

# America

THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC WEEKLY

JUNE 18-25, 2012 \$3.50

## Tales From The Foreclosure Front

KEVIN CLARKE

Observing  
Vatican II  
MARTIN E. MARTY

# OF MANY THINGS

**B**y the time this column appears in print, Pentecost will have come and gone. In the waning days of the Easter season, the liturgy prompted us to wait for the coming of the Spirit; but there is no comparable liturgical effort in the days following the feast to help us relish the Spirit dwelling in us. The liturgy once encouraged Christians during the now-suppressed octave of Pentecost to meditate on the Spirit. Medieval monks savored the Spirit's gifts deeply enough to give us the so-called Golden Sequence, "Veni, Sancte Spiritus," which we still chant today. Rabanus Maurus in the ninth century gave us the equally rich "Veni, Creator Spiritus"; and in our times the monks of Taizé popularized their own importunate round, "Veni, Sancte Spiritus."

According to Dom Mark Daniel Kirby, even Pope Paul VI, when he prepared to vest to celebrate Mass the Monday after Pentecost in 1969, was surprised and saddened to learn that under his authorization the day now belonged to Ordinary Time. The older octave, Kirby writes on his blog, *Vultus Christi* ([snipurl.com/23r4tee](http://snipurl.com/23r4tee)), "was eight days under the grace of the Holy Spirit, eight days of joy in the fire and light of His presence, eight days of thanksgiving for His gifts. The Octave of Pentecost was one of the most beautiful moments in the Church Year, not only by reason of the liturgical texts, but also by reason of its effect in the secret of hearts."

What the suppression of the octave deprived us of is the opportunity, in Dom Mark's words, to "linger over anything momentous...to bask in the afterglow of events rich in meaning...to prolong the feast." People have an innate capacity and desire for meditation, he writes. "*Meditatio* is the act of repetition by which truth, or beauty, or goodness passes from the head into the heart. There it becomes life-changing."

This Pentecost 2012 we sorely need to appreciate the beauty and the power

of the Spirit alive in us—and to celebrate the Spirit moving in the wider church and in the world. For it so often seems we are living in a time of "the quenched Spirit," when God no longer sends prophets to speak his word and the prophets we hear are often false prophets. We need the gentle comfort of the Spirit to nurse our bruised hearts and the Spirit's light to guide us through dark times. Most of all, we need the divine gift of reform and re-animation.

Pope Paul testified to his confidence in the Spirit's active presence in both the church and the world. "We live in the Church at a privileged moment of the Spirit," he wrote in "Evangelii Nuntiandi." "Everywhere people are trying to know him better.... They are happy to place themselves under his inspiration.... Through the Holy Spirit, the Gospel penetrates to the heart of the world, for it is he who causes people to discern the signs of the times."

The same conviction was shared by the fathers of the Second Vatican Council, who declared in "The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World," "The People of God believes that it is led by the Spirit of the Lord who fills the earth." Inspired by that faith, the council reappropriated the ancient teaching on charisms and recalibrated the balance between charism and office in the life of the church. It also thrust the church into the world, confident that the Spirit was at work there as well as in the church.

Let us own the gifts the Spirit continues to pour out on the church to renew her. Let us honor the Spirit by discerning with other Christians and men and women of good will the signs of the times through which God continues to transform our world. Finally, let us take up for ourselves Blessed John XXIII's daily prayer for the council, "O Holy Spirit, renew thy wonders in this our day, as by a new Pentecost."

**DREW CHRISTIANSEN, S.J.**

# America

PUBLISHED BY JESUITS OF THE UNITED STATES

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106 West 56th Street  
New York, NY 10019-3803  
Ph: 212-581-4640; Fax: 212-399-3596  
E-mail: [america@americamagazine.org](mailto:america@americamagazine.org);  
[letters@americamagazine.org](mailto:letters@americamagazine.org)  
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Customer Service: 1-800-627-9533  
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*Cover:* Members of the Ramirez family hold signs outside the Bank of America's headquarters before the bank's annual shareholder meeting in Charlotte, N.C., in May. Reuters/Jason E. Miczek

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### Egypt's First Steps

Some 23 million citizens cast ballots in Egypt's first free presidential election, a historic achievement regardless of who wins the runoff. The photos of Egyptian women at the polls were particularly stirring, given the limits many Islamic nations still place on women's education and civic roles. But the election euphoria died when the results of the first round were announced. A cache of moderates had split the vote, leaving two more hardline candidates the winners: Amed Shafik, a former prime minister of Egypt under Hosni Mubarak, and Mohamed Morsi, a leader of the Islamist Muslim Brotherhood. Either choice is risky. Mr. Shafik might return the nation to its authoritarian, military-controlled past. Mr. Morsi might interject Islam into governing in ways detrimental to Egyptian women, secularists and adherents of non-Muslim faiths. Both candidates present foreign policy challenges for the West, other Islamic states and Israel. Neither candidate is actually the people's choice.

Self-government requires sustained citizen activism, political organization and skill. The losing candidates will have to build coalitions and stay active. The Islamist majority in Parliament could, if coupled with an Islamist president, skew the focus and direction of government. Voters must monitor events. First, the military council that has run the country since Mr. Mubarak's arrest is to hand over its powers to the newly elected president. A peaceful transition to a civilian-controlled military would mark another historic accomplishment. Second, the constitution needs to be finalized and passed. It was shelved in March by lawmakers unable to compromise. Voters must demand universal suffrage and a slate of basic rights. In this way Egypt can take its first steps toward a democratic future.

### Cover Story

Quick, what's on the cover of this issue of **America**? No peeking. Can you remember? Don't worry if you can't. Chances are it's our fault. We need to be sexy and provocative, we are told, and that starts with the cover. You should remember what appears below our logo. You should want to tweet it, share it, like it. It should land us on the "Today" show, inspire comic riffs, maybe merit a mention on "The Colbert Report." If it does not, then we have failed.

The newsmagazines show us the way. Newsweek put Barack Obama on the cover with a rainbow halo and called him "The First Gay President." Time shows a young moth-

er nursing a three-year-old child and asks, "Are You Mom Enough?" Each took off on Twitter, garnering tens of thousands of "mentions." There were articles attached to these covers. At least we think so. There wasn't much mention of them.

Understated no longer works. Forget about subtlety or wit. The point is to shock. Even the estimable New Yorker knows it is time for change. Think of the cover depicting President and Mrs. Obama standing with machine guns in the Oval Office, celebrating with a fist bump. You can't blame the magazine for trying. How else are publishers to drive traffic, improve analytics, trend on Twitter? Words don't sell; pictures do.

It is time for Catholic magazines to get in the game. No more pictures of war-torn regions or parishioners sitting meekly in the pews. We need to get younger, more attractive, less depressing. Editing articles can wait; it's the cover that counts. Time to boot up Photoshop and have some fun.

### Too Much Talk

Unplanned teen pregnancies have long been associated with poor educational and economic outcomes, but a new study suggests that social welfare specialists across the political spectrum may have gotten the matter precisely backwards. Teens do not become poor because they become pregnant; they become pregnant because they are poor.

Research published in the spring issue of the *Journal of Economic Perspectives* indicates that the cultural histrionics over the "right" kind of sex education for young people—whether to emphasize abstinence or instruction in artificial birth control—is misplaced. It turns out that behavioral instruction has a limited impact on the trajectory of teen mothers. The social outcomes for teens who became pregnant but miscarried compared with those who kept their babies were essentially the same: Poverty begets poverty. Responding to the problem of teen pregnancy requires a much larger creative and practical public commitment.

Teens have to be able to imagine a future that is worth preparing themselves for. That means that more determined personal and educational interventions are required if teens are to truly break out of the cycle of poverty before they become unmarried parents. Young people do not need another abstinence or sex education seminar; they need a Cristo Rey or NativityMiguel school. If they do not see a practical way ahead out of poverty and hopelessness, they recognize all the lecturing on sexual mores for what it is: just talk.

# Gender Bias

Last month a bill that sought to make it a crime to perform or obtain a sex-selective abortion failed to pass a House vote. This is no surprise. The Prenatal Nondiscrimination Act, sponsored by Representative Trent Franks, Republican of Arizona, required a two-thirds majority to pass, and was seen by some as primarily an attempt during an election season to force Democrats to take a public stand on a divisive issue. In short, it was meant to make politicians uncomfortable and make voters take notice. But even though the bill may have been motivated by politics as well as ethics, it highlights one of the moral complications surrounding abortion that many pro-choice advocates would prefer to ignore: gender selection.

In 2008 The Los Angeles Times reported on a growing market for at-home genetic testing. In the article, women described their dissatisfaction over the inaccuracy of tests that claimed to determine the gender of a fetus as early as five weeks into a pregnancy. Some women who took the test were simply curious. Others were concerned about potential for diseases in one gender. Others acknowledged that some women might abort a child after learning the results.

Unfortunately, that article focused less on ethics than on customer satisfaction. A study in The Journal of the American Medical Association in 2011, however, found that some at-home gender tests were 99 percent accurate if conducted after seven weeks of gestation. Other tests were found by two studies to be 90 percent accurate after 10 weeks gestation. The lack of medical oversight and advice in the use of these tests is troubling, but the moral implications are even more so.

Opponents of the Franks bill pointed out that the vast majority of abortions in the United States are performed before doctors can accurately determine the gender of a fetus. Most ultrasounds cannot accurately predict the gender of a fetus until 12 or 13 weeks. Most sex-selective abortions in the United States are obtained by a small number of women who have emigrated from countries where the practice, well-documented, is more common, like China, India and South Korea. An article published in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences in 2008 found that among parents who had emigrated from these countries to the United States and who had already given birth to two girls, the boy-girl ratio increased from 1.05 boys to 1 girl to 1.5 to 1 for the third pregnancy. This, the study stated, was evidence of sex-selection. The size of the group in question

may be too small to influence legislation, but size does not determine the morality of the practice.

Moral decisions are not made in a vacuum. In the countries in which sex-selective abortions are most prevalent, females face many gender inequalities. For this reason some makers of at-home gender testing refuse to sell the product in China or India. The best remedy is respect for the dignity of women, which affords them equal educational, familial and economic opportunity. Addressing the problem of gender equality requires systemic change and a recognition of the fact that investing in women's lives promotes sustainable development, according to a recent report by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development.

But, as Pope Paul VI stated in "Populorum Progressio," authentic development "cannot be restricted to economic growth alone. To be authentic, it must be well rounded; it must foster the development of each [person] and of the whole [person]." It is difficult to convince some societies of the value of an unborn girl, if the society does not see the inherent worth of a woman.

