

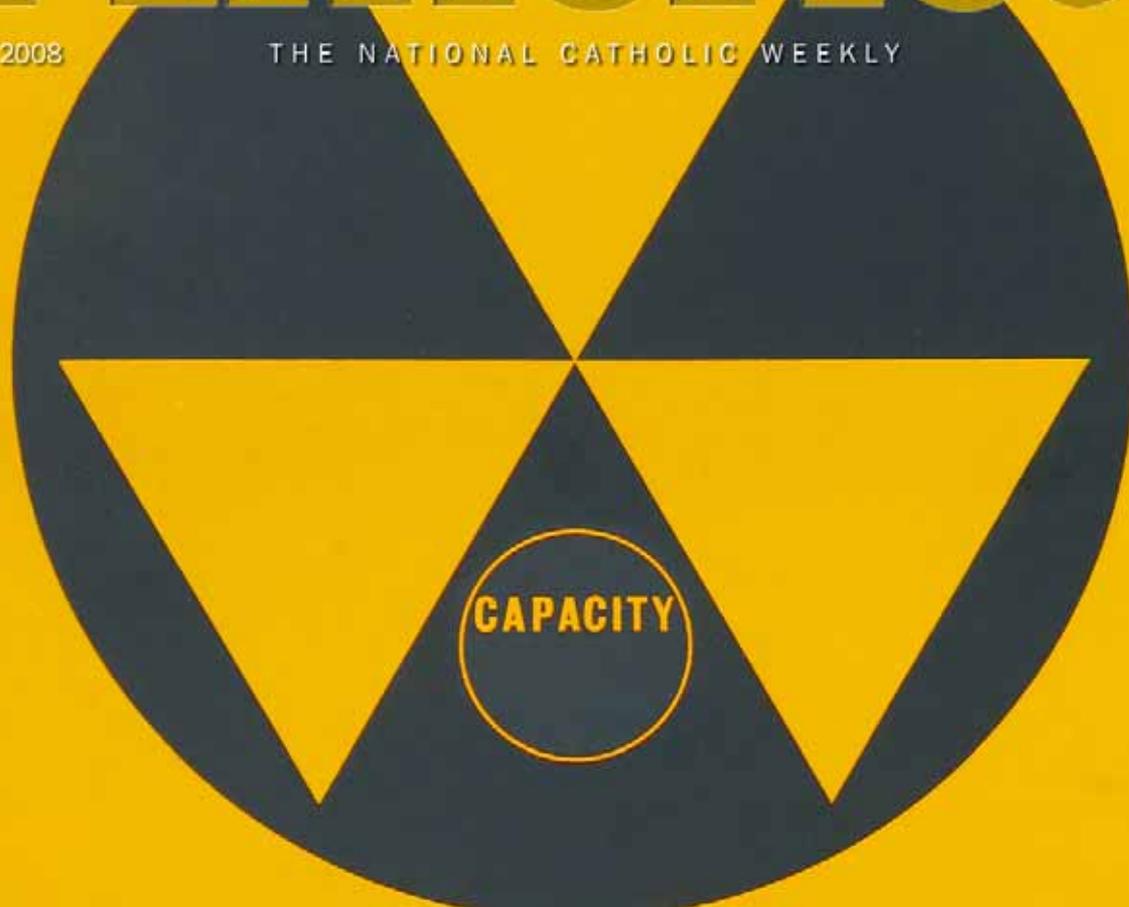
Austen Ivereigh on Britain's Brave New World

America

June 23-30, 2008

THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC WEEKLY

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1909
America's
CENTURY
2009

A Nuclear Future?

Five Myths About Nuclear Power
Kristin Shrader-Frechette

The Nuclear Arms
Race Intensifies
Ronald E. Powaski

THE CATHOLIC WORKER is part of my life, at least on Mondays when I stop by Maryhouse for a bite to eat and Evening Prayer after saying Mass around the corner at my former parish, Nativity. But on Thursday, May 1, I was also in that neighborhood of Manhattan's Lower East Side at the other Worker house, St. Joseph's, two blocks away. A special Mass and celebration there marked the Catholic Worker's 75th year. On that date in 1933, Dorothy Day, Peter Maurin and others walked up to Union Square, a rallying place for political protests, to sell the first copies of *The Catholic Worker* newspaper. The very fact that the stated aim of the Catholic Worker movement is "to live in accordance with the justice and charity of Jesus Christ" stands out as an implicit protest against the injustices of a world beset by violence and greed. As Dorothy Day herself once said, "God meant things to be much easier than we have made them"—especially as we have made them for the poor and marginalized.

Catholic Worker houses

of hospitality are spread throughout the country and abroad, but it is those two on the Lower East Side that I know best, though I have also visited the Worker farm north of New York City. In the 1970s, during my first stint in New York, I remember seeing Dorothy Day at Mass at Nativity; and I still recall where she sat, a dignified figure dressed in whatever the Workers' clothing room had to offer. A friend, referring to her as a living saint, had by then led me to her autobiography, *The Long Loneliness*. But it was only through visiting the two houses on the Lower East Side that I came to have a sense of what a Catholic Worker house is actually like.

When I knock on the Maryhouse door on Mondays and walk down into the large dining room, I see a varied group of people, some healthy and strong, but most frail in body or mind or both—the very mix of people with whom Jesus might have spent time. The home-cooked dinner has arrived by then from St. Joseph House, in a rumbling shopping cart pushed by the famous Eugene. At the end of the Maryhouse dining room is a small table presided over by Evelyn, a longtime resident who immigrated from Haiti decades ago. Her table

is something of a gathering site and my favorite spot for supper.

Afterward I climb to the third floor with Communion for Frank Donovan and Ed Forand, 90 and 91 years old respectively, who worked closely with Dorothy Day. Frank, in fact, lives in the very room in which she spent the final years before her death in 1980. Her desk and other furnishings are still there, though her papers are now in a special collection at Marquette University. After those visits, it's back to Evelyn's table in the dining room for Evening Prayer.

Very old prayer books emerge from the nearby china closet, along with a candle for the center of the table. Once Evelyn has set the ribbons in their proper places (or scraps of paper if ribbons have disintegrated), she divides the people around the table into two groups, so that they can recite psalms antiphonally. When we reach the petitions, we offer many for ill or struggling people, and usually one "for an end to this dreadful

war in Iraq." We end with a prayer penciled into the backs of

the books that begins, "May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life." A useful prayer with which to end the day.

The ministry at both houses—in its personal care for the frail and in its advocacy for Gospel nonviolence—stands out as a needed sign of contradiction in a once poor but now gentrified area that nevertheless still attracts many poor and homeless people in need of basic assistance. Dorothy Day herself contributed articles to *America* in the 1930s on the struggles of poor people, and near the altar for that May 1 Mass was the same steel serving table in front of the ovens where she herself often stood. Over the years, thousands have received nourishment in that room, both physical food and the bread of life whenever Mass is celebrated, as it was that night.

In 2000 the late Cardinal John O'Connor of New York introduced the cause for Dorothy Day's beatification, and with that initial step she became known as Servant of God. But throughout her adult life of ministering to the poor and going to jail for just causes, she had long since earned that title many times over.

George M. Anderson, S.J.

Of Many Things

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Editor in Chief

Drew Christiansen, S.J.

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Managing Editor

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Assistant Editor

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Design and Production

Stephanie Ratcliffe

Editorial Intern

Luke J. Hansen, S.J.

Advertising

Julia Sosa

106 West 56th Street
New York, NY 10019-3803
Ph: 212-581-4640; Fax: 212-399-3596.
E-mail: america@americamagazine.org;
letters@americamagazine.org.
Web site: www.americamagazine.org.
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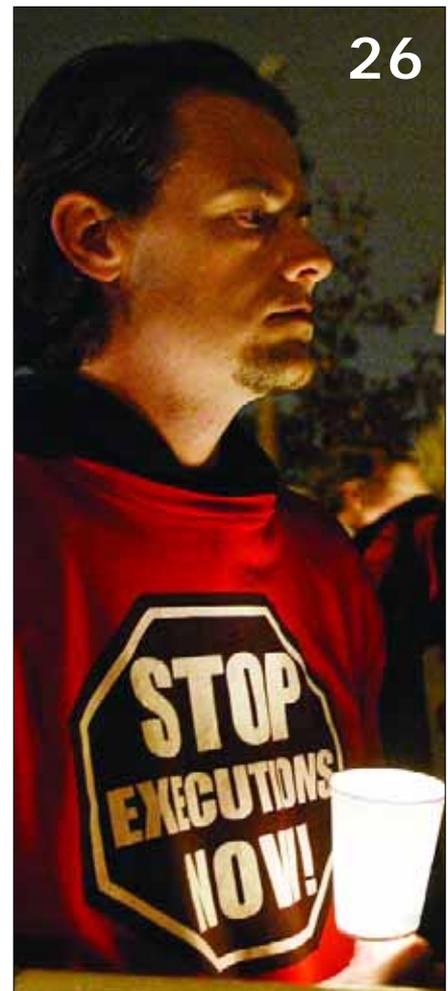
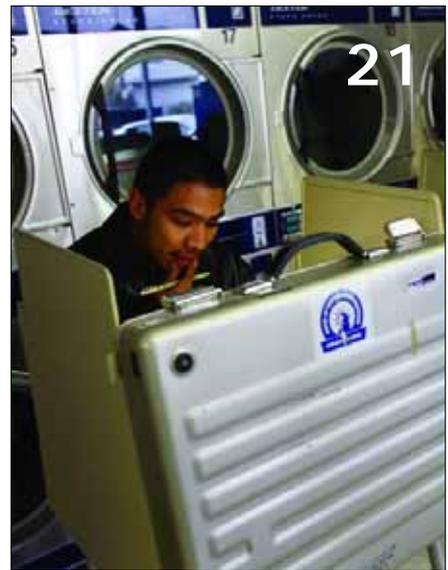
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Karen Sue Smith analyzes the Latino vote on our podcast. Plus, from the archives, the editors on the "The Challenge of Peace," and John Courtney Murray on religious liberty at Vatican II. All at americamagazine.org/connects.

