prominent examples from political, business and church life, and analyzing what he calls "a leadering attitude," with its various styles and competencies (the more leaders master certain competencies, the more effectively they can alternate their styles, putting them "on manual, not autopilot," as Byron puts it).

In the short, punchy chapters that

follow (4 through 11), Byron assembles his "leadership tool kit." Young readers are reminded that good leaders listen. They learn to be effective speakers. They work at their writing. They are readers. They value critical, practical intelligence. Cultivating their memories helps them to be more present to their colleagues (as does experience in the theater!). They can make decisions. They are ready to effect change (another summary definition of leadership).

In the last two of these chapters, on decision making and effecting change, Byron's personal history and strength as a Christian ethicist come especially to the fore, as he introduces the lessons of Ignatian group discernment and emphasizes the vision necessary for significant change. This is still more the case in his concluding chapters on the ethics of leadership (he is hopeful that a more communitarian ethos may be revived in our country) and the classic notion of the servant-leader (a term coined by Robert Greenleaf, who is perhaps Byron's favorite authority). With James L. Connor, S.J., he has also written an extensive Appendix that presents "Principles of Ignatian Leadership" ("unapologetically Christian and…completely countercultural") for use by young leadership training groups who want their leadership to be faithful and their faith to lead.

The book is written for emerging leaders. Their elders, before making a gift of it to "the next generation," can learn from it as well—not to mention leaders of the church at every level who are called to a more dialogical, collaborative and transparent dedication to our all too often sinful but also always holy church in changing times.

LEO J. O'DONOVAN, S.J., *is president emeritus of Georgetown University, and past president of the Catholic Theological Society of America.*

BILL WILLIAMS

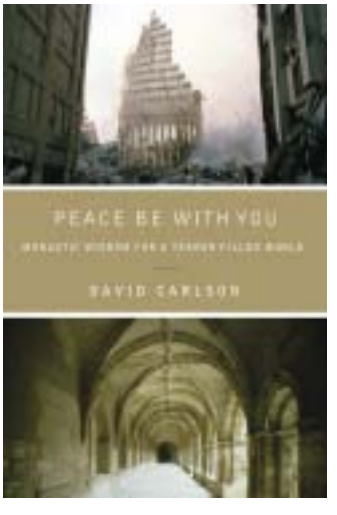
A DIFFERENT PATH

PEACE BE WITH YOU
Monastic Wisdom for a Terror-Filled World

By David Carlson
Thomas Nelson. 240p $15.99

In the wake of the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, David Carlson wondered how monks and nuns had responded to the tragedy and if they possessed any special wisdom for the rest of us.

An Orthodox Christian who teaches religion at Franklin College in Indiana, Carlson decided to visit monasteries across the nation. The result is *Peace Be With You*, an inspiring and timely book published to coincide with the 10-year anniversary of the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center.



Carlson interviewed monastics in 2007 at the Benedictine Monastery of Christ in the Desert in New Mexico, the Catholic Sisters of Loretto Motherhouse in Kentucky, New Skete Orthodox Monastery in New York and several other religious communities.

During his research the author experienced an unexpected transformation, starting out angry and confused but gradually "waking to a new reality, where the divided worlds of enemy and friend have been replaced by only one category—the neighbor who has sacred value."

Some monastics saw 9/11 as a missed opportunity to create a bridge of understanding to other nations that have experienced horrendous suffering. Many Americans chose instead a path of anger, hatred and vengeance that continues to this day. Regarding the killing of Osama bin Laden earlier this year, the author laments "images of people celebrating in the streets and jubilantly waving American flags."

Carlson has a special affection for Thomas Merton and his fellow monks at Gethsemani Abbey in Kentucky. He refers to Merton's often-cited epiphany while walking in downtown Louisville that "I loved all those people, that they were mine and I theirs, that we could not be alien to one another even though we were total strangers."

For the Gethsemani Trappists, that message resonates today. They believe that "God is with us, lurking in the other, our neighbors, the very ones we wish to avoid" and, by extension, in the young men who flew planes into the World Trade Center.