American society, while far from perfect in this respect, has made great strides in gender equality, from women's education to employment. But our society may be at a crossroads. The increased accuracy of at-home tests for gender selection could have grave consequences. For the implication seems to be that foreknowledge would result in more sex-selective abortions in the United States. Some makers of the at-home tests say they have denied testing for customers who have expressed a desire to abort a child because of gender. But what about those couples who never mention it? One company requires users to sign a waiver saying they will not use the test for sex-selection, but enforcement is difficult. Nor are the tests regulated by the Food and Drug Administration. Without regulation, tacit acceptance of abortion for any and all motivations becomes the societal norm. Preventing abortion solely for gender selection is an area on which a wide consensus could be built in the United States. The overemphasis on "choice" in this case undermines decades of society's efforts to promote gender equality, including the efforts of many feminists. One need not profess the Catholic faith to see the backward direction of abortion for gender-selection.



# SIGNS OF THE TIMES

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

## Bishop Blaire Seeks ‘Wider Consultation’

**B**ishop Stephen E. Blaire of the Diocese of Stockton, Calif., issued a clarification on May 24 of “some misunderstandings.” His remarks, reported on *America’s* blog In All Things on May 21, had provoked widespread speculation about a rift within the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops over its strategy and deportment in the ongoing confrontation over religious liberty with the Obama administration. The U.S.C.C.B.’s national campaign “Fortnight for Freedom” begins on June 21.

Bishop Blaire reiterated his support for the conference’s overall effort. “I stand solidly with my brother bishops in our common resolve to overturn the unacceptable intrusion of government into the life of the church by the mandate” of the Department of Health and Human Services, he said.

On May 21 Bishop Blaire had expressed guarded concerns about strategy after more than 40 lawsuits were filed by Catholic dioceses and institutions around the country challenging the new H.H.S. requirements that contraception services be included in future employer-sponsored health insurance plans. Bishop Blaire is chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development and a member of the U.S.C.C.B. Administrative Committee, which approved the “Fortnight of Freedom” campaign in March.

“The bishops that I am in contact with in California are strong supporters of the importance of defending and strengthening religious liberty in our country,” Bishop Blaire said. “I do think there are probably some different concerns with how it is being done,” he added.

According to Bishop Blaire, attorneys for California dioceses had concerns about legal strategy and expressed a desire for more consultation. He explained that the California conference had already gone unsuccessfully down the judicial path in challenging government mandates on

contraception and insurance coverage. Bishop Blaire acknowledged that “there is a concern among some bishops that there ought to have been more of a wider consultation” regarding national strategy on religious liberty. “The question is what is our focus as bishops and that we have opportunity to clarify our focus and that we are all in agreement on focus.” He said some bishops appear to be speaking exclusively on the mandate, “that it is imposed...as a violation of [individual] conscience.” Other bishops see the crucial question as the religious liberty of the church itself



A rally in March outside the Department of Health and Human Services in Washington

and its freedom “to exercise her mission through her institutions.”

He added, “I think that it’s important that there be a broader discussion of these issues” at the June U.S. bishops meeting in Atlanta so that U.S. bishops can clarify their message “and

not allow it to be co-opted.

“I am concerned that in addressing the H.H.S. mandate,” he said, “that it be clear that what we are dealing with is a matter of religious liberty and the intrusion of government into the church and that it not be perceived as a woman’s issue or a contraceptive issue.”

According to Bishop Blaire, discussions with the Obama administration toward a resolution of the dispute could be fruitful even as alternative judicial and legislative remedies are explored. He worried that some groups “very far to the right” are trying to use the conflict as “an anti-Obama campaign.”

Bishop Blaire said, “I think our rhetoric has to be that of bishops of the church who are seeking to be faithful to the Gospel, that our one concern is that we make sure the church is free to carry out her mission as given to her by Christ, and that remains our focus.” The upcoming meeting in Atlanta, he said, should offer an opportunity for a “thorough and careful discussion” about focus in the religious liberty campaign and Catholic “principles of cooperation that need to be applied in any kind of accommodation.”

## EGYPT

### Christians Face Critical Vote

**E**gyptian Christians voting in their nation’s historic presidential election were throwing much of their support behind candidates who aimed to check the power of the Islamist parties. Although no official statistics on the Christian vote were reported, in the days before and during the election on May 23-24, many of Egypt’s Christians said they

would support candidates who served under ousted President Hosni Mubarak, worried that the ideals of the 2011 revolution might have been too ambitious.

“For me as a Christian I have only a few choices—the other side is Islamic, I can’t choose them,” said a man identified only as Rami, 45, a worshiper at the Catholic basilica in Cairo’s Heliopolis district. It appeared that many Christians supported former Prime Minister Ahmed Shafiq or former Foreign Minister Amr Moussa, who also served as secretary general of the Arab League for 10 years. “Even if Shafiq and Moussa are from the old regime,” Rami said, “they offer security and freedom to live the way we want.”

No one was the outright victor in the first round of presidential elections. A run-off for Egypt’s first freely elected president has been scheduled on June 16-17 between Mohamed Morsi, the Muslim Brotherhood candidate, and Shafiq.

A senior church leader in Egypt has expressed grave doubts about the prospects for Christians if the Muslim Brotherhood emerges victorious in June. Antonios Aziz Mina, the Coptic Catholic bishop of Guizeh, said that while it was difficult to say which candidate would best guarantee liberty for the country’s Christians, he had fears about the Muslim Brotherhood taking power.

Bishop Aziz said: “The Muslim Brothers say one thing; then tomorrow they do another thing. They don’t maintain their promises; that’s the problem.” He added that it would be difficult to vote for the Muslim

Brotherhood without guarantees from them. “Whoever will guarantee liberty and democracy and a good constitution for Egypt will have our vote,” said Bishop Aziz.

The Rev. Sherif Nashef, assistant pastor at the Melkite Catholic Church of St. Cyril, explained that the nation’s Christian minority has been forced into pragmatism at the ballot box. “When people see a man like Shafiq in power they will feel comfortable. They feel their country is in safe hands,” he said, summing up the grudging support for figures associated with Mubarak’s regime, which suppressed political Islamism in an often-brutal manner.

“Shafiq may be supported by the army if he is in power; they will keep us safe,” said a woman identified only as Ines, a 39-year-old accountant attending the Maronite Catholic Church in Heliopolis. “In the beginning we were with the revolution, but after all that has happened, we are against [it]. Nothing has changed for the better.

“Under Shafiq, at least we will be back as we were,” Ines said. “That’s enough.”



**A veiled woman shows her ink-stained finger after casting her vote at a polling station in Cairo on May 24. A run-off is scheduled for June 16.**

## Syria Crisis Continues

Caritas Lebanon reports that refugees are continuing to arrive from Syria as more Christians and Alawite Muslims fear they could become targets of Sunni Islamic militants who want to avenge the Houla massacre. On May 25-26 an attack alleged to have been committed by Syrian army forces and militia-supporters left about 108 people dead in Houla, including 49 children and 34 women. A Greek Syrian Catholic said that he left his village because of fighting between the army and rebels but especially because of a plague of kidnappings of Christians. Refugees said if other massacres happen, "Christians may pay a high price." One Syrian priest said, "Everyone is afraid.... We don't know what the future holds." Muslim fundamentalists could take advantage of a regime change in Syria, he said, adding that the best way to deter extremism is for all citizens to work together. "Right now people think that if 'they' win, then 'I' lose. But we all can lose. We need to rebuild together," he said.

## A Kinder Capitalism?

Cardinal Reinhard Marx of Germany called for a "social market economy" in the wake of the fiscal crisis that has gripped much of Europe over the past year. In a talk delivered on May 30 at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., Cardinal Marx, the archbishop of Munich and Freising and a member of both the Congregation for Catholic Education and the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, said the economy needed to move "beyond capitalism" in order to be more fair. He added that he was not calling for the abolition of capitalism, saying that capitalism was "an element"

From CNS and other sources.

## NEWS BRIEFS

The Dominican sister **John Mary Fleming** was named executive director of the Secretariat of Catholic Education of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops on May 29. + More than 350 attendees from Haiti, the United States, Canada and France met to discuss **recovery and development in Haiti** during the National Conference on Solidarity, "Haiti: One Table, Many Partners," in Washington, D.C., on June 1. + A federal appeals court on May 31 declared the 1996 federal **Defense of Marriage Act** unconstitutional. + On May 26 the Diocese of Spokane, Wash., **reached a broad settlement** on sexual abuse lawsuits, agreeing to pay \$1.5 million, a figure low enough to prevent the possible foreclosing of diocesan parishes and schools. + President Barack Obama awarded the 2012 Presidential Medal of Freedom on May 29 to 13 people, including the **civil rights activist Dolores Huerta**, co-founder with the late Cesar Chavez of the United Farm Workers. + As victims of the massacre in Houla, Syria, were buried on May 26, Pope Benedict XVI joined the international community in **condemning the killing**, which left at least 108 people dead. + The U.N. reported on May 31 that fighting between the national army of the Democratic Republic of Congo and rebel forces in Congo's North Kivu Province has **forced more than 80,000 civilians** to flee.



**Dolores Huerta**

in the social market economy he has in mind. But Cardinal Marx suggested that it was the practice of "financial capitalism" in the era since the fall of the Iron Curtain that had brought Europe to its crisis point today.

## Peacemakers in Rome

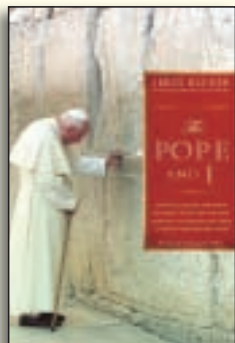
Catholic leaders from some of the world's worst conflict zones gathered in Rome on May 29 and 30 to discuss ways to make peace. "In South Sudan, the Philippines, and Congo, in the Middle East and Central America, the Catholic Church is a powerful force for justice and reconciliation," said Cardinal Peter Turkson, president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. "But this impressive and courageous peacebuilding often remains unknown, underanalyzed and unappreciated." Anticipating the 50th

anniversary of Pope John XXIII's encyclical "Pacem in Terris," the seminar, "New Challenges for Catholic Peacebuilding," examined the best practices of contemporary Catholic peacebuilding as carried out in places where hatred has led to mass killings and destruction. "Pacem in Terris remains a living teaching," said the Rev. Pierre Cibambo of Caritas Internationalis. "Situations of violence and terrorism have changed over the past 50 years, but the will and the ability to build peace remains."

*Correction:* In "Administration Official Calls Drone Warfare 'Ethical' and 'Wise'" (Signs of the Times, 5/21), Mary Ellen O'Connell was mistakenly identified as the incoming president of the American Society for International Law. She was an out-going vice president of that organization.



# Food for Heart, Mind & Soul



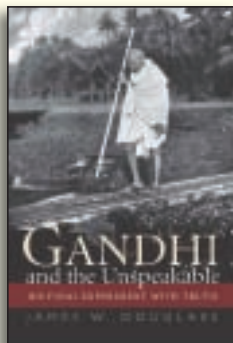
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## The Gospel of Rutba

*War, Peace, and the Good Samaritan Story in Iraq*

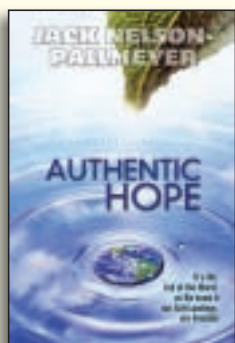
Greg Barrett

“Go and tell the world of Rutba.” That was the only request the Iraqis made to the three Americans they rescued during the onset of war in 2003.

