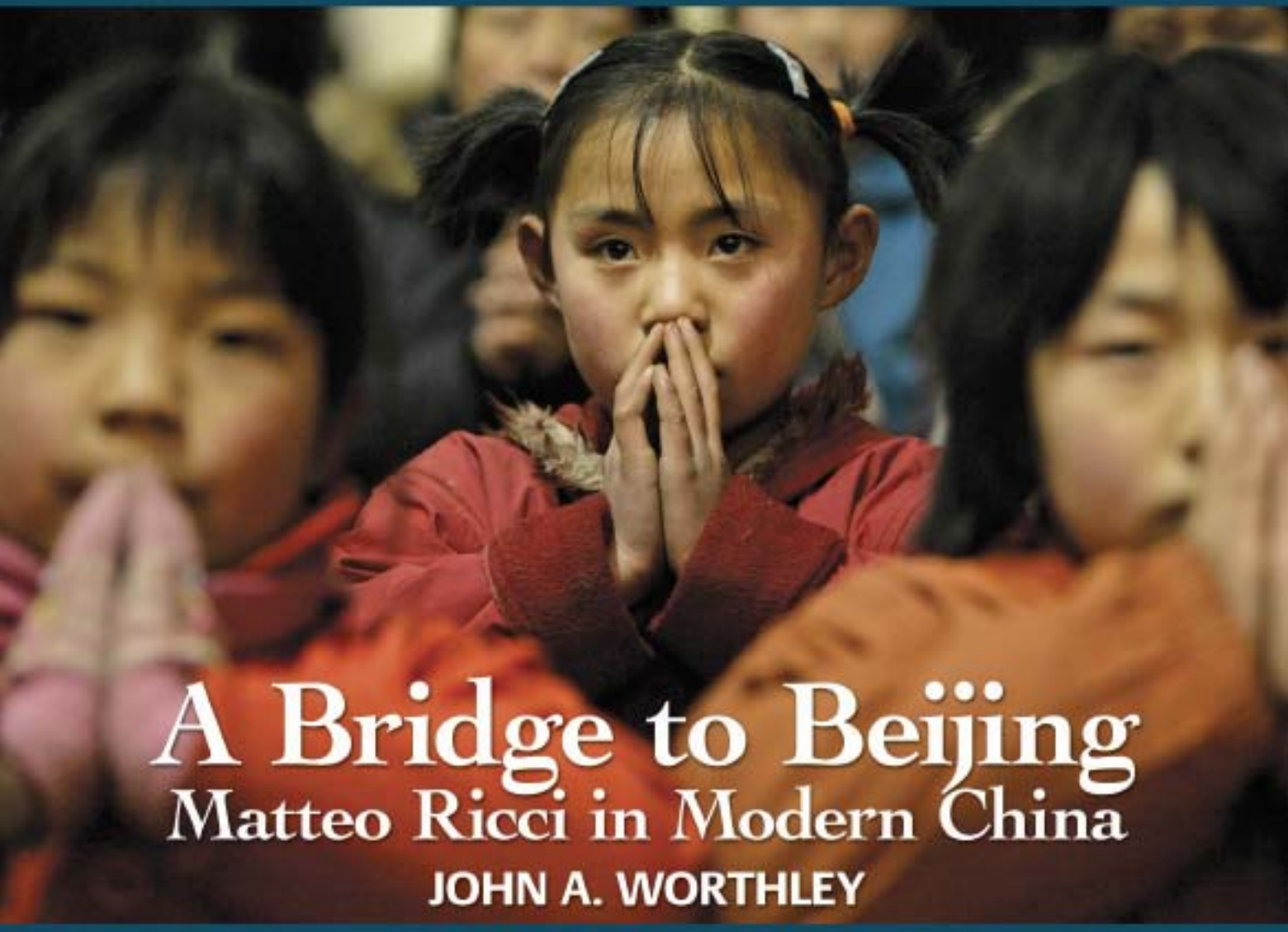
America

THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC WEEKLY

APRIL 2, 2012 $3.50



A Bridge to Beijing
Matteo Ricci in Modern China
JOHN A. WORTHLEY

A Visit to J Street
RAYMOND A. SCHROTH

OF MANY THINGS

Jesuits are known for their cross-cultural explorations. In this issue John Worthley celebrates one of the most famous of the early Jesuit missionaries, Matteo Ricci. Li Madou, as the Chinese call him, was so successful in introducing Western Christian culture to China and Chinese civilization to the West that, Worthley believes, his legacy can still serve as a bridge in the tense relations between Rome and Beijing.

After Ricci, my favorite Jesuit pioneer missionaries are Antonio Andrade and his successors, who were among the first Westerners to cross the Himalayas to explore Tibet. Michael Wood followed Andrade's extraordinary journey in the PBS series "In Search of Myths and Legends." In *Tibet: The Jesuit Century* (Hargrove), the late Philip Caraman, S.J., described the Society's several attempts in the 17th and 18th centuries to establish a mission in Tibet. Most remarkable was Ippolito Desideri, the last of the Jesuit explorer-missionaries to establish himself there. He settled into a Buddhist monastery, learned Tibetan and studied the sacred Buddhist texts. When Capuchin friars arrived to demand he turn over the mission to them, he was carrying on what today we would call interreligious dialogue with his hosts. From the Spiritual Exercises, wrote the Jesuit superior general, Adolfo Nicolás, recently, these missionaries learned "one should always presume that those with whom one speaks are worthy of trust and fairness." As a result, they "exemplified a true dedication to the overall truth shared by all."

Jesuits today continue to engage in interreligious dialogue. Given the global religious-political situation, it should be no surprise that Jesuits are especially active in Catholic-Muslim dialogue. One of the more celebrated is Paolo Dall'Oglio, who revived the Mar Musa monastery in the Syrian desert as a site for Muslim-Christian encounter (see John Haughey, S.J., "Friends of Mar Musa," **Am.**, 11/27/06). Another is Samir Khalil Samir, sometimes called the father of Arabic patristics for his pioneering work on early Arabic Christian writing. Georgetown University, with its Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding and the Jesuit Islamicists Daniel Madigan and Tom Michel, is becoming well known for advancing the dialogue. At Fordham University, Patrick J. Ryan, S.J., hosts public interreligious dialogues each semester with Muslim and Jewish colleagues.

Internationally, one of the better-known Jesuit Islamicists is Christian Troll. A consultant to the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, he has worked in Sudan, Iran, Pakistan and India and taught in Britain, India, Italy, Turkey and his native Germany. In recent years, he has turned to popular education. New City Press has just issued a convenient handbook to aid both Catholics and Protestants in their dialogues with Muslim neighbors, titled *Muslims Ask, Christians Answer.*

It is not unusual for the questions of devout believers in one faith to arouse renewed interest on the part of others in their own faith. Two decades ago at the Jesuit catechetical center in Amman, Jordan, I met young Arab Christians who freely admitted they were studying theology because of encounters with their articulate Muslim contemporaries.

By elucidating what Muslims think about key doctrines (the word of God, the Incarnation, God, the church) and practices (prayer, celibacy, religious freedom), *Muslims Ask, Christians Answer* provides a beginner's knowledge of contemporary Islam for Christian readers. Father Troll's inclusion of a chapter on religion and the world and another on the religious pluralism and freedom of religion open up the ground for discussion of the testy political issues that often vex believers on both sides. Following this study guide may help readers find the "ray of truth" in the Muslim "other."

DREW CHRISTIANSEN, S.J.

America

Published by Jesuits of the United States

President and Publisher
John P. Schlegel, S.J.

Editor in Chief
Drew Christiansen, S.J.

EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT

Managing Editor
Robert C. Collins, S.J.

Editorial Director
Karen Sue Smith

Online Editor
Maurice Timothy Reidy

Literary Editor
Raymond A. Schroth, S.J.

Poetry Editor
James S. Torrens, S.J.

Associate Editors
Kevin Clarke
Kerry Weber

Contributing Editor
James Martin, S.J.

Art Director
Stephanie Ratcliffe

Assistant Editor
Francis W. Turnbull, S.J.

BUSINESS DEPARTMENT

Chief Financial Officer
Lisa Pope

Editor's note: James Martin, S.J., has resigned his position as culture editor in order to devote more time to other writing. He will continue to serve as a contributing editor.

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

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

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

Cover: Girls at Mass at a Catholic church in a village on the outskirts of Taiyuan, Shanxi Province, China. CNS photo/Reinhard Krause, Reuters.

Contents

www.americamagazine.org VOL. 206 NO. 11, WHOLE NO. 4967 APRIL 2, 2012

13


19


25

ARTICLES

COLUMNS & DEPARTMENTS

BOOKS & CULTURE

ON THE WEB

Julia Haslett talks about her new film, "**An Encounter with Simone Weil**," on our podcast. Plus, poems and essays by **Paul Mariani,** and a modern missionary remembers **Matteo Ricci, S.J.** All at americamagazine.org.

Too Long a Sacrifice

In the early morning of March 11 a U.S. staff sergeant walked off base in Kandahar, Afghanistan, and began a rampage that would end in the deaths of 16 civilians, including three women and nine children. It is too soon to say precisely what provoked this murderous attack, but it is well past time to ask if the paradigm of the "volunteer professional" as the foundation for the contemporary U.S. armed services may be nearing a breakdown. The current personnel structure of the U.S. military relies on an unprecedented number of combat tours by service members. The assailant had already completed three tours of duty in Iraq, during which he suffered a brain injury, and was beginning yet another combat tour, this time in Afghanistan.

How many days in combat can any single individual endure before trauma and stress begin to diminish mental health or dislodge his or her moral compass? The military's overdependence on a small pool of service members is clearly taking a toll on these individuals and their families. The dreadful events in Kandahar suggest that even more gruesome collateral damage may be attributable to the military's multi-tour rotation system.

The nation is faced with a stark choice: find a way to expand the military so that the same men and women are not repeatedly deployed into combat, most likely through a draft; or find a way to advance U.S. geopolitical interests without leaning so heavily on military power. Perhaps both options complement each other. The possibility of a truly shared sacrifice ensured by universal conscription may be enough to discourage an overreliance on war-making in U.S. statecraft.

More Than a Game

For athletes around the world, only a few months of training remain before the 2012 Summer Olympics in London. But these potential medal-winners are not the only people who have been preparing for the big event. The Bishops' Conference of England and Wales is hoping that after three years of preparations, their plan to reach out to the millions of visitors to London during the Olympics will increase interest in the Catholic faith and raise awareness of such social justice issues as homelessness, fair trade products, the environment and human trafficking.

The British bishops' plan addresses both personal spirituality and service to others and includes the training of 24 chaplains, as well as volunteers from more than 5,000 parishes, the creation of two hospitality centers and a youth village offering sports-themed catechesis. A conference on disability, theology and sport will also take place before the Paralympic Games. The bishops also are working closely with More Than Gold, a charity conducted by 16 Christian denominations to enact programs like one that recruits London families and hotels to house athletes and their relatives who may not be able to afford to stay in London otherwise.

Parishes will be encouraged to pray for peace and, in particular, for an end to gang violence. They will also offer refreshments to those who stand along the streets to watch the passing of the Olympic torch. The British bishops' program is an admirably wide-ranging one with attention to the whole person. It is a creative, well-rounded and thoughtful effort that encourages attendees to embody those same qualities.

Cleveland's Reprise

"It is evident, therefore, that the requirements of law for the licit and valid relegation of a church to secular but not unbecoming use have not been met, and that St. Patrick Church...has not been lawfully and validly relegated to secular but not unbecoming use." That Vaticanese declaration may sound bland to some, but it was welcome news to parishioners in Cleveland, who had protested the closing of 13 churches. The recent ruling by the Congregation of the Clergy reversed some of the closings initiated by Bishop Richard G. Lennon in 2009 as part of an archdiocesan reconfiguration. The canonical reason: the archdiocese had not consulted its presbyteral council before the decision.

It is natural that parishioners in Cleveland, and elsewhere, feel attached to their parishes. And it is laudable that the Vatican, which is sometimes seen (unfairly) as removed from the daily concerns of local parishes, offers an avenue of canonical redress. It may sometimes be necessary for parishes to be closed, for unavoidable reasons. Some parishes no longer attract enough parishioners; because of changing demographics, there may be more Catholics in newer areas that are underserved; and financial shortfalls make keeping all churches open an impossibility. But these reasons sometimes fail to convince everyone: in a few dioceses sit-ins have been sponsored in shuttered churches. Some parishioners protest, claiming their local parish has enough money to survive. But this may mean that other areas, with growing Catholic populations, will be underserved. The church as a whole—not just bishops—must respond to the sometimes uncomfortable demands of changing demographics and apply its resources where they are needed the most. And that's true in Cleveland, California or Calcutta.

They Came So Far

Anthony Shadid, 43, a New York Times reporter who had gone secretly to Syria to describe what he called "the suffering that cannot be covered in words," died on Feb. 16 during an asthma attack while trying to escape to Turkey. Tyler Hicks, a Times photographer, carried his body across the border. Shadid had won two Pulitzer Prizes for The Washington Post. The Times described his "poet's voice" with "deep empathy for the ordinary person." During the Arab Spring, he and his family in Lebanon were under constant threat.

