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THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC WEEKLY

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Benedict XVI: Peacemaker

Drew Christiansen



The Partial-Birth Decision

by Ellen K. Boegel

Rebuilding Christ's Church

by Martin Pable

Andrew M. Greeley on Ireland

I HAVE JUST RETURNED from a two-week trip to Ireland, where we enjoyed long days and surprisingly sunny weather. It was my fourth trip, but the first time that I visited without seeing an old friend, Father Maurice Reidy, who died last summer.

Yes, Maurice Reidy. No, we weren't related. Father Maurice met my father in the 1960's when he was visiting New York. He decided to eat at a Manhattan restaurant that bore his surname, and soon he and my father became fast friends. Maurice was a teacher of moral theology at Holy Cross College, Clonliffe, the archdiocesan seminary in Dublin. He wrote a number of books on medical ethics and spirituality, including *The God I Believe In and Why* (Columba), which he finished shortly before he died.

I met Maurice when I was just 13. He invited my brother and me to stay with him for three weeks in Dublin and Wexford, where he had a summer home. I felt a special connection with Maurice

because we shared the same name. I was named after my grandfather, but

since childhood I have been called Tim because my first name is too often mangled by the American tongue. (It's Maurice as in Morris, not "Maw-ree-se" as in Chevalier.) In Ireland I met what seemed like a dozen other Maurice Reidys, all related to our host. It was a great thrill for me.

I did not see Maurice again until 2001, when I returned to Ireland on my honeymoon. My wife and I stayed with him at his house outside Dublin, where he prepared a lovely dinner for us. By then he was quite ill, having contracted Wegener's granulomatosis, a rare and serious vascular disease that left him sapped of energy. Yet he still found time to chat with us about our careers, and we discovered that we had many things in common. He was a great reader, and kept *The Tablet* within easy reach.

Even though he had known me only as a child, Maurice treated me as an adult, soliciting my opinion on political and religious matters. Before leaving, we pledged to keep in touch by e-mail, and over the next few years we exchanged long letters. Once he was kind enough to offer a critique of an article I had published.

The last time I saw Maurice was in 2004. Knowing that he was ill, we visited

him on our way home from a trip to London. His energy was quite low, and he required the use of a cane. Still he relished playing the host, treating us to dinner at an Italian restaurant, encouraging us to order wine and appetizers. Before we said our goodbyes he was clear about his prognosis: he had only a short time left.

Visiting Ireland this June, I was keenly aware of the changes that have come to the land of my great grandparents: prosperity, development and, as many have pointed out, a decline in Catholic vocations and practice. In one Galway town no daily Mass was available because of the priest shortage. A church in Mayo bore a plaque thanking the Christian Brothers for their 100-plus years of service to the community.

I regret I never spoke to Maurice about the changes in the Irish church. Though he was not given to nostalgia, it must have been difficult for him to witness the passing of an era. Clonliffe, the seminary where he taught, was closed shortly after he stopped teaching there.

Few young men seemed interested in the life that he had chosen.

sen.

But I doubt Maurice dwelt on these matters. I suspect he would have agreed with his bishop, Diarmuid Martin, who believes that the Irish church needs to be more creative in reaching out to a new generation of Catholics (see Father Andrew Greeley's observations in this issue, page 20). Maurice undertook just this kind of project with his last book. *The God I Believe In and Why* is based on a series of interviews Maurice conducted. Two of his subjects were committed Catholics; two had left the church. The book is an extended argument for faith, but Maurice does not dictate his beliefs to his subjects; he seeks to persuade them.

Maurice lived longer than the doctors predicted. He died in August, 11 years after his first diagnosis. One of his closest friends told me that he was a man of great trust. He placed his trust in his doctors, in his friends and most of all in his God. Along with Cardinal Newman, a man he deeply admired, he could say: "Therefore, I will trust him.... If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve him; in perplexity, my perplexity may serve him; if I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve him.... He does nothing in vain."

Maurice Timothy Reidy

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Cover art "Saint Francis of Assisi Before the Sultan" by Giotto di Bondone. Photo: Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY.

In 1219 Francis went on a pilgrimage to Egypt, where he crossed the lines between the sultan and the Crusaders in Damietta and challenged the Muslim scholars to a test of true religion by fire; but they retreated.



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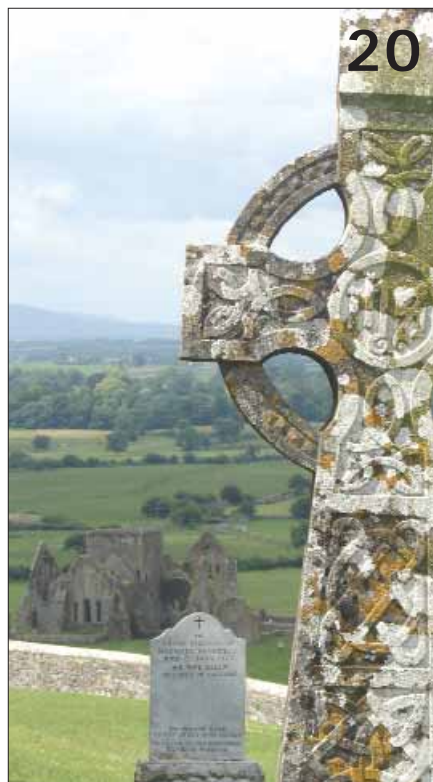
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Fool's Errand?

Once more it appears that the United States, Israel, Palestine and their Arab neighbors might have a chance to make progress, if not toward peace, then at least toward alleviating the oppressive effects of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank. The parties' seriousness of commitment about improving the living conditions on the West Bank, however, is far from clear. In an effort to lower expectations prior to the Arab-Israeli summit June 25, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert played it as a photo op, where "the entire Arab world will see two very prominent national leaders [Jordanian King Abdullah II and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak] shaking hands with the head of the Palestinian Authority and the prime minister of the state of Israel, together" and talking peace.

Even before the meeting took place, however, it was clear that the Israelis had rejected American proposals to re-initiate final status talks with the Palestinians. When former British Prime Minister Tony Blair was named special envoy to the Middle East later in the week, authorities stipulated that his mandate extended only to advising the Palestinians on improving their government and economic structures. With Hamas sidelined in Gaza, peace talks off the table and Mr. Blair without leverage on Israel, his mission threatens to be a fool's errand. Last year another talented statesman, former World Bank President James M. Wolfensohn, resigned in frustration from a similar role for lack of support from the United States and Israel. One can only pray Mr. Blair will succeed where others have not.

Blame the Terrorists?

In a sharp exchange with a Congressional committee investigating the federal government's response to environmental concerns after the Sept. 11 terrorist attack, Christie Whitman, the former head of the Environmental Protection Agency, insisted that those responsible for health hazards at the site were "the terrorists who attacked the United States, not the men and women at all levels of government who worked heroically to protect and defend this country." In testifying before the 9/11 Commission, former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani responded in similar terms when questioned about the failure of city agencies to plan for another terrorist attack in the aftermath of the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center.

Blaming the terrorists for misleading assurances about the quality of the air in lower Manhattan and the failure to insist that workers at ground zero wear respirators was not an answer calculated to satisfy Mrs. Whitman's Congressional critics. Nor can such a defense absolve Mr.

Giuliani of his responsibility for mistakes made in the aftermath of the 1993 attack: locating the emergency response center at the World Trade Center and failing to provide the communications technology and command structure that would have allowed city agencies to respond to the 2001 attack in a better coordinated manner.

At the same time, a review of the response of the federal government and New York City agencies to both the 1993 and the 2001 attacks is too important for partisan political sniping. We must be able to learn from the mistakes of the past, and we do not impugn the heroism of the victims of past attacks when we question decisions that may have contributed to their deaths.

A Great Mystery

Few ecclesiastical procedures are as misunderstood as the annulment process. Many Catholics find it difficult to believe that the church can declare a marriage "null" after a couple has been married and, in some cases, had children together. Recent reports that the annulment of Joseph P. Kennedy's marriage was reversed by the Vatican will only further muddy the waters.

Kennedy, the son of the late Robert F. Kennedy, was granted an annulment in 1993 after he separated from his first wife, Sheila Rauch. The couple had been married for 12 years and had two children together. Rauch mounted a campaign to reverse the annulment, publishing a book (*Shattered Faith*) strongly criticizing the annulment process, claiming that Kennedy had used his family's influence to obtain the decree. The Vatican apparently reversed its decision in 2005, but Rauch was not notified until May of this year, after the document had been translated from Latin.

Contrary to a common misconception about annulments, the granting of an annulment does not mean that a wedding never took place or that children born of a union are illegitimate. Rather, an annulment is a declaration that according to church law, the marriage was not a sacramental union because certain essential elements were not present. Unfortunately, many people believe that money and influence play a decisive role in the granting of annulments.

The annulment process is necessarily a private one, dealing in the intimate details of a couple's life together, so it is difficult to assess how these decisions are arrived at in particular cases. Nonetheless, it seems clear that the church needs to do a better job explaining how annulments are obtained. For too many Catholics the process remains a great mystery.

Green Renaissance

ONE YEAR AFTER THE RELEASE of Al Gore's Academy Award-winning film on climate change, "An Inconvenient Truth," and two years after the devastation wrought by Hurricane Katrina, Americans seem finally to have accepted the reality of climate change and the need for "greener" living. Indeed, while the federal government continues to drag its feet, innovative state and local initiatives, coupled with changing consumer attitudes, are generating the beginnings of a veritable renaissance in environmental practices.

No state has received more attention than California. Newsweek recently dubbed Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger "The Green Giant" for the numerous plans he and the state legislature have undertaken to reduce carbon production and spur business innovation, including state-mandated cuts in carbon emissions, a proposed 33 percent increase in car fuel efficiency by 2009 and plans for a hydrogen fuel network along the Pacific Coast Highway.

Yet California is by no means alone. To cut the greenhouse gases emitted by buildings, for instance—which account for a staggering 50 percent to 70 percent of the greenhouse gases produced in cities—the city of Chicago has installed grass on two million square feet (the equivalent of 40 football fields) of roof space, including the largest green roof installation in the world, 24.5 acres at Millennium Park. The grass acts as a natural insulation, reducing air conditioning needs in summer and heat loss in winter. Meanwhile, Austin, Tex., has set itself the goal of making all of its houses zero-energy-capable—that is, able to function without drawing energy from the power grid—by the year 2015. Salt Lake City, Boston and New York City all have efforts underway to "hybridize" their taxis.

American business has responded positively to these changes. Energy-efficient electronic devices abound, as do green product lines in everything from home cleaning supplies to clothing. Segments of the automobile and energy industries are likewise seriously engaged in the development of alternate fuels and sources of energy. The capture and use of solar and wind energy continues to improve dramatically, to the point that many houses could today be powered by a set of solar panels.

To some degree, however, the stance of the energy

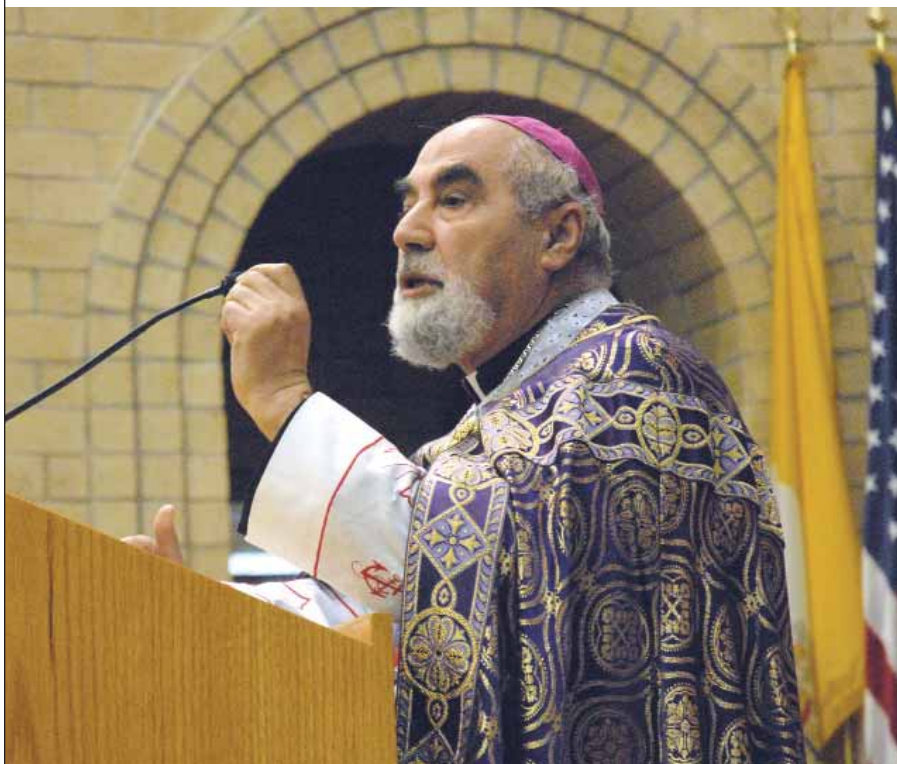
industry remains like that of the cigarette business before them, seeking to convince consumers that they do not need to quit, they just need the right filter. Some businesses are investigating the storage of carbon underwater or underground, solutions that demand little change on their part while creating new, unseen environmental problems. Sequestration underwater, for instance, would keep carbon out of the atmosphere but raise the acidity of the water and harm undersea life. Likewise, the effectiveness of the carbon trading market, in which businesses that produce less than their allotment of carbon are given credits they can sell to businesses that produce too much carbon, remains inconclusive.

Poverty needs attention because of the vulnerability of the poor and because of the ecological damage caused by people forced to live on the margins. As both the tsunami in Indonesia and Hurricane Katrina revealed, changes in our climate disproportionately affect the poorest among us, who lack the resources to ensure their own safety. Yet poor countries are also among the most egregious polluters. To people struggling for their very survival, the needs of the present vastly outweigh concerns about long-term environmental harm or sustainability.