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—DESMOND TUTU

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## Authentic Hope

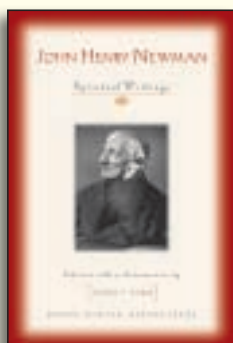
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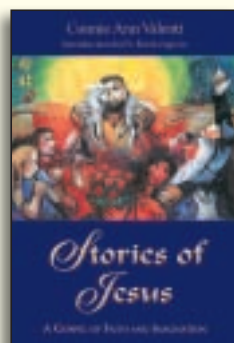
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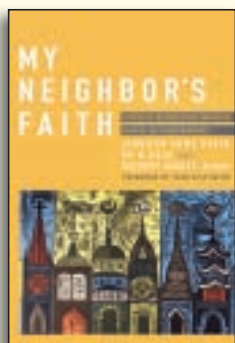
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## My Neighbor's Faith

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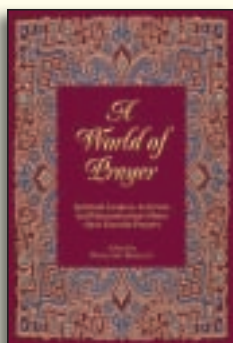
Jennifer Howe Peace, Or Rose, and Gregory Mobley, editors

Foreword by Sister Joan Chittister

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## A World of Prayer

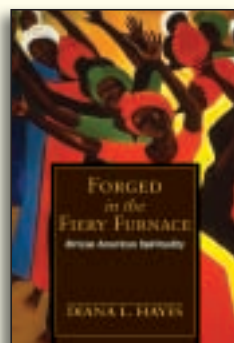
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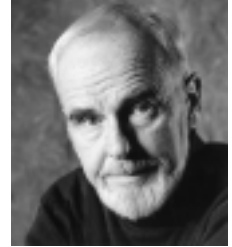
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# Voter's Remorse

One of the more unfortunate features of the 2012 presidential campaign is the prospect that neither Republicans nor Democrats will examine their own rigid ideology or acknowledge their failure to address honestly the crises of our time. Both parties, driven by the rhetoric of extremists, have staked out a tiny piece of political territory where they have invested all their energy. For Mitt Romney, every problem will be solved by lower taxes for the mythical “job creators” and cuts to government programs. For President Obama, it has become even more constricted. Despite the vaunted rhetoric, the only thing he seems steadfastly committed to is the “social agenda” of his most liberal base.

For someone like me, who voted “the hope” in the last election, it is more than disappointing to realize that reasons to vote for President Obama have dwindled to two. First, he is a likable man and good role model. Second, and more chilling, is revulsion at the thought of being in even a remote way aligned with the president’s “enemies,” who slanderously have accused him of the highest duplicity. (The latest charge from the likes of Sean Hannity and some Christian groups is that Obama will stage an assassination attempt and declare martial law before the election.)

Others too voted “the hope” the last time. But they also seem to have drunk the Kool-Aid. Among Democrats, except “Democrats for Life,” any criticism of the president’s policies and decisions seems to have been quietly

suppressed. Thus there is little chance that serious voices will be heard to challenge our present policies. In fact, some Democrats act as if it is a betrayal to bring up questions like the following.

What will be the upshot of Obama’s expanded use of drone missiles and the horror they bring to innocent people? Is this, like targeted assassination and torture, our own rewriting of the rules of war and the principles of a just war? At the end of May, *The New York Times* ran an extended article with the title: “Secret ‘Kill List’ Proves a Test of Obama’s Principles and Will.” Are Democrats proud of a president with the will to kill? Or are they giving the president a free pass on policy that would have them screaming had it been attributed to George W. Bush?

Why did the president make no demands on the titans of Wall Street after he told them, “My administration is the only thing between you and the pitchforks?” Instead, they were showered with billions of dollars, no strings attached. One does not have to be an economist to be deeply troubled by the president’s response to our economic crisis. Instead of “shovel-ready jobs,” we were given a “trickle down” theory pushed through by the same financial managers who ran Bush’s presidency. No wonder there is little room for the likes of Paul Krugman and Joseph Stiglitz in an administration where now everyone seems to be a “free market fundamentalist.”

In the health care crisis, why was

“single payer” taken off the table from the start? A strong case can be made that universal minimal coverage is the only way our health care system can be salvaged—with a tiered system that people can buy into as a special premium. And yet, this option was not even used as a point of leverage. Despite the mounting evidence of increasing unnecessary medical procedures and costly diagnostic tests, the only actions taken are those that profit insurance companies.

These are complicated issues, but Democrats seem willing to ignore them all for the sake of a second term for the president. But if the president is re-elected (and he is absurdly construed as a “socialist”), socialized medicine will never be given a hearing, nor will the present pathologies in our military and economic policies be addressed.

Democrats say that Republicans are “in the tank” for a rapacious capitalist ideology. Republicans say that the Democrats are “in the tank” for liberationist secular ideology. Maybe they are both right. And perhaps the best response is to reject both parties in this race to elect the best president money can buy.

I have been warned that a write-in vote is a vote for Obama. I have also been told that it is a vote for Romney. Well, it is also a vote against both of them. It may show, perhaps, that I am out of step with the American zeitgeist and its vaunted view of its political wisdom. A likely worse fate would be to fall for it.

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JOHN F. KAVANAUGH, S.J., is a professor of philosophy at Saint Louis University in St. Louis, Mo.

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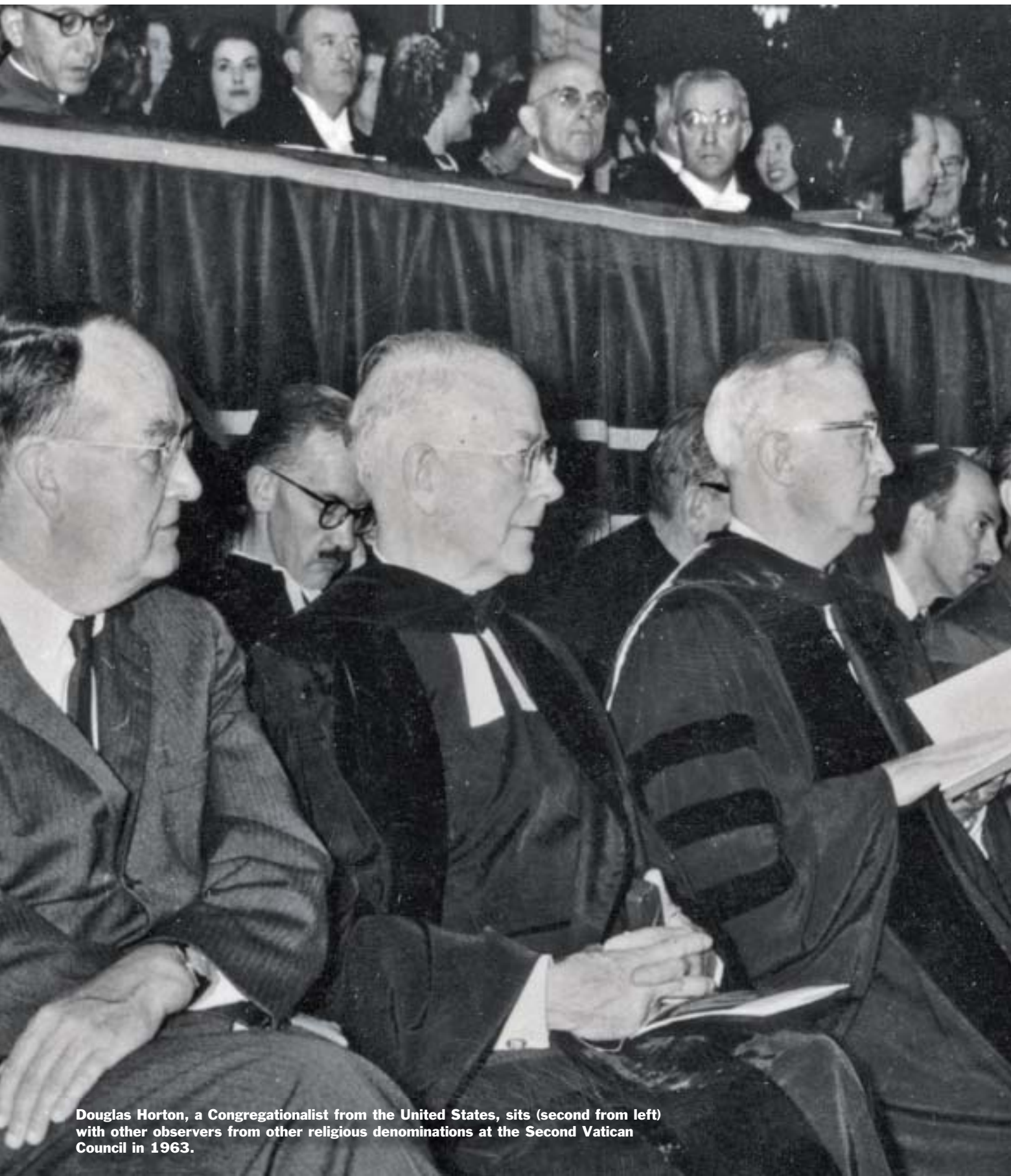
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**Douglas Horton, a Congregationalist from the United States, sits (second from left) with other observers from other religious denominations at the Second Vatican Council in 1963.**



A PROTESTANT HISTORIAN  
RECALLS VATICAN II.

# A Great Awakening

BY MARTIN E. MARTY

**T**he words *joy* and *hope* appear twice in the first three lines of “*Gaudium et Spes*,” as do the words *grief* and *anguish*. The document is one of the last four passed and promulgated on Dec. 7, 1965, by the bishops at the Second Vatican Council. The quoted words were reflections of the mood and content of the debates at the end of the third session, which I attended late in 1964.

The philosopher Alfred North Whitehead once wrote about a period when “wise men hoped, and...as yet no circumstances had arisen to throw doubt upon the grounds of hope.” I have often thought of the wise men at the council who offered theological reasons for joy and hope, aware that then and since “circumstances” have given reasons also for grief and anguish. Soon after the council, a generation of exuberant Catholics were carried away by its promise and looked for a churchly virtual utopia. Their hopes were soon shattered, and anguish often followed.

My vantage in 1964 was that of a journalist-historian. Fortuitously, on the day of my arrival I met Bishop Peter Bartholome, one of whose predecessors as bishop of St. Cloud, Minn., shared the Swiss-rooted name, Martin Marty. What could he do for me? Within hours he generously presented me with a pass, so I could be close to the action in Saint Peter’s Basilica. There my prep school Latin carried me through long sessions, but I confess having also welcomed noontime English-language briefings and late afternoon press conferences to enhance my understanding. Let me also say that through all my time in Rome I experienced hospitality and profited from personal elaborations on hope and anguish by bishops and *periti* (experts), some labeled liberal and others conservative.