Six days later the Syrian government slammed 11 rockets into an apartment building in Homs that it had been bombarding for 19 days. As the inhabitants fled, they were bombed again. At the bottom of the stairs lay 22 bodies, including a 6-year-old boy and two foreign journalists, Marie Colvin, 56, a veteran war correspondent who had lost one eye in Sri Lanka in 2001, and Remi Ochlik, 28, a photojournalist. The day before, Colvin told the BBC that she had watched a 2-year-old baby die in the bombardment. "Our mission is to report the horrors of war with accuracy and without prejudice," she said, though she always asked herself whether the story was worth the risk. Within a week, 13 Syrian activists were killed trying to help four journalists escape from Homs to Lebanon.

The image of the war correspondent has evolved since William Howard Russell told his London readers after the fatal charge of the light brigade at Sebastopol in 1854 that if the exhibition of valor gives consolation, they need not regret the catastrophe he was about to describe. From the Spanish American War to World War I, Richard Harding Davis was the "glamour boy" correspondent; but when he witnessed the German burning of Louvain in 1914, he suddenly realized that war was not a "game," but "a war against the defenseless, war upon churches, colleges, shops of milliners and lacemakers; war brought to the bedside and fireside; against women harvesting in the fields, against children in wooden shoes at play in the streets."

This image of war's innocent victims has driven generations of correspondents to risk their lives. They include, in World War II, Edward R. Murrow, who, perhaps recklessly, accompanied daily bombing raids over Germany; John Hersey, who revealed the horrors—among them the melted eyeballs—of Hiroshima and who taught Marie Colvin how to write at Yale; and Ernie Pyle, a voice for the ordinary G.I. Forty-five correspondents were killed in Vietnam, including the French historian Bernard Fall, who stepped on a land mine, and Marguerite Higgins, who died later of a disease she contracted in Vietnam.

Meanwhile, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists, 907 journalists worldwide have been killed since 1992, 81 of them in 2011 alone. The largest number, 40 percent, have been murdered for political reasons; 34 percent have died in battle. The deadliest country is Iraq. Afghanistan is tenth. In 2012, 10 have died, five of them in Syria. An international conference in January 2012, organized by the Qatar National Human Rights Committee, called for the systematic publicizing of crimes against journalists, the appointment of a High Commissioner of Human Rights to investigate cases, withholding development aid from offending countries and training for women in danger of sexual harassment.

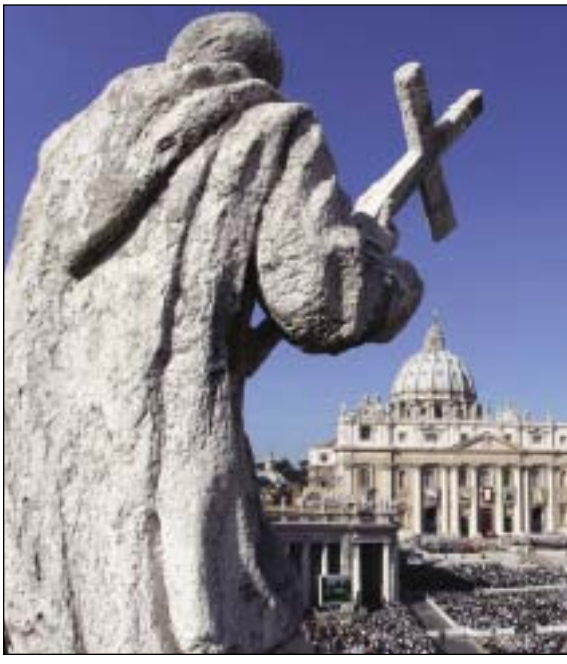
It seems clear now that Syria is not only strictly limiting journalists' access to the country; it is also deliberately killing those who are already there. As a result, stories are now datelined Beirut, Cairo and Turkey; some are pasted together from YouTube videos and other Internet sources; and the major media are reluctant to let their bravest reporters continue risking their lives.

On March 17, 1944, Ernie Pyle walked slowly through the miles of wreckage on Normandy Beach, where the tides carried the soldiers' bodies out to sea, then returned them, buried them in sand and dragged them out again. He came upon two pieces of what he thought was driftwood, but they were the feet of a soldier covered with sand. "The toes of his G.I. shoes pointed to the land he had come so far to see, and which he saw so briefly." After Pyle had seen so much, he wanted to quit, but he went to the Pacific because the Navy wanted the attention his columns inspired. On April 17 he went ashore on Okinawa, and a Japanese machine gunner killed him.

A few years ago a lone American visitor stood by Pyle's grave under a tree on the mountain military cemetery outside Honolulu. A car drove up and two Asian women emerged and placed flowers before the stone. Did they know who this man Pyle was? No, they did not know him, they said, but "he came so far." That is what war correspondents do. They go far away to tell those at home that men and women whom they do not know are dying and that they should care. In the long run, not much can "protect" them from the inevitable risks. But they themselves are willing to die to send the news.

THEOLOGY

Commission Text Holds Surprises On the Role of the Faithful



The Vatican's International Theological Commission issued a new study on March 9 under the title "Theology Today: Perspectives, Principles and Criteria." Like the commission's 2008 study of natural law—still unavailable in an official English translation—it represents a forward-looking consensus view, in this case about the role of theology in the life of the church. It holds some real surprises. It offers a precedent-setting treatment of the *sensus fidelium* (i.e., the appreciation of the faith of the whole people of God), an exposition of reading the signs of the times that makes historicity a principle of contemporary theology and an evocative pointer to spiritual experience as a theological source.

Developed in two phases over eight years, "Theology Today" was approved by the whole commission in November 2011 and released in March with the approval of Cardinal William Levada, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

"Attention to the *sensus fidelium*," the study declares, "is a criterion for Catholic theology. Theology should strive to discover and articulate accurately what the Catholic faithful actually believe." The commission recalls that the Second Vatican Council repeatedly "speaks first about the whole people of God and the *sensus fidei* that they have and then of the bishops." Neither a simple majority opinion nor a secondary affirmation of the magisterial teaching, the sense of the faithful is a conviction "deeply rooted in the people of God, who receive, understand and live the Word of God in the Church."

Because the *sensus fidelium* is a locus of theologians' study, "they must

CHINA/VATICAN RELATIONS

Cardinal Tong: Use Hong Kong As 'Bridge Church' to China

As thousands of mainland Chinese receive permission to visit the "special status" region of Hong Kong each year, Cardinal John Tong sees an opportunity for the Diocese of Hong Kong to reach out to both the "open" and the "underground" Catholic Church in mainland China and facilitate further dialogue between Communist Chinese authorities and the Vatican. That relationship seemed to be improving in recent years but was thrown into upheaval last year by a series of episcopal appointments made by the Beijing-controlled Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association without approval from Rome.

Now both sides seem to be seeking a way to get relations back on track. "I hope that both sides would be patient and continue to be open to each other, listening to the other side so that they can have a deeper and more fruitful dialogue," Cardinal Tong said. "That is what we need."

In an interview with the Web site Vatican Insider published on March 13, Cardinal Tong said opportunities for continuing dialogue between Beijing and Rome remain to be explored and that "win-win" solutions to the problems that exist between them remain achievable. Cardinal Tong has reiterated his idea of Hong Kong as a "bridge-church," helping the mainland church improve priestly formation, promote reconciliation and achieve full communion with the universal church. Cardinal Tong was elevated to the College of Cardinals in February.

Cardinal Tong said that China's increasing role in international affairs should provide an opening for dialogue with the Vatican. Now Beijing has to appreciate, he said, "international values.... I think in the long run that China will change in very important ways."

Cardinal Tong said his message to Chinese government officials is "to believe that our Catholic Church

participate in the life of the church to be aware of it." Because their intellectual work requires them "to critically examine expressions of popular piety, new movements of thought and movements within the church," they are urged to work in a constructive spirit "with humility, respect and charity." Furthermore, the body of the faithful, especially the laity and lay theologians, because they live on "the interface between the Gospel and everyday life," have a special role to play in the church's interpretation of the signs of the times.

Thus dialogue with the world is a distinguishing characteristic of theology today. In treating Christians' shared reading of the signs of the times, the commission takes special notice not just of the turn to historical consciousness in theology, but to the historicity of the entire tradition, underscored by thumbnail histories of theology, especially in the modern period.

Given that Pope Benedict XVI has been critical of this trend and stresses instead the continuity of the Apostolic Tradition and the necessity of metaphysics for articulating truth, the affirmation of historicity is a daring move. Nonetheless, the commission boldly asserts, "The council's use of the expression 'signs of the times' shows that it fully recognized not only the historicity of the world but also of the church."

"Theology Today" offers a tantalizing glimpse, too, of spiritual experience as a source for theology. Theology, the commission argues, is not just a science; it is also a form of wisdom, seeking unity in its knowledge and intimate personal union with the mystery of God. Thus, scholarly theology and mystical theology are complementary.

The new study, however, fails to explore both the mystic doctors of the church—like Bernard, Catherine of Siena, John of the Cross and the two Teresas (Ávila and Lisieux)—and the great theological studies of mystics by Von Hügel and Brémond. Nonetheless, the commission's identification of spiritual experience as theological source does suggest it may be time for others to resume the work of those pioneering scholars.

always asks each Catholic to be patriotic, to love his or her own country." He said, "I would ask the government to trust also in Catholic believers so that if they really enjoy full freedom, they can make more contributions to their own country, and China and its government will enjoy a better reputation in the whole world. That would be a real 'win-win' situation for the Chinese government, for the country and also for the Catholic believers in China."

Regarding the future of the Patriotic Association, assuming conditions improve for the church in mainland China, Cardinal Tong suggested that the association may continue to have a "low-key role" in the church. "They can be used as the agents or the members of social agencies," he said, "like Caritas organizations under the mandates of the local bishops. That could be one of the ways out for them. But I don't know whether they would accept that or not."

Cardinal Tong said that improved formation can help bring an end to confrontations between Chinese authorities and the Vatican over episcopal appointments, creating candidates both sides would find acceptable or leading to episcopal nominees more willing and spiritually equipped to resist pressure from Beijing. "I think the Holy See was pushed into [a] corner last year," Cardinal Tong said, referring to a series of illicit episcopal appointments, "but the important thing is the preventive formation, and we have to emphasize this."

Easter Vigil Mass at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Beijing

Work for Unity

Remembering the common roots of the Christianity they share, Roman Catholics and Anglicans should renew their commitments to praying and working for Christian unity, Pope Benedict XVI said. The pope and Archbishop Rowan Williams of Canterbury, who will be stepping down as the spiritual leader of the Anglican Communion by the end of the year, held an evening prayer service on March 10 at Rome's Church of St. Gregory on the Caelian Hill, the church from which Pope Gregory the Great sent St. Augustine of Canterbury to evangelize England in 597. "We hope that the sign of our presence here together in front of the holy altar where Gregory himself celebrated the Eucharistic sacrifice, will remain not only as a reminder of our fraternal encounter, but also as a stimulus for all the faithful—both Catholic and Anglican...to renew their commitment to pray constantly and to work for unity, and to live fully in accordance with the '*ut unum sint*' ['that all may be one'] that Jesus addressed to the Father," Pope Benedict said.

Christian Restrictions in Kuwait

In February, Kuwait's newly formed al-Adala ("Justice") Bloc introduced legislation to remove Christian churches and impose Islamic Shariah law. Party officials said later the legislation would not remove existing churches but would prohibit further construction of non-Muslim places of worship. The legislation also introduces Islam-inspired measures to fight corruption and "strengthen national unity." On March 12 Bishop Camillo Ballin, the Italian-born apostolic administrator of Kuwait, called the proposals "out of step with the traditions of Kuwait, which seeks to be an open, tolerant country welcoming other religions besides Islam." He said such proposals emerge "from ideologies which want to divide the world between Muslims and non-Muslims." According to Bishop Ballin, al-Adala's claims that there were more churches in Kuwait than needed by its Christian minority were untrue, taking account only of the small number of Christians who were ethnic Kuwaitis. "When religious life is assured, social life is also easier—so why can't our foreign members have a place for worship?" the bishop asked.

Housing Is a Right

Adequate housing is a fundamental human right, especially for women, who often are solely responsible for the care and upbringing of children, Archbishop Silvano Tomasi, Vatican observer at U.N. agencies in Geneva, told the U.N. Human Rights Council on March 9. He called for greater protection and legal guarantees for women during pregnancy and after they give birth so that their housing needs are met. "To promote women's right to adequate housing is also a way to combat discrimination against women and domestic violence," Archbishop Tomasi said. The archbishop said the Vatican agrees with the council's stance that priority should be given to women with children and to families where the father is away for work when state-supported housing programs are developed. He also recommended that housing efforts should also include basic social services like health, education and drinking water.

From CNS and other sources.

NEWS BRIEFS

Women flee Jos bombing

Archbishop Ignatius Kaigama of Jos, Nigeria, called for calm after a **suicide car bomb** struck a Catholic church on March 11, taking the lives of three worshipers and provoking retaliatory violence that resulted in seven more deaths. ✦ On March 12 Pedro Pimentel Rios, extradited from the United States to Guatemala in July, was sentenced to 6,060 years in prison for his role in the 1982 killing of 201 people during **Guatemala's "Dos Erres" massacre**. ✦ On March 13 Cuban authorities granted Havana's Cardinal **Jaime Ortega** a rare opportunity to address the nation on state-controlled television to talk about the anticipated arrival of Pope Benedict XVI on March 26. ✦ "We can see Jesus taking Marie by the hand and saying, 'Blessed are you, Marie, in your hunger and your thirst for righteousness,'" said the Rev. Dennis Mason of St. Dominic's parish in Oyster Bay, N.Y., during the funeral Mass on March 12 for **Marie Colvin**, a veteran war correspondent killed in Homs, Syria. ✦ Caritas Internationalis reports that requests for aid are increasing and **one million people are going hungry** in Spain as the nation's economic crisis continues.