THE GREENING OF THE WEST has so far done little to alter our levels of consumption. If anything, the growing consumer interest in environmentally safe products is stimulating buyer demand. Going green has become the newest fad, with rock stars for spokespersons and product lines at the Gap. The idea that the pool of resources is limited seems difficult for us to comprehend. Perhaps because we come from a culture of riches and possibilities, we believe that we can have our cake (even if it is carbon free) and eat it, too. There is a great need for Catholics and others to help bring awareness of the world's fragile reality to our well-intentioned but overfed American population.

Still, there is already much to celebrate. For over a generation, individuals and small groups have been talking about climate change and working to develop solutions. Most of the time, their work has been relegated to the margins. Today the American public is finally beginning to catch up. We must be ready, however, to assess whether the "green" solutions offered us by government policy or the market will prepare a sustainable future on the planet or simply pass the problem on to the next generation.

Chaldean Bishop Calls for U.S. Withdrawal From Iraq



Ibrahim N. Ibrahim

U.S. troops should withdraw and let Iraqi factions fight it out, the bishop for most Iraqi Catholics in the United States said June 19. "Let the Iraqis kill each other, but let the occupying power get out, because they are not killing each other because they are Sunni or Shi'ite, but because they are with the Americans or against the Americans," said Chaldean Catholic Bishop Ibrahim N. Ibrahim. The head of the Eparchy of St. Thomas the Apostle made the comments in an impas-

sioned sermon at a special Mass at Mother of God (Chaldean) Cathedral in the Detroit suburb of Southfield, where the eparchy has its headquarters. The Mass, which drew close to 1,000 people, was celebrated to memorialize the recently slain Chaldean priest Ragheed Aziz Ganni and the three subdeacons who were killed with him, as well as to pray for all those who have died in the fighting in Iraq, including U.S. troops, and for the safety of Iraq's remaining Christians.

Christians in Particular Suffer Human Rights Abuse

Human rights are not respected in Iraq, and Christians in particular are suffering, said Chaldean Patriarch Emmanuel-Karim Delly of Baghdad. "I have asked everyone to pray for us and to do something to reawaken the world's conscience," the patriarch told Vatican Radio June 20 at the end of a Vatican meeting of church funding agencies for Eastern churches, known by its Italian acronym, Roaco. The patriarch said he has asked the United Nations, the European Union and other organizations

to join him in demanding that "all Iraqis, Muslims and Christians have their human rights respected." The Rev. Leo Lemmens, Roaco's secretary general, told Vatican Radio, "Christians are being killed or thrown out of their homes before the eyes of those who are supposed to be responsible for their security." Father Lemmens said, "Christians always have lived in Iraq and have done everything possible to contribute to its development along with their Muslim brothers and sisters."

Chinese Government Calls Bishops' Meeting

Catholic bishops who have registered with the Chinese government were called to a two-day meeting in Beijing in late June. Some bishops contacted by UCA News, an Asian church news agency, said they believed the June 28-29 meeting was related to an expected letter from Pope Benedict XVI to Catholics in mainland China; others said they did not know why the meeting was called. The pope promised to write such a pastoral letter after a summit meeting took place Jan. 19-20 at the Vatican to discuss the situation of the Catholic Church in China. The letter, which Pope Benedict reportedly signed May 27, is generally expected to be released soon. Vatican sources have said that as a courtesy the letter would be sent to the Chinese government before it is released publicly. Anthony Liu Bainian, vice chairman of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association, confirmed to UCA News June 27 that the bishops were invited to a June 28-29 meeting to discuss celebrating the patriotic association's golden jubilee. He denied that the meeting has any connection to the papal letter.

Cardinal Praises Bush for Stem Cell Veto

President George W. Bush vetoed a bill on June 20 that would expand federal funding for medical research on human embryonic stem cells, saying it "would compel American taxpayers, for the first time in our history, to support the deliberate destruction of human embryos." Cardinal Justin Rigali of Philadelphia, chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities, praised the veto. "This bill would not actually enhance stem-cell research, but divert federal funds from legitimate research toward avenues requiring the destruction of innocent human life," he said. "The cause of science is not enhanced but diminished when it loses its moral compass." In conjunction with the veto, Bush issued an executive order calling on federal agencies to strengthen the nation's commitment to research on pluripotent stem cells. Adult stem cells from a variety of

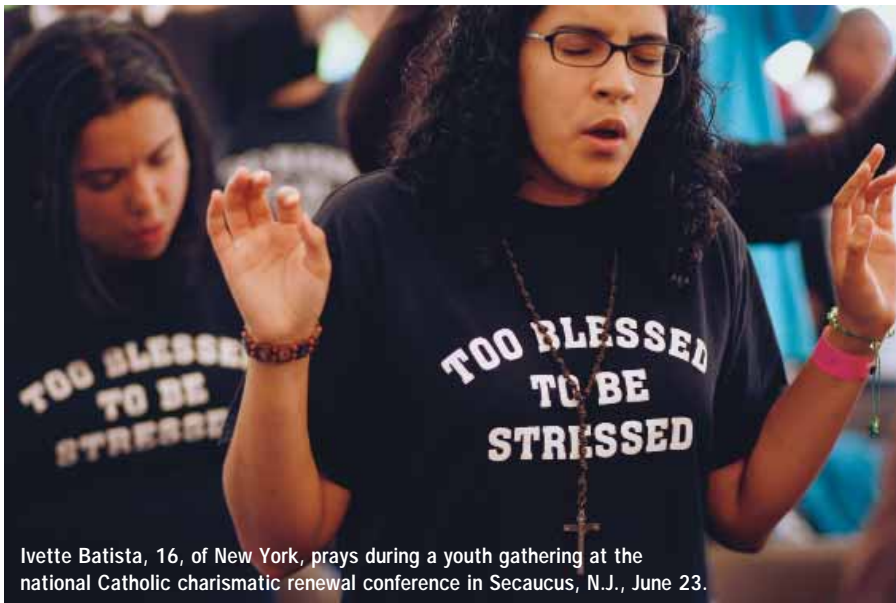
sources, including bone marrow, the placenta and umbilical-cord blood, have led to successful treatments for a number of diseases. Adult stem cells are called pluripotent because they have the power to turn into many of the more than 200 types of differentiated cells found in the body. Embryonic stem cells are called omnipotent because they can turn into any of those differentiated cells.

Dialogue Seeks Unity With Polish National Church

Members of the Polish National Catholic-Roman Catholic dialogue gathered in Milwaukee to discuss the opening to further steps toward unity created by last year's *Joint Declaration on Unity*. The main focus of the meeting on May 30-31 was the relationship between the two

churches. It included a review of the correspondence with the Holy See since 1991 on the validity of the Polish National Catholic Church's sacraments, sacramental sharing and the extent to which the Catholic Church considers the P.N.C.C. fully a sister church, like the Orthodox churches. There was a consensus among the participants that their May 2006 *Joint Declaration on Unity* has helped create a new context in which the two churches can begin to move incrementally toward the full unity desired by both churches. The declaration, a result of 22 years of dialogue and several official acts of recognition and reconciliation by both churches, said that the dialogue members "wish to reaffirm our resolve to overcome what still divides us and to state clearly that our goal is full communion between our churches."

Charismatic Catholics Mark 40 Years of Praise



Ivette Batista, 16, of New York, prays during a youth gathering at the national Catholic charismatic renewal conference in Secaucus, N.J., June 23.

For most organizations, the 40th anniversary would not call for special celebrations. In the Catholic charismatic renewal, however, 40 is taking on biblical importance. As Bishop Sam G. Jacobs of Houma-Thibodaux, La., pointed out in a keynote address at the Conference of the Charismatic Renewal on June 22-24, the number 40 appears in the Bible nearly 200 times: for 40 years the Israelites wandered in search of the Promised Land; for 40 days Jesus prayed in the desert; the ascension came 40 days after Jesus' resurrection.

Bishop Jacobs was among several speakers over the weekend who raised the possibility that God might have a similarly dramatic action in mind to mark 40 years of the Catholic charismatic renewal. "We have a great challenge before us," he said. "These past 40 years have been a time of cleansing and a time of new beginning; a time of preparation and a time of waiting upon the Lord...a time of renewal and of stirring up frequently the gifts given to us when hands were laid upon us and the Spirit invoked."

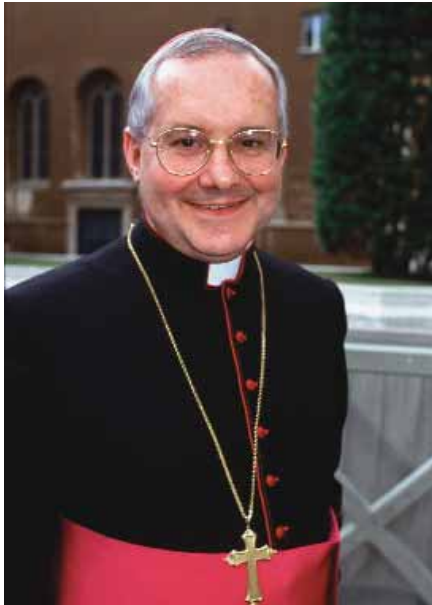
Philippine Culture a Leaven in U.S. Society

In a homily at a San Francisco church, Cardinal Guadencio Rosales of Manila, Philippines, underscored the deep faith, generosity and hospitality of the Filipino culture and urged Filipinos living in the United States to use their cultural heritage as a leaven in U.S. society. A Mass on June 21 at St. Anne of the Sunset Church and a reception afterward were the final events of the cardinal's three-day visit to the Bay Area. His U.S. trip included a stop in Washington, where he presided at a Mass for the feast of Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception on June 23. In a June 19 interview with Catholic San Francisco, the cardinal cautioned the United States about its social development aid in the Philippines and expressed enthusiasm about the impact of Pondo Ng Pinoy, a foundation he helped launch to aid the poor in his homeland three years ago.

Spiritual Podcasts Target Busy Men

The Catholic Men's Fellowship of Pittsburgh and that diocese's Department for Evangelization are producing weekly audio spiritual podcasts, specifically geared toward men, on the upcoming Sunday Scripture readings. Jeff Ludwikowski, co-executive director of the Catholic Men's Fellowship of Pittsburgh, said the weekly podcasts stem from a desire to respond to Pope John Paul II's "call for a new evangelization by utilizing new technologies to reach men who may not be tied into traditional methods of faith formation." The 10-minute podcast is available on the Web site of the National Fellowship of Catholic Men (www.catholicmensresources.org). A podcast is a digital media file, or a series of such files, distributed over the Internet using syndication feeds for playback on portable media players and personal computers. The Rev. James Wehner, director of the Department for Evangelization, is the "voice" of the podcasts. The initial target population was computer-savvy men who lacked time for spiritual reading. But Father Wehner noted that the audience is much broader than originally anticipated.

Diplomat Cardinal to Head Interreligious Council



Jean-Louis Tauran

Pope Benedict XVI named a French cardinal with extensive diplomatic experience as the Vatican's new coordinator of interreligious dialogue. Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, 64, will become president of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, the Vatican's main liaison agency with Islam, on Sept. 1. Cardinal Tauran, a 28-year veteran of the Vatican's diplomatic service who has served in Haiti, Lebanon and Syria, is known as a knowledgeable and sometimes outspoken specialist in international affairs. For 13 years he was Pope John Paul II's "foreign minister," the official who dealt with all aspects of the Vatican's foreign policy.

Pope Benedict announced the appointment during a visit on June 25 to the Vatican Library and the Vatican Secret Archives, two institutions Cardinal Tauran has headed since 2003. In his new role, the cardinal will be responsible for overseeing the Vatican's dialogue efforts with representatives of other faiths, including Muslims. Early in his tenure as foreign minister, the Holy See concluded the Fundamental Agreement with the State of Israel; and during the breakup of the former Yugoslavia, it supported the independence of Croatia and appealed for the first time to "the duty to protect" innocents, usually called the principle of "humanitarian intervention."

From CNS and other sources. CNS photos.

Pope Restores Two-thirds Rule for Papal Election

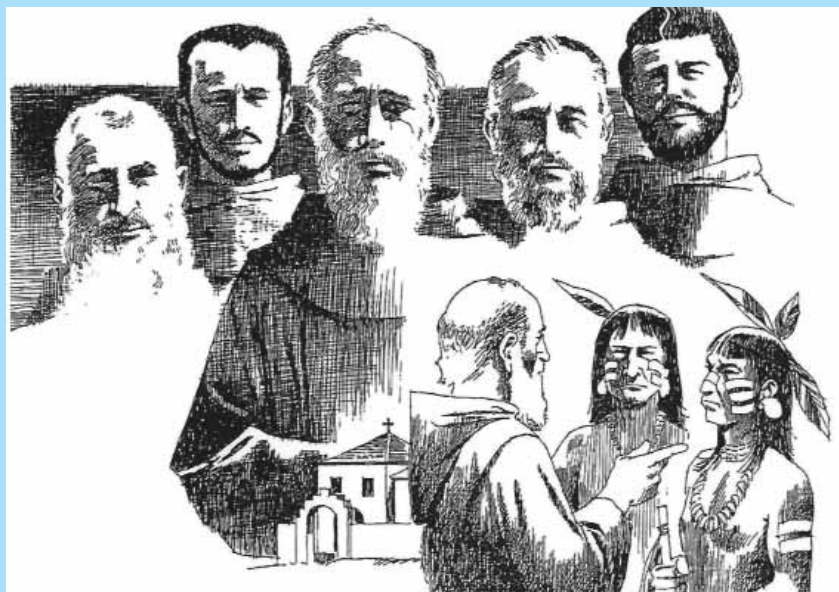
Pope Benedict XVI has stipulated that a two-thirds majority is always required to elect a new pope, undoing a procedure introduced by Pope John Paul II. In a one-page document released June 26, the pope said the two-thirds-majority rule cannot be set aside even when cardinal-electors are at an impasse. Instead, the pope instructed that if the cardinals are deadlocked after 13 days, runoff ballots between the two leading candidates will be held. A papal election will continue to require that two-thirds of the cardinals present agree on a candidate.