My experiences included gaining weight, thanks to hosts who wanted

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**MARTIN E. MARTY**, the Fairfax M. Cone Distinguished Professor Emeritus at the University of Chicago, has written many books on Christian history. He reported on the third session of the Second Vatican Council for *The Christian Century*.

CNS FILE PHOTO

to introduce American guests like me to their favorite restaurants or to the cuisines of their religious orders. When the morning sessions were unendurably long, I escaped for an hour to coffee bars along the Via della Conciliazione, where, for example, Jewish and other visitors and I would compare notes. Advice from seasoned Catholic advisers came down to this: enjoy the council, but do not be thrown off by the overwhelmingly pro-progressive votes on the documents. When the council fathers return home, commentators would tell us, the press of responsibilities and the pressure from ideological conservatives will demonstrate how difficult it is to “run” a less encumbered church. And so it turned out to be.

### All Shook Up

We ecumenically minded Protestants were genuinely stirred by the *aggiornamento*, the shaking-up that involved us as well as the Orthodox, plus people of good will everywhere. The realists foresaw that popes and bishops to come, as council memories faded, would react in ways that would lead to the silencing of dissent or the ignoring of experimenters. The pessimists in the church have often documented the effect of these negative ways in a no-longer-confident church. Yet the self-described traditionalists cannot win back all that they hope to. The philosopher Ernest Gellner reminded us that once you are made aware that you are in a tradition, you can never simply go back to what it was when it had been interrupted and was subsequently interpreted. Instead, you have to busy yourself creating something new in the name of return to the old.

Protestants and Orthodox may complain that ecumenical openness does not now prosper as it did for a time after the council, but they also know that fundamental positive changes have occurred. The same is true of leaders in non-Christian traditions. The council document “*Nostra Aetate*” spelled out different ways for Catholics to relate to people of other faiths, and many Catholics now follow these ways. On another front, the church makes news when reactionaries on high levels peel back liturgical reforms. The day after I arrived at the council, at a formal Mass in Saint Peter’s, the African garb of Ethiopian seminarians offended some but inspired others. The dress of these seminarians

was one of many visual signs foretelling that the domination of Western European and American liturgical ways was to be limited.

While many officials in the Roman Curia—as well as the postconciliar popes—have resisted implementation of many approaches defined at Vatican II, we saw then and see now all kinds of changed relations among the pope, the bishops, the members of church and the masses in the world. Some

moments at the council revealed these tensions. The day after I arrived, Pope Paul VI made an unannounced and largely unexplained visit to the session. The intrusion may have been mainly ceremonial or an occasion for him to get the feel of things. More often, the gestures appeared behind the scenes when actions by the pope—described in one declaration as an unnamed “higher authority”—frustrated progressive moves by the vast majority of bishops. Paul VI did not win favor by catering to a small but entrenched minority of bishops. When on the last day of the session the pope, in a few lines of his speech, gave the Virgin Mary a title—“Mother of the Church”—which the council

fathers had resisted doing, they found ways to make their displeasure known. And when, at the end that day, the pope was ceremoniously carried out of the session in his chair, what should have been a trumpeted celebration was greeted with silence.

### Debating Religious Liberty

For many Americans the high—or low—drama of these weeks was associated with debate over the “Declaration on Religious Liberty,” which was also clouded by unacknowledged maneuverings on the part of some conservative bishops and the pope. A huge majority of bishops was ready to pass the document, but it was pulled off the table until the next session. It was to pass with overwhelming support in the fourth session, but that November the opponents gave one last push to put it aside or weaken it.

The day when the pope and some curial members acted against the majority came to be called Black Thursday. It is always described as the worst moment of the four sessions. It took courage for Cardinal Gregory Meyer of Chicago to

#### INVITED

#### Protestants, Orthodox and Lay Catholics

The Second Vatican Council was the 21st ecumenical council (or worldwide gathering of bishops) in the history of the church. Some 2,500 bishops attended its four sessions, between Oct. 11, 1962, and Dec. 8, 1965, more than twice the number in attendance at Vatican I. As with previous councils, the only voting members at Vatican II were Roman Catholic bishops and heads of male religious orders. But for the first time ever, non-Catholics and Catholic laypeople were also invited to attend the sessions as auditors. By the council’s end, Orthodox and Protestant churches had sent 80 observers. And 52 Roman Catholic laypeople, 29 men and 23 women, also took part as auditors. A few even addressed the bishops on some topics.

*The Editors*



leap up and within hours organize a majority of the bishops. Overnight the minority learned that it could not win every battle. There was no doubt that they had been serious in their efforts to kill the declaration. Could Catholics have positive relations with other faiths? Cardinal Ernesto Ruffini had opposed even the weak concept of tolerance of non-Catholics. He argued that tolerance was a license for error, which has no rights. The bishops who were for more than tolerance, who pushed for a broader definition of religious liberty, succeeded in getting a commitment that there would be a vote on religious liberty in the fourth session. In a semipublic follow-up to Black Thursday, John Courtney Murray, S.J., the main agent and drafter of the document, was asked whether he was impatient with the pope's obstructive action. He said, no: he was *angry* over the pope's action.

In the 50 years since the council, I have spent most of my vocational life in the classroom or speaking on the campuses of colleges, seminaries and universities. This career has led me to be aware of, concerned about and eager to relate to the generations born since the council. Most of them have understandable difficulty picturing the church in pre-council times. It is often noted that when a revolution is over, it is hard to picture circumstances of life before it. Vatican II was, if not a revolution, at least such a drastic change that the old ways are hard to imagine, even for many who had

lived through them. Catholics may argue over the legacy of this council, but they cannot simply go back.

For the most part, Vatican II appropriately addressed the anguishing circumstances of its time. Each of the 20 previous ecumenical councils took up topics appropriate to its own era or to a basic set of issues. Thus the early councils dealt mainly with debates about the Trinity or Christology. They may not have settled issues for all later centuries, but they were authoritative and influential. Some later councils, up through Vatican I, which took place in the 19th century, dealt with questions of papal authority.

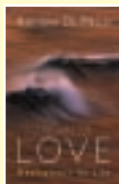
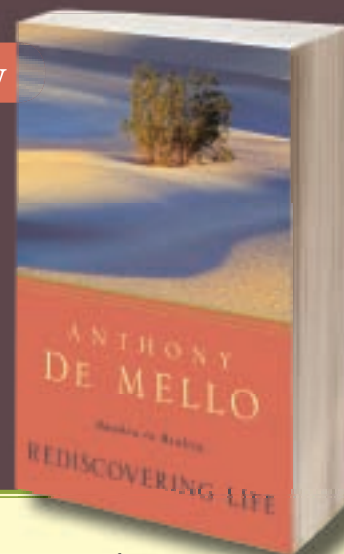
### Talking About Sex

If inquirers asked young through upper-middle-aged Catholics today what needs addressing now and where the church needs fresh insights, voices and programs, they might expect to hear complex answers that could be condensed in the word "sex" and the church's approach to sexual issues. These will include the biological, ethical, philosophical, theological and news-making elaborations of sexual themes that trouble, or should trouble, Catholics now. They come coded under "birth control," "abortion," "in vitro fertilization," "divorce," "homosexuality" and many more. I write a weekly online column, "Religion and Public Life," based on headlines and articles in the media. Many times I deliberately pass up most of the topics that deal with sexual

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issues in order to try to raise issues of justice, poverty, climate and so on. The church and the council had and still have much to say, most of it helpful, on all of these issues. But the biological, sexual and legal themes connected with them have become a preoccupation.

Very little of all that came up at the council.

I was fortunate enough to arrive just in time for a brief moment one morning on the subject of birth control and its correlates that was a foretaste of things to come. Three cardinals and one patriarch startled everyone and pleased most bishops by bringing up the subject. The church, one of them said, did not need a new Galileo: it did need to face scientific and other challenges. That morning was not quite the end of it. My crumbling copy of *Documents of Vatican II* is 1,062 pages long. Almost 1,000 pages into the book, under a chapter headed "Some More Urgent Problems," there are finally 10 pages on marriage, the family and marital relations.

Sparse notice? We need not fault the bishops for this, since these particular "urgent problems" were not the announced agenda for Vatican II. We can find very brief references to topics that impinge on birth control and connected issues here and there. It is clear that in the conversations near the end of the third session, the council fathers recognized how unprepared they were to discuss these topics.

### ON THE WEB

Archive reporting  
on Vatican II.  
[americamagazine.org/conciliaria](http://americamagazine.org/conciliaria)

How wise they were to refer to the situation in a tiny-print footnote on page 955: "By order of the Holy Father, certain questions requiring further and more careful investigation have been given over to a commission for the study of population, the family, and births, in order that the Holy Father may pass judgment when it is completed. With the teaching of the magisterium standing as it is, *the Council has no intention of proposing concrete solutions at the moment.*" (The italics are mine.)

"*Humanae Vitae*," the papal encyclical in opposition to birth control, appeared in 1968 but brought only more disaffection and turbulence. Epochal changes have been occurring. A Protestant reporter and visitor does not speak for a community that could be described as ready to come up with concrete solutions. At the International Theological Conference (1966), held at the University of Notre Dame, the well-qualified official visitor Albert C. Outler delivered a paper on Protestantism, one that was more demonstrative of "anguish and gloom" than of "joy and hope." He said, "It is...clear enough that Roman Catholic and Protestant theology have now been brought into a new, dynamic interdependency, that the future of Roman Catholic and Protestant theologizing will parallel each other in the tasks of communicating the gospel to the modern mind...." And so it has begun to be. ▲

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# Close to Home

Tales from the American foreclosure crisis

BY KEVIN CLARKE

**L**awrence Avery (not his real name) thought he was about to fulfill a long-postponed American dream when he decided, at 54, to buy his own home. “You know what they say; don’t wait to buy real estate; buy real estate and wait,” he says, remembering his enthusiasm for a home purchase after years of renting apartments. “Everybody said [home values] will always go up.”

Not only was he buying, he was shooting the moon, moving out of his crowded Bronx neighborhood and into a comfortable house in Mount Vernon, N.Y., a working-class, predominantly African-American suburb. His timing could not have been worse. Mr. Avery bought his dream house in 2007, just as a national real estate swoon landed on New York. Within a few years his two-family house was valued at half what he would have laid out for it. That is, if he had laid out anything for it.

A recipient of what Peter Spino, a foreclosure prevention counselor for Westchester Community Housing Innovations, calls “liar loans,” Mr. Avery was asked for no documents to secure his mortgage; his bank and broker relied merely on his high credit rating and reported salary. “At that time,” Mr. Avery says, “if you had a pulse, you could get a mortgage.”