Political Excommunication

Doug Kmiec is a former appointee of the Reagan and Bush I administrations, a former dean of Columbus School of Law at The Catholic University of America, currently a professor of law at the conservative Pepperdine University and a longtime pro-life activist. In February, to the surprise of his colleagues, he announced his support of Barack Obama for president. Professor Kmiec reasons that after more than three decades seeking to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, it is time to look at alternative approaches to preventing abortions. Among these is Obama's recommendation for community education of pregnant mothers. "Good, even-handed information and genuine empathy and love," Kmiec has said, "save more children than hypothetical legal limits—which, as best as I can tell, have saved: well, zero." For that political offense a priest whom he will not identify denied Kmiec Communion at a private Mass celebrated in advance of an event at which the lawyer was to speak.

The denial of Communion to a committed pro-life activist who, after firsthand experience of the political wars, judges new options must be tried demonstrates the absurd and uncharitable extremes to which the pastoral practice of excluding Catholics from Communion on political grounds can descend. Furthermore, after three professedly anti-abortion administrations since 1981 have failed to end abortion, one must in all honesty ask whether a hard-line pro-life position within the church serves as a Trojan horse for other, more partisan political goals. The church must continue to form the consciences of politicians, and anything-goes, pro-abortion politicians should not expect the church's blessing. Nonetheless, such a denial of the sacrament in the election season remains both politically inept and pastorally offensive.

Partisan Priests

"One final thing, Lord, I promise," prayed Msgr. James Lisante during an invocation at a Republican fundraising dinner in New York City. "This November," he said, "could you keep an eye on all of us and see that the change that we embrace comes from Arizona and not Illinois?" A few days earlier, the Rev. Michael Pfleger, pastor of St. Sabina's Church in Chicago, mocked Senator Hillary Clinton from the pulpit of Trinity United Church of Christ. "I'm white. I'm entitled," he said, pretending to be Senator Clinton. "There's a black man stealing my show!" Father Pfleger was instructed by Cardinal Francis George, archbishop of Chicago, to take several weeks off in order, as the cardinal put it, to "reflect on his recent statements

and actions in the light of the church's regulations for all Catholic priests."

There are multiple reasons why Catholic priests are not permitted to take partisan positions. Among them: the church should be a sign of unity, representing all Catholics, not simply Democrats or Republicans; and parishioners object when their pastors make one group feel marginalized. There is also the thorny legal issue of tax exemption: secular critics rightly object to a tax-exempt institution making political demands on its members. But there is a deeper reason to avoid making explicit or implicit partisan statements in the context of a sermon or a prayer. Preaching about Scripture and praying on behalf of an assembly are sacred moments. Neither occasion is appropriate for divisive comments. In any case, mocking, belittling or mean-spirited words are never appropriate for a priest—or, for that matter, any Christian.

God and The New Yorker

The *New Yorker's* list of special issues seems to multiply every year. Style gurus have an issue of their own, as do gourmands, fiction fans, even cartoon lovers. Now believers can include themselves in this distinguished company. Although the June 9-16 issue was ostensibly devoted to fiction, the true focus seemed to be God. Several prominent authors contributed essays to a series titled "Faith and Doubt," and the magazine's literary critic, James Wood, wrote a 4,000-word essay on the problem of theodicy, a term one does not often encounter in the pages of Eustace Tilley's journal.

Of course there were things to quibble about. The *New Yorker* would never run a series called "Faith," one friend remarked, without appending the word "doubt" to soothe the secular reader. And the inclusion of George Saunders's story about a liaison between a priest and a young nun was an entirely predictable choice. Yet there were moments that surprised too, such as Tobias Wolff's "Winter Light," a lovely reflection on the power of art to inspire faith; or the Nigerian Jesuit Uwem Akpan's understated account of two street children who inadvertently stumble upon the mystery of the Eucharist. Even the essay by Wood, a religious skeptic, was a bracing journey through thorny theological terrain. One does not need to agree with Wood's idiosyncratic conclusions to admire the seriousness that he brings to his task. He retains a "nostalgia for lost belief" that endows his critique with a quality of fairness absent from the work of the new atheists. And when it comes to the treatment of religion in the secular media, fairness is all the believer seeks.

A Small Light in Prison Darkness

THE SECOND CHANCE ACT, signed into law in April, represents one of the few glimmers of light in the darkness of the U.S. prison system. Its purpose is to assist prisoners who, on completing their sentences, leave prison with little more than their meager belongings and a small sum of money to take them to their next destination. Half of them will return to live behind bars once again on new charges, in large part because little is given them in the way of help with jobs, housing, mental health care and drug therapy. The new legislation is an attempt to begin changing that grim picture.

Over two million men, women and juveniles fill our jails and prisons. Their numbers have increased six-fold over the last three decades. The United States now incarcerates 762 people per 100,000 of population, more than any other country in the world. European countries in general have far shorter sentences, even for crimes as serious as rape and murder.

The cost of maintaining the nation's jails, prisons and juvenile facilities has taken a heavy toll on other more positive forms of public spending, especially in the area of education. A recent report by the Pew Center notes that five states spend more on corrections than on higher education: Connecticut, Delaware, Michigan, Oregon and Vermont. Building and operating incarceration facilities has become a major industry in itself.

Having served their time, former prisoners often emerge with little education and few prospects for leading a stable life. Race, moreover, continues to play a troubling role. Recently released reports by Human Rights Watch and The Sentencing Project have found that African-American men are far more likely to be re-arrested and sentenced to prison for drug offenses than are whites. In addition, incarceration rates have also been rising for African-American women.

Introduced in 2004, the Second Chance Act languished for several years until a bipartisan coalition of members of Congress ensured its passage. President Bush himself, in

his 2004 State of the Union address, referred to the need for re-entry help for prisoners completing their terms. The services to be provided by the act include education and job training, along with mental health care and drug treatment both during and after incarceration. Drug offenses account for a large proportion of those behind bars, both in state and federal facilities. Also included are mentoring initiatives and support programs for the children of incarcerated people—who, with one or both parents behind bars, are at heightened risk themselves of eventual incarceration.

The legislation authorizes \$362 million in grants to local governments and nonprofit organizations. Given the scope of the problem, the amount is small, but it is at least a beginning. The next crucial step, however, is to see that the funds are disbursed. Some advocates fear that there may be no disbursements this year or even in 2009, and the act is authorized only through fiscal year 2010. In the meantime, however, private groups have initiated programs of their own. One such initiative is the Welcome Home program in the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C. Begun with modest funding from foundations and other sources, Welcome Home provides mentors to “walk with” prisoners while still in prison and after their release, offering moral support, tutorial service and practical guidance in seeking employment and supportive services. Such a program could be usefully expanded with additional funds from the Second Chance Act.

AS HELPFUL AS THE SECOND CHANCE ACT COULD BE, its effect will be limited without changes in the mandatory minimum-sentencing laws and three-strike laws that are responsible for locking up thousands of low-level drug offenders for long periods. Legislatures in some states, like Delaware and Rhode Island, have at least made efforts to modify them, though so far without success. Other states have moved toward reforming their approach to parole violators, a major cause of the increase in incarceration levels. Some 800,000 persons are on parole, and parole revocations now represent a third of new prison admissions each year. But now several jurisdictions are looking at ways to reduce parole revocations. Kansas, for example, deals with minor violations by assisting with drug treatment and milder sanctions, like ankle bracelets, rather than re-incarceration.

In the meantime, the Second Chance Act offers hope for lowering the nation's rate of imprisonment. The act remains on hold, though, until funding is made available. This should be done without delay.

Zimbabweans Fear for Their Lives

Zimbabweans in rural areas “fear for their lives,” a church official said after a report warned that Zimbabwe is headed toward civil war. Postelection attacks have been “most severe” in rural areas, and many Zimbabweans in these areas may be too afraid to vote for the opposition in the runoff presidential election June 27, said Alouis Chaumba, head of Zimbabwe’s Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace. However, many people in the country’s towns and cities “are motivated to vote again to ensure an end to the present system. Many communities feel that voting will be an act of solidarity with their friends who have been killed or wounded in the violence, so that they did not die in vain,” Chaumba said.