In 1996, Pope John Paul introduced a change in the conclave procedure that allowed cardinal-electors to move to a simple majority after 13 days, when 33 or 34 ballots had been held. Pope Benedict said there had been significant requests for a return to the old rules, under which a two-thirds majority was always required. The pope effected the change by replacing two paragraphs of his predecessor's apostolic constitution, *Universi Dominici Gregis* ("The Lord's Whole Flock"), a document that defined conclave procedures.

Foley to Head Knights of Holy Sepulcher

Pope Benedict XVI has named Archbishop John P. Foley, of the United States, pro-grand master of the Knights of the Holy Sepulcher, a fraternal organization dedicated to supporting the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem and to responding to the needs of Catholics in the Holy Land. The 71-year-old Philadelphia native had been head of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications for 23 years. By naming Archbishop Foley "pro-"grand master, Pope Benedict seemed to indicate that he would be named a cardinal during the next consistory, which will probably take place in November. Archbishop Foley, who will remain in Rome, succeeds the retired Italian Cardinal Carlo Furno, who is 85.

The Vatican also announced June 27 that Archbishop Foley's successor at the social communications council would be Italian Archbishop Claudio Maria Celli, who will become 66 in July. Archbishop Celli had been a Vatican diplomat and was the Vatican's point man for contacts with the Communist governments of Vietnam and North Korea in the early 1990's, when he was an under secretary in the Vatican Secretariat of State.



THE FIVE GEORGIA MARTYRS are depicted in an artist's rendering being used in the promotion of their cause for sainthood. The Spanish Franciscans were killed at their Georgia missions in 1597 after a baptized Guale Indian took a second wife, dismissed a priest's admonition about this and set out to destroy the friars. The martyred missionaries were Pedro de Corpa, Blas de Rodríguez, Miguel de Anon and Francisco de Verascola, all priests, and Brother Antonio de Badajoz.



Big Dreams, Daily Details

‘So what are you going to do next?’

THE GRADUATION season is finally over. All over the country young people have completed their studies and received the diplomas that, they hope, will unlock a future of their choosing. In Britain the ritual of graduation involves the donning of graduation hoods and gowns (hired at great expense for 20 minutes of glory) and the gathering of the clans, as proud parents line up to watch their sons and daughters cross the line that signifies the final end of childhood.

Our own daughter's graduation ceremony was probably typical of thousands being enacted up and down the land. She had attended the medical school of a large metropolitan university, where the number of graduates far exceeded the capacity of the hall to accommodate them. Consequently the various ceremonies were spread out over several days.

When the big day came, she spent the morning in a state of rising panic about the ordeal that lay ahead. The prospect of walking the length of the hall, climbing with dignity the three steps up to the podium, receiving with grace the certificate from the hands of the dean and descending in safety to return to her seat was, she confided, a more daunting challenge than taking her final examinations. I took that remark with a pinch of salt and settled down to enjoy the unfolding pageant.

As he handed out the diplomas, the dean exchanged a few words with each new graduate—a simple question like “Have you enjoyed your time here?” or “What are you planning on doing next?” To his great credit, he conducted the proceedings with what appeared to be gen-

uine interest and appropriate alacrity, as he processed some 200 newly qualified doctors.

Then he turned his attention to the parents and friends of the newly robed and told us how he had presided over several similar ceremonies that week. Successfully suppressing any hints of jadedness, he recounted the reactions of two particular graduates to his not-too-searching question: “What are you going to do next?”

The first, a young man, had responded, after a moment's thought, “I'm going to be a world-class brain surgeon.” The dean had congratulated him on his graduation and wished him every success in his chosen career.

The second, a few hundred graduates farther down the line, had been asked the same question: “What are you going to do next?” She had likewise given the question several moments of thoughtful attention before replying: “I'm going to turn left and walk very carefully down these three steps.”

We smiled at the discrepancy between these two ambitions, the lurch from the sublime to the ridiculous, the chasm between idealism and pragmatism. Two ways of looking at life. But are they compatible? And are they realistic? One is about a big and distant dream. The other is about the next few minutes. The story appeals to me, because it captures so succinctly something of the dynamic of the spiritual journey.

We are called to be players in a Big Dream. The dream is God's dream, and it is nothing less than the fulfilment, under the power of love, of all creation. The Gospel vision is not just another way of “doing religion.” It is about becoming everything God is dreaming us to be. It is about the very destiny of Homo sapiens. To be part of this adventure is surely what each of us, in our hearts, is longing for. No

wonder the aspiring brain surgeon expressed a desire to play his own modest part in the unfolding of the dream.

But the second graduate got it right too. We are called to work out in the finest detail what our very next step should be, in order to live true to the dream's unfolding in our daily living. Both perspectives are potentially world-changing, and the Gospel vision challenges and empowers them both. It coaxes us constantly to make one more step toward the horizon of all we can become, constantly reminding us that there is always more to God's dream than we dare to imagine. But it also gives us, in Christ, both the model of how to live true to God's dream, and the empowerment to let that dream become incarnate in the daily details of our own personal circumstances.

Paulo Coelho recounts in his novel *The Alchemist* the tale of a little boy who sought out a famous guru for an audience. The wise man sent the boy off to tour his palace and gardens, and to enjoy all he discovered there, but at the same time to carry in his hand a teaspoonful of oil and to bring it back without having spilled any of it. The child returned, the oil unspilled, but he had completely failed to notice the beautiful gardens, the rich tapestries, the great works of art around him. The guru sent him off for a second time, and he returned full of the delights he had seen, but the oil was gone.

The trick, it seems, is to balance the two—to become a top neurosurgeon and manage not to fall over your feet going down the next three steps, to play your own unique part in the great unfolding of God's dream for creation while carefully discerning the step immediately ahead on the slippery pathways of your personal circumstances. The big vision without the daily detail is merely day-dreaming. The daily detail without the big dream can become just a toilsome trudge.

We honor the big vision when we keep in mind, with every step, that we are movers and players in a cosmic drama far beyond our imagination. We honor the daily detail every time we ask, in a specific situation, “What is the more loving, the more life-giving, the more Christ-like thing to do next?”

So what are you going to do next?

Margaret Silf

MARGARET SILF lives in Staffordshire, England. Her latest books are *Companions of Christ: Ignatian Spirituality for Everyday Living* and *The Gift of Prayer*.



CNS PHOTO BY PATRICK HERTZOG

Pope Benedict XVI and Mustafa Cagrici, grand mufti of Istanbul, pray in the Blue Mosque in Istanbul, Turkey, Nov. 30.

Benedict XVI: Peacemaker

– BY DREW CHRISTIANSEN –

NEARLY A YEAR AFTER Pope Benedict XVI quoted a Byzantine emperor on the evils of Islam, one hears much less talk of the Vatican's alleged hard new line on Islam. The shift of attention is a tribute to the pope's unexpected success in taking on the roles of diplomat and peacemaker. After the late Pope John Paul II presided over the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe and set in motion the change of governments from Haiti to East Timor, few anticipated that Benedict, a scholar and church administrator, would similarly influence world affairs. But it appears, despite a brief period of turmoil, that two years into his pontificate Pope Benedict is mastering his role as a diplomat and religious peacemaker. It is a role he could not avoid.

DREW CHRISTIANSEN, S.J., editor in chief of **America**, was for 13 years the principal policy adviser to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops on Mideast affairs. He writes frequently on the church's role in international affairs, most recently in *Faith and International Affairs* (fall 2006).

Religious Peacemaking: The 'Spirit of Assisi'

For a thousand years the Holy See has sent diplomats abroad. With the demise of the Papal States in 1870, as Archbishop Celestino Migliore, now the Holy See Permanent Observer at the United Nations, has said, the Holy See was free of "the ball and chain" of ordinary statecraft and could carry out "a diplomacy of conscience" and peace. In Pope John Paul II's peripatetic pontificate, the diplomatic role took on new intensity and a new form. The new intensity was evident in a flurry of activity from central Europe to the Balkans to the Middle East. The new form came in religious peacemaking, especially John Paul II's convocation of religious leaders in times of conflict to oppose violence and proclaim their common commitment to peace.

John Paul's religious peacemaking came to be known popularly as the "Spirit of Assisi," referring to the 1986 interreligious prayer for peace held in Assisi. It was followed by two other major gatherings there: in 1992, following the outbreak of war in the former Yugoslavia; and in 2002, following the terrorist attacks in the United States on Sept. 11, 2001, and the invasion of Afghanistan. In between those events and since 2002, the Spirit of Assisi has been kept alive by Rome's Community of Sant'Egidio with an annual Day of Prayer for Peace. Last year's gathering met at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. The presence there of Catholic prelates with world leaders of other faiths made it clear that religious peacemaking is fully integrated into the life of the church today.

As Bishop William F. Murphy, the under secretary of the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace at the time of Assisi I in 1986, explained in **America** last year ("Remembering Assisi After 20 Years," 10/23/06), the whole Roman Curia was involved in planning the event. Despite this corporate preparation, John Paul's religious peacemaking, like his steady series of apologies to groups harmed or offended in the past by the church, remained controversial in some corners of the curia. Rumors persisted that Pope Benedict had had reservations about the alleged syncretism at Assisi I and was continuing his opposition as pope. Those rumors gained more weight when he reined in the Franciscans of Assisi, putting activities at the Basilica of Saint Francis under a millstone of ecclesiastical control that included the bishop of Assisi, the Episcopal Conference of Umbria and the Italian Episcopal Conference.

Though it is hard from this side of the ocean to pierce the veil of Italian church politics, the issue appears to have been just that, one of Italian church politics, specifically an effort to curb the independently progressive Franciscans, who showed excessive sympathy to the Italian left. For when the 20th anniversary of the first Assisi event was observed in September, Pope Benedict sent warm and encouraging

greetings. While gently warning against syncretistic interpretations of the meeting, Benedict reflected at length on the need for such meetings, both two decades ago and in our own day. He wrote of the first Assisi convocation:

It should be stressed that [the] value of prayer in building peace *was testified to by the representatives of different religious traditions*, and this did not happen at a distance but *in the context of a meeting*. Consequently, the people of diverse religions who were praying could show through the language of witness that prayer does not divide but unites and is a decisive element for an effective pedagogy of peace, hinged on friendship, reciprocal acceptance and dialogue between people of different cultures and religions.

Earlier this year, the pope praised the charisms of the lay religious movements, including Sant'Egidio, the carrier of the Spirit of Assisi.

This June, at the observance of the 800th anniversary of the conversion of St. Francis, Benedict called the first Assisi gathering "a prophetic intuition and a moment of grace," clearly not the words of a deep skeptic. He continued, "Assisi tells us that faithfulness to one's own religious convictions, faithfulness above all to the crucified and risen Christ, is not expressed in violence and intolerance but in sincere respect for others, in dialogue and in an announcement that appeals to freedom and reason while remaining committed to peace and reconciliation."

Some of the over-interpretation of the disciplining of the Assisi Franciscans came from *Vaticanisti*, journalists covering the Vatican, with an interest bordering on advocacy in the reshaping of the Vatican's post-9/11 policy toward Islam. They touted Benedict's new, supposedly hard-line position toward Islam. In their coverage, one could often detect neoconservative alliances, with Europeans like Michele Pera and Americans like George Weigel receiving extensive and favorable attention for publicizing the new pope's alleged toughness on Islam. It was a case of bringing the culture wars into the church. But Benedict did not share their enthusiasm for finding new enemies.

Islam: A Dialogue of Cultures

Early in his pontificate Pope Benedict took a series of steps that Vatican journalists presented as evidence of a new hard line toward Islam. Most important, he set "reciprocity" as a goal of Vatican Islamic policy, that is, the demand that Christians be allowed the same rights in Muslim countries that Muslims are allowed in the West. By itself, this was a necessary adjustment to the realities of an asymmetrical relationship. Pope John Paul's openness had won the right

to open churches in some Persian Gulf states, led to memoranda of understanding with the Palestine Liberation Organization and with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan guaranteeing religious liberty, and furthered cooperation between Christians and Muslims in Lebanon. But in places like Pakistan, Iran and Saudi Arabia, life for Christians went from very trying to downright oppressive. After 20 years of dialogue, more progress could reasonably be expected.

In another move, the new pope missioned the Vatican's leading Islamicist, Archbishop Michael Fitzgerald, M.Afr., the president of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, as nuncio to Cairo and the Arab League and placed that council under Cardinal Paul Poupard, the president of the Pontifical Council for Culture.

As a result, the Holy See now speaks of a "dialogue of cultures" rather than a dialogue of religions. The cultural dialogue is broader than Catholic-Muslim relations narrowly defined; and given the size of the two communities, the contemporary global political climate and the plight of the ancient churches of the Middle East, the Muslim dialogue, it may be argued, has become the most important bilateral conversation on the church agenda.

As if to signal the renewed importance of the relationship, the Vatican announced June 25 that the pope has appointed the former secretary for relations with states, or foreign minister, Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran as president of the P.C.I.D. A serious and progressive diplomat, Tauran can be expected to lend new purpose to the office.

Solidarity Against Secularism

In his end-of-year address to the Roman Curia on Dec. 22, 2006, Pope Benedict expressed sympathy with Islam, which like Christianity must confront the Enlightenment, both adopting its virtues, as Pope John XXIII and the Second Vatican Council did, for example in the field of human rights and religious liberty, and correcting its excesses and deficiencies, like its materialism and moral relativism. Above all, the pope argued, both must address the positivist notion of reason that "excludes God from the life of the community." Christians and Muslims must be united in the commitment "to find solutions" in opposing violence and finding a synergy "between faith and reason, between religion and freedom." The theme of the common tasks facing people of faith, both Muslims and Christians, in confronting the godlessness of the Enlightenment ran through the essays in Cardinal Ratzinger's exchange with Michele Pera, *Without Roots* (Basic Books, 2006). In these recent

statements, the pope exhibits not an abstract respect for Islam, but rather a sense of spiritual solidarity with people of faith in the face of unbridled secularism.