ARE YOU CALLED TO SERVE THOSE SERVING?

U.S. AIR FORCE
CHAPLAIN CORPS

All over the world, brave U.S. Airmen defend our country. Catholic Air Force chaplains support them wherever they go, providing Airmen religious observance, pastoral care and advice to leadership. Are you called to serve in this unique ministry? Visit us on the web to learn more about becoming a chaplain in the United States Air Force Chaplain Corps.

AIRFORCE.COM/CHAPLAIN • 1-800-803-2452

MARGARET SILF

Blessed Mothers

We are all familiar with the tragic yet compelling image of the pietà, the bereaved mother cradling her crucified child—perhaps too familiar. We admire this classic image, but we fail to notice the many pietàs that we encounter along our way in today's world, in those we meet as we journey.

Let me share with you three of them, whom I met on a recent trip through the Philippines.

Meet Teodora Alonso, mother of the Philippine national hero José Rizal. Teodora had 11 children, of whom José was the seventh. Teodora suffered from failing eyesight. As a result, her multitalented son (a medical doctor, writer, sculptor, painter and accomplished linguist) was inspired to specialize in ophthalmology in order to help her. It is one of the many surprising patterns of grace that this man, whose work was to help people see, was also to be the one who would open the eyes of his people to a greater vision of their destiny, freed from colonial oppression.

Teodora would live to see more than a mother should ever have to witness—the execution of her son, at the age of 35, by firing squad, after a mock trial for sedition. His main alleged crime had been to write books, especially the classic *Noli Me Tangere*, in which he exposed the corruption of both the Spanish occupation of his land and the ecclesiastical system that colluded with it.

At the Rizal Shrine in Fort Santiago in Intramuros, Manila, there is a line of footprints marking Rizal's own via dolorosa to his execution on Dec. 30, 1896. Teodora was permitted one last farewell before watching her son walk to his death. He was buried in an unmarked grave. His sister, Narcisa, searched through all the burial grounds, with her unspoken cry of "Where have you laid him?" Eventually, she found a plot of freshly turned earth and placed a simple marker there in her brother's memory. Now Manila is justly proud of a more worthy monument to a man who was martyred primarily for writing books, but whose courage and vision helped to bring about the Philippine Revolution.

The woman of my second pietà has no name. She was discovered by a rescue worker in the aftermath of Typhoon Sendong, which struck Cagayan de Oro in the Philippines in the middle of the night of Dec. 16-17, 2011, claiming nearly 2,000 lives. Most of the people were asleep in bed. The 17th would have been the second day of their novena, and they would have risen early for a dawn Mass, had they survived the night.

Some time afterward a rescue worker was returning from the scene of the disaster, when she saw a little family approaching, carrying a birthday cake with two candles. When she advised them that there was nothing and no one left where the typhoon had struck, the grieving mother said simply, "We just need to go back to where my baby daughter was swept away, so that we can celebrate what would have been her second birthday and give thanks for her short life among us." Those birthday candles will remain, for me, as potent a symbol of love and loss as any more sophisticated monument could be.

> We fail to notice the many pietàs in today's world.

My third Filipino pietà mother has many names. She does not grieve for a dead child, but for the loss of a child in quite another way. She is an overseas worker, one of hundreds of thousands like her, who take employment in faraway foreign countries as the only way of supporting their families. They are forced to leave their own children behind for long periods of time, in order to make a living by caring for the children of strangers or tending the sick in distant lands. You may know some of them in your own hometown, your own street.

When they return for brief holidays to their homes and families, it can happen that their own young children have almost forgotten them and no longer feel bonded to them. Their loss is perhaps the most grievous of all. One of the saddest expressions I have ever heard is sometimes applied to these migrant mothers. They are called "A.T.M. moms," because they are perceived by their own little ones as merely the suppliers of money.

I cannot begin to imagine the anguish of any of these women. Perhaps only the Pietà of Calvary can do that. My prayer this Holy Week is that Mary and her Son will gather these sorrowing mothers, and all who grieve for lost sons and daughters, into their eternal arms.

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

For GUARANTEED Mother's Day Delivery
1-866-768-6517 www.bradfordexchange.com/13457

Our Family Surrounds Us with Love

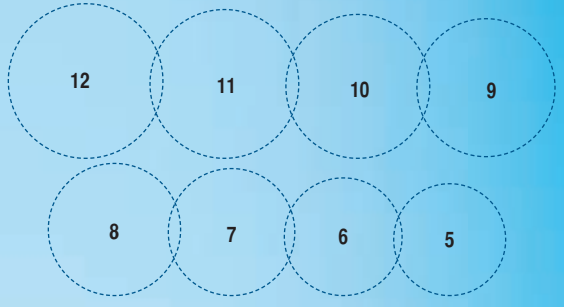
The *"Our Family is a Circle of Love" Personalized Birthstone Ring* is an exclusive design exquisitely hand-crafted in solid sterling silver with rich 24K gold plating. Every ring features a unique design of shimmering waves that is individually customized just for your family! Up to six family member's cubic zirconia birthstones of your choice will sparkle next to a "wave" that can be elegantly engraved with his or her name. The inside of the band is engraved with the words, "Our Family is a Circle of Love." It's a beautiful way to express a family's connection to one another!

Each child is represented by a custom-engraved "wave" on the ring.

Your ring arrives in a deluxe presentation box.

A Remarkable Value... Available for a Limited Time

This exclusive ring is an exceptional value at $119, payable in 4 easy installments of $29.75 and backed by our 120-day full money-back guarantee. The ring is available in whole and half sizes 5-12 and arrives in a deluxe presentation case along with a Certificate of Authenticity. To reserve, send no money now; just mail the Reservation Application. This gorgeous personalized ring is *only available from The Bradford Exchange*. So don't miss out—order today!



To find your size, using the guide, place one of your rings on the chart and match a circle with the inside of your ring. Whole & half sizes 5-12 are available. If your ring size falls between two circles, order the half size in between.

www.bradfordexchange.com/13457

"Our Family is a Circle of Love"
Personalized Birthstone Ring

Solid Sterling Silver with Personalized Engraving and Birthstones

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC

A Fine Jewelry Exclusive
FROM THE BRADFORD EXCHANGE

LIMITED-TIME OFFER

*Reservations will be accepted on a **first-come, first-served basis**. Respond as soon as possible to reserve your "Our Family is a Circle of Love" Personalized Birthstone Ring.*

Shown actual size

We must receive your initial payment by 5/2/12 to guarantee Mother's Day delivery. Call 1-866-768-6517 or visit www.bradfordexchange.com/13457.

*Plus $9.98 shipping and service. Sales subject to product availability and order acceptance.

RESERVATION APPLICATION **SEND NO MONEY NOW**

THE BRADFORD EXCHANGE JEWELRY

P.O. Box 806, Morton Grove, IL 60053-0806

YES. Please reserve my ring with the names and birthstones indicated below.
(Limit of 6 names with maximum of 8 letters each)

	Name	Birth Month
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		

Mrs. Mr. Ms.
Name (Please Print Clearly)

Address

City State Zip

E-Mail (Optional)

01-13457-001-E39411

J Street conducted a Day of Action in Congressional districts around the country on Aug. 23, 2011. Clockwise from upper left, gatherings in: Cleveland, Philadelphia, New York City, San Francisco, Austin and Chicago.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF JSTREET.ORG

A new political lobby promotes a peaceful vision of Israel's future.

A Voice in the Wilderness

BY RAYMOND A. SCHROTH

Jeremy Ben-Ami, founder of a new Jewish lobby known as J Street, loves Israel. But Israel, he has been instructed, must be loved in a certain way. He is among a generation of American Jews who are beginning to wonder where that "certain way" is leading.

Israel today, according to many of its friends as well as its critics in the American and Israeli press, is at a critical stage in its history. Does the word *democracy* really apply to a political system that maintains two tiers of citizenship, one for Jewish citizens and one for "Israeli Arabs"? Or does the word *apartheid*, once applied exclusively to the legal separation of whites and blacks in South Africa, more accurately describe the relationship of Jews and Palestinians in Israel and the West Bank and East Jerusalem, where 500,000 Jewish settlers have illegally established themselves? In November 2011 Gideon Levy, an Israeli journalist, wrote a column warning that if some proposed laws were passed in Israel, the democracy would become unrecognizable. He said there would be separate buses and streets for men and women; cities would shut down for the Sabbath; Arabs would not be able to run for Parliament or have the right of a university education but would be subject to capital punishment. Also, said Levy, the West Bank would be annexed, and the piece he was writing would never see print.

The New York Times columnist Nicholas D. Kristof writes that Israel is endangered by its own leaders: "Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is isolating his country, and to be blunt, his hard line on settlements seems like a national suicide policy" (10/6/11). Ruth Dayan, the 95-year-old widow of one of Israel's founding fathers, told Newsweek she longs for the old Israel, where she could travel alone in Gaza the day after the 1956 war. Today there are "roadblocks everywhere. And that horrible wall! It's not right." She thinks, "Zionism has run its course."

RAYMOND A. SCHROTH, S.J., *is the literary editor of* ***America.***

It is sadly ironic that a few years ago the word *wall* meant the remaining wall of the ancient temple in Jerusalem, the Western or Wailing Wall, where visitors from around the world offered prayers. Today the word just as often denotes the huge security barrier walling off Israel from its neighbors in the occupied West Bank and, perhaps in a way, the rest of the world.

Mr. Ben-Ami, J Street's president and the author of *A New Voice for Israel, Fighting for Survival of the Jewish Nation* (Palgrave), is a cheerful fellow in a royal blue shirt with 25 years experience as a political operative. He is well connected in Washington but remains on the fringe of the Middle East lobbying world, where until recently the tactics of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (Aipac) dominated the dialogue. Both his grandfather and father were Zionist militants who took up arms to establish a Jewish homeland. After college Mr. Ben-Ami spent three years in Israel as a businessman, mainly because he loved the place and wanted to be part of its development. He also participated in Peace Now, the mainstream Israeli movement for reconciliation with its Arab neighbors.

Jeremy Ben-Ami and a few friends founded J Street as a Jewish lobby that would be unafraid to talk straight when Israel was hurting itself.

The Hoodwinked Congress?

Returning to New York in 2000, Mr. Ben-Ami worked first in the mayoral campaign of Mark Green and then for the presidential run of Howard Dean. Each of his clients had made what Aipac would consider a "terrible mistake": Mr. Green made a donation to Peace Now and Mr. Dean called for an "even-handed" approach to the Middle East. Both politicians were pilloried as "anti-Israel." Shaken, Mr. Ben-Ami and a few friends founded J Street as a Jewish lobby that would be unafraid to talk straight when Israel was hurting itself.

ON THE WEB
Excerpts from **America**'s interview with Jeremy Ben-Ami.
americamagazine.org/podcast

In early December last year, Republican candidates hustled to surpass one another as friends of Israel in presentations to the Republican Jewish Coalition. Newt Gingrich compared the U.S. "struggle with radical Islam" to the U.S. confrontation with Russia after World War II. Mitt Romney accused the Obama administration of "appeasement" in its Middle East policy and promised that once elected, his first trip would be to visit Israel. It was a scene Mr. Ben-Ami deplored.

In his book and during our discussion in the sleek, modern J Street offices in Washington, Mr. Ben-Ami spelled out the standard scenario for an imagined candidate for Congress. Representatives of the Jewish community set up a meeting and ask the candidate if he or she "supports Israel." Following a yes, the candidate receives a position paper with talking points that provide answers to questions about the Middle East that the candidate is to give for the rest of his or her career. The candidate's yes means the candidate is to make no criticism and no objection to settlements. The candidate's newfound friends will sponsor a fundraiser. If victorious, the new member of Congress will enjoy an Aipac-sponsored trip to Israel, with background briefings and emphasis on the security threats that Israel endures. The new friends also instill a level of fear of what might happen if the new congressional representative sings a different tune after arriving in Washington.

Mr. Ben-Ami says that members of Congress have been to some degree hoodwinked, being led to believe that Israel is the number one issue for all American Jews, when in reality Jewish priorities are about the same as those of other voters. Jews represent only 2 percent of the American population; they are politically active because they believe that "repairing the world" (*tikkun olam*) is basic to their identity. But only 8 percent of American Jews are hawkish on Middle East policy. J Street polls find that American Jews overwhelmingly favor a two-state solution and believe the settlements are counterproductive to peace. While neoconservative Jewish intellectuals promoted the war in Iraq, 70 percent of all American Jews opposed it. Nevertheless, the average gentile candidate addressing a Jewish audience will start off declaring undying love and loyalty to Israel—as if America's rising poverty and unemployment and the ongoing war in Afghanistan were afterthoughts to a U.S. Jewish audience.

Direction From J Street

The greatest obstacle to peace between Palestinians and Israelis, according to Mr. Ben-Ami, is the insatiable hunger for land on the part of the settlers' movement and supporters in the rest of Israeli (and American) society, who imagine some transcendent right to the entire Palestinian terri-

tory. How can Israel still imagine itself a democracy if it continues to illegally drive out non-Jews, bulldozing their homes and seizing their fields and water resources? It cannot, Mr. Ben-Ami says. Although he is not ready to describe Israel as an apartheid state, he cannot deny that a worrisome trend is evident.