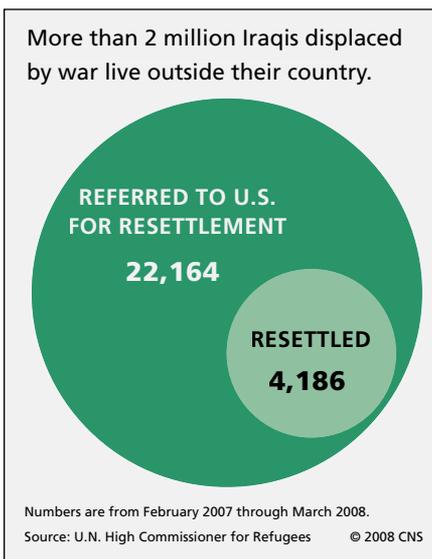
A report on postelection violence in Zimbabwe by the Solidarity Peace Trust, an ecumenical group of church organizations from Zimbabwe and South Africa, said, “There needs to be a general recognition that Zimbabwe is sinking fast into the conditions of a civil war, propelled largely by the increasing reliance on violence by the ruling party to stay in power, and the rapidly shrinking spaces for any form of peaceful political intervention.” The report, released in Johannesburg, South Africa, May 21, contained about 50 eyewitness accounts of orchestrated beatings, torture and the destruction of homes and shops.

Vatican Security Adds Antiterrorism Units

The Vatican has set up two new antiterrorism units that will work closely with international police experts to prevent possible attacks, the Vatican’s director of security announced. A “rapid-intervention group” and an “antisabotage department” were recently established as sub-units of the Vatican’s gendarme corps, Domenico Giani, corps director, told the Vatican newspaper *L’Osservatore Romano* June 7. He said the Vatican also has begun closer collaboration with Interpol, the International Criminal Police Organization. The Vatican and Pope Benedict XVI have been named as

potential targets by extremist groups in recent years. Earlier this year, an Al Qaeda leader accused the pope of leading an anti-Islam campaign. Although the Vatican has downplayed the threats, it also has beefed up security, adding metal detectors for all visitors to St. Peter’s Basilica and attendees at papal events. The gendarme corps also has been deployed at Vatican territories outside Vatican City, in particular at Rome’s patriarchal basilicas.

Few Iraqi Refugees Resettled in U.S.



More than 1,000 refugees from Iraq arrived in the United States in May, the most in recent months, bringing the fiscal-year total to 4,742 so far, the State Department reported June 3. But with just four months left in the fiscal year, the administration’s objective of resettling 12,000 Iraqis in the U.S. by October is far from being reached, said Anastasia Brown, director of refugee programs for Migration and Refugee Services of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. She added that even that goal is an inadequate fraction of the estimated 4.9 million Iraqis who have been forced to leave their homes by the war. At a press briefing June 3, Ambassador James Foley, senior coordinator for Iraqi refugees and former ambassador to Haiti, said systems are finally in place to process the applica-

tions of would-be refugees within Iraq. Processing systems in adjacent countries are working more smoothly than before, he said, though there are still problems, particularly in Syria, where as many as 1.4 million Iraqis have sought temporary protection.

Nun Describes Life in War-Torn Iraq

Sister Diana, of the Dominican Sisters of St. Catherine of Siena, described life in Iraq, her war-torn country, as one of suffering, violence and fear of kidnappings and attacks on civilians. Nonetheless, she said: “We can only have faith and hope. I pray and hope that things get better, or else I won’t be able to continue my life and my vocation.” She spoke on June 5 at a briefing at the New York headquarters of the pontifical agency Catholic Near East Welfare Association, which publishes *ONE* magazine. She did not use her surname for fear of reprisals against family members in Iraq. Sister Diana’s brother and six cousins have been killed there since the war began in 2003. Before the war, life under sanctions was difficult, she said, but there was little violence; and she and others were free to pursue their education and worship openly. Now violence is rampant and random, medicine and medical care are in short supply, electricity is limited to several hours each day, travel is difficult and students attend school only sporadically. “People thought [the war] would change Iraq, but it didn’t turn out the way they thought,” she said. Sister Diana has been living with a group of Dominicans in Michigan since 2006.

Jerusalem Patriarch Speaks on Peace

People are capable of achieving peace and loving one another just as God loves each of them, Latin Patriarch Michel Sabbah of Jerusalem told about 160 worshipers gathered to emphasize the need for peace in the Holy Land. “We have come here to pray because each one of us believes in God, in his goodness and the good in

Signs of the Times

each one of us,” the patriarch said at a June 4 ecumenical prayer service at St. Stephen’s Cathedral, part of the Dominican-run French Biblical and Archaeological School of Jerusalem. The service marked the opening of the third International Church Action Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel, which concluded on June 10. “We pray so all of us can be effective peacemakers in our societies,” the patriarch said. The week of activities is sponsored by the World Council of Churches. Pax Christi International and World Vision also were involved in the planning this year.

Nepal Bishop Applauds New Constitution

The bishop of Nepal described the recent abolition of Nepal’s 239-year-old Hindu monarchy as “truly a great achievement.” Catholics, “as citizens of the country, deserve to be proud, and we rejoice with the nation and our brothers and sisters. We thank God for his blessings,” Bishop Anthony Sharma, S.J., of Nepal told the Asian church news agency UCA News May 29. Nepal’s Constituent Assembly voted overwhelmingly to abolish the monarchy May 28, a day after assembly

members were sworn in at the capital, Katmandu. The assembly gave the king 15 days to leave office. The announcement that assembly members had voted to support the proposal for the implementation of a republic was not made until close to midnight. Despite the late hour, people thronged the streets of the capital, singing, dancing and waving the flags of various political parties to welcome the republic.

Pope Appeals for More Myanmar Relief

Pope Benedict XVI said he hoped all victims of the deadly cyclone in Myanmar will receive the aid and relief they need. He also urged Myanmar’s military government to let humanitarian workers have access to the hardest hit areas. “May God open the hearts of all so that a concerted effort may be made to facilitate and coordinate the ongoing endeavor to bring relief to the suffering and rebuild the country’s infrastructure,” the pope said in a May 30 audience with Catholic bishops from Myanmar. The bishops were on their *ad limina* visits to the Vatican, a series of consultative meetings made approximately every five years. Cyclone Nargis struck Myanmar May 3 and devastated the Irrawaddy River delta and the capital Yangon. According to the United Nations, as many as 134,000 people have died or are missing and at least 2.4 million people are in need of food, clean water, shelter and clothing.

Kasper Meets With Russian Orthodox Leaders

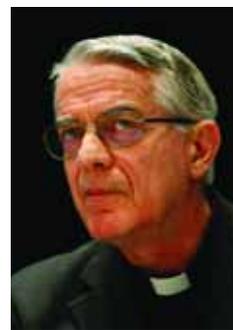


Cardinal Walter Kasper and Russian Orthodox Patriarch Alexy II of Moscow meet in Moscow.

The Vatican’s top ecumenist gave an upbeat report on his recent meetings with leaders of the Russian Orthodox Church, saying historic tensions have been replaced by an eagerness to cooperate. “We are at the beginning of a new situation and a new reality, in which the confrontation of the past seems to have vanished,” Cardinal Walter Kasper said after his 10-day visit to Russia at the end of May. “Everything seems to point in the direction of a possible meeting between Pope Benedict XVI and Patriarch Alexy II [of Moscow]. There is not a concrete

agenda, but there are many signs of reconciliation,” the cardinal said in an interview June 3 with the Vatican newspaper *L’Osservatore Romano*. Cardinal Kasper traveled to Russia at the invitation of Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, president of the Russian Orthodox Church’s office for ecumenical relations. The trip featured a meeting with Patriarch Alexy and visits to Orthodox centers in four major cities. Cardinal Kasper said he received a warm welcome that would have been unthinkable a few years ago.

Media Urged to Highlight the Positive Message



The Vatican spokesman, Federico Lombardi, S.J., urged members of the Catholic media to highlight the positive and beautiful in life, while not shirking their

responsibility to recognize and denounce

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evil. "It is always necessary to have a criterion, a hierarchy in expressing the Christian proposition," Father Lombardi told several hundred communications professionals at a plenary session of the international Catholic Media Convention in Toronto on May 29. "That which is positive takes first place." He pointed out it was "no accident" that Pope Benedict XVI's first encyclical was on love and his second on hope, nor that his first book was "on Jesus who shows us the face of God." "Benedict XVI insists that ours is not a religion of prohibitions, of nos," he said, while noting that Pope Benedict has been realistic and uncompromising in his critiques of relativism, subjectivism, individualism, materialism and hedonism. "We have to know how to recognize and denounce the evils, the risks and the dead ends present in contemporary culture," he said.

Iowa Community Rallies to Help Families

As the people arrested in an immigration raid in Iowa on May 12 were processed and sent off to prison or deported, church leaders, pastoral ministers and community organizers in northeast Iowa struggled with what they called the tragic and devastating effects of the enforcement action. After nearly 400 people

were arrested at Agriprocessors, a meat processing plant in Postville, the faith community responded the following Sunday with a prayer service, a conference on how the community could help affected families and a march to the cattle fairgrounds where the arrested workers were held initially. The Rev. Jose Comparan, pastoral administrator of Queen of Peace Catholic Church and director of Hispanic ministry in Waterloo, said the events were intended to create awareness of what was happening and how people are being affected. "We also wanted the government to know that we do not approve of their actions," he said. Pastoral leaders and parishioners of St. Bridget Catholic Parish in Postville, which was on the front lines of efforts to assist arrested workers and their families, were joined in Waterloo by representatives of other churches.