In the Mideast, moreover, where the church and Islam have their most intimate encounters, local church leaders have long spoken of the "dialogue of daily life," referring to the many social interactions in which Muslims and Christians routinely engage one another. Benedict takes this

For Benedict, diplomacy and the care of souls fit together like hand in glove.

notion a step further, counseling nonviolent "conviviality." "Simply living together and suffering together," he explains, "has a healing effect on wounds and disposes people to thoughts and deeds of reconciliation and

peace." In a Christmas 2006 letter, he encouraged Middle East Christians "to continue along the path of trust with acts of friendship and good will [toward Muslims]" in "both the simple daily deeds you have practiced in your region by so many good and humble people who have always treated others with consideration and also those deeds considered heroic, inspired by authentic respect for human dignity and the desire to find solutions to situations of grave hostility."

Where, then, does Pope Benedict's lecture at Regensburg fit, with its imputation of violence and irrationality to Islam? For it seemed at the time that the great "clash of civilizations," promoted by the Harvard professor Samuel Huntington but repeatedly rejected by the Vatican and Benedict himself, had actually exploded across the world stage following the lecture. Parliaments and Islamic scholars denounced the pope; diplomats were recalled; protesters marched in the streets; in Somalia, a nun was murdered. Through it all, Benedict remained serene, but the new chief of Vatican communications, Federico Lombardi, S.J., swung into action, and Vatican diplomats, when they were not summoned by host governments, buttonholed their colleagues to soothe tempers and answer questions.

It is hard to recall a crisis in which the Roman Curia responded so rapidly with such concerted action and in such a short period of time. Explanations with varying degrees of credibility were issued. The pope offered expressions of regret. Though not apologies, they nonetheless count as an unprecedented step taken in record time. Pope Benedict met with Muslim diplomats and other Islamic leaders. Above all, despite the firestorm of controversy stirred by the lecture, Benedict refused to cancel his visit to Turkey planned for late November. The lecture itself may have been poorly staffed (or staff advice overruled), but the recovery was exceedingly well executed. By the time the

pope returned from Turkey, not only had relations with Islam been genuinely calmed, but with the help of his team, Benedict had proved himself a diplomat.

The Visit to Turkey

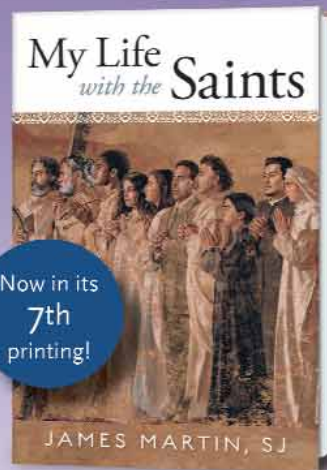
Even before the Regensburg lecture, the visit to Turkey looked fraught with trouble. For months, Turkey had been filled with anti-Catholic agitation. As cardinal, Benedict had roiled the waters by declaring his opposition to Turkey's entrance into the European Union on the grounds it did not share the (Christian) identity of Europe. In the months leading up to the visit, priests were attacked and assassinated, and a novel depicting the pope's murder during a visit to Turkey made the Turkish best-seller lists. The Regensburg lecture, following as it did a summer of protest against the blasphemous Danish cartoons, aggravated existing hostility toward Christianity and toward Benedict in particular. To hold firm to his resolve to visit Turkey in the face of this turmoil showed exceptional courage and trust in providence.

These tensions made the primary task of the trip, showing solidarity with the Greek Orthodox ecumenical patriarchate of Constantinople, even more difficult. While Turkey is a secular state, government constraints on the patriarchate are especially grave. It sets limits on the election of the patriarch, refuses to recognize the role the patriarch plays among Orthodox Christians and refuses to allow the patriarchal seminary, closed in 1971, to reopen. As a result of the controversy over Regensburg, the pope's ability to provide a show of unity with the Orthodox appeared greatly weakened.

To its credit, the Turkish government never asked the Vatican to cancel the trip. Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan, who let it be known he would be out of the country during the papal visit, in the end remained to greet the pope before heading to a European summit. The pope expressed his affection for the Turkish people, quoting the late Pope John XXIII, once nuncio to Ankara: "I am fond of the Turks to whom the Lord has sent me.... I love the Turks." He also expressed his esteem for Turkey as "a noble land" that "has seen a remarkable flowering of Islamic civilization in the most diverse fields, including its literature and art as well as its institutions."

In a meeting with Ali Bardaoglu, the head of the Directorate of Religious Affairs, Benedict, citing Pope Gregory VII, appealed to the "particular charity that Christians and Muslims owe one another 'because we believe in one God, albeit in a different manner, and because we praise him and worship him every day as the creator and ruler of the world.'" At the Blue Mosque, Istanbul's most important shrine, Benedict stood with the city's grand mufti, Mustafa Cagrici, before the *mibrab* niche that marks the direction of prayer facing Mecca. According

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to one reporter, the pope told the mufti, "Thank you for this moment of prayer." Father Lombardi explained, it was a personal prayer without the outward manifestations of Christian prayer, so as to emphasize what unites Christians and Muslims. Later the pope related that he had prayed there so that all believers may see themselves as brothers and sisters. After those encounters, it would be hard any longer to regard Benedict as a "hard-liner" on Islam.

By the end of the visit, Pope Benedict had won the hearts of the Turks. As one said, "We are quick to anger and quick to forgive." At the same time, in his quiet, direct manner, Benedict affirmed his core message. Against the background of religious and civilizational violence, he continued to promote a dialogue of cultures, reiterating that it is "a vital necessity, on which...our future depends." Faced with the suffering of Turkey's religious minorities, however, he also pleaded for religious freedom and the rights of minority religions. "The civil authorities of every democratic country are dutybound to guarantee the effective freedom of all believers," he told the diplomatic corps in a meeting in Ankara, "and to permit them to organize freely the life of their religious communities." In staying on message, Benedict demonstrated that even while healing and nurturing relationships, a world religious leader can speak the truth in love. In so doing, he proved himself both a diplomat and a peacemaker.

Lebanon: The Israel-Hezbollah War

Another crisis in which Pope Benedict proved himself a diplomat and religious peacemaker was Israel's war against Hezbollah in Lebanon last summer. Throughout, Benedict's position was sure. With pastoral sensitivity he requested that the first Sunday of the war become a day of prayer and fasting—the latter a sign of the seriousness with which he regarded the conflict. He regularly brought the situation to the world's attention during his weekly Angelus message. His public statements were clear and direct, characteristic marks neither of traditional Vatican diplomacy nor of the pronouncements of John Paul II. From the beginning, he laid out a farsighted program that exceeded anything coming from major foreign ministries. It included an immediate ceasefire and a negotiated settlement, respect for the humanitarian law of war—that is, immunity from attack for civilians and medical workers, the recognition of humanitarian corridors (so refugees could escape the fighting) and aid for the refugees to sustain them in the emergency.

A month passed before the world community caught up with the pope and put a ceasefire in place. Within days of the ceasefire, the U.S. ambassador to the Holy See, Francis Rooney, laid out U.S. plans for reconstruction aid and humanitarian assistance for Lebanon. It was a clear sign that the importance of Lebanon to the Holy See and the future

prospects for Christianity in the Middle East had finally—and one hopes not too late—registered with the administration. This followed weeks of delay in agreeing to a U.N. plan to end hostilities and forestall further conflict on the Lebanon-Israel border. The Maronite Patriarch, the Synod of the Maronite Church and the Assembly of Catholic Ordinaries in Lebanon have also exercised an extraordinary mediating role in Lebanon, opposing factionalism and supporting national unity based on Lebanese citizenship. Maronite Patriarch Nazrallah Pierre Sfeir, at the outset of Lent this year, published an extraordinary pastoral letter, *On Love of Country*, reflecting on the nature of genuine patriotism.

Counseling Nonviolence to Victims

Christians face unprecedented pressures in Iraq, in Palestine and in Lebanon, as well as in countries like Jordan and Syria, which are burdened with refugees. In a Dec. 21 Christmas letter to the Catholics of the Middle East, Benedict wrote to the faithful across the region to bolster their perseverance. He recognized that events in the region "naturally give rise in those involved to recriminations and rage, leading them to thoughts of retaliation and revenge." While recording grievances, he wrote, might offer an illusory satisfaction, experience had shown the results of such efforts were "disappointing." "When one person suffers he should first of all wish to understand how much someone else in a similar situation suffers." The best hope of healing, he advised, was in "patient, humble dialogue." Such dialogue, he correctly noted, "has already [yielded] positive results in many countries previously devastated by violence and revenge." Thus, even to the victims of violence he counseled nonviolence.

The Christmas letter is a model of pastoral care that at the same time never fails to uphold the prophetic mission of the church. Fully aware of the politics involved—"dangerous geopolitical situations, cultural conflicts, economic and strategic interests, forms of aggression that claim justification from a social or religious basis"—the pope's concern is to address the immediate pain of the faithful, offset their discouragement and offer counsel on the choices they face regarding, for example, acting on impulses of revenge or weighing the possibility of emigration. But he also reminds individuals of the duties of discipleship and the need to build up the church as an instrument of peace. Accordingly, he encourages both individuals and communities to acts of forgiveness, reconciliation and solidarity.

Benedict: What's in a Name?

Benedict's nonviolent counsel to Middle East Christians is consonant with the path many of them, especially in Israel and Palestine, have already set for themselves. It is also con-

sistent with the teaching of Pope John Paul II. But it flows as well from Joseph Ratzinger's own models of ministry, symbolized by his choice of Benedict as his papal name. Pundits noted, and Benedict confirmed, that he was invoking the memory of both St. Benedict, the patron of Europe and the founder of Western monasticism, and Benedict XV, the early 20th-century pope who labored in vain to end the First World War. Joseph Ratzinger became pope late in life, but his long attachment to Benedictine spirituality has informed his personal style in international affairs.

During the 2006 Lebanon war, his Angelus messages often focused on the life of the saint of the day. Two of the messages seemed to reflect Benedict's view of his own papal ministry and particularly the struggle to balance contemplation and action in the life of a church leader: those on Gregory the Great and Bernard of Clairvaux. Pope Gregory, Benedict remarked, was the model the Second Vatican Council had in mind when it outlined the role of the contemporary pastor, "inspired by the love 'that rises wonderfully to high things when it is compassionately drawn to the low things of neighbors; and the more kindly it descends to the weak things of this world, the more vigorously it recurs to the things on high.'"

On the pastoral practice of Bernard of Clairvaux, he said, "The life of a pastor of souls must be a balanced synthesis of contemplation and action..." Bernard's advice to Pope Eugenius III to avoid excessive activity because it leads to hardness of heart, Benedict told his listeners, is advice "to the pope of that time and to all popes, to all of us." Bernard, he observed, "knew how to harmonize the monk's aspiration to the solitude and tranquility of the cloister with the pressing needs of important and complex missions at the service of the church."

For Benedict, diplomacy and the care of souls fit together like hand in glove. Diplomacy is not an add-on or a remnant of the temporal power of the papacy. As in the letter to Middle

East Christians, concern for pastoral care of the faithful—their religious and moral affections and their practical personal and political choices—is combined with counsels to nonviolence and to heroic action amid conflict, as well as to the promotion of "solutions to situations of grave hostility." In initiatives like the letter to Middle East Christians, one senses a natural, integrated Christian imagination that is at home in the world but not of it.

Benedict would be the first to admit that not every move he makes may be correct, but if his diplomacy succeeds, it will be because his Christian peacemaking, rooted in Benedictine spirituality, is so authentic. **A**



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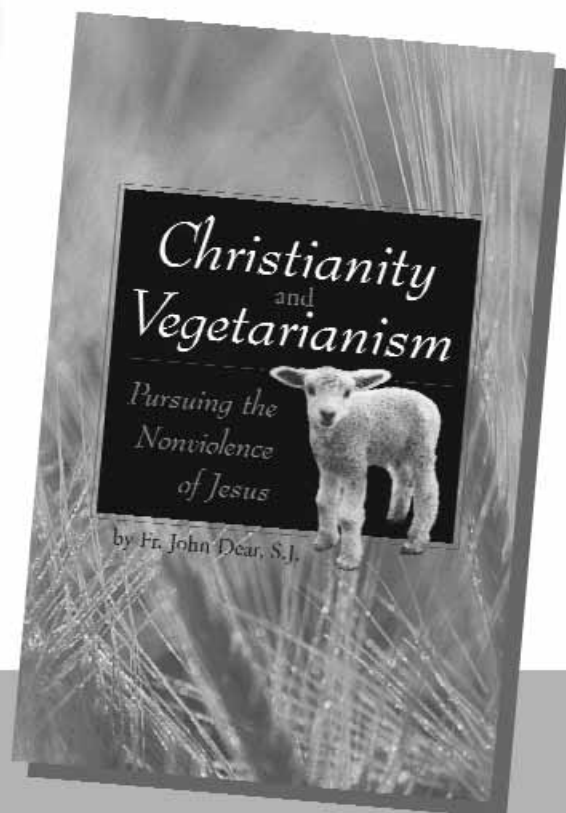
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Josh Alcorn, a pro-life activist, demonstrates in front of the Supreme Court in Washington on April 18.

The Partial-Birth Decision

Criticism of the Supreme Court shows confusion about the role of religious values in a democratic society.

BY ELLEN K. BOEGEL

MEDIA REACTION to the recent United States Supreme Court decision upholding the constitutionality of the federal ban on partial-birth abortion reflected unfortunate confusion concerning the legitimate relationship between religion and political debate in American society.