Carlson discovered that monks and nuns generally care more about world affairs than do members of the general public. Too often, monastics believe, we fail to listen to what others are saying, assuming that we are always right and that God is on our side.

The choices after 9/11 were the same as God's options at the crucifixion, when God rejected vengeance. "But in seeking to punish our enemies," Carlson

writes, "we leave Christ, we abandon Him, on the cross."

Carlson comes across as a devout, open, inquisitive seeker. He readily admits his own frailties, including a period of severe depression after completing his research.

Peace Be With You may remind readers of the compelling 1999 book *Beyond the Walls: Monastic Wisdom for Everyday Life*, in which Paul Wilkes recounted the time he spent living with monks in Mepkin Abbey, a Trappist monastery in South Carolina, where he, too, learned that monastics have much wisdom to offer lay people.

Carlson believes that the 9/11 terrorists and Americans have something in common. "Both the U.S. government and al-Qaeda," he writes, "have divided the world into two camps: civilization against evil. Both see peace in the world coming through the annihilation of the other. But since this is impossible, both seem to be promising unending warfare."

Carlson spoke with a staff member at Richard Rohr's Center for Action and Contemplation in New Mexico who responded to the U.S. invasion of Iraq by wondering how Americans would react if Iraq invaded the United States "for our good."

This is not a perfect book. The portraits of individual monks and nuns are too brief to be memorable. The book also lacks an index and a list of the monasteries Carlson visited. But these are minor flaws in what otherwise is a compelling examination of America's angry response to 9/11, along with the author's discussion of a radical alternative that would have involved compassion, understanding, deep listening and forgiveness.

BILL WILLIAMS *is a freelance writer in West Hartford, Conn., and a former editorial writer for The Hartford Courant. He is a member of the National Book Critics Circle.*

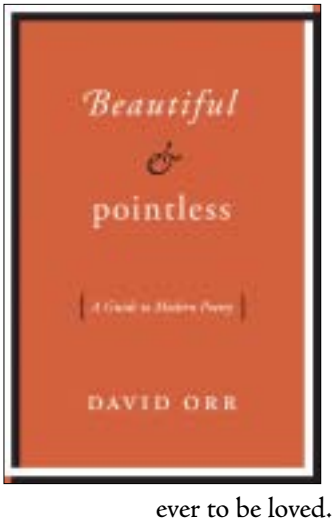
JAMES TORRENS

SOMETHING TO LOVE

BEAUTIFUL AND POINTLESS
A Guide to Modern Poetry

By David Orr
HarperCollins. 224p $25.99

The title of this book seems to be debunking its subject, modern poetry. But David Orr, poetry columnist for The New York Times Book Review, is debunking instead the classic arguments for the importance of poetry and admitting, up front, the insignificant status it is accorded today. We are not won to poetry by arguments for it, says Orr, but by being hooked on it. In his own case, a poem called "Water," by Philip Larkin, did the magic. After all, he points out, "small unnecessary devotions" are what constitute a life. Just notice how people talk about poetry. You don't just like it, if you are a reader; you love it.



The subtitle is also crafty. One expects a charting of the actual field with its major players. The author, however, holds off from rankings or evaluations of greatness because U.S. poetry, as a system, is so "enormous and protean," such a fishbowl.

Many of its writers at this late date are still intent on style, distinctive phrasing or what Orr calls "the 'Poetry as Super Language' school of thinking." Robert Lowell set the bar for fine writing half a century ago. But Lowell's friend Elizabeth Bishop, whose diction is more relaxed, less polished, finds more favor today, especially among the many who "aim for a new style by abandoning traditional form." Among these, Orr admits, "anything they write will inevitably disappoint an audience conditioned to associate poetry with sublimity."

The author takes us behind the scenes in Poetryland (his term). Most universities have creative writing programs, staffed by poet teachers. Their academic tenure may be uncertain, but they are drawn to "the art form's rambunctious, impassioned history of oddball behavior and outrageous self-promotion." The poetry of the past, Orr comments, "was often a cliquish mess," so writers are better off now in a more democratic regime, with multiple readings and publications. Current conditions do have a downside; they feed careerism and a "unique blurb culture" that has grown "ever more exquisitely ridiculous."