The kind of peace imagined by J Street could help reverse that trend. Mr. Ben-Ami would begin by talking about a Jewish "homeland" in which Jewish religious law would be the basis of civil law, not a "state" in which the "chosen people" occupy a promised land in fulfillment of God's Covenant. In this homeland the 20 percent of the Israeli population who are Arab would have full citizenship, including representation in the Knesset.

Mr. Ben-Ami approves of both the border separation wall—he believes it has cut down on terrorism—and the new security fence under construction that will separate Israel from Egypt. But he would move the wall, which now overlaps sometimes deeply into Palestinian property, to correspond to the 1967 Green Line border. Regarding the settlements, Mr. Ben-Ami suggests a "land swap" that would move two-thirds of settlers inside a new Israeli border. The new Palestinian state's rights to the water sources and the highways threading through the West Bank would have to be guaranteed, too, but he did not say how.

In Mr. Ben-Ami's vision of a practical peace, Palestine would have a police force but no army and would have no control of its air rights. An international force would administer the border between the two states. In an appearance on "The Colbert Report," Mr. Ben-Ami opposed the Palestinian Authority's decision to raise the question of statehood at the United Nations. However valuable U.N. membership may be, he believes that the two-state solution must be settled before anything else. Nor did Mr. Ben-Ami approve a settlement freeze as a condition for negotiations. I reminded him that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's strategy seems to be to build so many settlements so fast that the residents of the West Bank will be completely overwhelmed. He agreed, but said that made the two-state solution all the more urgent.

Under a two-state plan, there would be a territorial passageway across Israel linking Palestine and Gaza. While many Palestinian families still retain the keys to the homes they left in 1948, Mr. Ben-Ami argues that the Palestinian leadership should prepare those in exile for the likelihood that they will never get their homes back. Instead, these exiles should be compensated, he thinks, and offered homes in the new Palestinian state or in a third country. Jerusalem would be the shared capital of both Israel and Palestine, Mr. Ben-Ami says, but it does not seem a J Street priority to restore to the Palestinians those neighborhoods usurped through Netanyahu's inexorable building spree.

Peace, Not Pandering

Does J Street really speak for mainstream Jewry, or is it only a nagging voice on the fringe of Jewish public opinion? Mr. Ben-Ami points out that the movement, started with just himself and two friends three years ago, now claims 180,000 members and maintains a $7 million annual budget. J Street has 50 staff members and 40 local chapters. Membership includes those from the far left to those slightly right of center. The Monday after our interview, all 180,000 members received an e-mail message, one of several sent each week, deploring Mr. Gingrich's description of Palestinians as an "invented" people, Michele Bachman's refusal to surrender "one inch" of land for peace and Rick Perry's implied endorsement of the annexation of "Judea and Samaria." The message called on readers to sign an open letter to the 2012 candidates saying, "I've had enough" political pandering. A follow-up letter asked for donations for a little-known Congressional candidate who backs peace, not pandering.

Even if peace were in sight and a two-state solution were on the brink of ratification, the Palestinian state would face an enormous challenge in economically and politically revitalizing the Gaza Strip: 50 percent of the 1.6 million population are under 18; 38 percent live in poverty; and 26 percent of the workforce are unemployed. Each day 50 to 80 million liters of partially treated sewage are dumped into the Mediterranean Sea; 90 percent of the water from the Gaza aquifer is undrinkable.

Israel will still have to struggle with two big internal problems: the growing power of the ultra-Orthodox population, who would use the Knesset to make Israel a "Jewish State" rather than a "homeland" at the expense of human rights; and the growing economic inequality, one of the highest in the world, which has sent an angry population into the streets demonstrating for economic reform. These are big challenges; but, says Mr. Ben-Ami, "Every challenge is surmountable."

I asked Mr. Ben-Ami to what extent J Street might draw on American Catholics for support or on his Jewish religion for inspiration. He believed the Catholic Church was committed to justice and that Catholics did not view all issues related to Israel in black and white. He thought Catholics were realistic enough to see compromise as the only way forward. Mr. Ben-Ami describes himself as a Jew who takes his family to the synagogue, but who is not strictly "observant," for example, of kosher laws. Ultimately his morality is based on the maxim of Rabbi Hillel the Elder (1st century B.C.E.): "That which is hateful to you, do not unto another." Add to that Leviticus, "Love one's neighbor as oneself." From the Jewish history of persecution and its experience, he says, with "the dark side of human nature...should come a heightened awareness of justice when running our own state, and a sense of responsibility for fair treatment of any minorities living in our midst." A

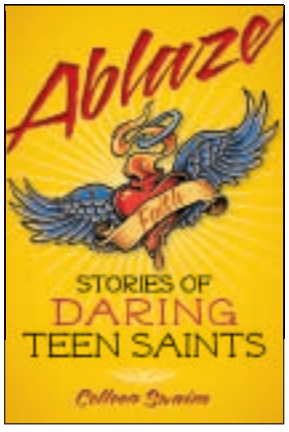
This conference will focus on the issues of ***Inter-Cultural Competency: Multi-Cultural Assessment, treatment and understanding these dynamics in formation.*** Vocation Directors, Formation Directors, Vicars of Clergy, Leadership and Assessing and Treating Psychologists are strongly encouraged to attend. Our creative, innovative, and research-based agenda will aim to:

- Engage and facilitate dialogue amongst and between treating and assessing psychologists, vocation directors, religious leadership, and formators
- More effectively respond to the Vatican Statement: "Guidelines for the proper use of psychology in the admission and formation of candidates into the Priesthood"
- Respond to these goals within the context of intercultural competencies.

Following this conference, there will be an opportunity for those interested in our inaugural conference held in 2010 entitled: ***A Necessary Conversation: A Gathering of Experts - Beginning a Dialogue*** from June 13-15, 2012. This workshop will review the issues and ideas shared as a result of the Vatican's 2010 statement, "Guidelines for the Use of Psychology in Admission and Formation of Candidates to the Priesthood." Vocation directors, formation directors and assessing and treating psychologists are encouraged to attend. Please check out the SJVC website for details of this previous workshop.

Additional details and registration information are available online at:
www.scs.edu or www.sjvcenter.org

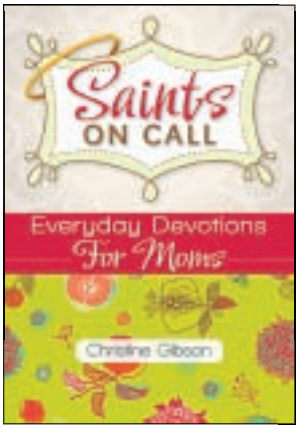
New Titles from Liguori Publications



Colleen Swaim looks at eight young souls who became saints for the against-the-current, selfless heroism of their teen years. Includes maps, prayers, journal prompts, and reflection questions to help the reader apply the saints' experiences to everyday life.

144-page paperback

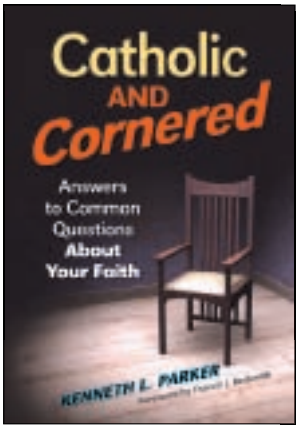
978-0-7648-2029-8 • **$12.99**



Designed with the on-the-go mom in mind, this book is helpfully categorized by a mother's daily situations—from the practical problems of daily life to the spiritual struggles that come with every mother's vocation.

80-page paperback

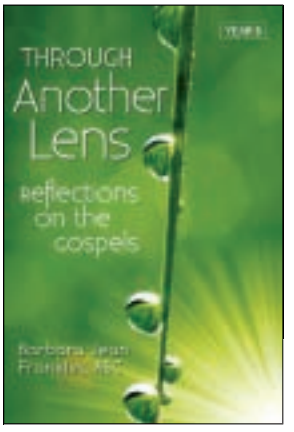
978-0-7648-2034-2 • **$7.99**



Theology professor and Catholic convert Kenneth L. Parker helps converts—and lifelong Catholics—clear up confusion, exaggeration, and differences between religious cultures in a way that will inform, calm, and bring people together.

112-page paperback

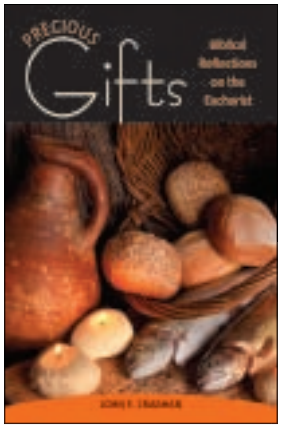
978-0-7648-2025-0 • **$10.99**



This book analyzes and reflects on the Sunday Gospels through spiritual poetry. Barbara Franklin challenges us to enter each Gospel passage in a new way that will lead us to a deeper, richer communion with God and helps to apply Jesus' teachings to daily life.

144-page paperback

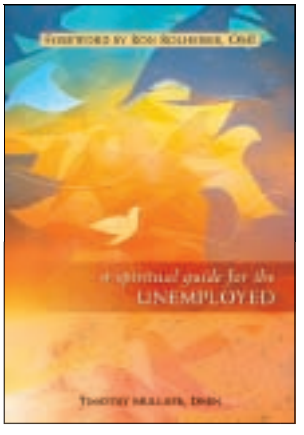
978-0-7648-1989-6 • **$14.99**



Precious Gifts: Biblical Reflections on the Eucharist is an informative and inspirational resource that weds solid biblical scholarship with thoughtful reflections to deepen our experience of the Eucharist.

128-page paperback

978-0-7648-2026-7 • **$10.99**



Join Timothy Mullner in *A Spiritual Guide for the Unemployed* as he embraces his unexpected fall from six figures to no figures and lands in a new world of unemployment, renewed faith, and the fear, frustration, and fragility of looking for a new job.

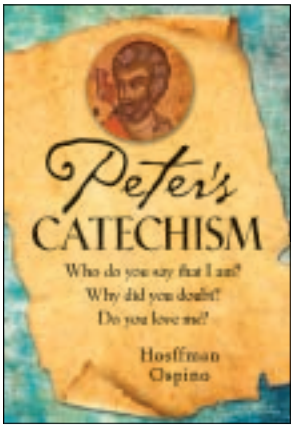
128-page paperback

978-0-7648-2060-1 • **$10.99**

With activities, exercises, and scrapbooking space, *Jesus Invites Me to the Feast* will guide children closer to God during preparation for Holy Communion, and provide them with a priceless keepsake upon completion.

80-page paperback

978-0-7648-1998-8 • **$9.99**



Peter's Catechism is an excellent resource for adult faith formation as it examines the responses of Peter and other Catholics throughout history to Jesus' three questions.

128-page paperback

978-0-7648-1994-0 • **$10.99**

Also available in Spanish

Available at your local bookstore or call 800-325-9521. Mention Source Code 12-330
www.liguori.org • Liguori Publications, 1 Liguori Drive, Liguori, MO 63057-9999

Liguori PUBLICATIONS

A Bridge to Beijing

Can a 16th-century Jesuit help rebuild Chinese-Vatican relations?

BY JOHN A. WORTHLEY

Devotion to Matteo Ricci, S.J., is visible throughout China. Statues and icons of the man appear nationwide. Prayer cards for Ricci's intercession are in widespread use. Mother Teresa's sisters, the Missionaries of Charity, follow their founder's practice and seek Ricci's intercession daily for their efforts in China. Centers and Institutes promoting the example of Ricci exist in America, Australia, Europe and Asia. And the Vatican itself recently presented a special Ricci exhibit inaugurated by Pope Benedict XVI, who applauded Ricci's "search for harmony between the noble and millenary Chinese civilization with the Christian novelty."

All this makes one wonder: Could this 16th-century, European Jesuit, adopted by China four centuries ago, become a bridge to reconciliation between the Vatican and Beijing? The faithful on both sides of the world seem to be shouting yes.

As phenomena suggesting the heroic virtue of his life become more widely known, the cause for Ricci's canonization is crystallizing. The result could well be that Ricci, whose Chinese name is Li Madou, becomes an instrument of grace completing the East-West bridge that he began building when he arrived in Guangdong, China, in 1582. In the mystery of the Holy Spirit the timing is exquisite: As the church in the West wanes, the church in China thrives.

PHOTO: CNS PHOTO/NANCY WIECHEC

Heroic Virtues

Ricci's canonization cause formally began in 1984 through the diocese of his birth in Macerata, Italy. The process is focused on heroic virtues as the sign of Ricci's holiness. The progression of testaments to the heroic virtue of his life is compelling.

It begins with his holy persistence. Permission for foreigners to enter China was rare as the 17th century loomed. When an invitation surfaced in 1583 to work in Zhaoqing, Ricci determinedly embraced it and shared with China the science and technology of the West, gradually gaining some acceptance until he was expelled in 1589. But he persevered and was eventually given permission to relocate to Shaoguan, further north. From there he continued the unlikely pursuit of Beijing, reaching Nanjing in 1595 and Suzhou in 1598. When war in the north pre-

JOHN A. WORTHLEY *has been a visiting professor of public administration in China for 30 years. He is an emissary for Vatican-China relations.*

vented him from proceeding, he waited with patience. By 1601 word of his genuine esteem for China, as well as the practical generosity of his high-tech gifts (like a clock and a world map), was so compelling that the seemingly impossible occurred: He was invited by the Ming emperor Wanli to become the first Westerner welcomed into the Forbidden City. Ricci quickly contributed major advances in Chinese astronomy, mathematics, musicology and cartography and centered his ministry at what today is the site of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception.