The case, *Gonzales v. Carhart*, is a classic 5-to-4 split decision. Five justices—Anthony M. Kennedy, John G. Roberts, Antonin Scalia, Clarence Thomas and Samuel A. Alito Jr.—determined that the federal partial-birth abortion ban is constitutional. These justices happen to be Catholic, and critics who did not understand the legal reasoning in the majority opinion warned that it reflected a bias toward

Catholic doctrine that could lead to the rejection of *Roe v. Wade*, the decision that established a woman's right to choose an abortion based on a constitutional right to privacy.

The Catholic Church's doctrinal position on abortion is clear. All abortions end a human life and are immoral. If the faith of the justices had dictated their vote, the reasoning in their opinion would have laid the foundation for overruling *Roe v. Wade* and its successor, *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*. Instead, the majority opinion applied these rulings to the federal statute and, in so doing, retained the basic tenet of *Roe v. Wade*, which is that women have a virtually unfettered right to most types of pre-viability abortions.

ELLEN K. BOEGEL, who teaches legal studies at St. John's University in New York, clerked for the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit.

Legal Precedents, Not Catholic Doctrine

The ruling will not reduce the number of abortions performed in the United States, because the law it upheld does

CNS PHOTO BY JIM YOUNG

not ban abortions; it merely regulates a particular type of abortion technique that Congress determined was “gruesome and inhumane.” The Catholic majority, therefore, did not base their decision on Catholic teaching but instead made a judicial decision consistent with legal precedent. As a matter of fact, their decision reflected the sentiments of most Americans, including Catholics, who favor limitations, but not a total ban, on abortions.

The majority of the court in this decision, like the majority of the American people, acknowledged the moral ambiguities presented by an unwanted pregnancy. Nevertheless, their judicial integrity was called into doubt because their legal decision, based solely on statutory language and constitutional analysis, coincided in part with the position of their church.

The minority in *Gonzales v. Carhart* dissented because the statute, which contains an exception to preserve the life of a woman, does not also include an exception to preserve the health of a woman. According to Congress, which passed the ban on partial-birth abortion, the concern of the minority opinion represents a distinction without a real difference; there are, after all, safe alternatives to the partial-birth technique. The majority decision, in effect, simply affirmed the constitutional authority of Congress to make findings of fact regarding the efficacy of medical procedures.

Religious Values and Public Policy

The dark warning about the religious affiliation of the *Gonzales v. Carhart* majority illustrates the need for a better understanding of the proper role of religious belief in American politics and the legitimate role for religious values in the public debate. The attention paid to the Catholic affiliation of the Supreme Court justices who upheld the partial-birth abortion ban is rooted in the naïve and historically uninformed assumption that the separation of church and state prohibits any religious influence on public policy.

There is a profound difference, however, between a government that is controlled by a religious denomination and a government whose policies are informed by the religious values of its citizens. Any government that would totally disregard moral values that are rooted in religious faith would be hopelessly doctrinaire, unable to represent a society that values freedom of religion.

Jon Meacham’s book *American Gospel* demonstrates that religious belief always has informed our political and legal decisions. Thomas Jefferson’s personal belief in a beneficent creator, for example, formed the foundation for those “inalienable rights” of “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” that are the cornerstone of our political system. Citizens of the United States should not support political



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leaders or public policies simply out of obedience to religious authorities. At the same time, we cannot dismiss the relevance of moral values in forming public policy simply because these values may be rooted in the different religious beliefs of American citizens.

Religious Faith and Democratic Foundations

Those who insist on the total dismissal of any religious influence on U.S. politics and jurisprudence should reflect on those voices that would have been silenced if an impenetrable wall had kept religious values out of public policy. President Lincoln would not have issued the Emancipation Proclamation; Martin Luther King Jr. would have been politically irrelevant; the Civil Rights Act of 1964 would not have been passed; and *Brown v. Board of Education* would have kept schools segregated.

American politicians and jurists cannot base their decisions about public policy on their personal obedience to any religious authority. At the same time, to insist that moral values rooted in religious faith have no place in any debate on public policy would undermine the foundation of a democratic society, namely the right of its citizens to participate in that debate.

Benedict XVI on Faith and Reason

How can religion and politics, faith and reason, be reconciled and properly put to use in our pluralistic society? Pope Benedict XVI addressed this issue in his first encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est*, when he reflected on the relationship of faith and reason in the search for justice in society. "Faith by its specific nature is an encounter with the living God—an encounter opening up new horizons extending beyond the sphere of reason. From God's standpoint, faith liberates reason from its blind spots.... Faith enables reason to do its work more effectively and to see its proper object more clearly" (No. 28a).

To some it may seem strange that the pope goes on to warn that reason can be compromised by the influence of special interests, since secularists would be quick to identify religion as the classic special interest. But Dean Brackley, S.J., issued a similar warning in these pages in his article "Higher Standards" (2/6/2006). Father Brackley acknowledged that reason is often clouded by biases—religious, economic, ethnic and political. The believer's task is to recognize the biases that influence the beginning of all analysis and replace them with understanding. "Prejudice is embedded in my identity," Father Brackley wrote.

Authentic religious faith that leads to personal moral conversion helps us recognize our personal prejudices and achieve a more disinterested exercise of reason. Religious discourse can lead to inner transformation, greater respect for the other and enlightened persuasion. This concept of

religious reason is the one advanced by Benedict XVI.

The pope explicitly states that it would be improper for the church to "attempt to impose on those who do not share the faith ways of thinking and modes of conduct proper to faith.... The church wishes to help form consciences in political life and to stimulate greater insight into the authentic requirements of justice..." (No. 28a). This is the same process of religious reflection that brought Thomas Jefferson and our other founders to form a liberal democracy.

Self-governance is not an easy task. Nations often stray from their founding principles. Attention to the religious values of our populace can provide a compass for us as we struggle to remain true to the spirit of liberty that is central to our democratic republic. If we do not allow our collective belief in the "blessings of liberty" to influence our political decisions today, we run the risk of eroding the foundation of our democratic aspirations, the belief that U.S. citizens should continually aspire to establish a society that promises "liberty and justice for all."

Critics of the Catholic Supreme Court majority should realize that the religious affiliation of the justices does not predetermine specific outcomes, but rather, challenges them to use all their abilities—reason and compassion—to come to just and constitutional decisions. We can only hope that the non-Catholics on the bench do the same. **A**

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What Ever Happened to Ireland?

BY ANDREW M. GREELEY

WHEN IRELAND was lagging behind other European nations, there were those who attributed its failure to a defect in Irish character and culture. I often commented in response to this allegation that it was remarkable how sea air seemed to change the Irish character.

Now that in a very short time Ireland's standard of living has become the highest in Europe (save perhaps for Norway) and higher than that of the other island to the east, some Irish critics are finding fault with their countrymen again. Community cooperation, religious devotion and faith, generosity and con-

cern for the poor are all deteriorating, we are told, and secularism and moral relativism dominate the country. We were better humans when we were poor.

The Blindness of Self-hatred

I sat and listened to this stuff (a euphemism for two other words) at a dinner recently at a major Irish university until I could stand no more. "I've had it with your sickening (a euphemistic participle) Irish self-hatred. Poverty is only good when it is voluntarily embraced."

In ecclesiastical circles this self-hatred blames education and prosperity for the "secularization" and loss of faith in Ireland. The implicit assumption of such

an allegation is that if the church had been able to keep the Irish poor and uneducated, Ireland would still be a Catholic country. That excuse may be half true, but it misses the point. Education has taught people to think. For those who value the old Ireland and the old Catholicism, that may have been a mistake.

As my colleague Mark Chaves has argued, "secularization," if it means anything at all, means that organized religion has lost its power to impose unquestioned rules on the behavior of its

members. Religious leaders are reduced from commanders who issue orders to teachers who must listen and try to persuade. It is a transition that is not without its difficulties, though one might argue that, in fact, the religious leader who is skilled at the arts of listening and persuading may have more power than the absolute leader who need only make decisions and give orders. Perhaps the turning point in this transition in the Catholic world was the birth control encyclical (*Humanae Vitae*, 1968).

Loss of Faith or of Blind Obedience?

People do not lose their faith or their religion in this kind of secularization. Rather, they lose their willingness to accept the apodictic rules of church authority. Work that Msgr. Conor Ward of University College Dublin and I did on religion in Ireland over the last four decades shows that the Irish are still Catholic, but now on their own terms. You cannot be Catholic on your own terms, the leaders say; you must be Catholic on our terms. Sorry lads, those days are gone forever. You should have protected your flock from higher education if you expected that to continue to work.

Yet the clergy persist in their propensity to blame the laity for their lack of faith and the overarching power of "secularization" and "relativism," platonic labels for disembodied forces and energies that circulate around in the atmosphere and take possession of human souls. It would be more accurate—and more honest—to blame this so-called "decline in faith" on higher education.

Could the Church Be at Fault?

An alternative and dangerous strategy is to ask whether the church and its leadership might be responsible in part for the alienation of its followers. Did the sexual abuse crisis and the leadership's shameful response to the crisis damage our credibility, perhaps permanently?

Is it possible for men who perceive themselves as sharing in the charism of infallibility to permit themselves the question: "Might we be part of the problem?"

THE REV. ANDREW M. GREELEY, with Msgr. Conor Ward, is the author of *How Secularized Is the Ireland We Live In?* (Doctrine & Life, December, 2000).



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/KEITH MURPHY

Might we have caused by our style and our mistakes the very problems we are railing against?" Not many churchmen are asking that question of themselves on the public record these days.

One who does is Archbishop Diarmuid Martin of Dublin. Responding to those who lament the prosperity of the Irish people, he crosses the border from those who blame the laity and blame society to those who are willing to raise the question of blame for the structures of the church.

Others will say to me that is precisely the style of prosperity created within the European Union that has brought a climate of materialism and rejection of Christian values. For me, taking huge sectors of the European population out of poverty and precariousness is an achievement about which the Christian must only rejoice.

His next sentence is a response to the "blame the laity" mentality that currently paralyzes the church everywhere:

If such prosperity has been accompanied by a change in belief patterns within the E.U., then this may be due to a lack of dynamism in the churches' own pastoral structures for evangelization in a cultural climate that is changing, just as much as a result of the economic prosperity fostered by the E.U.

Or as I would put it in far less graceful words than Archbishop Martin, "For the love of God—quite literally—shut up and listen!"

A Challenge Not Only for the Irish

I have described this as a situation in Ireland, since Irish prosperity has taken a beating in some recent articles in this journal. Patently the "loss of faith" in Ireland (or "secularization" of Ireland) is paradigmatic of a problem that exists in the West, in the East, and in the South—in Poland and Nigeria as well as in Ireland and in this land across the seas, which some Irish seafarers once called Great Ireland.

Like I say, shut up and listen. 

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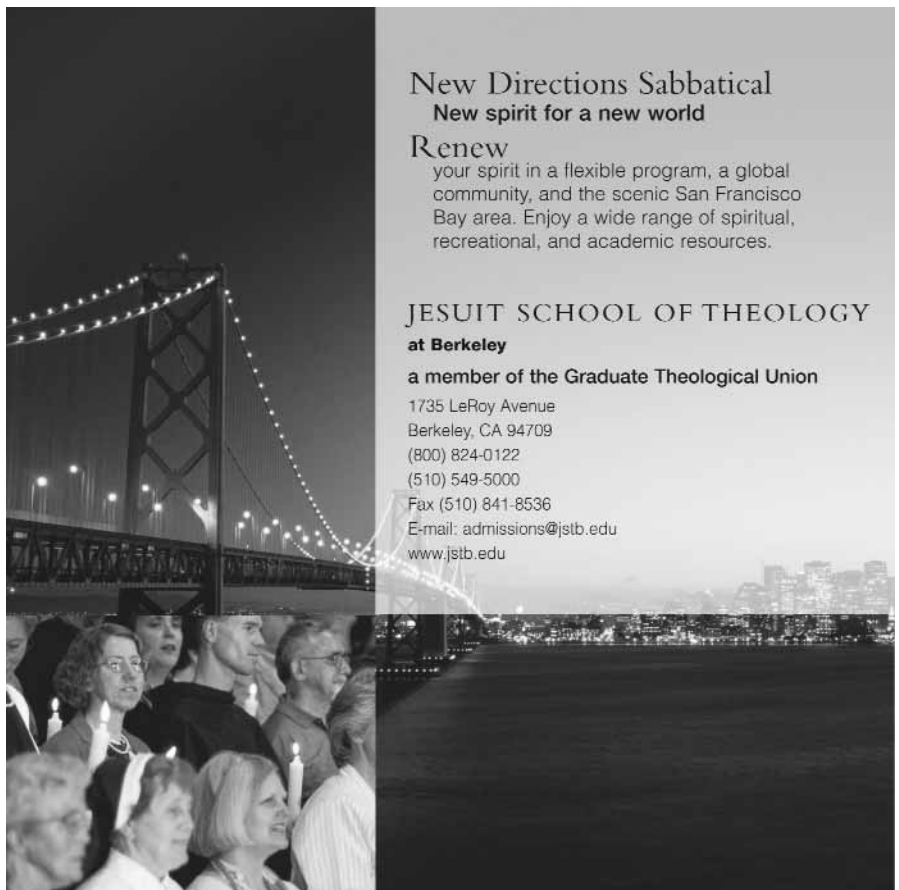


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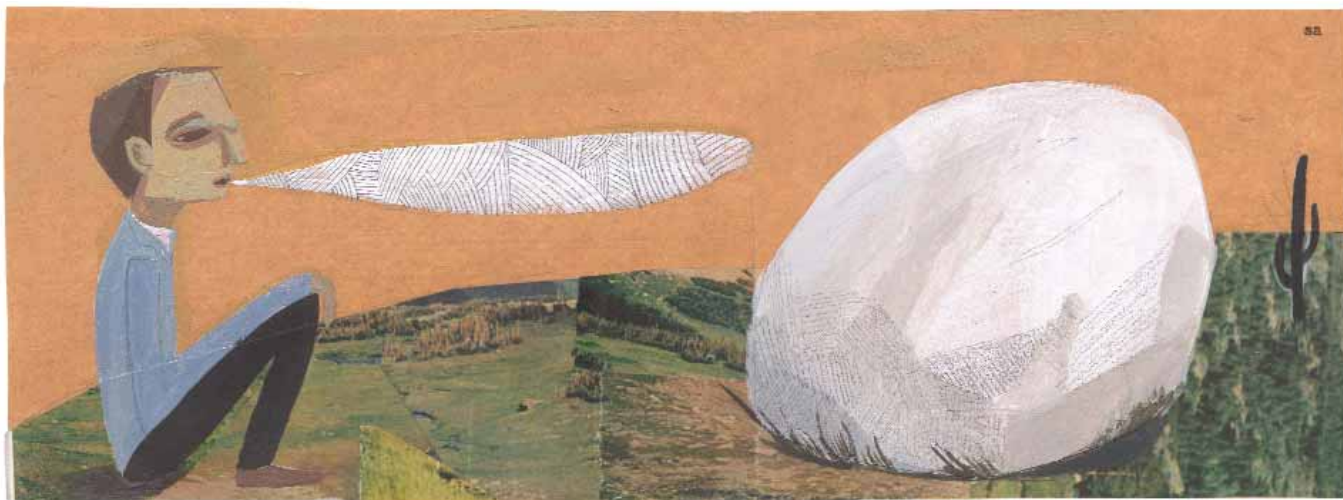
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Rebuilding Christ's Church

Even among the rocks, we must learn to care and not to care.