In a postmodern climate, the poetic lyric, according to W. R. Johnson in *The Idea of Lyric*, "has moved from an 'I' speaking to a 'You' to an 'I' speaking to itself or to nothing." Still, ordinary readers are drawn to the personal in poetry. Even when the writing is not confessional and handles its subject impersonally, the reader tends to find it revealing, something "overheard rather than heard."

The long study required to read so much of today's poetry builds into "a relationship," the author maintains. And he concludes wistfully that this "small, vulnerable human activity" needs as much as ever to be loved.

JAMES S. TORRENS, S.J., *is poetry editor of* ***America****.*

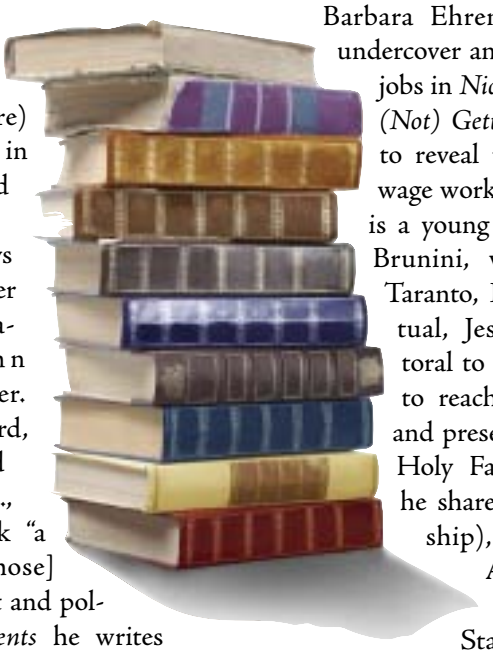
NATURE AND GRACE

My First Summer in the Sierra, 100th Anniversary Illustrated Edition, by John Muir, with photography by Scot Miller (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, $30). This treasured classic chronicles the first lengthy trip made by the renowned naturalist John Muir to the Sierra Nevada (now Yosemite National Park) in 1911. The author of a dozen books and considered the father of national parks, Muir has bequeathed a rich legacy, engendering a better appreciation of the natural world, raising consciousness and capturing in word and image the riches of God's creation and the crucial need for conservation. As the journal entries in this book reflect, nothing escaped his gaze. He went on to connect the nation to a "beauty beyond thought everywhere, beneath, above, made and being made forever."

In addition to Muir's original illustrations, this anniversary edition features stunning photographs by Scot Miller, whose other work includes the 150th anniversary edition of *Walden*. The reader travels along, as it were, from encampment to encampment exploring natural wonders and terrains and a host of animal and plant life forms. Rivers and trails, ridges and creeks, cliffs and mountains, boundless landscapes of beauty: Muir delights the reader with palpable details of his day-to-day experiences over a three-and-a-half-month sojourn. Among his memorable observations are these: "…in the face of Yosemite scenery cautious remonstrance is vain; under its spell one's body seems to go where it likes with a will over which we seem to have scarce any control." "How rich our inheritance in these blessed mountains, the tree pastures into which our eyes are turned!"

Miller's stunning photos are equally evocative. The book is printed on a heavy, glossy stock, and it has a lay-flat binding. Truly a classic has been reborn—if indeed it ever died.

Moments of Grace: Days of a Faith-Filled Dreamer, by the distinguished and award-winning essayist Christopher DeVinck (Paulist Press, $19.95), is an uplifting book to help readers find (or restore) needed balance in their hectic and media-driven world. The essays are grouped under the four seasons—autumn through summer. In a brief foreword, Ronald Rolheiser, O.M.I., sees in DeVinck "a craftsman [whose] every word is cut and polished." In *Moments* he writes about ordinary life experiences—the good, the bad, the frightening, the unexpected, the unforgettable, the teachable and everything in between. "We live our lives," he notes, "in the rhythms of drama, between ordinary routines and sudden jolts."