Thérèse's Parents Move Toward Sainthood

The remains of the parents of St. Thérèse of Lisieux, in France, have been exhumed as French Catholics await the couple's expected beatification. "This beatification will be important not only for the church in France, but for families everywhere who've prayed for the inter-

cession of this married couple, who lived in a different epoch but experienced the same strains as all parents," said Dominique Monvielle, director of Lisieux's pilgrimage center, June 4. The bodies of Louis and Zélie Martin were disinterred May 27 from graves outside St. Thérèse Basilica in Lisieux and will be reburied after preservation work in the basilica crypt in September. Monvielle told Catholic News Service that Pietro Schillero, a 6-year-old Italian boy whose cure from a fatal lung condition at 13 months was recognized as a miracle by the church in June 2003, attended the exhumation ceremony with his parents, who had invoked the intercession of the Martins for a cure.

C.R.S. Honors Journalists



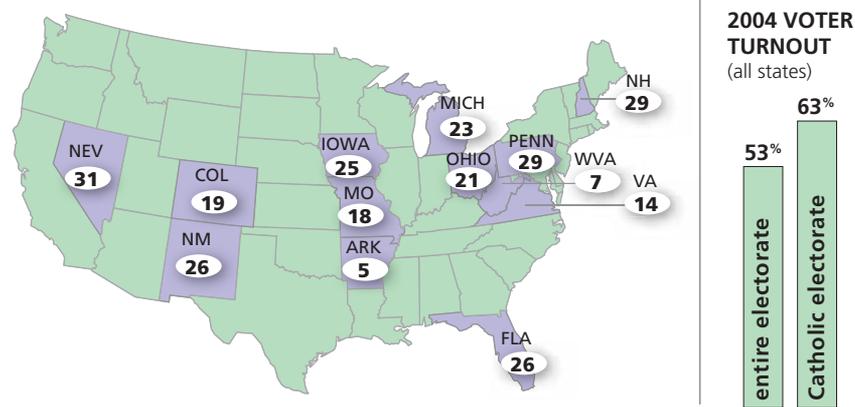
Meghan Hurley, left, and Amanda Finnegan were two of the winners of the Eileen Egan Award for a series of stories on fair trade they wrote for their college newspaper at Cabrini College in Radnor, Pa.

Seven journalists have been chosen winners of the Eileen Egan Award for journalistic excellence in reporting on humanitarian and social justice issues. Catholic Relief Services, the U.S. bishops' overseas relief and development agency and sponsor of the awards, announced the winners May 29 at the Catholic Media Convention in Toronto.

From CNS and other sources. CNS photos.

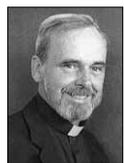
Swing-State Catholics

Likely swing states in the 2008 election and their percentage of Catholic population



Sources: Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, U.S. Religious Landscape Survey; Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University

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Pulpits and Politics

‘The preacher is a problem for himself.’

I HAVE WRITTEN about the Rev. Jeremiah Wright in these pages before (4/14). In that column I proposed that the former pastor of Barack Obama at Chicago’s Trinity United Church of Christ is best judged, not by two-minute video clips, but by a full reading of his sermons delivered in the prophetic tradition. It seems the problem is deeper than that.

At the end of April, Pastor Wright appeared before the National Press Club, accompanied by what seemed to be hundreds of allies in the gallery, and made a presentation so embarrassing that Senator Obama had to distance himself fully from the preacher. The most disturbing aspect of the affair was the way Wright was playing to the crowd, rolling his eyes and grinning as he showed little respect for the moderator and her questions. The preacher is not only a problem for Obama. The preacher is also a problem for himself.

He is not alone. Two prominent evangelical clergymen presented problems for Senator John McCain. At a campaign appearance earlier this year, Pastor Rod Parsley was introduced by McCain as “one of the truly great leaders in America, a moral compass, a spiritual guide.” Parsley has also appeared on a DVD claiming, “Islam is an anti-Christ religion that intends through violence to conquer the world.” He believes as well that America “was founded with the intention of seeing this false religion destroyed.” The Rev. John Hagee of Texas, whose endorsement was sought by McCain, has called the Catholic Church “a great whore” and “a false cult system.” McCain rejected the words and eventually the endorsements.

Obama wound up leaving his church

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

of 20 years. It was not Pastor Wright who precipitated the move, but a Catholic priest, Michael Pflieger, who delivered a turkey in Wright’s former congregation. Although calling his sermon-ridicule of Senator Clinton a “conversation” that he presumed was not being taped, Pflieger’s performance was a full-blown comedic put-down of Clinton’s tearful moment in New Hampshire—not because she was losing, but because Obama is black. His mocking, handkerchief-waving, tear-wiping flamboyance were there for all to see. It was a mess.

I had a different impression of Father Pflieger, based on his tireless efforts to get gun control in Chicago, stop gang crime and confront racism (which he sincerely considers a primal sin) and also from taped sermons sent to me by one of his parishioners (a white professional woman) who had found consolation in his vibrant parish community.

The upshot of Father Pflieger’s performance is that Obama has resigned from his church. As for Pflieger, he has resigned from all Obama support groups and reluctantly obeyed Cardinal Francis George’s demand that he take a temporary leave from the parish of St. Sabina, where he has been for 24 years.

I sympathize with Father Pflieger, despite his silly performance. He is 59. He has been a priest for 33 of those years, most of them at St. Sabina. As is clear from a Chicago Sun Times article by Cathleen Falsani, he is anguished by the aftereffects of his raving at Trinity. He thinks the world hates him. Worse, he admits that he has profoundly wounded the parish (which still supports him) to which he has given most of his life. “I’ve spent my life trying, No. 1, to serve God, and to build up this faith community.... I don’t want to hurt this church. I don’t want to hurt these people, who are at their jobs and workplaces

having to defend their pastor.” He wrote a painful apology to his people (available on the parish Web site) for the words he used and for “my dramatization.” He called the Clinton campaign to apologize. But it was done.

Neither Pflieger nor the other three pastors are crazy persons. But they do have problems of their own. And they are the problems of the preacher. The preacher’s main temptation is in the preaching. In that wholly unmerited position and opportunity, in the context of sacred word, worship and sacrament, one is attended to, listened to by believers. There is a terrible seduction in this. One can preach to the choir and hear a chorus of approval.

As a preacher myself, I know there are few moments to compare with the affection and approval of parishioners after Mass, especially if you have been helpful in strengthening their faith. But the most distressing moment for me was the one homily I gave that evoked applause. Of course, it was gratifying; but it was disturbing. What was the applause for? The Gospel? The Eucharist? Maybe the stirring indictment of both church and state? Or for me?

There are many styles of preaching. But I have always felt a suspicion of styles that call too much attention to the preacher, whether by extravagant display or studied hyperbole. This becomes particularly dangerous when “preaching to the choir,” who applaud your indictments of everyone but the choir.

The priest preacher is a mediator. The danger is that the mediator can become the message. If the preacher is short on self-knowledge and personal restraint, his own preaching becomes, sadly, more important even than the Eucharist itself or, in non-eucharistic congregations, more important than even the Gospel. The preacher becomes the message. And that is disastrous.

The disaster finally hit Father Pflieger and the parish he loves. It also wounded Barack Obama. In the senator’s search for a new faith community, I hope he finds a church that nourishes his faith and family. I hope, also, he finds a preacher who is more into the Gospel than he is into his performance. *John F. Kavanaugh*

Five Myths About Nuclear Energy

– BY KRISTIN SHRADER-FRECHETTE –



ATOMIC ENERGY IS AMONG THE MOST impractical and risky of available fuel sources. Private financiers are reluctant to invest in it, and both experts and the public have questions about the likelihood of safely storing lethal radioactive wastes for the required million years. Reactors also provide irresistible targets for terrorists seeking to inflict deep and lasting damage on the United States. The government's own data show that U.S. nuclear reactors have more than a one-in-five lifetime probability of core melt, and a nuclear accident could kill 140,000 people, contaminate an area the size of Pennsylvania, and destroy our homes and health.

In addition to being risky, nuclear power is unable to meet our current or future energy needs. Because of safety requirements and the length of time it takes to construct a nuclear-power facility, the government says that by the year 2050 atomic energy could supply, at best, 20 percent of U.S. electricity needs; yet by 2020, wind and solar panels could supply at least 32 percent of U.S. electricity, at about half the cost of nuclear power. Nevertheless, in the last two years, the current U.S. administration has given the bulk of taxpayer energy subsidies—a total of \$20 billion—to atomic power. Why? Some officials say nuclear energy is clean, inexpensive, needed to address global climate change, unlikely to increase the risk of nuclear proliferation and safe.

KRISTIN SHRADER-FRECHETTE teaches biological sciences and philosophy at the University of Notre Dame. Her latest book, *Taking Action, Saving Lives: Our Duties to Protect Environmental and Public Health* (Oxford University Press, 2007), has been nominated for a National Book Award.



On all five counts they are wrong. Renewable energy sources are cleaner, cheaper, better able to address climate change and proliferation risks, and safer. The government's own data show that wind energy now costs less than half of nuclear power; that wind can supply far more energy, more quickly, than nuclear power; and that by 2015, solar panels will be economically competitive with all other conventional energy technologies. The administration's case for nuclear power rests on at least five myths. Debunking these myths is necessary if the United States is to abandon its current dangerous energy course.