BY MARTIN PABLE



AS MY SPIRITUAL DIRECTEE described what she called “a meltdown” in talking with her husband, she sighed, “I just don’t care anymore.” Things were not going well at the parish where she is on staff. She was fatigued; her husband was not recovering well from an injury; she saw little that was positive in church leadership. But she then went on to tell how she recovered her usual zest during a weekend retreat led by a Capuchin friar and a secular Franciscan woman. She came to the realization that she truly does care—about the parish, about the wider church, about her call to minister to God’s people. I stressed how important it is that she keep her focus on “the deep-down things,” as Gerard Manley Hopkins put it: on the lordship of Jesus, on the gifts of the Holy Spirit, on the

MARTIN PABLE, O.F.M.CAP., is a retreat director at St. Anthony Retreat Center, Marathon, Wis., and author of *Reclaim the Fire: A Parish Guide to Evangelization* (Ave Maria Press, 2002).

unfailing, unconditional love of God and on the simple beauties of nature, just as Francis of Assisi would have us do.

“Rebuild My Church”

The woman’s cry found an echo in my own heart. Sometimes I am tempted to say (though it is more of an under-the-breath whimper than a full-throated cry), “I don’t care any more, either.” On Easter Sunday the church where I offered Mass was filled to the rafters. The next Sunday the music was just as uplifting, and I preached with the same enthusiasm—but the church was back to its usual half-fullness. “Where is everybody?” Every survey I read paints the same dismal picture. Catholics are divided; they no longer believe many church teachings; they are angry and hurt by the sexual abuse scandals and by the closing of parishes; they have little confidence in their leaders.

Yet the words “I don’t care” stick in my throat. I cannot say them, because I do not really mean them. I am haunted by the words of Jesus to Francis of Assisi:

“Go and rebuild my church, which you see is falling into ruins.” I hear those words not as a “should” but as a gentle, loving invitation. They make me want to give my best, even though I may never see much in the way of measurable “rebuilding.” For that matter, I wonder if Francis did. At first he took Christ’s words literally and began physically repairing the little, broken-down church of San Damiano. Only later did he understand what Jesus really meant: Go and rebuild my church spiritually. And, God knows, he tried. But he met opposition, not only from the faithful, who expressed indifference, not only from the institutional church, but also (and especially) from his own friars. This was discouraging.

What Really Matters?

I have often been touched by the ending of T. S. Eliot’s poem “Ash Wednesday”: “Teach us to care and not to care/ teach us to sit still/ Even among these rocks.” Yes, there are things we ought to care about, and others that we ought not.

ART BY STEFANIE AUGUSTINE

How are we to distinguish, to separate them? That is the function of discernment, of contemplation. Hence we need to “sit still,” to make time, to pray. Wasn’t that the impetus behind St. Ignatius’ Spiritual Exercises and the contemporary retreat movement? Our consumer-driven, success-oriented culture dismisses the act of sitting still and the practice of prayer. Good heavens, we might miss something!

So, what should we care about? Briefly: what God cares about. I do not think God cares who wins the Academy Awards, or the N.B.A. championship or the next “American Idol” competition. God does care about the protection of human life, the safeguarding of human rights and dignity for all people, economic justice and adequate health care for everyone, the protection of children from violence and exploitation, equal opportunities for women and about the ending of war as a means of settling disputes and the commitment of all nations to live in peace.

“Teach us to care and not to care/.../ even among these rocks.” Yes, the rocks are there, and some of them are huge, like the stone rolled in front of Jesus’ tomb. What are my rocks? What are yours? Probably nearly the same things: the divisions in the church, the lack of dialogue, the clash of egos, the insistence on adherence to rules over sound pastoral judgment and the direction of resources to rebuild the physical rather than the spiritual church.

But even among these rocks, we must learn to care and not to care. So we must stop trying to please everybody, stop being paralyzed by fear of criticism, stop caring about who gets credit and focus only on getting the job done. And with genuine passion and even joy, we continue to give our best efforts, even when they appear fruitless. We detach ourselves from results, and ask only if we are being faithful to the Gospel vision that Jesus left us.

St. Paul had another way of putting this. “My prayer for you,” he wrote, “is that your love may more and more abound...so that...you may learn to value the things that really matter” (Phil 1:9-10). A good discernment question we should often ask ourselves is, “At the end of the day, in the long view of life, does

this really matter?” If the answer is yes, then we stand firm and take whatever heat may come. But if the answer is no, we let it go. Sometimes it is wiser to lose the battle if it means winning the war. And then we trust that our humble yielding will be blessed by God. As Paul said in another place, “Your work is never in vain when it is done in the Lord” (1 Cor 15:58). That is really comforting. After all, it is not we who can rebuild the church; that is the work of Christ and of the Holy Spirit whom he sent to guide it till the end of time. Yet in a mysterious divine economy, our “work” is needed to bring about God’s purposes.

Persevere

“I don’t care any more.” We need not be afraid if those words well up in our minds at various times in our spiritual journey. They can represent a moment of truth, a warning light that there is a malfunction in our spiritual system. Rather than deny or repress it, let it come into the light—where it can be honored, examined and brought into dialogue with the part of us that still does care. We pray, “Teach us

to sit still...even among these rocks.” Then, whether in a retreat, or in spiritual direction, or in prayer to the Holy Spirit, we reclaim our power to care deeply about “the things that really matter.”

Toward the end of his life, when Francis saw that many of his brothers were no longer following the way of poverty and humility that he had passed on to them, he was distressed in spirit and cried out in prayer, “Lord, I give you back the family you gave me!” (read: “I don’t care any more!”). But then he “sat still” and heard the Lord say to him: “Tell me, brother, why are you sad about this? Who converts men and calls them to enter the order? Who gives them the grace to persevere? Is it not I? Therefore, I say to you: don’t be saddened about this. Do what you have to do, and do it well. I have planted the order of brothers in an everlasting charity.”

“Do what you have to do, and do it well.” Each one of us is able to do that, even among our rocks. That is the only way to rebuild the church and to extend the reign of God in our world. **A**

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Book Reviews

The Coming 'Eurabia'?

God's Continent

Christianity, Islam and Europe's
Religious Crisis

Philip Jenkins

Oxford Univ. Press. 352p \$28

ISBN 9780195313956

In *God's Continent*, the third volume of a trilogy, Philip Jenkins sets out to refute the claims of American conservatives and Muslim radicals alike that European Christianity is in terminal decline and about to be overtaken by a resurgent Islam. While admitting and regretting that there is much evidence to support these claims, he argues that they tell only part of the story.

Christianity in Europe has undergone fundamental change in recent years, and there has been growth in the presence of Islam. Yet while traditional church attendance may have plummeted, new movements have emerged and old practices have been revived, breathing fresh life into the old faith. Jenkins's analysis of these changes—characterized by many as a crisis—is a balanced antidote to the hyperbole of such commentators as Michael Novak and George Weigel.

Unlike many other parts of the Christian world, Europe's religious landscape has been marked by the preponderant role of majority churches—Catholic, Orthodox or Protestant, depending on the country—that are rarely in direct competition with one another. Many towns have just one church, its denomination being that of the surrounding area. Often the majority church is formally or informally considered to represent the faith of society as a whole. This contrasts with both the religious marketplace of the United States and with the competition for souls between religious denominations in the "Global South"—which, in *The New Faces of Christianity*, the second volume of this trilogy, Jenkins has forecast will shape the future of Christianity.

Much of Christian Europe's so-called crisis can be traced to the dominant

churches' complacency in changing from churches of society as a whole to churches of individual believers. Their influence in society has become weaker as traditional forms of practice have dwindled. On a more positive note, Jenkins points to the success of new movements and the revival of pilgrimages as evidence of this shift toward more personalized religion. Yet while these provide succor for individuals seeking intense spiritual experiences, they do not reach out to the silent majority for whom Christianity used to provide a moral and social framework but whose engagement was limited to attending church every Sunday—and who now gain more satisfaction from a visit to the shopping mall.

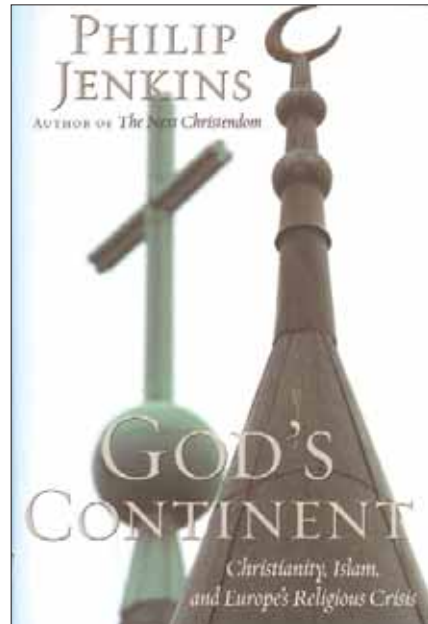
While the number of practicing Christians in Europe has fallen, the projected rise in the proportion of Muslims is due not to their success in converting lost souls but to immigration and a higher birth rate. Indeed, Islam in Europe—as a religion—faces the very same pressures from secularism that have so marked the Christian churches. Jenkins, who teaches history and religious studies at Pennsylvania State University, argues that the true impact of this socioeconomic change will depend on how other groups—such as evangelical Christians, who are also immigrating into Europe from Africa and elsewhere and also have higher than usual birth rates—develop as a proportion of the population. The reasons for the apparent decline of Christianity and the rise of Islam are therefore quite different, and the relationship between these two aspects of "Europe's religious crisis" coincidental rather than causal.

In the field of public policy, though, Jenkins suggests that these parallel developments might have a real impact: for example, European politicians would be

less likely to make religious freedom in the Islamic world a foreign policy priority for fear of upsetting their domestic Muslim constituencies. While electoral politics should never be underestimated, this argument misrepresents the nature of European secularism. The European Union has in fact made respect for religious freedom a sticking point in its membership negotiations with predominantly Muslim Turkey. Moreover, the separation of religion and politics in Europe is defended with increasing determination precisely because, unlike the

United States with its constitutional guarantee, spiritual and temporal power in "one-church states" too often became intertwined.

While Europe's traditional churches may no longer command the faith of the majority, their strident interventions in public debate are often seen not as one voice among many but as an attempt to reassert their former influence. The devoutly Catholic French politician François Bayrou, for instance, felt obliged to remind Pope Benedict XVI of the distinction between God and Caesar when the pontiff renewed his call for a reference to Christianity in future E.U. treaties. With this principle of separation embedded in European political culture, Islam



The Reviewers

John Coughlan is head of public relations at the Academy of European Law in Trier, Germany, and a former staff member at the Commission of the Catholic Bishops' Conferences of the European Community.

Franklin Freeman, a freelance writer whose work has appeared in *The Boston Review* and *New Oxford Review*, among others, lives in Saco, Me.

James S. Torrens, S.J., director emeritus of the Cardinal Manning House of Prayer in Los Angeles, Calif., is *America's* poetry editor.

can expect no more special treatment than Christianity.

For a reader unfamiliar with the reality of religious practice in Europe, *God's Continent* provides a useful overview with plenty of insights that are often obscured by the sensationalism of the mainstream media. For a more informed reader, however, it can be frustrating reading. Jenkins's approach is first to present a ream of controversial opinions and often spurious arguments before finally letting the light shine in with the balanced diagnosis promised at the outset. Many of the sources for these arguments are the news media, and thus second-hand, which makes it difficult to distinguish between factual observations, selective quotations and outright biased opinions. On one occasion, the author quite deliberately cites inaccurate data in order to bolster his case—only to reveal 12 pages later that the quotation's source is out-of-date. This polemical style inevitably undermines the resulting analysis.

As a rebuff to those polemicists who claim that Europe is about to become "Eurabia," though, *God's Continent* hits its target.

John Coughlan

Let US Entertain You

Bambi vs. Godzilla

On the Nature, Purpose, and Practice of the Movie Business

By David Mamet

Pantheon. 250p \$22

ISBN 9780375422539

The two key words in the title of David Mamet's new book, *Bambi vs. Godzilla: On the Nature, Purpose, and Practice of the Movie Business*, are "movie" and "business." The screenwriter and director hates the business—or what passes for business but is really the struggle for power—aspect of making movies. So why does he stay in the business? Because—and this is the positive and enthusiastic part of the book—he loves movies. He loves the art of making movies.