Ricci found a heroic way to be faithful to the church and loyal to China.

This formidable accomplishment was made possible largely by Ricci's practice of the virtue of solidarity. Though he was not the first Westerner to enter Cathay (Marco Polo and others preceded), he was the first who chose to stay—and he never left. Instead of remaining a visitor in a strange land, Ricci embraced Chinese language and culture, quickly mastering Mandarin and Confucianism. He even sought solidarity liturgically by praying Mass in the vernacular, vesting in mandarin garb and preaching the Gospel with Confucian concepts centuries prior to the insights of the Second Vatican Council.

Ricci's virtue of humble friendship is evident from the way the Chinese embraced him. His ability to garner invitations that were seldom, if ever, offered to foreigners seems to have been a fruit of his genuine esteem for China and his graciousness in working with the Chinese to blend Western scientific and artistic advances with Chinese receptivity. Notable is Xu Guangqi, an imperial official and scientist who became a Christian and a great friend. He helped Ricci meld Confucian concepts with Christian theology. Fittingly, his own beatification cause has been opened by the Diocese of Shanghai.

Perhaps the strongest evidence of China's embrace of Ricci relates to his death. Inexplicably—perhaps because of the perceived heroic virtue of Ricci's life—the emperor overrode ancient traditions banning the burial of foreigners in Chinese soil. Wanli provided imperial grounds for Ricci's tomb. And, perhaps the most salient indication of the perception of Ricci's sanctity, that tomb has been honored and protected through the centuries. Even during the Cultural Revolution, when anything remotely Western was desecrated, the tomb of Matteo Ricci was protected. Today it is a point of pilgrimage for the Chinese faithful as well as foreign visitors. (I personally considered it a miracle when government officials, as an

honor to me as their professor, permitted me to celebrate one of my first Masses at Ricci's grave in 1990.)

Within the church, Ricci is a remarkable example of the virtue of heroic obedience. The willingness of Ricci and his fellow Jesuits to adapt to Chinese culture was controversial in Rome, where the view prevailed that the melding of Chinese rites with Christian theology was problematic. Undoubtedly cognizant of the implications for his evangelization work, Ricci nonetheless remained an obedient priest while thriving in the imperial court. He found a heroic way to be both faithful to the universal church and loyal to China. Today bishops and priests in China face a similar challenge and look to Ricci for guidance.

A Mutual Embrace

A stunning testimony to Chinese esteem for Ricci stands today on Sheshan Hill outside Shanghai, an astronomy museum under secular authority that honors heroes of China's scientific history. Prominently displayed is a portrait of Li Madou, with an extensive explanation of the advances he developed in China for observing the heavens through the eyes of science. Adjacent is the Basilica of Our Lady Help of Christians. Images of Matteo Ricci appear there, too, in recognition of his role in helping China see the heavens through the eyes of faith.

ON THE WEB
Matteo Ricci's lesson to a modern missionary.
americamagazine.org/pages

The widespread devotion of the faithful to Ricci and the extensive evidence of the heroic virtue of his life suggest that his beatification is destined to take place. The process itself might help to heal the rifts of recent decades—and pave the bridge that he built—if the diocese of his birth and baptism and the diocese of his death and burial were to join hands in the cause. In conjunction with Shanghai's process for beatification of Xu Guangqi, the canonization could symbolically bless the friendship of China and Christianity. By illuminating the compatibility of Chinese culture with Christian customs, as well as the enrichment of Christian theology through Confucian concepts, a joint focus on Matteo Ricci could significantly soothe Vatican-Chinese relations. His remarkable nurturing of profound mutual respect at a time when distrust prevailed offers a holy path to reconciliation.

Matteo Ricci fervently embraced China. China fondly embraced Li Madou. The implications for Rome and Beijing abound in the blessed personage of that East-West hero. His deep humility, abiding respect, quest to understand and eagerness to blend brought China and the West together in his day. Highlighting those heroic virtues today in Vatican-Beijing relations offers a potential path over the bridge to harmony. A

SMALL TOWN SEEKS PARISH PRIEST.

Join America's Navy Chaplain Corps

A small town of 5,500 men and women travel the world on peacekeeping missions, sometimes with no one for spiritual guidance and sacramental opportunities. That is why the Navy needs you. As a member of America's Navy Chaplain Corps, you'll minister to the needs of sailors and share with them the challenges and rewards of Navy life. It's an exciting opportunity for you to see the world, receive excellent benefits, while at the same time, serving both God and country. To learn more about the Navy Chaplain Corps, go to navy.com/chaplain

AMERICA'S NAVY

A GLOBAL FORCE FOR GOOD.

In the Garden

A reflection on the grace of suffering

BY ANDY OTTO

When I worked as a chaplain at Georgetown University Hospital, I witnessed among my patients horrific losses, feelings of emptiness and the suffocating aftermath of lost jobs, lack of insurance and enormous medical bills. Most of us know someone who has suffered from cancer or some chronic medical condition. Suffering can also be financial, relational and spiritual. From a Christian perspective, we must attempt to find God's fingerprints in suffering: where is the grace?

The grace of suffering is often found in vulnerability. Some of my patients, for example, held positions of power at their jobs, but now they donned the same kind of hospital gown everyone else wore. Brought down to a level plane, to where humanity meets its fragility, we often pause and consider powers greater than our own. We seek God in unexpected ways, hoping to find answers. In these times of struggle, we yearn to depend on a God who seems to have betrayed us.

Yet God can make use of our suffering: bringing people together, touching lives and advancing the kingdom. As families visit their loved ones in the hospital, old grievances are sometimes reconciled. Grudges seem foolish in the face of fragile life. I saw the faith of many patients strengthened; a few even rediscovered their desire for God, something they had lost years before.

One young lady in my unit had advanced multiple sclerosis and could no longer feed herself or brush her teeth. Whenever I visited, she would proclaim, "God is so good!" When I asked why she felt this way, despite having a disease that prevented her from holding a job or caring for herself, she said she had nothing to complain about. She had a happy life, a loving family and a strong faith in God. "Everything happens for a reason," she said.

Oddly enough, the fragile, suffering person comes to notice that he or she is depended upon, too. Just after Daniel Lord, S.J. (1888-1955), a writer from St. Louis, was diagnosed with cancer he wrote this prayer: "For some strange reason, Lord, you depend upon me.... It is a challenge and a trust, an inspiration and a call to character."

Father Lord also wrote a series of reflections on the mystery of suffering for The Queen's Work, a Jesuit magazine he edited during the 1930s and 1940s. He identified the puzzlement and hopelessness that characteristically arise. But he also stated a bold truth about how it can shake us out of pride:

> The loss of wealth has often jolted a man out of sinful self-sufficiency. The sudden collapse of a woman's beauty frequently makes her see the ugliness of vice that has been lurking behind the mask of her personal charm. Failure has sent more than one proud man reeling broken into the arms of God.

God depends on us to allow ourselves to be shaken to the bone and broken so we can be rebuilt. One patient told me how his sudden illness brought him and his family back to church and restored their faith in a God who desires the best for them. After years of not believing in God, one elderly patient wanted to give God another chance and "make peace." Despite such episodes we are left with the inevitable question: why? Why me? Why anyone? God's blessings do not negate the pain. The most difficult hurdle for me as a chaplain was to accept that I had no answer to such questions. All I could do was place suffering and sorrow in context.

The Suffering Christ

I will never forget one occasion when I contemplated Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane as I made the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. The clarity of it was arresting: Jesus knelt on the ground crying, begging his Father to take away this suffering if it was his will. The tears were real, as were the fear and the feeling of betrayal. Jesus

ART: SHUTTERSTOCK/CHUBPHONG

ANDY OTTO *is programming coordinator for CatholicTV in Watertown, Mass. He also blogs about Ignatian spirituality.*

gripped the dirt and cried out, accepting his fate in obedience.

As a chaplain I knew nothing of my patients' pain, but I recognized that Jesus knew their pain exactly. The woman with MS understood something of this. She knew that God was present in her life. This recognition does not come easily. One woman in her 70s had broken her hip; the impending surgery was going to be risky. She gripped my hand as she winced in pain. Any little movement in bed was agony. "Why would God allow this?" she asked. "I want to die on the table during surgery." It was as if she were in the garden next to Jesus, facing a fate just as frightening. Imagine the feeling I shared with her in this moment—both of us at a loss for answers.

Yet I came to understand that as this woman suffered, she felt accompanied by the God of love who knew the pain and hopelessness she experienced, the Son of God who felt betrayed at the cross. "Perhaps sorrow is not the horrible evil that men have thought it," wrote Father Lord in his reflection. "Perhaps it has some beautiful and deep significance that can be read only by eyes that have looked into the blood-red sun behind Calvary's hill."

In this context, our suffering becomes a mutual exchange of compassion. If Christ can suffer humiliation, hatred and physical pain, can we sit beneath the cross and suffer with him? It is not easy. As children we may have rushed into our parents' arms crying, feeling helpless. Was our suffering removed? If anything, all our parents could do was hold us and feel the piercing of their own heart as they felt our brokenness. But somehow, that softened things.

"Reeling broken into the arms of God," writes Father Lord, signals a thirst deep within us that arises frequently from an experience of pain. It is the "I-know-not-what" of St. John of the Cross for which we ache. There is a deep need to fill the emptiness created in sorrow and brokenness. It may begin with a loved one's embrace or word, but it ends with the mystery of God.

Laura Story, in her song "Blessings," asks one of the greatest what-if questions: "What if my greatest disappointments or the aching of this life is the revealing of a greater thirst this world can't satisfy?" This lyric hints that our life's experiences are part of God's ongoing creation, thirsting more for the kingdom of God, ever leading us closer to the promise of the Resurrection, to the day when all will be reconciled in God and made new.

Pondering With Mary

Whether one is a chaplain in a hospital with patients or the loved one of an ill family member, the feeling of sorrow is universal. Consider Jesus' disciples and his mother Mary. They endured much sorrow, especially on Good Friday. Consider the pain they felt. Consider the sorrow felt by Mary at the foot of the cross as her son, the Man of Sorrows, died and the life drained from him. Indeed, Simeon's prophecy of a sword piercing her soul was fulfilled in that moment (Lk 2:34-35). Daniel Lord, S.J., completes the image: "Quietly she waited until, with the first pink light of Easter's dawn, He stood before her, radiant, triumphant, and holding out His arms to her embrace." That is the promise of God: joy and redemption. Father Lord says that "Sorrow was for [Mary], in every instance, the prelude to a deeper happiness."

Like Mary, we must ponder and question in order to seek deeper truth. For some reason, suffering is a path we are sometimes asked to take. And when our humanity meets its fragility, the Lord depends on us to be vulnerable and broken so that we may become empty enough to be filled with grace. A

IDEAS | DIANNE BILYAK

BETWEEN THE LINES

Exploring poetry and faith

For six years I have been interviewing poets, some 25 of them, a process that began with a graduate thesis project. The project focused on the intersections of poetry, religion and the writing process. I did not subscribe to the notion that contemporary poets had a premeditated plan for what they were going to write. I sensed instead that much of writing was revelatory. Yet many university seminars seemed to claim otherwise; students and professors analyzed, critiqued or mined poems for rigid meanings. The only class that reinforced my notion was a course on Chinese poetry.

In his book *Chinese Theories of Literature*, James J. Liu divides writing into six categories: The first and second are metaphysical and deterministic, which represent the interactions between writer and universe; the third is expressive, the interaction between writer and work; the fourth and fifth are technical and aesthetic, which look at the work as an object; and the sixth is pragmatic, the interaction between work and audience.

I suggest a seventh theory and apply it specifically to poetry—the "meta-metaphysical," the interaction between audience and universe or God. The meta-metaphysical means that the potential exists for associations between the reader or hearer of a poem to something beyond the self. Some poems can allow God to flow through the author; later, the poem reaches out to remind others of their own connection to God.

Talking With Poets

Raised as a Roman Catholic, I began to interview other poets from the faith. One of the first was Paul Mariani. "What, for you," I asked this author of many poems and books on such poets as Hart Crane and Gerard Manley Hopkins, "is the relationship between God and poetry?" Mariani, a former poetry editor of **America,** answered:

> All my life I've been a practicing Catholic. It's the foundation of who and what I am, and I try to take my Catholicism seriously. After I made full professor [at the University of Massachusetts]—I was 35…doing critical

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM/MIKHAIL DUDAREV

The Entry of Christ Into Brussels

(after a painting by James Ensor)

Smack in the center of this parade
that he neither leads nor follows,
but so far off we barely see him
riding the ass through town—
and neither do the masked revelers
who surround him
look up at the one unfeigned face
amongst the grinning skulls
and leering burghers, the red-nosed
revelers and windup soldiers.
Lost amongst their specious
banners, flags and slogans,
too homely even to crucify,
too undisguised to notice,
the one they flaunt as "Jesus"
in order not to see (though they give
him pride of place). As the eyes
cannot see themselves
at the center
of the face.