Myth 1. Nuclear Energy Is Clean

The myth of clean atomic power arises partly because some sources, like a pro-nuclear energy analysis published in 2003 by several professors at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, call atomic power a "carbon-free source" of energy. On its Web site, the U.S. Department of Energy, which is also a proponent of nuclear energy, calls atomic power "emissions free." At best, these claims are half-truths because they "trim the data" on emissions.

While nuclear reactors themselves do not release greenhouse gases, reactors are only part of the nine-stage nuclear

fuel cycle. This cycle includes mining uranium ore, milling it to extract uranium, converting the uranium to gas, enriching it, fabricating fuel pellets, generating power, reprocessing spent fuel, storing spent fuel at the reactor and transporting the waste to a permanent storage facility. Because most of these nine stages are heavily dependent on fossil fuels, nuclear power thus generates at least 33 grams of carbon-equivalent emissions for each kilowatt-hour of electricity that is produced. (To provide uniform calculations of greenhouse emissions, the various effects of the different greenhouse gases typically are converted to carbon-equivalent emissions.) Per kilowatt-hour, atomic energy produces only one-seventh the greenhouse emissions of coal, but twice as much as wind and slightly more than solar panels.

Nuclear power is even less clean when compared with energy-efficiency measures, such as using compact-fluorescent bulbs and increasing home insulation. Whether in medicine or energy policy, preventing a problem is usually cheaper than curing or solving it, and energy efficiency is the most cost-effective way to solve the problem of reducing greenhouse gases. Department of Energy data show that one dollar invested in energy-efficiency programs displaces about six times more carbon emissions than the same

amount invested in nuclear power. Government figures also show that energy-efficiency programs save \$40 for every dollar invested in them. This is why the government says it could immediately and cost-effectively cut U.S. electricity consumption by 20 percent to 45 percent, using only existing strategies, like time-of-use electricity pricing. (Higher prices for electricity used during daily peak-consumption times—roughly between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m.—encourage consumers to shift their time of energy use. New power plants are typically needed to handle only peak electricity demand.)

Myth 2. Nuclear Energy Is Inexpensive

Achieving greater energy efficiency, however, also requires ending the lopsided system of taxpayer nuclear subsidies that encourage the myth of inexpensive electricity from atomic power. Since 1949, the U.S. government has provided about \$165 billion in subsidies to nuclear energy, about \$5 billion to solar and wind together, and even less to energy-efficiency programs. All government efficiency programs—to encourage use of fuel-efficient cars, for example, or to provide financial assistance so that low-income citizens can insulate their homes—currently receive only a small percentage of federal energy monies.

After energy-efficiency programs, wind is the most cost-effective way both to generate electricity and to reduce greenhouse emissions. It costs about half as much as atomic power. The only nearly finished nuclear plant in the West, now being built in Finland by the French company Areva, will generate electricity costing 11 cents per kilowatt-hour. Yet the U.S. government's Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory calculated actual costs of new wind plants, over the last seven years, at 3.4 cents per kilowatt-hour. Although some groups say nuclear energy is inexpensive, their misleading claims rely on trimming the data on cost. The 2003 M.I.T. study, for instance, included neither the costs of reprocessing nuclear material, nor the full inter-

est costs on nuclear-facility construction capital, nor the total costs of waste storage. Once these omissions—from the entire nine-stage nuclear fuel cycle—are included,

nuclear costs are about 11 cents per kilowatt-hour.

The cost-effectiveness of wind power explains why in 2006 utility companies worldwide added 10 times more wind-generated, than nuclear, electricity capacity. It also explains why small-scale sources of renewable energy, like wind and solar, received \$56 billion in global private investments in 2006, while nuclear energy received nothing. It explains why wind supplies 20 percent of Denmark's electricity. It explains why, each year for the last several years, Germany, Spain and India have each, alone, added more wind capacity than all countries in the world, taken together, have added in nuclear capacity.

In the United States, wind supplies up to 8 percent of electricity in some Midwestern states. The case of Louis Brooks is instructive. Utilities pay him \$500 a month for allowing 78 wind turbines on his Texas ranch, and he can still use virtually all the land for

farming and grazing. Wind's cost-effectiveness also explains why in 2007 wind received \$9 billion in U.S. private investments, while nuclear energy received zero. U.S. wind energy has been growing by nearly 3,000 megawatts each year, annually producing new electricity equivalent to what three new nuclear reactors could generate. Meanwhile, no new U.S. atomic-power reactors have been ordered since 1974.

Should the United States continue to heavily subsidize nuclear technology? Or, as the distinguished physicist Amory Lovins put it, is the nuclear industry dying of an "incurable attack of market forces"? Standard and Poor's, the credit- and investment-rating company, downgrades the rating of any utility that wants a nuclear plant. It claims that even subsidies are unlikely to make nuclear investment wise. Forbes magazine recently called nuclear investment "the largest managerial disaster in business history," something pursued only by the "blind" or the "biased."

What Does the Church Say?

Though neither the Vatican nor the U.S. bishops have made a statement on nuclear power, the church has outlined the ethical case for renewable energy. In *Centesimus Annus* Pope John Paul II wrote that just as Pope Leo XIII in 1891 had to confront "primitive capitalism" in order to defend workers' rights, he himself had to confront the "new capitalism" in order to defend collective goods like the environment. Pope Benedict XVI warned that pollutants "make the lives of the poor especially unbearable." In their 2001 statement *Global Climate Change*, the U.S. Catholic bishops repeated his point: climate change will "disproportionately affect the poor, the vulnerable, and generations yet unborn."

The bishops also warn that "misguided responses to climate change will likely place even greater burdens on already desperately poor peoples." Instead they urge "energy conservation and the development of alternate renewable and clean-energy resources." They argue that renewable energy promotes care for creation and the common good, lessens pollution that disproportionately harms the poor and vulnerable, avoids threats to future generations and reduces nuclear-proliferation risks.

Myth 3. Nuclear Energy Is Necessary to Address Climate Change

Government, industry and university studies, like those recently from Princeton, agree that wind turbines and solar panels already exist at an industrial scale and could supply one-third of U.S. electricity needs by 2020, and the vast majority of U.S. electricity by 2050—not just the 20 percent of electricity possible from nuclear energy by 2050. The D.O.E. says wind from only three states (Kansas, North Dakota and Texas) could supply all U.S. electricity needs, and 20 states could supply nearly triple those needs. By 2015, according to the D.O.E., solar panels will be competitive with all conventional energy technologies and will cost 5 to 10 cents per kilowatt hour. Shell Oil and other fossil-fuel companies agree. They are investing heavily in wind and solar.

From an economic perspective, atomic power is inefficient at addressing climate change because dollars used for more expensive, higher-emissions nuclear energy cannot be used for cheaper, lower-emissions renewable energy. Atomic power is also not sustainable. Because of dwindling uranium supplies, by the year 2050 reactors would be forced to use low-grade uranium ore whose greenhouse emissions would roughly equal those of natural gas. Besides, because the United States imports nearly all its uranium, pursuing nuclear power continues the dangerous pattern of dependency on foreign sources to meet domestic energy needs.

Myth 4. Nuclear Energy Will Not Increase Weapons Proliferation

Pursuing nuclear power also perpetuates the myth that increasing atomic energy, and thus increasing uranium enrichment and spent-fuel reprocessing, will increase neither terrorism nor proliferation of nuclear weapons. This myth has been rejected by both the International Atomic Energy Agency and the U.S. Office of Technology Assessment. More nuclear plants means more weapons materials, which means more targets, which means a higher risk of terrorism and proliferation. The government admits that Al Qaeda already has targeted U.S. reactors, none of which can withstand attack by a large airplane. Such an attack, warns the U.S. National Academy of Sciences, could cause fatalities as far away as 500 miles and destruction 10 times worse than that caused by the nuclear accident at Chernobyl in 1986.

Nuclear energy actually increases the risks of weapons proliferation because the same technology used for civilian atomic power can be used for weapons, as the cases of India, Iran, Iraq, North Korea and Pakistan illustrate. As the Swedish Nobel Prize winner Hannes Alven put it, “The military atom and the civilian atom are Siamese twins.” Yet if the world stopped building nuclear-power plants, bomb ingredients would be harder to acquire, more conspicuous

and more costly politically, if nations were caught trying to obtain them. Their motives for seeking nuclear materials would be unmasked as military, not civilian.

Myth 5. Nuclear Energy Is Safe

Proponents of nuclear energy, like Patrick Moore, cofounder of Greenpeace, and the former Argonne National Laboratory adviser Steve Berry, say that new reactors will be safer than current ones—“meltdown proof.” Such safety claims also are myths. Even the 2003 M.I.T. energy study predicted that tripling civilian nuclear reactors would lead to about four core-melt accidents. The government’s Sandia National Laboratory calculates that a nuclear accident could cause casualties similar to those at Hiroshima or Nagasaki: 140,000 deaths. If nuclear plants are as safe as their proponents claim, why do utilities need the U.S. Price-Anderson Act, which guarantees utilities protection against 98 percent of nuclear-accident liability and transfers these risks to the public? All U.S. utilities refused to generate atomic power until the government established this liability limit. Why do utilities, but not taxpayers, need this nuclear-liability protection?