In the past, former Mayor Clinton Young remembers, Mount Vernon residents were locked out of fair mortgages by bank redlining. This time the problem was the opposite. Predatory lenders found Mount Vernon’s neighborhoods attractive sites for quick profits in refinancing schemes. Some lenders directed borrowers to subprime loans, which are more profitable to banks and brokers, even when they qualified for standard mortgages. (Countrywide Bank settled with the Justice Department over such practices, paying a \$300 million fine.)

Veronica Raphael, director of Foreclosure Prevention for Westchester Residential Opportunities Inc., reports that

many of the people she works with signed loans they did not understand. “They trusted the professionals they paid to advise them, including the attorneys,” Ms. Raphael says.

The experience seemed painless to all parties as long as property values headed up, but when they started to fall many residents found themselves doubly trapped with debt burdens and diminished home values. Even longtime



Mount Vernon homeowners with substantial home equity ended up losing their homes after predatory sales pitches ignited a craze for cash-out refinancing in the community in the years leading up to the collapse.

“I saw people take out \$100 thousand to \$200 thousand in one refinance,” says Mr. Spino. As home values dropped, excessive refinancing left homeowners with little to no equity but much higher monthly debt-servicing burdens.

Mr. Avery’s broker assured him that when the loan’s adjusted rate kicked in, he could return for a fixed-rate 30-year loan. Securing another loan for the down payment, the broker arranged what would become a disastrous debt bundle. When the time arrived for the promised refinance, Mr. Avery’s home value had plummeted, and he could not escape his high-interest deal.

His mortgage jumped from \$2,000 a month to \$3,500. Mr. Avery remembered, “It was tough there for a while, robbing Peter to pay Paul.” Still, he was among the lucky ones

KEVIN CLARKE is an associate editor of *America*.

in Mount Vernon. With Mr. Spino's help, he arranged a loan adjustment that has allowed him to stay in his home and within his budget.

## The Damage Done

Millions of other homeowners nationwide have not been so lucky. A recent report from the Bipartisan Policy Group surveys the damage. The effects of the foreclosure crisis have been dispersed ethnically and geographically (although just 10 states account for almost 70 percent of the nation's total foreclosures). But while homeownership fell modestly for white non-Hispanics under 65, the housing bust has been especially hard on Latino and African-American communities, which have given up all the historic gains in homeownership they experienced between 1992 and 2000. Worse, the study reports that largely as a result of this fall-off in homeownership, the median wealth of African-American and Hispanic households has declined by one-half to two-thirds. How did things get so bad so fast?

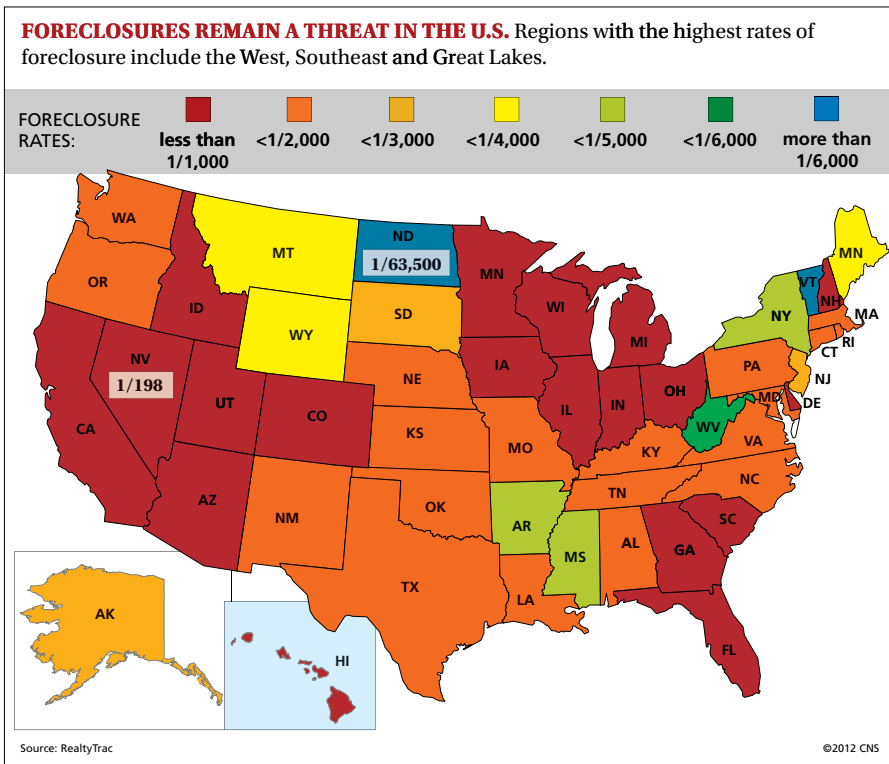
The Web site RealtyTrac has become the go-to source on the state of the nation's foreclosure market and, by extension, its real estate market. Even government agencies use the data, says Daren Blomquist, director of marketing communications. That is because in the past, foreclosure numbers were so low no one bothered to track them; everyone assumed banks were watching out for their own interests. In 2005, foreclosures represented just 0.58 percent of the national real estate market; by 2010, over 2.2 percent of all homes were in foreclosure, and almost 10 percent of all homeowners were considered "distressed"—somewhere between significantly behind in mortgage payments and losing their homes outright to lenders.

That 2.2 percent mortgage failure rate may not seem high, but, explains Mr. Blomquist, most banks had never experienced such a high volume of loan failure; few had set aside enough reserve to absorb the losses. Small banks began to fail, setting in motion ripples of default. Compounding the crisis were now-valueless mortgage securities and related insurance swaps. The resulting crisis in the U.S. finance sector wreaked havoc on the economy as credit locked up, businesses closed and consumer spending plummeted.

By 2009 and 2010, Peter Spino was seeing a new class of

clients, not casualties of bad loans but victims of the ruined economy.

Stephanie Newhart (not her real name) was an independent "head hunter" and a happy condo owner in White Plains, N.Y., with a 30-year fixed-rate mortgage. Divorced with adult children, she took care of herself. Her business was booming; her savings and retirement accounts well stocked. Then 2008 rolled around and her business came to



a dead stop; she could not place clients in jobs that did not exist. Maintaining the mortgage meant exhausting her savings and looting her retirement funds.

Ms. Newhart has worked on her loan modification for almost three years, but her lack of employment makes her a bad risk. The process has been emotionally and physically exhausting. She is convinced that stress drove her into the hospital last December with pneumonia; the unexpected medical costs only added to her financial troubles. "I'm just so grateful my children were already grown," she says. "If I had children to take care of during all this, I don't know what I would have done."

## Long-Term Troubles

Much is sacrificed in the struggle to save a home. Foreclosure counselors report stay-at-home moms leaving their kids to find work; fathers taking second, even third, jobs to stay afloat; families doubling up; retirement and savings accounts drained; stress-driven divorces.

Many economists, tracking the effect of the foreclosures,

now predict a market recovery this year or by 2014; some say even later. Who knows? RealtyTrac's Daren Blomquist says there is evidence that the overall housing market has begun to stabilize. He thinks foreclosures may have peaked in 2010. "We're heading in the right direction," he says. "It's still going to be a matter of years as opposed to months before foreclosure rates return to normal in most areas."

But the long-term impact of this foreclosure crisis will be measured over the next generation, as young people come of age in families with no savings to pay for their college and as older homeowners approach their senior years with diminished retirement accounts and home equity.

The legions of distressed or foreclosed properties still held off the market by banks threaten any long-term recovery of real estate value. But the Bipartisan Policy Center comments on a less-observed problem. In the coming decade the nation will have to absorb an increasing number of existing homes released into the market by retiring baby boomers. That overflow will continue to depress housing prices. Compounding the problem is the economic weakness of the "echo boom" or millennial generation (born between 1981 and 1995). Dislodged by economic crisis as they entered adulthood and facing tight credit restrictions, the echo boomer generation may experience deferred marriage, parenthood and "household formation." It may not be aggressive enough in home buying to propel the economy forward.

## End of the Tunnel?

Anthony Marciano, a Century 21 realtor who works in Mount Vernon, says business has picked up a little this year, but his clients now tend to be investors. He is happy for the sales and thinks the appearance of bargain-hunters is a step in the right direction for the city. "Very few [individual buyers] can do the kind of work that these houses require," Mr. Marciano says. "Some of them have been vacated over two years."

During a long stretch of abandonment, a great deal of damage can be done to a property by vandals, scavengers, squatters, drug dealers and their clients, he says. The longer an uninhabited home is off the market, the more damage it incurs and the harder it is to sell. Such a vicious cycle of degradation can cripple a community like Mount Vernon. "Some of these homes have been decimated," says Mr. Marciano. "There is really nothing left." Thieves have stolen even the copper fixtures and plumbing from some properties.

Though some may consider this to be vulture capitalism writ small, the phenomenon of real estate investors circling with an eye on quick renovation and turnover or conversion

of single-family homes into rental units is a development that could be "positive for the city," Mr. Marciano says. With investor-buyers, Mount Vernon is "getting people who can afford to be in the house," says Mr. Marciano. "People are getting homes that have been renovated; and once you renovate one house, that starts changing the whole look of the block."

Mr. Blomquist agrees. "Real estate investors and speculators...could really help by buying up inventory in this market."

It is a process that the Obama administration is now encouraging on a grand scale by inviting large investors to take large blocks of property off the hands of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac at sale prices.

Ms. Raphael argues more must be done to end the crisis. She says the federal government must try something dramatic, like a reduced loan rate for all Fannie Mae- and Freddie Mac-backed mortgages. Mr. Spino suggests that banks should fast-track procedures to speed both loan modifications and foreclosures through the system; Mr. Marciano suggests a new round of first-time homebuyers' tax credits.

## A Role for Religious Communities

Religious institutions and local community groups too can play an important role in responding to the crisis. Ms. Newhart says her tough-luck story has ended as happily as it could, because she was able to tap into community services. After she visited her temple, feeling in need of spiritual sustenance, her fortunes began to change. "If you can get quiet enough to listen, that's what can happen," she says.

At the synagogue she found a brochure for Westchester Jewish Community Services. Through that agency she connected with a support network of other people who were struggling as she was; she found job leads, financial counseling and other services that helped her get back on her feet. She landed a full-time job with benefits last December, and the dependable income was sufficient for Citibank to approve her loan modification. Now she can remain in her home and start rebuilding her life; her retirement is not far off. "I have to start from scratch," Ms. Newhart says; "What else can I do?"

Mount Vernon, says former Mayor Young, has learned some hard lessons in financial literacy. "Unfortunately the stakes were extremely high for the lessons that had to be learned," he says. In addition to the abandoned homes, he says, the town's civic spirit was deeply damaged by the departure of residents, many born and raised in Mount Vernon, who lost their homes.