RICHARD SCHIFFMAN

RICHARD SCHIFFMAN, *a biographer and former journalist for National Public Radio, has published poetry in Poetry East, The North American Review and other journals.*

and scholarly work and working on my own poetry at odd moments.

Later that same year, when I was serving as a rector of a Cursillo weekend up in North Adams [Mass.]. I remember a voice asking me: 'What do you want? What would you like?' I said I wanted nothing. That being able to serve these men in some way had been reward enough. But the voice kept quietly insisting, and so I said: 'Okay, if I could use the gifts you've given me in your service, I would like that.' Shortly after that, the poems started coming, one after the other.

Since that time—I'm 71 now—I've been writing poetry, biographies, criticism, reviews, even a religious memoir. So if you ask me about God and poetry, I really can't separate them. That doesn't mean that all my poems are God-filled; in fact some of them deeply question the reality of it all. But the poems that most deeply satisfy are those in which I confront the mystery.

I was initially drawn to Catholic poets for another reason: their use of symbols, experiences and language from their own faith practice. Since as a cradle Catholic I am very familiar with the concepts of grace, souls, angels, sin, saints, Mary and Jesus, I asked Fanny Howe, a poet, novelist and short story writer how these dimensions of Catholicism became real to her after her conversion. She responded:

> What attracted me earliest were the devotional objects, and the preservation of childhood that I saw in a church with angels, Mary and the saints. The saints' cards and the plaster statues had fluttered and tumbled down from a

child's heaven. For me the original attraction was through those representations of an idea. I am not a sophisticated or intellectual Catholic, despite exhaustive readings in theology and Scripture.

I often ask: Who writes the poem? Is there a self that writes the poem, or is there some "unknown other" trying to rise up through language? Was writing your way to access God, or was it the way God had access to you? How might poetry be like prayer, prophecy or ministry? The answers vary, of course, and this has helped me shift some of my own perspectives. Here are two examples.

Faith and Instinct

First, I see a contradiction in the idea that writing is a solitary act. Many poets begin by listening, by being present and by jotting things in a notebook as they go about the day. Writing may start on a subway, a walk or a visit to a church or museum. As life weaves in front of them, a conversation is initiated.

Second, none of the poets I interviewed follow a plan or could explain exactly where their poems came from. Even when they started off wanting to write about "something," in the end they had to rely on faith and instinct. Marie Howe (no relation to Fanny), a poet and professor at Sarah Lawrence College, in Bronxville, N.Y., alluded to this when I asked, "Are there ways you are still being influenced by the faith of your childhood?" Her response:

> Although the faith of my childhood was patriarchal, female figures exemplified the deep feminine to me as a child and do still.... How much we need to access the deep feminine now. Mary Magdalene is a wonderful character to me because she's passionate, devoted and remains the subject of her own life. She's courageous. She's lived. All the previous depictions of her are useless to me. They seem to have nothing to do with the real woman, person. She is receptive but strong, the feminine among all those wonderful guys. I've been working on poems about her since I began to write but kept failing and failing.
>
> Finally, it came to me [to write] about the seven demons. She was said to be possessed by seven devils, and she began to talk about what they were. Of course, she sounds like us. The first one was, 'I was very busy. You have no idea.' The devils we are all possessed by don't look like devils at all. But Lord knows they are. So it turns out the devils she keeps revising and thinking about end up being devils that are recognizable to some of us. In the end she's no longer some strange woman possessed by devils, but someone as "bedeviled" as we are in everyday life.

Writing as Prayer

After a while, I began to interview adherents of different religious traditions, and the process revealed another layer of what faith means. On a personal level, the most life-changing part of speaking with these poets was that they were willing to speak with me. It felt like an answer to my prayers, because it happened with very little effort. Each has helped me understand that poetry and God are not about any one thing.

I asked Martha Serpas, a poet and professor at the University of Houston, when she first connected poetry writing with divinity. She said:

> I'm going to answer that as though you had used the word "consciously," because unconsciously I think it was always there.... But I became conscious of the fact that I was working out a belief system through poetry when I was at N.Y.U. [New York University] and my father died suddenly. That utterly changed my perspective and my connections to people, and I became much more aware of what I was doing because I realized my own mortality. More and more I started recognizing how my upbringing as a Catholic affected my thinking and my writing. The only time I actually lose time because I am attending so completely to something is when I'm writing. So for me, writing is prayer—it's the unmediated experience of the divine.

The Edge of the Pond

Imagine standing at the edge of a pond and peering down at the water. The water holds and reflects an image of you and also includes the material around you. At the same time you see yourself you also see through yourself to distinguish the sand and the stones and the moving fish. You see the water as the agent of that which gathers and that which reflects. Or perhaps you are floating in a boat on the ocean. The waves sway the boat, which is a type of movement, but not toward any one thing. By resisting the urge to make poetry or faith transparent or uncomplicated, we endeavor to expand and navigate our consciousness in the fragile balance between these secular and sacred worlds.

ON THE WEB
Poems and essays by Paul Mariani.
americamagazine.org/culture

DIANNE BILYAK, *a graduate of the Institute of Sacred Music at Yale Divinity School, is the author of* Against the Turning, *a book of poems. Excerpts from her interviews of poets are available on the Web site of the Poetry Society of America.*

PEPPERY PUBLIC INTELLECTUAL

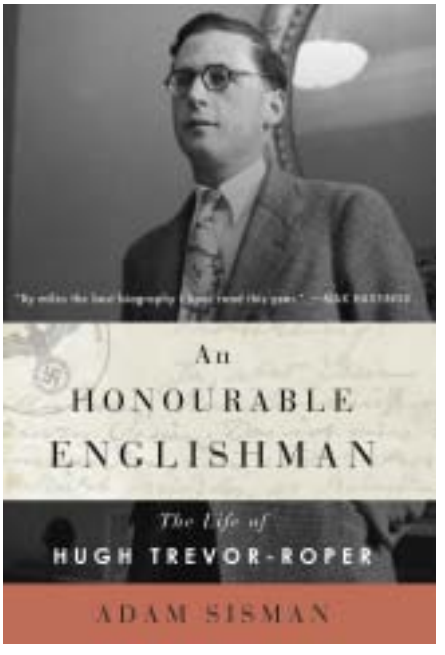
AN HONOURABLE ENGLISHMAN
The Life of Hugh Trevor-Roper

By Adam Sisman
Random House. 672p $40

Come again? Not that he was *dis*honorable, mind you, but if one had to summarize the career of Hugh Trevor-Roper (1914-2003) with a single word, adjectives like "witty," "waspish" or "contrarian" would sooner come to mind than "honourable." But then Trevor-Roper was also both vigorously old school (a fox-hunting, classically educated elitist) and unremittingly sarcastic (in a typical aside he described two Nazi officials as "a perfect pair, the Tweedledum and Tweedledee of pretentious German silliness"); so one has to take the title with some ironic salt.

Adam Sisman, who has written a solid biography of Trevor-Roper's colleague and occasional combatant A. J. P. Taylor, as well as studies of Boswell's *Life of Dr. Johnson* and the friendship between Wordsworth and Coleridge, rather nervily asks readers to follow him through 600-plus densely detailed pages chronicling the uneventful, bookish career of an Oxford don with a very fine prose style. It's a near thing, but Sisman makes the trip worthwhile.

In straightforward, efficient fashion, he marches steadily through the stages of Trevor-Roper's CV with chapters labeled "Boy" (born in Northumberland, near the Scottish border), "Carthusian" (a student at the Charterhouse "public" school), "Undergraduate" (at Christ Church, Oxford), "Researcher" (at Merton College), Cadet" (a 25-year-old second lieutenant in the Territorial Army just before World War II), "Soldier" (in the Radio Security Service, charged with intercepting and decoding enemy messages), "Major" (in the Secret Intelligence Service), "Sleuth" (he interviewed high-ranking German P.O.W.s and uncovered a crucial copy of Hitler's personal testament). And this is just a partial listing. Others include "Student" (back at Christ



Church and publishing his earliest and biggest hit, *The Last Days of Hitler* [1947]), "Destroyer" (sulfurous critic of Arnold Toynbee and other historians) and "Lover" (of Lady Alexandra Henrietta Louisa Howard-Johnston, daughter of the "butcher of the Somme," Field Marshal Douglas Haig, whom he married in 1954).

Trevor-Roper was a mixed bag. As a child, he claimed, "I never saw, in my own house, any evidence of any emotion whatsoever; and it was somehow conveyed to me that any show of it was not only improper but ridiculous." In person, especially as a younger man, he struck many people as cold, reserved and imperious; in print he could be a world-class insulter (he adored Edward Gibbon). But he was also a bon vivant and a prodigious oenophile. He was often regarded as an intellectual failure because he never got around to writing the "major" history he was thought to have in him. But he did write more than 20 books (four of them published after his death), some of them, like *The Hermit of Peking*, about the pseudo-Sinologist Sir Edmund Backhouse, or *Religion, the Reformation, and Social Change*, extremely good. (It turned out that the long essay, not the book, was his natural medium.)

A number of scholars scorned him for his extensive and handsomely paid journalism; but his work for The New York Times, The New York Review of Books, the BBC and so on was polished and memorable. No doubt, Lord Dacre, as he was finally known, was a snob, with a strong preference for duchesses over fusty Ph.D.'s, but he frankly admitted it. He was pilloried for being taken in by the Hitler Diaries hoax, but he did so only after two editors at Der Stern had falsely assured him that both the paper and the ink had been tested and found authentic—and anyway, was that lapse such an earth-shaking event? Trevor-Roper disliked children, but he developed a deep, fatherly affection for his stepson James.

He was, all in all, a remarkable man. Bernard Berenson, who could be a shrewd judge of character, noted in his diary that Trevor-Roper "seems to have known everybody, or at least everybody who has counted, in the last 30 years" [this was in 1956] "a fascinating letter-writer, indeed an epistolary artist, brilliant reviewer of all sorts of books, very serious historian and formidable polemicist."

So much for the good news. The bad news is that Trevor-Roper spent a large part of his long life fighting academic battles, which, as his acquaintance Henry Kissinger famously

remarked, are so bitter because the stakes are so small. He was forever engaging in verbal fisticuffs with, for instance, Evelyn Waugh, because of his compulsive need to bait Christians, Catholics and Jesuits for their every failing, past or present. His years of steering through storms of senior common room gossip, his machinations to become Regius Professor at Oxford or his jousting with the dinosauric old guard at Peterhouse, the next-to-last Cambridge college to admit women (1983), are amusing at times; but outbursts of pettiness (even if his enemies sinned more that way than he did) make for a dull story.

The one thing we do not know after our protracted stroll with Professor Trevor-Roper is what exactly to make of his wife, Xandra, and their marriage. Seven years older than her husband and painfully aware of the fact, she was an intense, nervous aristocrat who sounds at times like a flibbertigibbet and fashionista, and elsewhere like a clever, sharp-tongued and intuitive, if undereducated art lover and social climber. Her several pregnancies with her husband all ended in miscarriages; but we can only guess at whatever depths of pain or joy the two may have experienced together. The record, as provided by Sisman, is opaque on that score.

Still, for the relatively few people to whom he opened up, Trevor-Roper himself appears to have been a charming, entertaining, dazzling companion, even if he never fully recovered from his love-starved childhood. Pity.

PETER HEINEGG *is a professor of English at Union College, Schenectady, N.Y.*

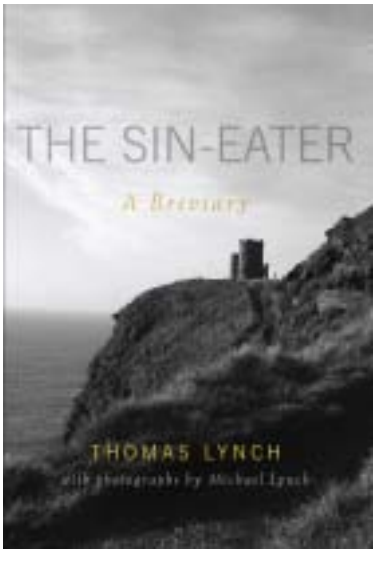
ANGELA ALAIMO O'DONNELL

FUNERAL PROCESSION

THE SIN-EATER
A Breviary

By Thomas Lynch
Paraclete Press. 80p $22.99

Thomas Lynch's new collection of poems, *The Sin-Eater*, breathes life and contemporary language into a figure from ancient folk magic and thereby conveys a strange tale in accents that are endearingly familiar. Originating in legends from the British Isles, the sin-eater is despised by good Christians and pagans alike as he makes his living from the dead. As tradition has it, he would arrive before the burial of a corpse and consume bread and ale over the body, a ritual enacted in order to free the deceased from his sins, release his soul to heaven and prevent him from haunting the living. In return for this service, the sin-eater would be paid his pittance—usually by an impoverished and resentful widow—and driven back by the community into exile in the unsettled countryside from which he emerged. The gruesome nature of his work inspired revulsion in ordinary villagers, consigning the sin-eater to the margins of society, tolerated but never welcomed, despised if not rejected.



It is a brilliant imaginative choice on Lynch's part to adopt the persona of this mysterious creature, to participate in the dark art he practices and to channel his consciousness. (The choice also seems inevitable, when we consider Lynch's chosen profession; as an undertaker, he has labored over many a body, preparing the dead for the journey ahead.) Seen close up, Lynch's Argyle (the sin-eater's name, chosen both for its suggestion of the ordinary—namely, socks—and its homophonic resemblance to "our guile") becomes a less fearful presence than he seems from a distance. Through the course of 24 poems—each of which is 24 lines long, a symmetry bespeaking the orderly mind of the supposedly disordered creature at its center—we become party to his loves and his loathings, his prayers and his nightmares, and his deep physical and spiritual longings. Argyle's pilgrimage, as he makes his way across his ancient homeland in pursuit of his vocation and his salvation, becomes a version of our own. Argyle, the sin-eater, is appalling—and he is us.