Another problem is that high-level radioactive waste must be secured “in perpetuity,” as the U.S. National Academy of Sciences puts it. Yet the D.O.E. has already admitted that if nuclear waste is stored at Nevada’s Yucca Mountain, as has been proposed, future generations could not meet existing radiation standards. As a result, the current U.S. administration’s proposal is to allow future releases of radioactive wastes, stored at Yucca Mountain, provided they annually cause no more than one person—out of every 70 persons exposed to them—to contract fatal cancer. These cancer risks are high partly because Yucca Mountain is so geologically unstable. Nuclear waste facilities could be breached by volcanic or seismic activity. Within 50 miles of Yucca Mountain, more than 600 seismic events, of magnitude greater than two on the Richter scale, have occurred since 1976. In 1992, only 12 miles from the site, an earthquake (5.6 on the Richter scale) damaged D.O.E. buildings. Within 31 miles of the site, eight volcanic eruptions have occurred in the last million years. These facts suggest that Alvin Weinberg was right. Four decades ago, the then-director of the government’s Oak Ridge National Laboratory warned that nuclear waste required society to make a Faustian bargain with the devil. In exchange for current military and energy benefits from atomic power, this generation must sell the safety of future generations.

Yet the D.O.E. predicts harm even in this generation. The department says that if 70,000 tons of the existing U.S. waste were shipped to Yucca Mountain, the transfer would require 24 years of dozens of daily rail or truck shipments. Assuming low accident rates and discounting the possibility

of terrorist attacks on these lethal shipments, the D.O.E. says this radioactive-waste transport likely would lead to 50 to 310 shipment accidents. According to the D.O.E., each of these accidents could contaminate 42 square miles, and each could require a 462-day cleanup that would cost \$620 million, not counting medical expenses. Can hundreds of thousands of mostly unguarded shipments of lethal materials be kept safe? The states do not think so, and they have banned Yucca Mountain transport within their borders. A better alternative is onsite storage at reactors, where the material can be secured from terrorist attack in “hardened” bunkers.

Where Do We Go From Here?

If atomic energy is really so risky and expensive, why did the United States begin it and heavily subsidize it? As U.S. Atomic Energy Agency documents reveal, the United States began to develop nuclear power for the same reason many other nations have done so. It wanted weapons-grade nuclear materials for its military program. But the United States now has more than enough weapons materials. What explains the continuing subsidies? Certainly not the market. The Economist (7/7/05) recently noted that for decades, bankers in New York and London have refused loans to nuclear industries. Warning that nuclear costs, dangers and waste storage make atomic power “extremely risky,” The Economist claimed that the industry is now asking taxpay-

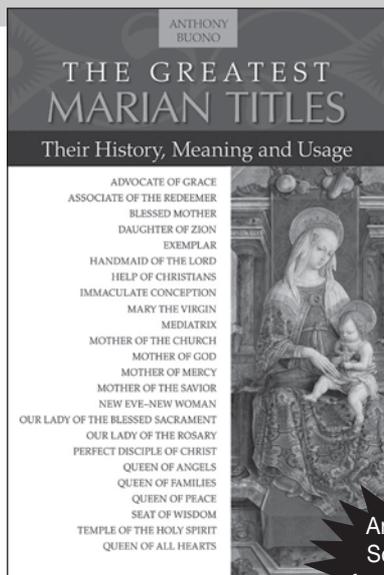
ers to do what the market will not do: invest in nuclear energy. How did The Economist explain the uneconomical \$20 billion U.S. nuclear subsidies for 2005-7? It pointed to campaign contributions from the nuclear industry.

Despite the problems with atomic power, society needs around-the-clock electricity. Can we rely on intermittent wind until solar power is cost-effective in 2015? Even the Department of Energy says yes. Wind now can supply up to 20 percent of electricity, using the current electricity grid as backup, just as nuclear plants do when they are shut down for refueling, maintenance and leaks. Wind can supply up to 100 percent of electricity needs by using “distributed” turbines spread over a wide geographic region—because the wind always blows somewhere, especially offshore.

Many renewable energy sources are safe and inexpensive, and they inflict almost no damage on people or the environment. Why is the current U.S. administration instead giving virtually all of its support to a riskier, more costly nuclear alternative? **A**



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The New Nuclear Threat

Twenty years after the end of the cold war, the arms race intensifies.

BY RONALD E. POWASKI



Pakistan's medium-range Shaheen-1 (Haft-IV) ballistic missile takes off during a test flight from an undisclosed location in Pakistan in January.

DURING THE HEIGHT of the cold war, in September 1961, President John F. Kennedy addressed the General Assembly of the United Nations. “Every inhabitant of this planet,” he said, “must contemplate the day when this planet may no longer be habitable. Every man, woman and child lives under a nuclear sword of Damocles, hanging by the slenderest of threads, capable of being cut at any moment by accident or miscalculation or madness.”

With the demise of the Soviet Union and the emergence of the United States as the world's lone superpower, the immediate possibility of nuclear Armageddon has receded, especially in people's consciousness. Yet Kennedy's warning still resonates. The world remains a very dangerous place, and the threat of a nuclear catastrophe is still very real. The next U.S. president, whether Republican or Democrat, must face this threat head-on by rebuilding the international nuclear nonproliferation regime, which has been grievously weakened by the Bush administration.

The heart of that regime is the 1968 Nuclear

RONALD E. POWASKI is a retired adjunct professor of history at Cleveland State University. His book *Return to Armageddon: The United States and the Nuclear Arms Race, 1981-1999* was published by Oxford University Press in 2000.

Nonproliferation Treaty. One of its main provisions is the promise by the states that have no nuclear weapons not to develop or otherwise acquire them. In return for that promise, the major nuclear weapon states—the United States, Russia, China, Britain and France—pledged eventually to eliminate all of their own nuclear weapons.

The treaty also permits nonweapon states to develop nuclear energy for purely civilian purposes. To this end, the nuclear powers promised to provide the nonweapon states with nuclear assistance, including research reactors, nuclear power plants and nuclear technology. To ensure that this civilian nuclear assistance would not be diverted to military applications, the International Atomic Energy Agency was charged with monitoring the nuclear activities of the non-weapon states.

As demonstrated by the large number of treaty signatories—189 countries, including the United States—the nonproliferation regime has been very successful in restricting the number of states with nuclear arsenals. In addition to the five recognized nuclear-weapon states, only four other countries, which are not parties to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, have developed nuclear weapons. They are India, Pakistan, Israel and, since 2006, North Korea.

Yet in spite of its success in stemming the spread of nuclear weapons, the treaty is now in peril. One cause of the

PHOTO: REUTERS/STRINGER

problem is the failure of the weapon states to live up to their promise to eliminate their nuclear arsenals. Although the United States and Russia have made substantial reductions in the size of their respective nuclear weapon stockpiles, they are far from having eliminated them.

In 1987, when the United States began reducing its nuclear arsenal, it contained 24,000 warheads. By 1992 that number had been cut to 10,500 warheads. In 2002 the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty, or SORT, required the United States and Russia to reduce their “operationally deployed” strategic warheads to between 1,700 and 2,200 by the end of 2012. SORT, however, permits each side to retain thousands of additional warheads in a reserve stockpile for redeployment if necessary. As a result, by 2012 the U.S. nuclear arsenal will still contain 4,600 warheads. Russia is expected to have about the same number.

While these reductions are impressive—even amazing, considering the zeal with which each country once built them—both Russia and the United States have no plans to eliminate their nuclear arsenals completely in the foreseeable future. Indeed, if SORT is not renewed before it expires at the end of 2012, both countries will be free to increase the size of their nuclear stockpiles once again.

Undermining the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty

In an effort to spur the nuclear weapon states to fulfill their nuclear disarmament promise, as well as to halt the further proliferation of nuclear weapons, the nonweapon states approved the indefinite extension of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty in 1995. But they did so on the explicit condition that the nuclear powers would permanently cease all nuclear-weapons testing and ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

The C.T.B.T. is based on the assumption that if nations are prohibited from testing nuclear weapons, they will not be inclined to develop them. As of February 2008, 178 states have signed the treaty and 144 have ratified it, including the whole of the European Union, illustrating the overwhelming support this treaty enjoys. However, before the treaty can go into effect, it must be ratified by nine more of the 44 states listed in its annex.

The United States, which signed the C.T.B.T. in 1996, is one of those nine states. In 1999 the Republican-controlled Senate refused to ratify the treaty in order to permit the United States to resume nuclear tests, which it had halt-

ed in 1992. For the same reason, apparently, the Bush administration has refused to resubmit the C.T.B.T. to the Senate. In fact, in November 2003 the administration persuaded Congress to shorten the time required to prepare for the resumption of U.S. nuclear testing from 24 months to 18. Without saying so, it wanted the ability to resume testing because it was eager to develop, and if necessary test, a new generation of nuclear weapons.

New Nuclear Weapons

A new U.S. nuclear weapon system, proposed early in the Bush administration, was the Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator. It was designed to destroy hardened and deeply buried targets, similar to the cave complex in Afghanistan that was used by Al Qaeda. But Congress rejected the administration’s rationale for the new weapon. Not only would the Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator have produced significant collateral damage and radioactive fallout, but the building of a new nuclear weapon would have undermined the international effort to limit other countries from developing their own nuclear arsenals.