"We are in the process of recovery," Mr. Young says. The people who remain, he says, "are still committed to the success of their neighborhoods and the success of this city." **A**

**ON THE WEB**  
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# BOOKS & CULTURE

TELEVISION | JAMES T. KEANE

## THE VARNISHED TRUTH

*Getting the news from Comedy Central*

One day last fall, an explosion of texts and tweets about police brutality began to appear on the Internet concerning an incident at the Occupy Cal protests on the steps of Sproul Hall at the University of California, Berkeley. Because most college students have camera phones, many captured on video footage of officers beating students, dragging a professor across the lawn by her hair and kneeling on the neck of a student being handcuffed. I saw the footage myself for the first

time that night on “The Colbert Report,” where Stephen Colbert quoted from an Associated Press story that described the violence as “pulling people from the steps and nudging others with batons.”

“Yes, ‘nudging,’” Colbert noted in his deadpan delivery as the footage rolled, “just like the Rodney King nudging. Or when Bull Connor set up that slip-’n’-slide in Birmingham.”

The studio audience howled and so did viewers, judging by the frequency with which Colbert was quot-

ed afterward. Note that there’s a lot going on between the delivery and the viewer in moments like that. First, Colbert is presuming a fairly high level of cultural literacy on the part of his viewers (Bull Connor is not a household name anymore); second, the joke implies that both Colbert and his audience share a reflexive distrust of the way a venerable news organization like the Associated Press delivers content; and third, much of Colbert’s audience (including me) was getting their news from what is explicitly a comedy show.

### With Quips and Cynicism

“The Daily Show With Jon Stewart” (where Colbert got his start) has a



similar *modus operandi*. It delivers news wrapped in comedy, pop-culture references and often an ironic distance from momentous historical events. When President Obama announced an impromptu televised press conference last May to deliver news that would capture world headlines (the death of Osama bin Laden), Jon Stewart quipped, "As Hollywood has taught us, when a black president interrupts your show, a meteor is headed for the earth." There's that combination again—humor, cynicism about the entertainment element of the news cycle and a pop-culture reference that the audience can take satisfaction in recognizing. (It has been 14 years, after all, since Morgan Freeman announced the earth's impending destruction in "Deep Impact.")

Despite a brief jump last year in viewers of the Big Three evening national news broadcasts, Nielsen Media Research has shown a steady decline in the audience for these television programs since 2001. Some of this is due to the growth of the Internet and the transformation of the news cycle into a 24/7 enterprise. Gone are the days when a company could issue bad news on a Friday afternoon and hope that by Monday someone else's gaffes would occupy the attention of reporters. But much of the decline is also attributable to a sea change in the way Americans receive information and interact with public figures. Ask your friends and family where they get their news; if you're talking to someone under a certain age, they will likely say Stewart or Colbert.

### Why Comedy?

But Stewart and Colbert are comedians, not news anchors. Colbert's entire *shtick* originated as a mockery of Bill O'Reilly's punditry from the

"enemies list" that put journalists among his nemeses. The media have their own agenda, and so does everyone they report on. So does the audience. If you watch the commercials

between news segments on NBC, ABC or CBS (ads for medical care, defenses against crime and "how to protect your assets" are ubiquitous) you'll see that the content follows certain motifs, like the fear of change. Mainstream news programs routinely report on the ways in which "our way of life" is being threatened or destroyed and seldom acknowledge that such ways of life are unsustainable or contrary to the public good. *Écrasez l'infâme* to all that.

Second, we have seen a cultural shift in the relative importance of personality as it relates to content. This is as true of Colbert and Stewart

as it is of O'Reilly and Rush Limbaugh. Can you remember the particular personality characteristics of Tom Brokaw, Peter Jennings or Dan Rather? Or do they blend together? Those anchors of the 1980s and '90s were deliberately bland to reflect an Everyman persona. But with hams like Stewart and Colbert, much of their viewer appeal is tied up in their personality, regardless of the content. In fact, we're usually waiting for the laugh more than for the news they riff on. The flip side of this focus on personality is delight in the failure of such persons to live up to the standards their cultic status places on them. One can see again Limbaugh's public scandals here, or the endless speculation among Catholic media about Colbert's background. (Is he a catechist? Does he

**The "Daily Show" team, left to right: Wyatt Cenac, Jason Jones, Jon Stewart, John Oliver, Samantha Bee, Aasif Mandvi**



right on "The O'Reilly Factor." Why do jokesters bring many of us so much of our news? Are we shallower than our parents? Do we need sugar with our medicine? Are we more cynical than previous generations, refusing to accept information without ironic distance? The answer is complicated.

First, there has been an erosion of trust in "the news" as anything approaching the truth. This is a positive development in many ways. It is naïve to assume that Walter Cronkite could be trusted to deliver unvarnished truth, or that The New York Times delivers "all the news that's fit to print." We all have biases and blind spots and cut some intellectual corners. That has been apparent ever since a sitting president assembled an

have 11 children? Does he go to Mass every week? Does he really hate liturgical dance?) As much as we want the person to exemplify the content, we place a surprising amount of weight on that public personality's private affairs.

Third, these shows have become news sources because of the ever-increasing compartmentalization of information in U.S. culture. The worldwide revolution in communications has put much more information at our fingertips, but it has not changed our ability to process it. We tend to compartmentalize where we receive our input, and we want it from people who look and act like us.

A dangerous result is that one is confirmed repeatedly in one's narrow worldview without having to listen to opposing perspectives. Of course, opposing views were not regularly offered by the "mainstream news" either. A hegemonic information culture has been replaced by a completely fractious one, not necessarily to the good.

Why is it that Colbert and Stewart, the darlings of liberal sophisticates and urban hipsters, convey their product through comedy, while O'Reilly, Limbaugh, Ann Coulter and Glenn Beck convey theirs through personas of perpetual outrage? It has to do with the ways in which we put each other down. The great weapon of the social conservative is to suggest that his or her ideological opponents have no values and no moral center. The great weapon of the social progressive is to suggest that his or her opponents are unsophisticated rubes, not in on the joke. The anger and professional outrage one hears from conservative pundits is paralleled by the mocking, ironic tone of comedians on the left. Both sides play to particular audiences. It really is just entertainment.

One last question: if the news is becoming entertainment, and entertainment is delivering the news, will the generations that get their news

from such shows be able to process world events and social trends in nuanced and thoughtful ways? If our sources of information are filtered through the comic instincts of teams of

writers with particular interests and biases, won't we be increasingly polarized around political and social issues? The writer Joe Keohane presented evidence to support that view in an essay in *The Boston Globe* last year: when we Americans are confronted with information contrary to our strongly held views, we tend to become even more deeply convinced of what we already believed. Worse, Keohane

found that the more "politically sophisticated" you think you are, the less likely you are to accept facts contrary to your worldview.

There is something troubling about a culture of

information that relies on laughs at the foibles of ideological strangers. While these shows are not going away, it might be a valuable corrective to recover some sense of the comic axiom that the most fruitful target of humor is ourselves.

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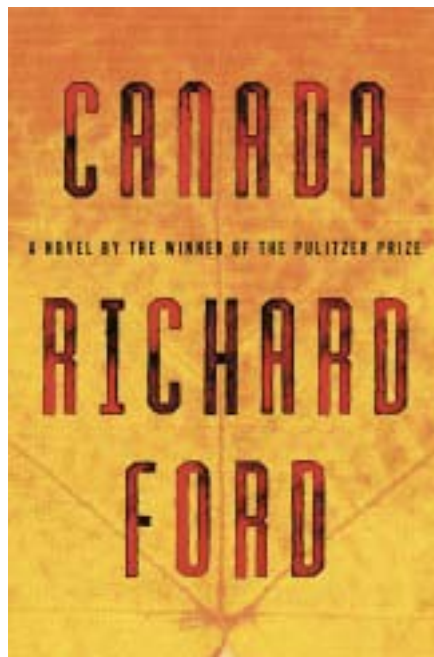
**JAMES T. KEANE, S.J.**, is a student at the *Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University in Berkeley, Calif.* He is a former associate editor of *America*.

### ON THE WEB

Karen Sue Smith reviews  
"The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel."  
[americamagazine.org/culture](http://americamagazine.org/culture)

RAYMOND A. SCHROTH

## A NEW MORAL LANDSCAPE



### CANADA

By Richard Ford  
Ecco. 432 p \$26.99

A few months ago two e-mail messages from former students alerted me that Richard Ford's new novel was about to appear. We had begun talking

about him 25 years ago, when *The Sportswriter*, the first in his trilogy about Frank Bascombe, appeared. I was teaching at Loyola University New Orleans at the time. Ford was living there, we had met, and he came and talked with my students about writing. Loyola gave him an honorary degree, and he has stayed in my syllabus whenever I taught fiction at one of the five Jesuit universities where I have worked.

In the six years since his last novel, *The Lay of The Land*, Ford moved to Maine, while his followers waited impatiently for his next novel to appear. Recently, perhaps as a signal of something new about to emerge, his photo portrait appeared in the *New York Times Style Magazine* with other famous novelists modeling expensive shirts. Others wore checkers, stripes and spots; Ford, though he had recently been photographed in frontier denim blue, wore a \$420 no-nonsense solid black.

*Canada*, though a break from the



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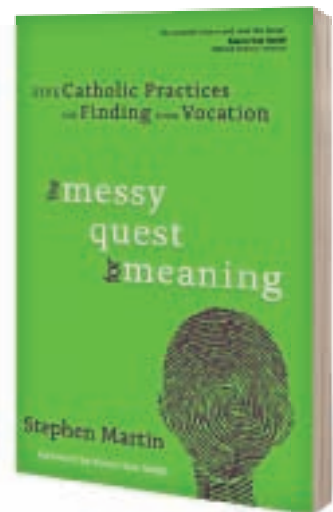
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Bascombe trilogy—*The Sportswriter* (1986), *Independence Day* (1995) and *The Lay of the Land* (2006)—as the action shifts from the Jersey Shore to Montana and Saskatchewan, recaptures experiences from Ford's adolescence. The rootless characters in his stories, like those in *Rock Springs* and *The Ultimate Good Luck*, betray their spouses, have scrapes with the law and sometimes kill others or themselves. Ford's America has been one of broken families, vulnerable youths, crooked businessmen, would-be honest men and women stifled by their environment and good people trying to be good or fighting the odds to be better.

The narrator in *Canada* is Dell

Parsons, 65, a retired high school English teacher who lives in Canada but brings us back in memory to Great Falls, Mont., in 1960, when he was 15. The voice then shifts to Dell as a boy, who introduces his father, Bev, 37, a former World War II Army Air Corps pilot; his mother, Neeva, 34, a nonobservant Jewish school teacher; and his restless twin sister, Berner, anxious to break out of the small town's smothering embrace.

Dell is not an athlete, but he hungers for high school, where he hopes to learn bee-keeping, because bee hives represent community life,

and to become competitive in chess. The chessboard is his map as he tries to strategize the next moves of his life. Meanwhile, from time to time the voice of the elder Dell intrudes to warn the reader that tragedy lurks on the horizon.