That love is in full evidence in the book despite the many negatives of Hollywood. The book consists of short essays grouped under headings like, to cite

the first three, "The Good People of Hollywood," "The Repressive Mechanism" and "The Screenplay."

In "The Good People of Hollywood," Mamet scourges stars and producers while praising film crews. He describes how, when the prop master had given up his day off to search for a prop, one unnamed star "in a transport of jollity, took to dancing in combat boots on the roof of the prop master's brand-new Mercedes."

And producers? What do they do, Mamet wonders after seeing a movie poster that lists the names of 18. Well, though there are good ones, many of them are sycophants who care neither to make a good movie nor even to cut costs and make more money; they want to increase costs so they can pocket the waste. "And the gold-encrusted howdah," Mamet writes, "must eventually drag down the mighty elephant."

In "The Repressive Mechanism," Mamet writes about the psychological reason why Hollywood producers saddle the mighty elephants with gold-encrusted howdahs and why we go see them. The reason, according to Mamet, is that we and they want to repress something.

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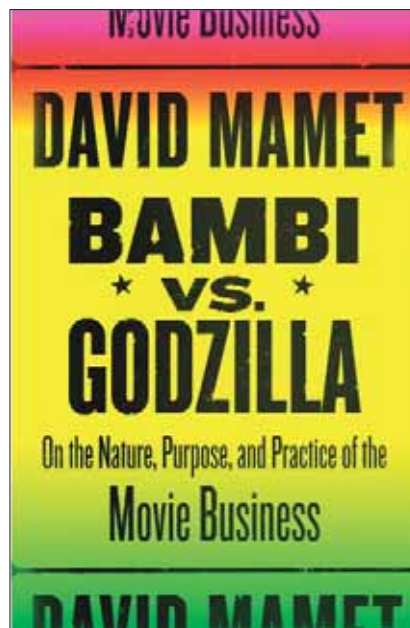
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“What is repressed? Our knowledge of our own worthlessness. The truth cleanses, but the truth hurts—everywhere but in the drama, where, in comedy or tragedy, the truth restores through art.”

In “The Screenplay,” Mamet sees little good in graduate film schools and shelves of books on writing screenplays. Although statistically, getting a screenplay sold and produced is like winning the lottery, for those who cannot help themselves, Mamet recommends three books and three “magic questions.” The books are *The Uses of Enchantment*, by Bruno Bettelheim, *The Hero of a Thousand Faces*, by Joseph Campbell, and Mamet’s own *Three Uses of the Knife*. The three questions are: “1. Who wants what from what? 2. What happens if they don’t get it? 3. Why now?”

“These magic questions,” Mamet concludes, “and their worth are not known to any script reader, executive, or producer. They are known and used by few writers. They are, however, part of the unconscious and perpetual understanding of that group who *will* be judging you and by whose say-so your work will stand or fall: the audience.”

There is more biting and witty criticism in the book (“Critics are a plague,” “manners as such do not exist in Hollywood” and “Religious films have as



much chance of increasing humane behavior as ‘Porgy and Bess’ had of ending segregation”).

Mamet praises as well as criticizes. For

example, when after declaring “I can’t stand Laurence Olivier’s acting,” he says, “We speak of the art and artists who move us, not with reverence but with love.” Mamet commends the performances of Tony Curtis. He cites Curtis’s performance in “Some Like It Hot” as the “perfect comic turn” and his performance in “The Boston Strangler” in the following way: “...in the interrogation sessions we see De Salvo, that is, Tony Curtis, recall, little by little, the grisly murders, and we see him, before our eyes, *disintegrate*.”

“We do not laud and revere Mr. Curtis’s ‘great technique,’” Mamet writes, “we merely remember the moments of his performances our entire lives.”

That is the highest praise you can give an actor; and the highest praise you can give a book is that you read it again, as I will *Bambi vs. Godzilla*.

For those, God help them, who want to write a screenplay, or for the movie lover, this book belongs on the shelf with William Goldman’s *Adventures in the Screen Trade* (1982). There are echoes between the two books, and Goldman mentions Mamet as a writer of “proven integrity.” Goldman is prolix but

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approachable; Mamet is terse and acerbic, but both strike me as making the same complaint.

In 1982 Goldman wrote, "In the old days, a studio head might have said, 'Let's make the goddamn movie and hope the business people know how to sell it.' Such words are not much uttered nowadays...."

Nor in 2007, as David Mamet eloquently attests. *Franklin Freeman*

Home, Along the Rahway River

Bridge and Tunnel

Poems

By John Hennessy

WordTech Communications. 85p \$17 (paperback)

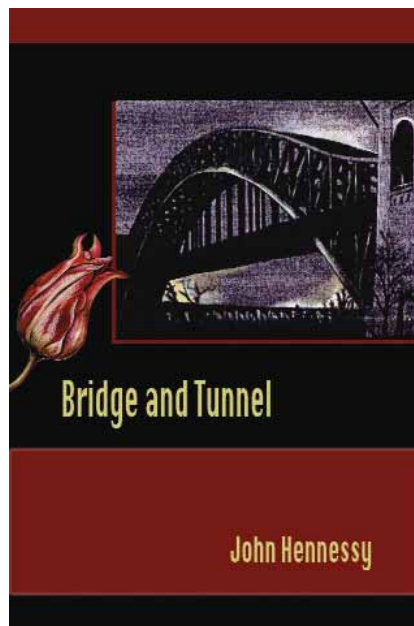
ISBN 9781933456553

As soon as I began to read the very first of these poems by John Hennessy, "Signing the Kills," I had to get out a map of the New Jersey shore to find where the Rahway River emerges, across from Staten Island and along the Arthur Kill. Then I needed the dictionary to inform me that "kill" is from the Dutch, meaning a stream or channel. The poem itself let me know that "signing" referred to tagging, as with graffiti—that is, leaving one's mark on bridges and tunnels and the rest.

Local allusions abound in these poems, set mostly on the terrain of Hennessy's youth. It is not a picturesque country. "Mercks' brick chimneys" appear half a dozen times, as do "Exxon's clear blue flames." The river, with its "chemical greens and floating fish," and the land, with its spread of "rusting auto parts," are hardly the scenes of an idyllic growing-up.

We come to know a cast of characters, like the young author's pals Curtis and Paul (who ended up in a Korean monastery). There is a weird roughneck named Dog-Star Freddy, a scourge to both boys and girls. There is a sexual initiation in which the author gets his nose broken by his irate partner. There is the poet's father, an inveterate skirt-chaser ("It's not easy being such a man's son," he allows), plus the magical practices of his Catholic mother.

Frankly, it is a bit of a pain to construe these narratives. When a sentence begins, "And Phil Rizzuto's Holy Cow," what if you don't know Rizzuto was the old



Yankees announcer and "Holy Cow!" his favorite exclamation? Still, all the offbeat circumstances of these poems are strangely compelling. The fine centerpiece poem, "In the Kills," pulls all the threads together. The author figures here as a Job, to whom a consoler catalogs all the delights to be tried on the Jersey shore. The unconvinced author can only plead: "Pick up a rifle...for God's sake, knock me down mid-air." But he is reminded by God, in a paraphrase of the Book of Job: "Have you conjured kelp from the rivermouth, steelheads/ to swim the canal's still water, turtles to amble over the car doors/ and batteries?" In a final section called "Settling Up," God and the author end up resolving differences.

An engrossing poem in *Bridge and Tunnel* bears the title "Free Union" but in fact is all about "my wife." She, we are told, is one "Whose eyelids are songs carried hidden in the pocket/ Whose eyebrows are a field of feeding martins/ Whose neck is a forest fire." In the subtitle, "After Breton," Hennessy—whose poetry has appeared in *The New Republic*, *The Yale Review* and elsewhere—acknowledges his debt to the great French surrealist, but the hyperbolic list of charms also recalls passages in the biblical *Song of Songs*, where the lovers praise each other's beauties, with

lots of metaphorical stretching.

A number of these poems, occurring away from Hennessy's home turf, include his slants on Scripture or on Greek mythology, or they are presentations of his more recent home life. In "The Raft of the Medusa," addressed apparently to his son, he evokes the famous painting by Gericault to describe the boy's conception, during "two long days and nights...when we took to our bed with honey and biscuits." The bed had then become "a raft far from the shores of telephone/ or television...floating you into the world, your bulrush basket." This happened under the sign of "the Water-Bearer," Aquarius, and presumably on a water bed. In a later poem, "Nicholas, Flying," the son himself appears. It begins, "Our two-year-old is flying around the house again," and goes on and on amusingly, with "the setter barking at his feet."

To sum up, what John Hennessy does in this first collection is, above all, respond to the writer's imperative: "Plumb the material of your youth. Do not forget where you came from." From there he proceeds to the wider world and his later life, where we will continue to follow him with interest. *James S. Torrens*

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CATHOLIC CHAPLAINS, IMMEDIATE OPENINGS. California Institution for Women, Chino—full time, Diocese of San Bernardino; California Rehabilitation Center, Norco—full time, Diocese of San Bernardino; Napa State Hospital, Imola—full time, Diocese of Santa Rosa; Coalinga State Hospital, Coalinga—part time, Diocese of Fresno.

Qualified applicants include priests, men and women religious, deacons or lay persons with appropriate background and skills. A letter of endorsement of good standing in the church from the bishop in which the institution is located must accompany all applications.

Complete job description and salary scale: <http://www.spb.ca.gov/employment/spbpay2rd.cfm>. State application form and other information about employment with the State of California: <http://www.spb.ca.gov/employment>.

Send résumé and three references with current phone numbers to: Debbie McDermott: dmcdermott@cacatholic.org, or fax: (916) 443-4731.

CATHOLIC PRIEST, Dominican Hospital-C.H.W. is currently seeking a full-time priest to serve as a member of our multidisciplinary team. Important aspects of this position include assessment of spiritual needs and provision of support to patients, families and staff of all faiths. This position will share on-call responsibilities, which may include nights. Requires a master's degree in theology or equivalent and C.P.E. training. Bilingual Spanish/English and N.A.C.C./A.P.C. certification is preferred. Dominican Hospital-C.H.W. is a 375-bed acute-care, not-for-profit hospital located in beautiful Santa Cruz, Calif. Please apply directly online at: www.dominicanhospital.org in the Careers section, or contact Sabrina

Michaelis at (831) 462-7556. EOE/AA/M/F/D/V.

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA, School of Theology and Religious Studies, invites applications for a full-time tenure-track position in **LATIN PATRISTIC THEOLOGY.** The candidate must possess an earned doctorate and have primary expertise in St. Augustine and the theologians of the early Latin church and their history into the early middle ages. The person who fills the position will teach in undergraduate, graduate and seminary programs in the school, advise students, direct master's theses and doctoral dissertations, and serve on committees. Rank and salary will be determined on the basis of academic credentials and publication record.

Send a curriculum vitae and three letters of recommendation to: Chair of the Search Committee in Latin Patristic Theology, School of Theology and Religious Studies, The Catholic University of America; Washington, DC 20064. Applications accepted until position is filled.

The Catholic University of America was founded in the name of the Catholic Church as a national university and center for research and scholarship. Regardless of their religious affiliation, all faculty members are expected to respect and support the University's mission. The University is an Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action Employer.

DIRECTOR OF PASTORAL CARE SERVICES, St. Petersburg, Fla. St. Anthony's Health Care, a Catholic-sponsored health care organization and a member of the BayCare Health System family, is seeking an ordained Roman Catholic priest chaplain to be our Director of Pastoral Care Services.

This spiritually focused individual will promote holistic care for the faith, beliefs and values of patients and staff; establish a healing environment and interfaith collaboration with local community clergy and organizations; and direct staff in planning, coordinating and fulfilling chaplaincy service needs of patients, families and staff from a spiritual, religious and emotional perspective.

As a Director of Pastoral Care Services, the selected candidate must possess a master's degree in theology or related ministry field; two years' experience as a clinical pastor; and the ability to demonstrate spiritual, theological and pastoral care knowledge and formation; and excellent communication, teamwork, organizational and management skills. Exceptional interpersonal skills are also required to relate effectively to a diversity of age groups as well as ethnic, socioeconomic and educational backgrounds, while demonstrating respect for the Catholic ethical and religious directives; social justice issues; and the values and traditions of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany. Ph.D. and C.P.E. certification preferred.

For confidential consideration, please send e-mail to: Michelle Nelson at michelle.nelson@baycare.org; call: (727) 825-1161; or fax: (727) 825-1302; Web site:

www.baycarejobs.com. EOE/DFWP.

PASTORAL ASSISTANT FOR YOUTH MINISTRY AND LITURGY FORMATION. Gesu Catholic Community, a Jesuit parish in the greater Cleveland area, seeks a full-time person experienced in liturgy formation and youth ministry. The position includes developing and implementing youth faith programs and activities, planning and working with parishioners in developing strong and vibrant liturgies, working with staff dedicated to parish life and the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, promoting the Ignatian vision among our young and serving the community through liturgical formation.

Candidate should be an active Catholic, have experience and training in ministry and possess strong organization and coordinating skills. Experience in youth ministry, liturgy and Jesuit spirituality preferred. Offering excellent salary and benefits as well as a collaborative work environment. Deadline for applications is Aug. 25, 2007.

Send résumé to: Kathy Barile, Business Manager, Gesu Church, 2470 Miramar Blvd., University Heights, OH 44118; Fax: (216) 932-0617.

PASTORAL ASSOCIATE. Gesu Catholic Church, Detroit, is seeking a full-time pastoral associate, responsible especially for faith formation. We are seeking an experienced and gifted person who will use his or her talents in various ways. Candidates should have a degree or certification in theology or a related field. Two years or more experience required. Please mail résumé to: Gesu Church, 17180 Oak Drive, Detroit, MI 48221, in care of David Watson, S.J., Pastor; or fax: (313) 862-1083.