Blocked in its effort to obtain Congressional funding for the Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator, the Bush administration has turned to another new nuclear weapon program, the Reliable Replacement Warhead program. This project calls for the development of new nuclear warheads that supposedly would be easier and safer to maintain, and more reliable than existing models. Moreover, the administration insists that the new warheads could be built without having to conduct a proof test, thereby preserving the nuclear test moratorium. Congress has refused to fund this program as well. A group of independent scientists, the JASON Defense Advisory Group, reported that there was “no evidence” to suggest that the existing stockpile of U.S. nuclear weapons would be unreliable for at least another century.

In addition, the JASON group doubted that the Reliable Replacement Warhead design could be certified without testing it, which would violate the nuclear test moratorium. Nevertheless, the administration again has requested funding for the program in its fiscal 2009 budget.

The Bush administration has demonstrated that it has no intention of ending U.S. reliance on nuclear weapons. That impression has been reinforced by the administration’s decision to resume, for the first time since 1992, the production of nuclear weapons, albeit on a small scale, and by its desire to have Congress fund the expansion of America’s nuclear weapons laboratories.

Preventive Nuclear War

The Bush administration’s eagerness to produce new nuclear weapons is directly related to the new U.S. strategic doc-



This article is part of **America’s** series “A Closer Look,” offering in-depth perspectives on important issues during the 2008 presidential campaign.

trine that the president approved in 2002. It calls for the possible pre-emptive use of nuclear weapons against so-called rogue states, like North Korea or Iran.

This new nuclear doctrine threatens to overturn a U.S. pledge not to use nuclear weapons against nonweapon states that are still a party to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, such as Iran. “Why sign, or remain signatory to a treaty” (the N.P.T.), asked an unsigned editorial in the Parisian newspaper *Le Monde*, “which, in exchange for your absolute renunciation of nuclear arms, does not guarantee that they will not be used against you?”

The North Koreans and Iranians have gotten this message. It explains, in part, North Korea’s decision to test a nuclear weapon in 2006, and Iran’s refusal to meet the U.N. demand to stop enriching uranium, a primary ingredient of a nuclear weapon.

Clearly, if the United States is going to be serious about halting the proliferation of nuclear weapons, it will have to accept the same standards of behavior for itself that it is attempting to impose on nonweapon states. If it insists that other nations abide by the provisions of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, it should make sure the United States does so as well. Preparing to build and, if necessary, use new nuclear weapons is obviously not the way to do this.

The India Nuclear Deal

Perhaps the most blatant example of President Bush’s disregard for the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty is the nuclear deal he signed with India in July 2005. India, which never signed the N.P.T., became a nuclear weapon state in 1974. Nevertheless, the agreement calls for the United States to sell civilian nuclear materials to India, thereby formally acknowledging that country as a weapon state and in effect rewarding it for producing nuclear weapons.

In order to complete the deal, Congress must exempt India from the 1978 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act, which bars the United States from providing nuclear technology to countries that have not signed the N.P.T. In December 2006, Congress caved in to pressure from pro-agreement lobbyists and, by a voice vote, gave tentative approval to India’s exemption from the 1978 act.

Final Congressional approval of the deal, however, was made contingent on India’s meeting a number of conditions. For one, India must negotiate a safeguards agreement, which permits the International Atomic Energy Agency to inspect India’s civilian nuclear facilities. The deal also must be approved by the 45 countries participating in the Nuclear Suppliers Group, which establishes rules for the nuclear trade between nations.

India has yet to fulfill these conditions, mainly because Indian opponents of the agreement argue that it impinges

upon their country’s national security and sovereignty. Nevertheless, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, who negotiated the nuclear agreement, is still determined to see it ratified. But the State Department has warned him that before the deal can be concluded, India must fulfill the conditions set by Congress before it recesses for the summer. After that time, the attention of the legislators will be focused on the November elections.

If Congress does eventually approve the India deal, it will have cooperated with President Bush in undermining the second major part of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty’s “grand bargain.” That part contains the provision that the nonweapon-state signatories can obtain nuclear assistance for peaceful purposes, but only after pledging that they will not make nuclear weapons and will accept full-scope safeguards to ensure that they do not.

Moreover, if the United States drops the restrictions on nuclear sales to India, because the Indians are now our friends, what will inhibit Russia from ignoring international restrictions on sales to its friends, including Iran or China, or from dropping controls on sales to its friend Pakistan? The international nuclear export control system works only by the restraint of all the supplier countries. It is too much to expect other nations to restrict nuclear sales to their clients if the United States sells the same technologies to India.

Tasks of the Next Administration

The heart of the problem confronting the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, which the U.S.-India nuclear deal has made manifest, is that it divides the world into nuclear haves and have-nots. In so doing, it discriminates against the nonnuclear states by prohibiting them from producing nuclear weapons, while it allows the weapon states—which have pledged to eliminate their nuclear weapons—to continue to maintain their arsenals. And if the Bush administration has its way, the United States will continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

The only way to end the discriminatory character of the N.P.T., and thereby save the nuclear nonproliferation regime, is to have the weapon states live up to their side of the N.P.T. bargain. This will require the weapon states to stop producing nuclear weapons. One way this could be accomplished is by means of a negotiated treaty establishing a mandatory timeline, say 15 years in duration, for further nuclear weapons reductions, terminating with their complete elimination. Only then will the world’s inhabitants be free from the scourge of a possible nuclear war. 



From the archives, the editors on the bishops’ pastoral letter on war and peace, at americamagazine.org/pages

Courting the Latino Vote

It's about more than immigration.

BY KAREN SUE SMITH

IN MID-JULY IN SAN DIEGO Senator John McCain, the presumptive Republican Party nominee for president, will attend the annual convention of the National Council of La Raza, the nation's largest constituency-based Hispanic organization. His appearance there is just one of many efforts that McCain is making to court Latinos, a group that in the 2004 election proved essential to President Bush's victory. Latino votes will be critical to the winner of the next presidential election as well.

The Republican Party has seen an increase in Latino votes over the years, especially in general elections, but that statement needs to be placed in context. A majority of Latinos have remained within the Democratic Party, but the Democratic lead was shrinking for some time—until

2006, when the Latino move toward the Republican Party reversed itself, primarily over the direction and the tone of the immigration debate, which has offended many Latinos, both native and foreign-born.

Ironically, 2006 was also the year both houses of Congress passed legislation to build a fence along the Mexican-U.S. border and Senators McCain, Clinton and Obama all voted in favor of it.

Politics aside, the demographics are shifting as Latinos settle in states beyond the Southwest, often in the Midwest and South. But even in states that already have large Latino populations, significant changes are taking place. Beth Reinhard of *The Miami Herald* reported on May 9 that increases in Democratic voter registration in Florida show immigration from Latin America and younger generations of Cuban-Americans to be “diluting the influence of the

KAREN SUE SMITH is editorial director of *America*.



Alberto Rebolledo casts his ballot in the midterm elections at Harts Coin Laundry in Chicago, Nov. 7, 2006.

PHOTO: REUTERS/JOHN GRESS

older Cuban-American community,” who in the past had voted Republican.

Latinos and John McCain

Even so, Senator McCain represents his party’s best shot at attracting Latino voters. He not only understands Latinos, particularly those in the Southwest, but last year, with Senator Edward Kennedy, co-sponsored an immigration reform bill that would have laid a “pathway toward citizenship” for undocumented immigrants, had it not been defeated in the Senate. McCain has spoken compassionately about the plight of unauthorized immigrants. As Marcela Sanchez has written for *washingtonpost.com*, McCain “reminds people that just as with other waves of immigrants, Hispanics have ‘enriched our culture and our nation.’” And there are other issues to consider. McCain, a Baptist, supports traditional religious and family values, a position that attracts Latinos like those who voted for President Bush (see sidebar, pg. 23).

McCain has a good track record with Latinos. In this year’s Republican presidential primaries, he won a majority in the five states with the largest Latino electorates—California, Texas, Florida, New York and Illinois. In his 2004 Senate re-election bid, McCain did extremely well in Arizona, his home state, where he won 70 percent of the Latino vote. If McCain could get half that much support in the general election in November, predicts Ruben Navarrette, a columnist and writer for *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, “McCain could win the White House.” Navarrette thinks character draws Hispanics to McCain; they like “his independence, his convictions, his courage and his moderate stance on issues.” Writes Navarrette, “The fact that McCain is so patriotic is a draw for many Latinos.”

Still, McCain may face difficulties in attracting Latinos. He walks a tightrope on immigration, an issue he may choose to play down. After hearing boos from conservatives in Michigan in February, McCain has stressed tightening border controls first, before reintroducing immigration reform. To appeal to non-Latino conservative voters, he must address employer sanctions, identity cards, government sweeps, the fence along the Mexican border and swift deportations; but to appeal to Latinos, he must advocate a path to citizenship for the 9.6 million unauthorized Latinos now living in the United States.

The Senator must also convince Latinos—at least those in critical swing states with significant Latino populations—that his party cares about their concerns. That may take some doing. According to “Hispanics and the 2008 Election: A Swing Vote?” a report by the Pew Hispanic Center, 57 percent of registered Hispanic voters either call themselves Democrats or lean toward the Democratic Party. And most indicated that the Democrats show far

more concern for Latinos than do the Republicans.