Ford has split the story into three sections: Montana,

Canada and a brief "where are they now" conclusion. The chapters average three to six pages in length, each covering a few packed months, as the prose sucks us in with the aromas of sawdust and manure and the sounds of "rain slashing the house shingles and splattering inside" and Dell's adolescent ruminations both naïve and mature as life slaps him around.

The jobless father, Bev, joins a stolen beef racket with local Indians, who will kill him if he fails to repay them for spoiled beef. No money? Go where it is. At the novel's turning point, Bev and Neeva botch a bank robbery and are sent to jail, leaving their children to be scooped into an orphanage by the civil authorities. But Berner runs off with her boyfriend; and a family friend zips Dell to Canada, where it is expected that through a contact he will find work at a remote, small-town hotel that caters to seasonal goose hunters and perhaps be sent to school by a patron.

For four months Dell slaughters geese, supervised by Charley Quarters, a bizarre, dwarfish character who wears lipstick and who Dell suspects is a pervert, and by the hotel owner, the strange, handsome and blond Arthur Reminger, an American expatriate. The boss keeps a gun in his room and after a while shows interest in the boy, whom he enlists in a mysterious scheme. It appears that, like Dell's true parents, he is being pursued by American police.

In Ford's world religion lurks in the background, though his characters are

### ON THE WEB

Mark Shriver talks about his father, Sargent Shriver. [americamagazine.org/podcast](http://americamagazine.org/podcast)

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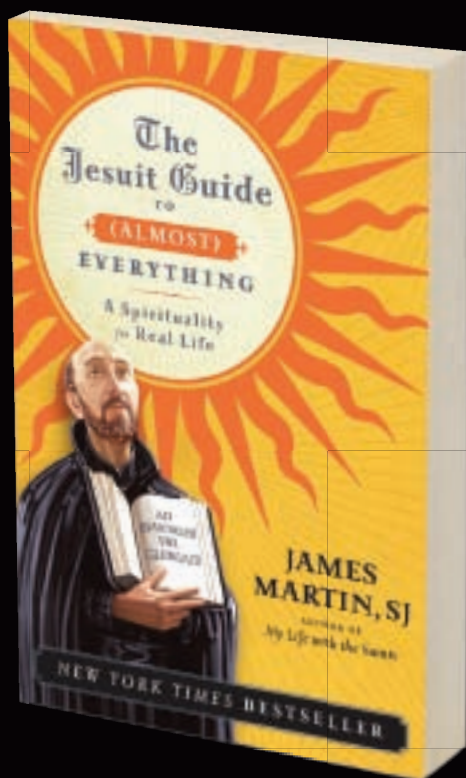
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not “religious.” The action takes place in the context of feasts and holidays—Thanksgiving, Christmas, Holy Week, Easter and the Fourth of July—rituals with moral lessons. In *The Sportswriter*, Bascombe regrets that his divorced wife does not take their children to church—not because they will turn out godless but because “Easter will soon seem like nothing more than a lurid folk custom, one they’ll forget before they’re past puberty.” In *Canada*, the intellectually starved Dell bikes for miles to a Catholic school for wayward girls, not knowing what a “wayward girl” is, because he thinks the school might let him take courses. He arrives at an old mansion locked behind a gate and tries to address some girls through the fence. A young nun imagines the worst and chases him away, never guessing that this is a lonely boy yearning for meaning in his life.

Ford was born in Jackson, Miss., in 1944. His father was a traveling salesman and his mother’s father ran a hotel in Little Rock, Ark. When Richard was 16, his father died suddenly in bed. When Richard had some scrapes with the law, his mother warned him to stay out of jail because she would not be able get him out. Later he accidentally found his mother with another man. The seeds of his stories and novels were taking root. In one story the young narrator wonders whether there is some “coldness in us all” that makes us “no more or less than the animals who meet on the road—watchful, unforgiving and without patience or desire.”

In *Canada* the boy’s whole family, through the stupidity of his basically good parents, who have not divorced, is snatched away from him within a few days. Compassion is the basis of all the other virtues, the one that allows us to enter into the feelings of others and to forgive and love them. Without labeling the emotions involved, Ford has created an extraor-

dinary, compassionate young man who loves his parents and sister no matter what. But with Canada as his new chessboard and a new frontier to form his character, he struggles to foresee how the other pieces on the board will move and how he will react to save his life and soul.

## EDWARD W. SCHMIDT FATHER FIGURES

### FONT OF LIFE Ambrose, Augustine, And the Mystery of Baptism

By Garry Wills  
Oxford University Press. 194 p \$21.95

Scholar and prolific author Garry Wills knows St. Augustine. In 1999 he published a biography of Augustine in the Penguin Lives series. Soon after, his translations of several books of the *Confessions* were published individually, and in 2006 his complete translation appeared. In 2011 he published a biography of the book itself, *The Confessions*, in the Princeton series Lives of Great Religious Books.

In the 1999 biography, Wills described the baptistry that lies under the steps to the Duomo, Milan’s magnificent cathedral. Covered for centuries by rubble and construction, it came to light in World War II when workers were digging out a bomb shelter; further excavations came with the construction of Milan’s Metro. Of this baptistry Wills wrote: “There are few places in Europe more charged with historical significance than this baptistry where Ambrose, the creator of structured disciplines for the medieval Church, received as a Christian Augustine, the

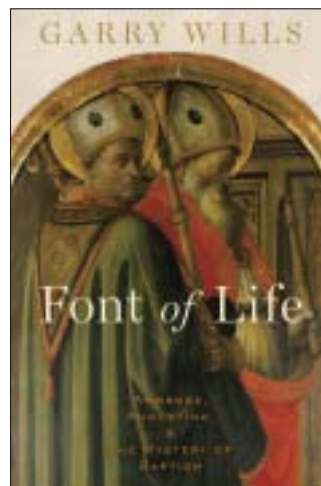
The narrator telegraphs that there will be gun shots, a murder and suicide, but he has survived and found peace. And we are blessed with Richard Ford’s greatest book.

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

creator of the theology that would resound in that Church.” He expressed the same judgment in the introduction to his *Confessions*.

Now, in *Font of Life: Ambrose, Augustine, and the Mystery of Baptism* Wills explores this judgment. Bringing profound familiarity with original sources and mastery of contemporary scholarship, he studies these two vastly different giant personalities, their backgrounds, their theologies and their ministries as bishops. Throughout this study, the author’s affection for his subjects fills out the human picture.

Wills first explores the geography of Milan, where Ambrose (bishop from 374 to 397) constructed a ring of churches, establishing his authority around the city. The son of a provincial administrator, he too was in government service until the people of Milan acclaimed him their bishop. Milan was then an imperial capital, and Ambrose never hesitated to confront emperors when he felt his church’s authority was under attack. His personality is a force in Milan today, where one hears of Ambrosian chant, Ambrosian citizens, Ambrosian clergy. Augustine entered this picture in



384, when he moved from Rome to Milan as a court orator, teacher and scholar. He describes the move simply in *Confessions*: “I came to Milan, to Ambrose the bishop, known among the best all over the world, your devoted servant”; he goes on to praise Ambrose’s service. From this many have concluded that Ambrose converted Augustine, but Wills disproves this, quickly pointing out their strained relationship. Augustine was going through great struggles in his soul—“boiling, seething,” as he put it—and Ambrose had no time for him. Augustine was disappointed with the great man.

Augustine did come to faith, though, and Ambrose did in fact help him learn to read and interpret Scripture correctly. So in the dramatic predawn of Easter morning in April 387, Augustine approached the baptistry, went through the lengthy ritual and was baptized by Ambrose. A few months later, Augustine returned home to Africa, hoping to live the quiet life of a scholar and writer. But in 395 he was chosen bishop of Hippo, and there went his dreams of a monastic life of prayer and scholarship!

Wills uses this narrative to study Ambrose’s mystical theology and Augustine’s more rational one. He explores their different approaches to baptism and the Eucharist, and he contrasts Ambrose’s mission as bishop in an imperial capital with Augustine’s in the smaller port city of Hippo in North Africa. Both faced religious controversies that had political overtones, though, and here Augustine learned from his elder.

The book surveys the intersection of the lives of two of the Latin patriarchs who left great, if different, marks on the church. It explores theology with narrative flow. It makes its serious points with grace.

---

EDWARD W. SCHMIDT, S.J., is a former editor of *Company Magazine* and of *America*.



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## LETTERS

### A Children's Crusade

Re "Grading the Missal" (5/28): My fear is that the ancient rule "Lex orandi, lex credendi" (the rule of prayer is the rule of faith) will prove all too true, and we will begin to imagine and relate to the formal, distant deity enshrined in our liturgical language.

This is a particular concern with the young. I volunteer as a middle-school religious education teacher and also work with teen confirmands. I work very hard to help them develop a personal prayer life with a loving God they can trust and a vibrant God they can be excited about—one who cares about their lives and invites them to be co-creators and co-redeemers in refashioning the world and church.

Until Advent 2011 I felt I had a fighting chance of helping them to find that God at the Eucharist as well. How am I supposed to teach this

abominable language without letting it influence the way they imagine and think about God?

ANNE MAURA ENGLISH  
Baltimore, Md.

### Missal Strike

Thank you for a well-written, respectful and thorough commentary on the new missal translation. I agree with the whole of it. The new translation seems to have been designed to decrease any kind of active participation in the liturgy. It has been painful to watch people just seemingly drift off to...where? while the "prayers" go on, unheeded. If participation is meant to draw us to a serious union with Jesus and to the living out of his life and message wherever we are, this translation is guaranteed to make this impossible. When did driving people away from church become the goal of the powers that be? And how can we stop it?

PATRICIA NICHOLSON  
Newburgh, N.Y.

### Enforcing a Private Piety

Re: "What's Next?" by the Rev. Michael Ryan (5/28): Three criteria for intelligent leadership are learning, experience and insight. Regarding the new missal, competency could be demonstrated using these three measures: (1) learning and the knowledge of Greek, Latin, English and some history of theology; (2) experience and demonstrable pastoral concern and skills; (3) insight from a heart practiced in prayer.

Those few responsible for making us pray their way demonstrate little learning and no pastoral skills. As for insight and prayer, I cannot believe anyone who really prays has prayed with the stilted officious language of the new missal. What's happened is that a few in positions of power have imposed their own private piety on the rest of the world. Given the criteria I have outlined above, I don't see any "next" until those few are forever

## CLASSIFIED

### Positions

**ASSOCIATE VOCATION DIRECTOR.** The Franciscan Friars of the Atonement (a Roman Catholic religious order) seek a full-time Associate Director for Vocation Office on the East Coast to invite men to life and ministry of Friars as candidates for both priesthood and brotherhood. Person has a B.A. as minimum, preferably in theology, religious studies or pastoral ministry. A successful candidate must have previous experience in young-adult faith formation, spiritual direction or pastoral experience with persons of diverse cultural backgrounds. Individual will possess good listening skills and ability to communicate clearly and effectively in personal and public settings. Ability to speak English and another language or willingness to learn (Spanish, Italian, etc.) would be useful. Web technology and good writing skills are necessary. Position requires successful team experience, administrative and supervisory skills, a high degree of confidentiality and travel. Professional salary and benefits. Send résumé to: Vocation Director, 40 Franciscan Way, Graymoor, Garrison, NY 10524-0300, or send e-mail to [VocDirector@AtonementFriars.org](mailto:VocDirector@AtonementFriars.org). Visit our Web site: [www.AtonementFriars.org](http://www.AtonementFriars.org). Deadline is July 31, 2012.