Faith, family and friends; the simple and complex parts of God's creation; the celebration of holidays and momentous events; acute and insightful observations of places and things too numerous to mention—such is the stuff of DeVinck's book, providing the reader with opportunities to savor her own physical and spiritual experiences. As the author concludes, "I hope this little book helped to stimulate the fields of your soul at midnight as you continue to make the conscious decision to breathe." In this he has succeeded with characteristic grace and style.

The Homeless Bishop: A Novel, by Joseph Girzone (Orbis Books, $25), marks a departure—and an interesting one at that—from the author's long-running and popular *Joshua* series. Those books have reportedly captivated a readership of 40 million people. His new novel's main character shares a (but loose) thread with the author Barbara Ehrenreich, who went undercover and assumed various jobs in *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America* to reveal the plight of low-wage workers. Girzone's hero is a young archbishop, Carlo Brunini, whose diocese is Taranto, Italy. Deeply spiritual, Jesus-centered, pastoral to a fault, he yearned to reach out to the poor and presented a plan to the Holy Father (with whom he shared a close relationship), who approved. And so Carlo came to the United States as "Charlie," a homeless man who walked the walk, lived the life, joined other homeless street dwellers, and who was spurned by the pastor of a Catholic church. His homeless "family" taught him many lessons, and readers will likewise experience vicariously what rewards are given those who embrace the poor and neglected in our midst. After a lengthy sojourn (that includes an interlude in Mexico), Carlo returns to Italy and begins to implement outreach programs in all the dioceses. Though some of the plotline struck me as over the top and straining credulity (I won't give any of it away), the book works well as a Christian fable and is an affecting read.

PATRICIA A. KOSSMANN *is literary editor of* ***America****.*

LETTERS

Not Just Catholic

I thank you for David O'Brien's "Learning From 9/11" (8/29). Of all the horror we witnessed that day, this brings hope and assurance that we are a nation that cares about one another. I'm grateful that O'Brien followed God's call to be an American historian, not just a Catholic historian.

SUE HUETTER
Adrian, Mich.

The New Dominicans

The recent article by William Bole, "The Peace Front" (8/15), was most welcome at our residence of the Dominican Sisters of Peace and their associates.

Ours is a new congregation formed in 2009 from a merger of seven foundations of apostolic Dominican Sisters who searched for a name and were most inspired to choose "Peace." We are committed to establishing an environment of peace—daily prayer for peace and year-long study of peace and nonviolence.

Our sisters and lay associates will demonstrate this "growth industry" as we provide basic education and health care to grassroots communities on the U.S.-Mexican border, in the Kansas heartland and in the other 26 states and six foreign countries where we serve.

Madeleine Albright's endorsement of faith-based organizations (they have "more resources, more skilled personnel, a longer attention span, more experience, more dedication...") has guided us in the reconfiguration of our new religious institute.

MARGARET ORMOND, O.P.
Columbus, Ohio

The Boss Is Best

Christopher Pramuk's "A Dream of Life," revisiting Bruce Springsteen's "The Rising" (Web-only edition, 9/12) on the occasion of the anniversary of Sept. 11, 2001, may be the finest essay I've read on **America**'s Web site in the past two years. It speaks to me on a number of levels, and I find that I keep coming back to read it again and again—perhaps especially its last sentence. But there are so many sentences like the last one that I need time to digest.

BETH CIOFFOLETTI
Palm Beach Gardens, Fla.

The Great Scam

Thank you to James Martin, S.J., for his compassionate response to the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, (Of Many Things, 8/29). The son of a friend of ours, an off-duty fireman who responded immediately to the disaster, was killed. A true hero.

But beyond that, I think the people of the United States have been scammed, as usual, by the government, the media and Congress. No one in history has done as much as Osama bin Laden to bring down a powerful country like the United States in one blow, delivered by a handful of fanatics.

At home I point to the culpable actions of George W. Bush in involving us in unwinnable wars, aided by Congress and leading to our economic downfall. The cost: the lives of our U.S. fighting men (mostly poor, young and expendable) and the stranglehold of the super-rich who control the government.

Jon Stewart, on "The Daily Show," recently presented statistics showing the discrepancy between the United States and the poor countries of the world. Does any thinking person still believe we are a government of the people?