The book begins by introducing our unlikely hero in his defining role: "Argyle the sin-eater came the day after—/ a narrow hungry man whose laughter/ and the wicked upturn of his one eyebrow,/ put the local folks in mind of trouble." We see him, at first, from the outside and as the locals do—as a terrible creature who possesses magic powers, the ability to down "swift gulps of beer and venial sin" yet seems none the worse for his indulgence afterwards.

But the perspective quickly shifts. By the end of the poem, we are squarely in his head as he sets off in the direction of his next grim appointment: "Two parishes between here and the ocean:/ a bellyful tonight is what he thought,/ please God, and breakfast in the morning." Argyle, as it turns out, is a far more

observant, dutiful Christian than his righteous employers.

These poems are ripe with physicality and sensuality, fittingly so, given the primitive world Lynch evokes. The language, too, is textured, Saxon and Gaelic, full of curt nouns that can cut your mouth (*gob, sup, gulp, lust*) balanced by legato, Latinate verbs that fairly sing (*anointing, avenging, inquisitioning*). Lynch's poetic lexicon brilliantly conveys the complex history of Christianity in the British Isles—the legacy of ancient tribal languages forming the foundation of our modern English, then softened by the elegant overlay of church Latin. We hear, as well as see, ourselves in Argyle's words, for his speech is our own.

The Sin-Eater depicts life lived close to the bone, described in language that is grounded in the material world yet gestures toward the transcendent. Lynch's paradoxical evocation of this world (and ours) is profoundly sacramental, both in terms of the book's content and the means of conveyance. It is surely no accident that a central poem of the volume (the 12th out of 24), entitled "Argyle's Eucharist," depicts the central sacrament of Christianity, and does so through a scenario that challenges all received notions about the nature of transubstantiation: "Upright over corpses it occurred to him—/ the body outstretched on a pair of planks,/ the measly loaf and stingy goblet,/ the gobsmacked locals, their begrudging thanks...it came into his brain like candlelight:/ his lot in life like priesthood after all."

Argyle's strange vocation is not unlike that of Christ, another outcast, despised and rejected, who took on the sins of his fellow human beings, though Argyle's version of the sacrament is, admittedly, "a transubstantiation, sleight and feint/ a reconfiguration of accounts/ whereby he took unto himself the woe/ that ought betide the rotting dece-

dent." Argyle, the Enemy, is thus transformed into Arglye, Priest and Savior, by whose selfless sacrifice "*the unencumbered soul makes safe to God.*"

This is, perhaps, the most remarkable achievement of Lynch's book: even as he demystifies the Sin-Eater, he remystifies the nature of sacrament, reminding us of its strangeness and its power. Given the weekly-ness—and even daily-ness—of the practice of Eucharist, it is easy for Catholics to forget how wild this ritual is, easy to forget that many followers left Christ's side when they heard they must "eat the flesh of the son of man and drink his blood" (Jn 6:53) in order to inherit eternal life. The mystery of the consecration and the miracle of transubstantiation can become domesticated as they are performed on our altars inside our familiar churches by our friendly priests. Thomas Lynch's poems revivify the ancient Christo-centric practice of "sin-eating," effectively presenting it to us in a guise we may not recognize, at first—but it is, nonetheless, Eucharist, by any name. Through the agency of Lynch's powerful poetic language and deep imagination, we glimpse Christ in the Sin-Eater, as well as ourselves, and come to know him in the breaking of the bread.

ANGELA ALAIMO O'DONNELL *is a professor of English and associate director of the Curran Center for American Studies at Fordham University in New York City.*

DANIEL P. SULMASY

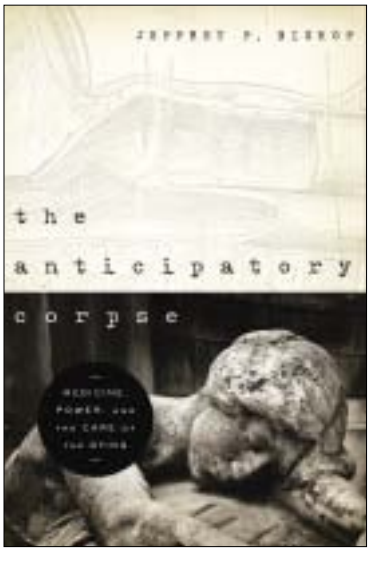
MACHINES IN MOTION

THE ANTICIPATORY CORPSE
Medicine, Power, and The Care of the Dying

By Jeffrey P. Bishop
University of Notre Dame Press. 440p
$35

In recent years, bioethics has become a rather stale academic enterprise, in which either widely accepted formal principles are applied in tedious detail to progressively narrower questions regarding advances in medical technology, or else sanctimonious philosophers chide the uneducated masses for failing to see how irrational it is for them to continue to believe that anything medical science does is really morally wrong. Jeffrey Bishop, a physician and philosopher, has written a book that dramatically alters that landscape. *The Anticipatory Corpse* is interesting, provocative and important—one of the most novel contributions to the field of bioethics of the last several decades. Bishop has many illuminating new things to say about the ethics of medical care for the dying. In the process, he helps to explain why bioethics itself is in such a sad state.

Bishop takes his central thesis from the observation of the French philosopher Michel Foucault that medicine made a dramatic turn in the late 18th century. In a particularly striking chapter of his masterful book *The Birth of the Clinic*, entitled "Open Up a Few Corpses," Foucault wryly observes that with the development of pathological anatomy, the primary subject of medicine, concerned as it is with the care of the living, paradoxically became the dead human body. What doctors began to see when they saw living patients, Foucault argues, was what could be seen only at autopsy. Bishop skillfully portrays how this conception has played itself out into the 21st century, focusing on how medicine cares for the dying.



Postmodern French philosophy is not easy reading. Bishop's exposition of Foucault's thought and its applicability to medicine is lucid and accurate. Anyone who has attempted to read Foucault but was unsure what it all meant will find Chapter One alone to be a worthwhile investment.

The author also cogently argues that the Western world (and hence, Western medicine) has abandoned Aristotelian-Thomistic metaphysics for what he calls "the metaphysics of efficient causation." What he means by this is that Aristotle's old notion of the "four causes" of things—material, formal, efficient and final (Bishop calls these "proximate" and "ultimate")—has not so much been supplanted as restricted. Bishop observes that modern science (and modern thinking more generally) embraces only the material and the proximate causes of things. As a result the "real" world is therefore seen to subsist only in matter and motion (the material and proximate causes). What have been drained from our conception of reality, however, are meaning and purpose (the formal and the ultimate causes).

The conclusion is that reality has no meaning or purpose and therefore no longer even requires an argument because the concepts of meaning and purpose simply are not admitted to the structures by which we reason. The formal and the ultimate causes are "hidden" from our view. Moreover, Bishop argues, this

metaphysical viewpoint of efficient causation presents itself as an alternative to metaphysics—an anti-metaphysics, so to speak. Its very status as a particular metaphysical viewpoint is thus also hidden from our view. Efficient causation simply presents itself as unvarnished rationality.

Bishop shows how this metaphysical standpoint is nowhere more dominant than it is in medicine. In particular, he shows how deeply it has affected the way we now view death and the care of the dying. "Life," says the French physiologist Bichat, "is the sum of the forces by which death is resisted." Life, in other words, is dead matter set in motion by the forces of efficient causation. If this all sounds eerily like a description of the modern intensive care unit, then Bishop has made his point. This is how doctors think.

Once this metaphysics is coupled with the politics of population statistics, and once the king (who previously alone could exert dominion over life and death) has been deposed, Bishop argues that only two forces remain to fight for control over life and death: the modern state and the sovereign self. Each fights it out at the bedside, wielding the efficient causation of political power to determine whether the lifeless matter of the body continues in motion or dies.

Bishop goes on to argue that this metaphysics plays itself out in our notions of life and death. He shows how standard bioethical discourse about the care for the dying is rooted in the ethics of efficient causation. He argues quite cogently that such thinking afflicts the "pro-life" and pro-euthanasia movements equally, inasmuch as both regard life as mere matter in motion. Proponents of euthanasia, Bishop argues, assume that the dead matter of the body has a purpose only if assigned one by the sovereign self, and if the sovereign self no longer sees meaning or purpose there no longer remains a political reason to sustain the forces by which death is resisted. The pro-life movement, similarly, sees only matter in motion (bare life) and mounts a political campaign to sustain the forces by which death is resisted because bare life is the only value they can see from within the metaphysics of efficient causation.

Brain death, Bishop argues, arises because just as disease had to be located in the corpse, so death had to be located in a part of the body. Organ donation and transplantation devolve from the medical politics of the state's utilitarian purposes. Even what seem to be reform movements in medicine are suspect. Palliative care is really a "violent" political movement exerting control over all aspects of dying, advancing the cause of "totalizing" medicine. Professional hospital chaplains are also suspect, submitting even the spiritual to the measurement tech-

niques and politics of biomedical statistical thinking.

The Anticipatory Corpse is striking and original. One wonders, however, if Bishop might not have been better served if he had regarded his central idea as one among many threads partially explaining the malaise of modern medicine. By attempting to bring everything under his thesis, he misses much that is really good about contemporary medicine. His own view is "totalizing" and thus, at times, overwrought. The book is decidedly negative and his concluding chapter, gesturing toward a new view of medicine, falls flat.

Nonetheless, his main thesis is so novel and so interesting and explains so much about modern medical care for the dying that it should be required reading for anyone interested in bioethics.

DANIEL P. SULMASY, M.D., *is the Kilbride-Clinton Professor of Medicine in the department of medicine and the Divinity School of the University of Chicago.*

LETTERS

Pray Before the Mystery

Re "Staying Civil" by Bishop Blase Cupich (3/5): However much the Catholic Church is convinced of the righteousness of its own position on the right to life of the unborn, such conviction—as I myself am convinced—cannot be imposed on the secular political weal. The quality of the leadership of the church alone will be convincing—certainly not a blustering, indignant and offensive righteousness.

All of us need to find a certain humility before the very real, profound complexity of contemporary church-state relationships. There is a mystery about the human person that overwhelms all our most seemingly obvious categories of time and space, faith and reason, love and compassion, man and male, woman and female, human life and dignity. That mystery inspires humility rather than rancorous confrontation. Before that mystery I need to pray, as before the image of God. We very much need to find a position of peace for the sake of thoughtfulness while in respectful disagreement with each other.

JEROME KNIES, O.S.A.
Racine, Wis.

Political Position?

Bishop Cupich's article is well written and strikes a moderate tone of reconciliation. How can one explain, however, the sudden mobilization of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, so atypical of their history? Where was the high moral ground when the second President Bush went to war over hidden weapons of mass destruction? It appears the U.S.C.C.B. is taking a political position trying to affect the 2012 election.

MIKE GRIFFIN
East Marion, N.Y.

Between Gaza and Israel

I am grateful for the insightful and accurate article by Elizabeth G. Burr, "Out of Palestine" (2/27). The photo of the Christian Palestinian woman walking down the long, cage-like above-ground tunnel between Gaza and Israel prompts me to point out that in the past four years Vatican-sponsored Bethlehem University has accepted a number of young men and women from Gaza (including several Christians who have gained their primary and secondary educations in the Catholic schools in Gaza). Not one has been given the necessary "permission"—all controlled by the Israeli authorities—to study at Bethlehem University.

Facts on the ground like these speak for themselves.

ROBERT SMITH, F.S.C.
Bethlehem University
Bethlehem, Palestine

Hostile and Invidious

"Out of Palestine" is basically a long tirade against Israel. The article is inflammatory, biased and filled with historic inaccuracies, semitruths and in some cases flat-out untruths. Ms. Burr may wish to consider the fact that following the 1948 war, the population of Israel was 20 percent Arab Palestinian, while not one single Jew was left in areas taken over by Jordan and Egypt. In light of the fact that approximately 20 percent of Israeli citizens remain Arab Palestinians the ongoing accusations of Israeli "ethnic cleansing" would be laughable were they not so openly hostile, invidious and dangerous.

JAMES LOUGHRAN, S.A.
New York, N.Y.

Do Your Best

Having read "One Nation, Under God," by John Coleman, S.J. (3/12), I asked myself, "What belongs to Caesar?" My conscience seems to be saying, "Nothing belongs to Caesar; at best Caesar is a steward." If Genesis does not suffice, the Book of Job clearly reminds me that God made this world. It belongs to him. All that matters is his will. He gives us talents for living in this world; the only question is how we account for ourselves. Jesus gives us a pretty good example. We need to deal with Caesar and those who live by different values, as Jesus did. We are always offered the grace to do so. It may take more courage, but that is life.

BOB O'CONNELL
Lake Forest, Ill.

Bishops Protest Too Much

Re "One Nation Under God," by John Coleman, S.J. (3/12): I was delighted to read a calm and reasoned call for continued discourse on this difficult issue. Should the bishops' determination of their religious freedom trump the freedom of conscience of any individual employee? How can these freedoms be balanced? Sadly, I am inclined to think that the bishops protest too much.