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### Translation

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### Wills

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singing in heaven, "Graciously grant, O merciful One, Holy, Almighty and Consubstantial..."

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

## Otherworldly Realm

Father Ryan accurately expresses my personal thoughts and experiences with the new Mass texts. I have been unable even to raise the issue in conversations with other priests. It's as though it cannot be discussed without appearing disloyal or suspect. What is the fear? Even more perplexing is the fact that there is no person or place where official pastoral concerns may be registered.

The laity, in my view, have too many other matters to face in their daily lives to be concerned with liturgical texts. If they expect homilies that make sense, however, why wouldn't they want prayers that make sense?

How does the new missal, and the next generation of church folk, help achieve the "new evangelization" being called for by the pope? The answer to this critical challenge to the church is not in some restored past or in some otherworldly realm, which is "symbolized" for me in how priests are expected to lead God's people in prayer these days.

(MSGR.) JAMES GASTON  
*Lower Burrell, Pa.*

## Power and Control

As a presbyter I find the new missal language cumbersome, garbled, prolix and, most of all, otherworldly. It's like I'm shifting into Elizabethan jargon (maybe that would be better?). In any event, this is not how I speak pastorally (or unpastorally) with parishioners, nor is it the language in which I preach my homilies. Kudos to Father Mike Ryan, always faithful and a man of

integrity, to keep raising the question. Accept, I humbly beseech you, and graciously hear my plea, which in mortal frailty is all I can offer—that, of course, this is really not about language but about the need of Rome and our episcopacy for power and control.

(REV.) ROGER G. O'BRIEN  
*Lynnwood, Wash.*

## Austerity or Bust?

Re "Voting Out Austerity" (Editorial, 5/28): Tipping the scales of social justice requires more than pointing out who needs help and suggesting a short-term solution in the hope that sustainable remedies to long-term problems will emerge. Those "debt markets" that now charge very high rates of interest on Greek sovereign debt are real people concerned that the debt will not be repaid.

Yes, austerity has its discontents. But the Greek voters' call for less austerity requires stewards of money, including the German government, to once again risk hard-earned currency in the hope of eventual reform. Every euro or dollar poured into the current morass is one less dollar available for investing in innovation. These fiscal stewardship challenges for the United States are not yet so acute, but they are just as real.

JOSEPH J. DUNN  
*Conshohocken, Pa.*

## Equal Opportunities

I join you in supporting the sisters in the wake of the Vatican's doctrinal assessment of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious ("Praise for Sisters," Current Comment, 5/14). American sisters have been serving the poor in hospitals, schools, jails and homeless shelters; and they have worked generously and effectively in many parishes.

They have also shown their respect for life by struggling against the death penalty, against nuclear arms and against the male chauvinism that frequently takes the lives of women in addition to harming them in many other ways.

What I find especially disappointing and troublesome in the Vatican's pronouncement is a lack of respect for American religious women, who have devoted their (long) lives to ministry in the church, the service of the poor and participation in work for justice that, according to the Synod of Bishops in 1971 is "a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel." But a lack of respect for the target of criticism and the absence of any real interest in dialogue have also characterized the Vatican's attacks on many male theologians, thus establishing a kind of equal opportunity to be victimized.

JOSEPH E. MULLIGAN, S.J.  
*Managua, Nicaragua*



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# The Messenger

NATIVITY OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST (B), JUNE 24, 2012

Readings: Is 49:1–6; Ps 139:1–15; Acts 13:22–26; Lk 1:57–80

*I will make you a light to the nations (Is 49: 6)*

Today's feast of the birth of John the Baptist is important enough to eclipse the Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time. And for good reason, for today marks the dawning of God's salvation. Biblically, this dawning does not start with Jesus, but rather with John. In today's reading from Acts, we see Paul highlight this point during his first recorded sermon: "John heralded his coming by proclaiming a baptism of repentance" (13:24).

John is important not merely because he announced the coming of the messiah, though the value of this should not be underplayed. John's importance is framed in God's providence, God's unfolding plan to save the world. Malachi predicted a messenger, Elijah or an Elijah figure, who would prepare the way of the Lord (Mal 3:23). And Jesus clearly identifies John as a fulfillment of that prophecy (Mt 11:13–14; Lk 1:17).

Yet our first reading is not from Malachi; rather, it is part of the second of Isaiah's Servant Songs. "The Lord called me from birth, from my mother's womb he gave me my name" (Is 49:1). The beginning of this song echoes Jeremiah's call (Jer 1:5) and the destiny God has for particularly important prophets.

Who then is this prophet-servant? On the one hand, the servant is Israel: "You are my servant, he said to me,

Israel, through whom I show my glory" (49:3). On the other hand, the servant is a prophet sent to both restore Israel and be a "light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth" (49:6). This is the great vision of the second servant song. God calls the servant (and Israel herself) to be a beacon for God's universal redemption.

The image of a light to the nations has traditionally been a favorite symbol for the church. One can see, then, why the church has chosen these readings as the context for our remembrance of John. He is a bridge between the old covenant and the new, between the people of Israel and the church. He personifies both and charges both to be a light to the nations. And the appropriate way to be this light is to be a servant. So we are to be servants who illuminate not ourselves but God.

We celebrate the birth of John the Baptist at the summer solstice, when the sun is at its highest point in the sky, and we celebrate Christmas at the winter solstice, when the sun is lowest. John is that great, bright beacon pointing to the light that humbly emerges to conquer the darkness in winter. He is a loud, brash and disturbing figure proclaiming, "Prepare the way of the Lord!" His role is as best man to the groom, as someone who rejoices in decreasing as Christ must increase (Jn 3:29–30). Consider him a finger point-

ing to the moon. Do not let your glance become fixed on the finger or confuse the pointer with what it is pointing to. Paul reminds us of this: "As John was completing his course, he would say, 'What do you suppose that I am? I am not he. Behold, one is coming after me; I am not worthy to unfasten the sandals of his feet'" (Acts 13:25).

Pointing to Christ is no easy task.

Getting over the addiction to self, to being attached to all that we are and do and needing it all to come back to us: this is among the most difficult and cruelest challenges of asceticism. Consider this: It's rush hour and someone wants to merge into your lane. You slow down (briefly and barely) to



## PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

- Consider your greatest gifts.
- For each gift offer a prayer of gratitude.
- How can each be used for God's glory?

allow this. And then the person does not wave in acknowledgment. Obviously, this won't wreck your day, but didn't you just think to yourself, "Hey, where's the wave—a little something for the effort?"

As John personifies God's servant and indeed Israel, and the church personifies both, we would do well to regard John as a role model. We point to Christ. Even in the context of our own gifts, our own lights, we seek to use them to illuminate the source of all goodness and meaning in our lives. We delight when we can recede from center stage and let God's glory be revealed.

PETER FELDMIEIER is the Murray/Bacik Professor of Catholic Studies at the University of Toledo.

# Little Lamb, Arise

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (B), JULY 1, 2012

Readings: Wis 1:13–24; 2 Cor 8:7–15; Mk 5:21–43

*God did not make death, nor does he rejoice in the destruction of the living (Wis 1:13)*

A woman from a parish I once served—I'll call her Iris—experienced a parent's nightmare: her son died as a young man. Iris had also lost her husband a few years earlier, but losing her son, she said, was incomparably worse.

A few weeks after the funeral, I visited Iris and she said that she was very confused. After a month or two I stopped seeing her at Mass, so I visited her again. She said that her confusion had lifted and now she was outright angry with God. She said to me: "Listen, I've given God a lot. I went to church every week for 50 years. I prayed every day. I sent my kids to Catholic schools. And what do I get in return? A dead son, that's what he gives me. I told him he was a lousy God and that I'm giving up on him."

No need to defend God in that moment; God can take it. I wanted just to walk gently with the anguished person. But it does get one thinking: Why does God allow death, or why did God create a world in which death even exists? The obvious scientific answer is that death is the cost of being a creature. Being a physical body means being subject to physical laws, including that matter breaks down. The theological response in our first reading, from the Book of Wisdom, is that this is not God's doing at all. In fact, God is the very antithesis of death: "God did not make death, nor does he rejoice in the destruction of the living...for God formed man to be imperishable; the image of his own nature he made him" (1:13; 2:23).

So where did death come from? The end of our reading today addresses this: "But by the envy of the devil, death entered the world, and they who are in his possession experience it" (2:24). Paul identifies the devil with the serpent of Genesis and the cause of death as sin from Adam (Rom 5:12). But we should never imagine that if original sin had never occurred, then there would be no death. The laws that govern matter are still laws. And I think the Book of Wisdom concedes this, for it recognizes that even the faithful will die. The real issue is whether God is the God of life or not.

Wisdom announces that the death of God's faithful is only a prelude to being held by God until the time of resurrection, when we will live with God in the manner God originally intended. "The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment shall touch them.... They are in peace.... In the time of their judgment they shall shine....and the Lord shall be their King forever" (3:1-8).

The insight that God stands for life, even in the context of suffering and death, grounds our Gospel reading. Here we read about Jairus who pleads with Jesus to come to his home and heal his daughter, who is deathly ill.

On the way, a woman who had suffered for 12 years with a hemorrhage touches Jesus' cloak and is healed. Apparently the Holy One of God (Mk 1:24) is not at all defiled by being touched by an "unclean" woman (contrast Lev 12:4). His response is to assure her, "Your faith has saved you." Jairus's daughter dies in the meantime, and Jesus calls for a similar faith. He comes to the bedside, takes her hand and says to her, "Talitha koum." By giving us the Aramaic words, Mark allows us to experience the intimacy and affection Jesus brings to those to whom he ministers. *Talitha koum* means literally "Little lamb, arise."

The woman with the hemorrhage and the young girl eventually both died, as we all will. This did not mean that Jesus had failed or merely postponed the inevitable. His healing of

## PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

- Imagine yourself in pain or darkness, with Christ lovingly drawing you up to himself.
- Hold a suffering friend in loving prayer.

the woman and his raising of the child point to the kingdom's ultimate plan, which is for union with God. These miracles told the people of Jesus' time, and us, that God walks with us in our suffering with great love and tenderness, and promises that our mortality is not the end of the story. For God is the God of life.

PETER FELDMIEIER



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Saturday, July 14, 9 am to 2 pm (includes lunch)

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Missionary Servant of the Most Holy Trinity and Senior Editor of *Human Development* magazine

### Saturday Retreat for the Hispanic Community

Saturday, July 14, 9 am to 3 pm

*The History of the People of Israel as a Starting Point in Reading and Interpreting Scripture*  
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