EILEEN QUIN GOULD
Montgomery Village, Md.

Recovering What Was Lost

Re the Of Many Things column on Aug. 29: Looking for a resurrection, I am thinking of taking a train into New

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York on Sunday Sept. 11. I won't get anywhere near ground zero to see the ceremonies or be able to approach the memorial.

I was there a year ago. The site was cleaned up and looked like one of those old movie sets for filming the building of the Great Pyramid, with ramps descending into a cavernous foundation. I am hoping to see, for the first time, a materialization from the ashes of obliterated people and structures.

I was there for the construction of these great monoliths. I loved the twin towers from the beginning. Many times I was at the Windows on the World restaurant for a drink or dinner with the view of the East River, the F.D.R. Drive, the jigsaw puzzle of federal, city and state buildings.

By sheer accident, three of my family members who worked at the World Trade Center survived the horror. Today we have hundreds of responders who survived the initial attack but were harmed in the process of rescue, recovery and demolition. Their families are now listed as collateral damage from the original devastation. May all of us participate in this resurrection.

NORMAN COSTA
Poughkeepsie, N.Y.

Streamline Immigration; Crack Down on Illegals

Re Signs of the Times, "Advocates: 'Secure Communities' Brings Fear, Not Trust" (8/29): Why can't anyone articulate the points for a comprehensive immigration reform? I would fortify the border but expand the entry points to 24 lanes and streamline valid visas with biometrics for all who want to enter for tourism, work or study. But the border is not sealed. Walls and fences are laughed at...but then fences secure the White House, Pentagon and airports with no one pooh-poohing their security perimeter.

Most illegals get jobs with a paycheck, not cash, and they do that with identity fraud using someone else's Social Security number. That is not fair to those other people who follow the law. Businesses that hire illegals are on a par with scabs crossing union picket lines. They undercut the wages of legal workers and pull the entire middle class down. We hate big business for off-shoring jobs and profits, but that's exactly what illegals do with their jobs and profits. They send them abroad. People do need to care for their families, and we do need to streamline immigration, but not just any reform will do.

JOHN LYONS
Detroit, Mich.

The Risk of Pregnancy

I am grateful for two pieces in the 8/15 issue: the editorial, "Out of Afghanistan," and the Signs of the Times report "Bishops Seek Broader Exemption From Controversial Requirements" on contraception.

I have never been pregnant and am celibate; but I have learned in my reading that the pill has been beneficial for many women. Having children every 11 months, I have read, is not good for the mother or the baby. Pregnancy is not a disease, but it can be injurious to a woman's health if it occurs too often. I realize that writing about war is a "safe" issue, but that writing about women and sexuality can be "dangerous." Nevertheless I am surprised at the coverage you gave the U.S.C.C.B. on this issue.

MARY SWAIN
Nerinx, Ky.

What 25 Cents Will Get You

Like Thomas Massaro, S.J., in his column "Car Talk" (8/29), I too have had an "open road" liberating experience, although mine involved paying just 25 cents to get me on a bus out of a mind-numbing summer job. For me, born and raised in Puerto Rico—a car-intense society—riding a bus for a quarter to go anywhere in the metropolitan area was freeing. From that moment I was determined to live in a town where public transportation was a priority.

But in Boston 25 cents doesn't get you anywhere. Getting to a job anywhere costs about two days' wages a month. Meanwhile fares rise and wages go down. A commitment to "jobs recovery" will depend on accessible public transportation.

M. T. DAVILA
Malden, Mass.

CARTOON BY BOB ECKSTEIN

Saying and Doing

TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (A), SEPT. 25, 2011

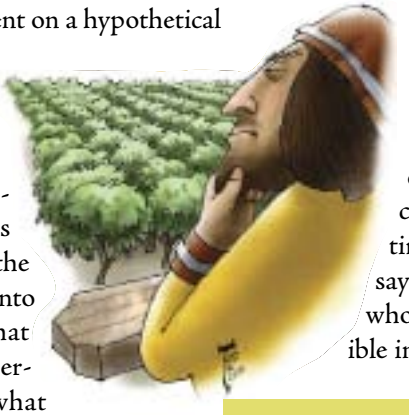
Readings: Ez 18:25-28; Ps 25:4-14; Phil 2:1-11; Mt 21:28-32

"Which of the two did his father's will?" (Mt 21:31)

Unlike other parables, the one in today's Gospel does not seem to pose a difficult riddle. A father asks his two sons to go out to work in the vineyard. The first says no, but then changes his mind and goes. The second says yes, but does not follow through. It does not seem hard to answer Jesus' question, "Which of the two did his father's will?" Isn't it the one who thought better of his original answer and actually complied with the father's command?