THEOLOGY FACULTY POSITION, Immaculata University. Applications are invited for a full-time tenure-track faculty position in theology, with expertise in moral theology. The position will begin in January 2008. Responsibilities will include the department chair position as well as teaching. Candidates must have earned a doctorate (doctoral candidates will be considered). Applicants with distinguished teaching, scholarship records and administrative experience/potential are sought to lead the theology department. Knowledge of technological resources and the application to instruction and research is desirable. The candidate must be qualified to teach basic introductory and upper-level courses including courses in moral theology. Immaculata University is a Catholic liberal arts institution located 20 miles west of Philadelphia. Send letter of application, curriculum vitae, official transcripts and three letters of recommendation to: Theology Faculty Search, Immaculata University, Box 635, Immaculata, PA 19345-0635. EOE.

Resources

HOMILISTS, PREACHERS. Stories, images and resources to assist you in your ministry: www.connections-mediaworks.com.

Letters

Wrestling Long and Hard

As a member of the International Commission on English in the Liturgy, I want to praise Bishop Donald W. Trautman, who usefully highlights some of the challenges facing translators of the Roman Missal ("How Accessible Are the New Mass Translations?" 5/21). The text he discusses, the prayer over the gifts for Masses of the Blessed Virgin during Advent, is one of the most difficult in the Missal and caused I.C.E.L.'s translators to wrestle long and hard. They will be glad of any further help that may be forthcoming.

The difficulty arises in part from the prayer's allusions to two doctrines that were better understood in patristic times than today. Not only its language, but also its thinking, is remote from what Bishop Trautman calls the contemporary mainstream of U.S. Catholics.

The first doctrine is that the sacrifices of the Old Testament prefigured and were brought to an end by the sacrifice of Christ. The church's redefinition of her attitude to Judaism at the Second Vatican Council has made Catholics hesitant to speak of the New Testament as superseding the Old; but without some notion of the bond between the testaments, it would make no sense to read the Hebrew Scriptures at the Christian liturgy at all. The translators have found no word better for expressing the concept in question than the traditional one, "prefiguring."

The second is the doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary, which means not only that she abstained from intercourse, but that she remained physically intact as she gave birth. How this hap-

pened is a mystery. Some of the Fathers said that Christ passed from her body "like a light through glass." Our Latin text uses the word *ineffabiliter*.

"Unspeakably" does not seem to be a good translation. Nor do "inexplicably," "indescribably," "inconceivably" or "incomprehensibly," all words whose connotations would not fit the context. So the translators chose, here and elsewhere, to press into service an English word that, though rare, is not difficult to explain: "ineffably."

"Inviolable" is aurally ambiguous, since it can be heard as "in violet." The translators wished to avoid it and looked around for an alternative term to use in this sensitive area of discourse. They felt that many would find "intact" too directly physical or medical. Other terms that were proposed could be heard as indelicate. In the end, "inviolable" was the best they could do.

Though the theology of this prayer is ancient, its text is not. It was not even in the Missals of 1970 or 1975, but first appeared in the 2002 edition. It may have been written as late as 1987. Translators find recently composed prayers among the most difficult of all because, in eagerness to hand on the church's tradition or to incorporate the insights of Vatican II, modern authors sometimes cram too many ideas into too small a space. But their compositions are in the Missal, and they must be translated.

Bishop Trautman ends with a call that I.C.E.L. can readily echo: "Speak up!" Anybody who can offer a better version of this difficult text is most welcome to send it to the I.C.E.L. secretariat for

consideration by the bishops of the commission when they meet in July. It is healthy for critics of any translation to ask themselves not only "Do I like this version?" but also "Can I do better?"

(Msgr.) Bruce Edward Harbert
Washington, D.C.

Stuff and Nonsense

I am a bit behind on my reading and only just now looked at the April 30 issue.

As usual, there are good articles (if there weren't, I wouldn't be a longtime subscriber), but as usual there is a certain amount of nonsense. You need a nonsense editor to watch for this stuff and delete it; remember, there are callow college kids reading this.

I notice the Corporate Hall of Shame mentions Union Carbide as responsible for releasing poisonous fumes into a "poor neighborhood." The release was due to the sabotage of an Indian employee, and the "neighborhood" was Carbide's own property, which was illegally populated by squatters. Do you think the Indian government might have been negligent in not removing them?

And Coca-Cola apparently is making people die of thirst by buying up sources of fresh water all over the world? I really would like to see some substantiation of this. It sounds highly dubious, a typical example of hysteria by corporation-hating nuts.

I also have noted that churchmen are prating about the evils of globalization, as if this were accepted truth. I happen to be of Irish descent and note that the

Retreats

AGING...OUR PERSONAL JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM. Fall retreat at Bethany Spirituality Center, Highland Mills, N.Y., Nov. 11-15, Director: Ann Billard, O.L.M., Ph.D. For information, call (845) 460-3061; www.bethanyspiritualitycenter.org.

BETHANY RETREAT HOUSE, East Chicago, Ind., offers private and individually directed silent retreats, including Ignatian 30 days, year-round in a prayerful home setting. Contact Joyce Diltz, P.H.J.C.: (219) 398-5047; bethanyrh@sbcglobal.net; www.bethanyretreathouse.org. Bethany East Chicago 4/23

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Both Mary and Martha

Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (C), July 22, 2007

Readings: Gen 18:1-10; Ps 15:2-5; Col 1:24-28; Luke 10:38-42

"She had a sister named Mary who sat beside the Lord at his feet listening to him speak" (Luke 10:39)



ALL THE SUNDAY GOSPEL readings this summer are from Luke's narrative about the journey of Jesus and his disciples up to Jerusalem. As they move from place to place, they rely on the generosity of persons along the way. Today's Old Testament reading from Genesis 18 about Abraham's hospitality to his mysterious visitors and its surprising results provides a glimpse of the importance of hospitality in the ancient Near East. The episode narrated in Luke 10 takes place at the house of Mary and Martha. While enjoying their hospitality, Jesus takes the opportunity to continue his teaching ministry. Mary joins in the session, while her sister Martha attends to the needs of their guests.

The inclusion of women in such a session would have been unusual in first-century Palestinian Jewish society. This kind of religious discourse was generally limited to men in Jesus' time. In patriarchal societies, there was (and is) a strict division

DANIEL J. HARRINGTON, S.J., is professor of New Testament at Weston Jesuit School of Theology in Cambridge, Mass.

of labor along gender lines. There is "women's work" and "men's work." In today's text Martha dutifully performs "women's work" by serving her guests and seeing to the practical aspects of hospitality. Meanwhile, Martha becomes annoyed that Mary fails to help her, because she is with the men listening to Jesus. Instead of directing Mary to help

Praying With Scripture

- Do you identify more with Martha or with Mary?
- What challenges does Jesus' inclusion of Mary in his teaching session pose for our church and society?
- What forms does contemplation take in your life? Do you give yourself regular time to read, think and pray?

Martha, Jesus admonishes Martha for being overly concerned with household matters and suggests that Mary has chosen "the better part." Jesus' willingness to include women in his teaching activity provides an important challenge to our

church and society today.

The Martha-and-Mary narrative also challenges us to balance practical action and contemplation. In the history of biblical interpretation, it has been customary to identify Martha with the active form of religious life and Mary with the contemplative form of religious life. But rather than limiting them to religious life and contrasting them as "either...or," it might be better to view them as "both...and." We all (religious and lay) need both contemplation and activity.

One of the ironies of modern life is that the very devices that save us time and energy (computers, household appliances, etc.) often impose new burdens upon us. We can become slaves to our machines. We can spend all our lives acting like Martha, so overwhelmed with practical duties that we end up intellectually and spiritually empty. Now, perhaps more than ever, we also need to give ourselves time and space in which to think and pray.

poverty-stricken island of my parents' time is now one of the world's most prosperous countries, thanks to the effects of globalization. Let's hear it for globalization!

Thomas Farrelly
Seattle, Wash.

Sense of Dignity

In "Treatment, Not Prison" (5/28), Peter Ninemire asserts with clarity the need for treatment and rehabilitation for nonviolent drug offenders. However, the need for "treatment, not prison" extends far beyond the addicted population. Having worked with the incarcerated population

for some 11 years, I am all too aware of the bi-polar or schizophrenic (or otherwise mentally ill) offender who is not so ill as to warrant emergency placement in an in-patient psychiatric facility, yet is sufficiently ill to have acted out in such a way that the police very properly took that person off the streets. The result is overcrowding in an extremely expensive corrections setting rather than a less expensive community-based supervised group home. A far more important issue, however, is that a corrections facility is the wrong setting for these persons. Even the very enlightened corrections system in Vermont undermines the dignity of

the mentally ill person-at-risk. The supervised group home enables the person to maintain some sense of dignity.

(Deacon) Pete Gummere
St. Johnsbury, Vt.

End This War

I wish to comment on the editorial about treatment of the military, "A National Shame" (5/28). My daughter was telling me recently about a group she joined that is helping the new needy of the United States. With fundraisers, physical aid and moral support, they are helping the spouses and families of the men and women of the reserves and national

This is the “better part” that Mary chose. Giving time to contemplation does not mean neglecting the practical dimensions of our lives. Rather, it means giving ourselves the opportunity to place what we do in the larger context of our lives and our relationships with God and others. We need to be both Mary and Martha. In the midst of the many duties and responsibilities that modern life imposes on us, we need to make time and space to sit beside Mary at the feet of Jesus and renew ourselves intellectually and spiritually.

Surprising Teachings on Prayer

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (C),
July 29, 2007

Readings: Gen 18:20-32; Ps 138:1-3, 6-8;
Col 2:12-14; Luke 11:1-13

“*Lord, teach us to pray*” (Luke 11:1)

OUR SUNDAY GOSPEL readings this summer from Luke’s journey narrative provide a framework or outline for developing a sound Christian spirituality. One essential element in any variety of Christian spirituality is prayer. Luke’s Gospel is an excellent place to learn about biblical prayer. Luke tells us that at the

most decisive and important moments in Jesus’ ministry—his baptism, choice of the Twelve Apostles, sermon on the plain, transfiguration and especially during his passion—Jesus prayed. In fact, if you want to know what events Luke regarded as most important, look to his many references to Jesus at prayer. Luke also provides two large blocks of Jesus’ surprising teachings about prayer, which is why Luke is sometimes called “the Gospel of prayer.” In the first block, read today, Jesus tells us what to pray for, how to pray and why we should pray.

Jesus’ first instruction on prayer is set within his own practice of prayer. Luke’s notice that Jesus was at prayer indicates the importance of what follows. In response to his disciples’ request, Jesus gives them and us a sample prayer. It is the short version of what we call the Our Father or the Lord’s Prayer. The longer version that is more familiar to us appears in Matt 6:9-13, in the Sermon on the Mount. With this sample prayer Jesus teaches us first of all to address God as a loving father. Next he prays for the full coming of God’s kingdom and for the time when all creation will acknowledge and celebrate the holiness of God. Then he teaches us to ask the Father for sustenance in our everyday life, for forgiveness of our sins (provided we forgive others) and for protection during the trials or tests

accompanying the full manifestation of God’s kingdom.

Having shown us what to pray for, Jesus then teaches us to pray—with persistence and boldness. His parable of the friend at midnight reflects a common experience. Often a friend or family member (especially a child) will be so persistent in making a request that we find it easier

to give in rather than continue to resist. We grow weary of hearing, “Please, please, please....” The surprising point of Jesus’ parable is the idea that if we are persistent and bold enough in prayer, God will eventually give in

to our petitions. The reading from Genesis 18 about Abraham bargaining with God illustrates this biblical attitude perfectly. And Jesus’ own repeated insistence on the almost automatic efficacy of the prayer of petition (“ask and you will receive”) further encourages persistence and boldness in prayer.

The best reason why we should pray is that God wants to answer our prayers. This point is made by the parable about the father who wants to give good gifts to his son. If human parents naturally want to give good gifts to their children, how much more does God want to give us good gifts. And God wants to give us the greatest gift of all, the Holy Spirit. These are indeed surprising teachings on prayer.

Daniel J. Harrington

Praying With Scripture

- What do you pray for? How do you make your own the petitions in the Lord’s Prayer?
- Are you surprised at Jesus’ insistence on persistence and boldness in prayer?
- What image or picture of God emerges from Jesus’ instructions about prayer?

guards. These spouses are left for a long period of time running their family life alone. Money is very tight.

Why is it that no one in the United States is asked to sacrifice for the terrible war except these people? Taxes are not raised to pay for the war; in fact, tax decreases are given. People are not allowed to question the war, because it shows we are not supportive of our troops, some would say.

In all my reading about how the war was sold to us, I keep coming back to the question “Why did President Bush want to do this?” and “What does he want now when he keeps refusing to listen to

the country to end this war?”

*Mildred Rahrig
Walcottville, Ind.*

Heartening Book

I just finished reading “Of Many Things” (5/28), the essay on intercessory prayer and how we apply it to our saints, including frivolous and superstitious requests we sometimes make. (“Dear Saint Anthony, please come around....”) As I was reading, I thought, “As soon as I get to the end of this article, I’m going to e-mail this editor and let him know about a life-changing and heartening book entitled *My Life With the Saints*.” It is a kind of faith journey “tell

all” about one priest’s lifelong journey with saints who served as cheerleaders and models in times of adversity. I lent my copy (for which I had waited three weeks) to my boss, my pastor, and he never returned it: “I’m still reading it.” But I noticed that he kept referring to the book in his weekly and Sunday homilies. Finally, he admitted that he wanted to keep the book because he enjoyed revisiting his own lifelong relationship with the saints! When I finished reading the essay I found the name of James Martin, S.J., who is the author of *My Life With the Saints!*

*Kathleen Carriere
Warminstoe, Pa.*

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