When the struggle to unionize staff at Catholic hospitals erupted, did the bishops rise to defend the right of the workers to organize, as advocated by papal encyclicals? Not hardly. And when they found themselves supervising pedophiles, did they act to protect the children or their own staffing concerns? We know that answer. When our nation entered a war they viewed as unjust, they did issue a letter, but it was not read out from every Catholic pulpit.

EILEEN KEIM
Concord, N.H.

Table Manners

Re "First of Freedoms," by Mary Ann Glendon (3/5): Even though Professor Glendon and I see the world and this issue differently, based on the ever-current controversy about what "religion" means in our republic, we might well share concern about American Catholics as "a people adrift," to use Peter Steinfels's apt description. Professor Glendon cites the statistics, and I know well the "drift" that is occurring in my parish and others—with younger people either opting for a super-Catholic expression or dropping out of the comfortable ranks of the "culturally Catholic."

Professor Glendon and I would probably disagree about all that causes this, but certainly the Republicanization of mainstream Catholicism due to the quasi-political endorsements by the hierarchy, the accumulation of wealth in the upper class and the increasing irrelevance of most liturgical and spiritual life in the community are contributing forces that have attracted some and driven away droves.

DAVID E. PASINSKI
Fayetteville, N.Y.

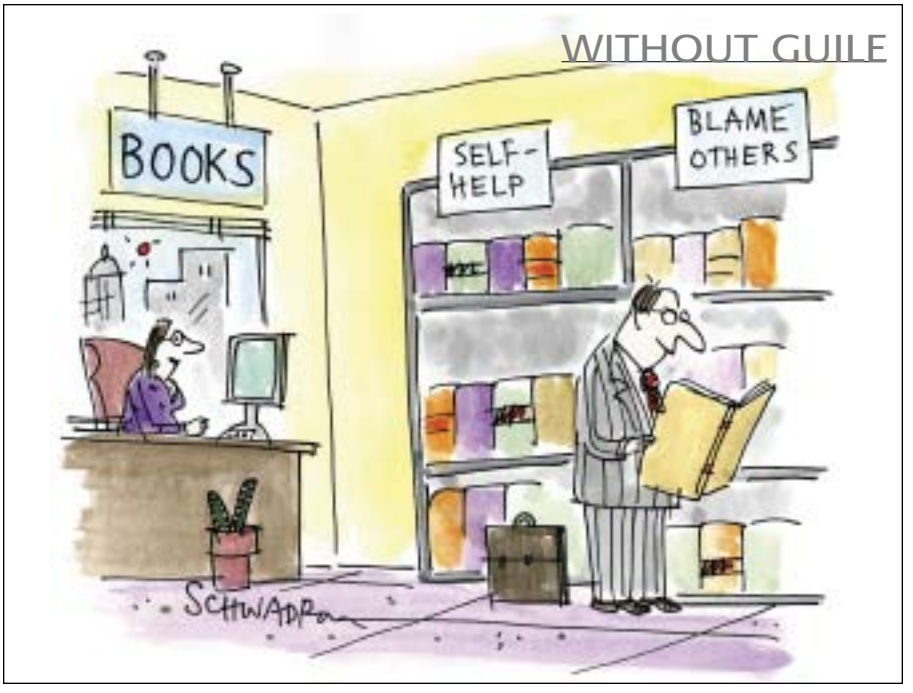
Religious Liberty War

I applaud your editorial "Policy, Not Liberty" (3/5). The current leadership of the U.S. Catholic bishops lost their bearings after they won their initial battle on Feb. 10 for an expanded religious exemption from the Department of Health and Human Services contraceptive mandate.

Heady from the public support they had garnered for several weeks under the banner of "religious liberty," these bishops suddenly raised their aspirations and advocated specific legislation aimed at permitting any employer to exclude contraceptive and other services from health care insurance.

The bishops seem unwilling to admit that they stepped over the line into areas of prudential judgment and partisan politics, joining the right wing in an increasingly strident condemnation of one political party. They also seemed oblivious to the fact that this specific policy proposal, if adopted, would impose any employer's conscience choices on all of his or her employees, creating exactly the kind of religious liberty war they had earlier protested.

KIRK O. HANSON
Santa Clara, Calif.



CARTOON BY HARLEY SCHWADRON

Future Assaults?

Your editorial "Policy, Not Liberty" (3/5) was way off point. While we may "pay to Caesar," we at the same time must not allow Caesar to take from us that which is God's. You seem to be suggesting that the U.S. church should simply roll over and shut up. Nothing could be worse. The godlessness and moral morass that we are experiencing around the world are the direct result of the church's frequent silence.

Aside from the issue of conscience rights and religious freedoms that are assaulted by the contraception coverage mandate, we must ask ourselves what else can this administration do? What new mandate will it force upon us? The Affordable Care Act gives extremely broad power to the secretary of Health and Human Services. To lie down without seriously challenging the mandate would be to agree tacitly to any future assaults the administration wishes to level upon us.

RON KIENZLE
Cincinnati, Ohio

A Wearying Emphasis

I couldn't agree more with Ronnie Rubit's observations in "Peer Pressure" (2/27), regarding attitudes among U.S. pro-life Catholics and their leaders. Unlike Mr. Rubit, I am a cradle Catholic who from early childhood was encouraged to give my pennies, nickels and dimes to "the missions." Social justice and care for the poor were imparted to my generation early in life and are in our very bones. The Catholic Church's record regarding this area is stellar. But instead of emphasizing this Gospel mandate, our church leaders today seem to concentrate upon instructing the faithful about reproductive issues to a wearying degree. Indeed, at times, it can feel as though this might be an obsession.

CAROL JOHANNES, O.P.
Ann Arbor, Mich.

One Wing to Rule Them

I disagree with John J. DiIulio Jr. ("A Broken System," 2/27), when he concludes that the political reform processes have "pushed Republicans ever farther to the right and the Democratic Party ever farther to the left." The shift I see since the 1960s in both parties has been only to the right. The current Democratic Party is now what liberal Republicans were in the 1970s.

I attribute the clear rightward shift of both these parties in large part to our failure to deal with campaign financing and how this failure biases our elections in favor of those backed by the affluent. This has had a far more undesirable influence than the reforms for opening up primaries and the nomination process.

WILLIAM F. O'CONNOR
Lewes, Del.

Obscene Elections

Concerning "A Broken System," by John J. Dilulio Jr. (2/27): It is easy to anticipate that the election of the president in 2012 will cost more than $1.5 billion. What kind of message about spending money does that send to other governments and peoples of the world? The word *obscene* is not adequate.

There is a better way to select a candidate for president. The first sig-

To send a letter to the editor we recommend using the link that appears below articles on **America**'s Web site, www.americamagazine.org. This allows us to consider your letter for publication in both print and online versions of the magazine. Letters may also be sent to **America**'s editorial office (address on page 2) or by e-mail to: letters@americamagazine.org. They should be brief and include the writer's name, postal address and daytime phone number. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

nificant change to the selection of presidential candidates would be to set the primaries on the same day for all 50 states. As a result of this change, the party's national convention would become the venue for the party's selection of a presidential candidate, vice presidential candidate and the presentation of the party's platform. The second change would be to set the national convention of each party about one month prior to the national election in November. This change sets a time period for campaign spending. The third significant change would be to set a campaign finance limit for the election of each party's candidates that can be audited.

LINUS L. KLITSCH
Gaithersburg, Md.

Running on Gratitude

Re the Of Many Things column by Raymond A. Schroth, S.J. (2/27): What a delight to discover that the man whose articles and reviews (as well as the book *From Dante to Dead Man Walking*) I have enjoyed is also a man in love with running. Like Father Schroth, I still love running, even though I cannot do it anymore. I started running when I was 40 and stopped at age 72 because of heart problems. I too still ache when, on long walks, I see others running. I too found running to be an activity that fostered prayer. I loved racing most of all: from the mile to the marathon. As much as I miss running and racing, however, I am profoundly grateful that I was able to be a runner for so many years.

GEORGE STAPLETON
Park Forest, Ill.

America (ISSN 0002-7049) is published weekly (except for 14 combined issues: Jan. 2–9, 16–23, Jan. 30–Feb. 6, April 16-23, June 4–11, 18–25, July 2–9, 16–23, July 30–Aug. 6, Aug. 13–20, Aug. 27–Sept. 3, Sept. 10–17, Nov. 26–Dec. 3, Dec. 24–31) by America Press, Inc., 106 West 56th Street, New York, NY 10019. Periodical postage is paid at New York, N.Y., and additional mailing offices. Business Manager: Lisa Pope. Circulation: (800) 627–9533. Subscriptions: United States, $56 per year; add U.S. $30 postage and GST (#131870719) for Canada; or add U.S. $56 per year for international priority airmail. Postmaster: Send address changes to: America, P.O. Box 293059, Kettering, OH 45429.

Witnessing to Easter

EASTER (B), APRIL 8, 2012

Readings: Acts 10:34-43; Ps 118:1-23; Col 3:1-4; Jn 20:1-9

He saw and believed (Jn 20:8)

A visiting priest once told the following story at Mass, and I have always remembered it as a great paschal-Easter witness.

Early in the priest's first assignment, a man named John introduced himself and invited the priest to a family dinner. When he arrived on the appointed evening, the young priest was struck deeply by two things. First, John's wife Rachel was disfigured. Her face was quite scarred, as were her hands and arms. She also moved haltingly. The second thing was the extraordinary love and solicitude everyone in that family had for each other, especially John for Rachel.

The next time he saw John alone the priest asked about Rachel's appearance. This was John's story: "A few years ago we had a house fire in the middle of the night. The whole place went down. When we woke up, we were in a panic. I grabbed Melissa, our 5-year-old, and Rachel grabbed Liz, who was 3. That's what I thought at least, but Rachel thought I had them both. Outside, we realized Liz was still in there. Rachel immediately bolted back into the house, which by now was really ablaze. She found Lizzy crouched behind the toilet hiding. She threw off her coat, wrapped Lizzy up and ran out of there—but obviously not before getting terribly burned herself."

"I'm so sorry," the priest responded. "Thanks, Father," John replied. "But, you know, the whole ordeal forced Rachel and me to rely on God totally. And we've learned to love each other with a depth we never knew we had. When we were married, we were barely Catholic; now our faith dominates our lives. We've never been happier or more in love. And every time I look at her I see not only my beautiful wife; I also see my eternal hero, who saved our baby's life."

Today's Scripture readings are filled with this sort of urgent Easter faith. In John's account, Mary Magdalene discovers the empty tomb and runs to tell Peter and the Beloved Disciple, who dash to the tomb in response. Mary returns and meets the risen Lord. The Easter faith of the Beloved Disciple comes simply from seeing the empty tomb: "He saw and believed." Mary's faith comes from hearing Jesus call her name. She thought him the gardener, at first. Then "Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She turned and said to him in Hebrew, *Rabbouni*." She then returns to the disciples to tell them.

In the first reading, we hear Peter speak to the household of Cornelius, a devout gentile whom God sent Peter to visit. Peter recognizes that "God shows no partiality. Rather, in every nation whoever fears him and acts uprightly is acceptable to him." While Peter shares the Gospel, the Holy Spirit interrupts by anointing the household (though this last event falls outside our reading).

What is most impressive about Peter, the Beloved Disciple and Mary Magdalene—and John and Rachel, as well—is not simply their experience of Easter faith, but their subsequent witness to it. Peter refers in his speech to witnessing three different times, being himself one of the "witnesses chosen by God in advance." I see the Beloved Disciple witnessing by being the first to recognize the Lord in Galilee: "It is the Lord" (Jn 21:7). And Mary has become known as the *apostola apostolorum* (apostle of the apostles).

Expressing Easter faith can take many forms. Peter's witness was quite public and bold. For most, however, our faith expresses itself in the context of the mundane and in humbler circumstances. Here our Easter faith can show itself powerfully, even if subtly. Paul recognizes this in the second reading. "For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ your life appears, then you too will appear with him in glory."

Easter faith is a gift. Witnessing to it, however bold or subtle, is an imperative. And this witness, this gift that we give back, is itself a great grace.

PETER FELDMEIER

PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

- Where do you see Christ most in your life?
- Where does he call your name?
- How do others know that you know him?

ART: TAD DUNNE

PETER FELDMEIER *is the Murray/Bacik Chair of Catholic Studies at the University of Toledo*

17TH Annual Detroit

CASTELOT SUMMER SCRIPTURE JUNE 18–21, 2012

WARREN CARTER

The Infancy Narratives

GINA HENS-PIAZZA

The Biblical Prophets: Global Context

JEROME T. WALSH

Reading Genesis: A Unified Narrative

Castelot Summer Scripture
1636 Bloomfield Place Dr. #243 Bloomfield Hills, MI 48302
(248) 802-4940
www.castelotscripture.com
css@castelotscripture.com

WE ARE THE CHURCH CONFERENCES

"Let it be with me according to your word."

"The Annunciation" by Barry Moser. From the Pennyroyal Caxton Press edition of the Holy Bible, published 1999. www.moser-pennyroyal.com

BILL HUEBSCH

VATICAN II

...a fresh look

MARGARET SCOTT • RICHARD GAILLARDETZ

after 50 years

F. Gerald Martin Pastoral Ministry Conference

August 6–8, 2012 • Detroit MI

www.wearethechurchconferences.com
info@wearethechurchconferences.com

WE ARE THE CHURCH CONFERENCES