Not so, says another ancient version of this parable. In some early manuscripts of the Gospel, the answer is that the second son did his father's will! In a culture where saving face is highly prized, it is deemed better to be publicly honored with an obedient response and privately shamed when the action does not follow, rather than be publicly shamed and privately honored.

In the literary context of Matthew's Gospel, Jesus directs this parable at the religious leaders who have tried to shame and discredit him publicly by challenging his authority. Jesus uses a technique like that of the prophet Nathan, who confronted King David about his sin with Bathsheba by telling a story about a rich man who took the one precious lamb of a poor man (2 Sm 12:1-12). Nathan invited David to pronounce judgment on a hypothetical situation, which ended up being a pronouncement on himself.



In similar fashion, Jesus' parable is designed to jar the religious leaders into conversion, so that there will be coherence between what they say and teach and what they do. Earlier, Jesus had warned disciples that merely saying, "Lord, Lord," was not sufficient; they must also do the will of God (7:21-27). In Mt 23:3, Jesus warns the crowds and his disciples not to follow the example of the scribes and the Pharisees, because they do not practice what they preach. Today's Gospel holds out hope to the religious leaders: There is still time to turn around and make their deeds match their words.

A startling statement at the conclusion of the parable is meant to jolt the leaders into a change of heart: tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the reign of God ahead of them. This saying does not refer to the actual makeup of the retinue of Jesus' disciples. Rather, it is hyperbole meant to contrast the best and the worst imaginable. The point is that the religious leaders, who should be the ones leading others into God's reign, are not, while those who are thought least able to do so are repenting and believing and entering the reign of God.

It is always easier to see the discrepancies between saying and doing in someone else's behavior. I can smugly point a finger at the Pharisees in the Gospel or at other contemporary leaders and see their need to change. It is harder to see the lack of a match between my own words and deeds. It is easy to say yes to following Jesus, but how difficult it is to do what that demands of us. If I say I value prayer, for example, do I actually carve out a consistent time and place to do it? If I say I am concerned for those who are poor, how is that visible in my lifestyle choices?

PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

- To what have you said yes? How is that visible in your actions?
- To what has your faith community said yes? How is that visible in your collective actions?
- What does Christ's self-emptying yes ask of you now?

ART: TAD DUNNE

Fortunately, the burden of arriving at consistency in word and deed does not fall on our shoulders alone. Christ's yes to the self-emptying love described so eloquently by Paul in today's second reading is the empowering force that allows us not only to say yes but also to do the corresponding deeds. Each day Christ's yes is pronounced anew in us, giving us myriad opportunities to open ourselves to conversion of heart and let those we regard least likely to do so to show us the way to enter God's reign.

BARBARA E. REID

BARBARA E. REID, O.P., *a member of the Dominican Sisters of Grand Rapids, Mich., is a professor of New Testament studies at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, Ill., where she is vice president and academic dean. Her latest book is* Abiding Word: Sunday Reflections for Year B *(Liturgical Press).*

BOSTON COLLEGE

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National Gallery, London, UK/The Bridgeman Art Library

THE EUCHARIST: *AT THE CENTER OF CATHOLIC LIFE*

The fall issue of *C21 Resources* explores the many facets of the Eucharist: its history and scriptural foundations, as well as trends in Eucharistic piety, its relationship to social justice, and its centrality to family life.

Download this issue and access C21 Center's extensive fall programming, including webcasts, events, and publications at:

bc.edu/church21

Boston College's Church in the 21st Century Center is entering its 9th year as a resource and catalyst for the renewal of the Catholic Church.