Hurdles for the Democrats

There may be a silver lining to this cloud, however. If race and an antipathy between Latinos and blacks turn out to be as significant as some predict, then Senator McCain may find himself kissed by the gods in facing Sen. Barack Obama as his opponent in the general election. Analysts have shown that in elections where there are both black and white candidates, Latinos tend to favor the white candidate. Advantage, McCain. If, however, Senator Obama finds ways of appealing to Latinos (or if Latinos transfer to him the support they have shown Senator Hillary Clinton), then he may be able to break the old pattern and capitalize on the increased Latino support for the Democrats and participation at the polls. Obama has the support of Governor Bill Richardson of New Mexico, the first Latino of any major party to run for president, as well as of the granddaughter of Cesar Chavez, founder of the United Farm Workers union.

Despite the gains the Democrats made in the 2006 Congressional race and in state elections since then, and despite the Latino turnout in the primaries, the Democratic Party is not taking Latino loyalty for granted. By April 2008, according to the Johns Hopkins Hispanic Voter Project, Senators Clinton and Obama had spent \$4 million, a record amount for Democrats, on Spanish-language advertising to rouse Latinos—the registered Democrats, the young first-time voters and the independents. That same month the Democratic National Committee set up a Hispanic Leadership Council to strategize and communicate specifically with Latinos.

The party’s current task is to seize the considerable momentum shown by Latinos in support of Senator Hillary Clinton. In the primaries on Super Tuesday and later in Texas and Puerto Rico, she won the Latino vote 2 to 1 over Senator Barack Obama. As Senator Clinton departs from the race, the party must ensure that it can close any resulting Latino loyalty gap. Senator Clinton herself could do much to build party unity specifically among her Latino constituents. Since Obama won a Latino majority in only four primaries—Illinois (by a mere 1 percent lead over Clinton), Connecticut, Virginia and Colorado—he will have to put Latinos at the top of his priority list.

Building Broad Latino Constituencies

The nominees of both major parties will no doubt consider choosing a running mate who appeals to Latinos, though at the same time they must unify their disparate party members behind them. Both will have to court the growing number of Hispanic evangelicals and make concerted appeals to Latinas, since Hispanic women vote in greater numbers than Hispanic men (“Feet in 2 Worlds,” blog

entries by Lorenzo Morales, 3/13 and 4/1).

According to Pilar Marrero, a senior political reporter and columnist for *La Opinión* in Los Angeles, the nation's largest Hispanic newspaper: "Both candidates [McCain and Obama] come to the competition with certain disadvantages.... No one can say they have this vote in their pocket." In a podcast she made for "Feet in 2 Worlds," a Web project of the New School in New York City, Marrero said: "Nobody knows what's going to happen. We'll see...Latinos are voting very Democratic this time around, and I find it hard to believe that John McCain...will attract a lot of Latino voters; he's pro-war and Latinos are very anti-the Iraq war...." Marrero also said, however, that Obama would have to fight very hard for the Latino vote, even though "race is not the main motivation of most Latino voters."

Whichever political party succeeds in building Latino support in 2008 will take home a valuable prize. For the Latino population (now 47 million) is growing steadily. Latinos make up 9 percent of the eligible electorate nationwide. Largely because of language and cultural differences, however, Latino turnout at the polls tends to be lower: the Pew Hispanic Center has predicted Latino turnout to be around 6.5 percent of all who actually vote in 2008. Latinos are currently the single largest minority group in the United States, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, though the very notion that Latinos make up a single ethnic group obscures the reality. Most Latinos in the United States today are Mexican, but the term "Latino" pertains to a diverse group of nationalities and cultures and, as it might become increasingly clear, more than one or even two political viewpoints.

In political terms, Latinos still make up a large portion of voters in four of the six most contested states in the 2004 presidential election (New Mexico, Florida, Nevada and Colorado). This year, Latino influence will likely be even greater because, since 2004, the number of Latino registered voters has grown by 4 million (to 18 million). Their turnout at the polls, although historically weak when compared to African-Americans and whites, has also grown. Some Latino leaders are predicting a record turnout among Latinos in November.

Since the Latino vote is expected to be critical in swing states again, one can expect to see massive voter registration drives and get-out-the-vote projects in Latino communities. And if the last two presidential elections are any guide, one can also expect negative advertising, unsubstantiated accusations and disinformation campaigns—some of them aimed squarely at Latino voters. In Orange County, Calif., during the 2006 election, Latinos were falsely warned that an incomplete or out-of-date voting certification would be seen as voter fraud and prompt their deportation. In a tight election, which 2008 is expected to be, watchdog groups of all types will need to monitor and expose any such voter-

Which Latinos Elected Bush in 2004?

George W. Bush's victory in 2004 has been credited to Latino voters. Some political commentators have even claimed that a majority of Latinos elected Bush in the 2004 presidential election. The statistics disprove the latter claim. Yet Latino votes in certain swing states did lead to a Bush win. Here's how.

In November 2004 the exit polls differed: the news media gave Bush 44 percent of the Latino vote; the Velasquez Institute tallied it at 33 percent; the Annenberg survey put it at 41 percent. None of these shows a majority.

John F. Harris, writing in *The Washington Post* (12/26/04), used the Annenberg survey to eliminate the role of Hispanic women in giving Bush his win (Bush's support among Hispanic women rose by "a statistically insignificant 1 percentage point, to 36 percent") and to highlight the role of males and Protestants: "Protestant Hispanics gave Bush a clear majority," wrote Harris.

In four swing states that year (New Mexico, Florida, Nevada and Colorado), Latinos made up a sizeable percentage of the electorate. President Bush won in each by a margin of 5 percent or less.

Writing in *National Review*, Richard Nadler explained the high Latino vote for Bush. "In states where conservative 527 groups, such as Council for Better Government and Hispanics Together...ran intensive campaigns on Spanish-language media," Nadler wrote, "the president's Hispanic vote share increased sharply. In states where no such effort occurred, his Latino vote share improved hardly at all." In the six battleground states, where 527 groups ran 12,000 spot broadcast campaigns on Spanish-language media, Bush carried 47.17 percent of the population-weighted Latino vote, compared with 52.25 percent for Kerry. In states without such campaigns, Bush's support among Latinos was 35.9 percent. Two of the campaign advertising scripts highlighted the president's immigration policy, but in the rest the content dealt with "traditional marriage, tax breaks for families and small business, school choice, military preparedness, the right to life, personal savings accounts, and faith-based social-service delivery," wrote Nadler.

In June 2005, a report by the Pew Hispanic Center concluded: "Hispanic Protestants made up a larger share of the Latino vote (32 percent in 2004 compared with 25 percent in 2000), and 56 percent of these voters supported the president in 2004, compared with 44 percent in 2000." What about the Latino Catholic vote? The authors found that Bush's share "remained unchanged."

In sum, a majority of Protestant Latino voters in six highly contested states, states that were effectively targeted by 527 groups, added enough votes to give Bush a narrow victory there.



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intimidation schemes.

Another impediment to Latino participation is a backlog of 1 million naturalization applications that, government officials say, cannot all be processed by November. That bureaucratic problem will keep many potential voters away from the polls. But that's not all. Proposals are now being placed before voters in 19 states that would make more stringent a state's voter-registration requirements, demanding, for example, a birth certificate and/or passport. The initiatives come in the wake of the Supreme Court's upholding of the Indiana photo-identification requirement for voter registration. Should voters pass such laws? Do they solve legitimate local problems? Or are they partisan efforts to limit voter registration, especially by minorities, the poor and the elderly? These are issues the voters must decide. Such referendums, if passed, would likely limit voter participation by African-Americans and Latinos (a majority of whom are Democrats), as well as many others.

Finally, although immigration is a critically important issue to Latinos, not all Latinos agree on what makes the best immigration policy. For that reason, it may not serve the interests of either candidate to bring the issue up gratuitously.

The most significant factor to consider is that immigration does not even rank among the top three issues for Latinos, according to surveys. Rather, Latinos have named the same top three issues as have voters of both parties in general: the economy, the war in Iraq and health care. It is telling, then, that in May Senator McCain released a new Spanish-language Internet ad: McCain, Plan Económico. Perhaps the best strategy for both candidates in appealing to Latinos would be to eschew distractions, schemes and negative attacks, and to focus squarely on the issues of most concern to the whole electorate. **A**



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End of a Partnership

Catholic human rights groups part ways with Amnesty International.

BY JEFFREY ODELL KORGEN

CATHERINE MCKINNEY joined Amnesty International in 2005 during her freshman year at the University of Notre Dame, seeking a way to put her peace studies major into practice. She discovered a passionate group of like-minded peers, committed to stopping torture and the use of the death penalty. During her sophomore year, the group grew and so did her commitment. “When you’re involved with a group like that, where you feel like you’re doing a lot on campus and having an effect outside of campus too, it really makes your passion for it stronger,” she said.

McKinney never intended to become an actor in a worldwide controversy, but events proved otherwise. During summer break at her home in Longview, Tex., she was considering ideas for the group’s 2007-8 activities when a BBC news report caught her attention. The Vatican had withdrawn support from Amnesty International, it said, because of changes in Amnesty’s policy on abortion. At the time she thought the decision might not have implications for the Notre Dame chapter. When the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops weighed in, however, she realized that it would.

Since Amnesty International’s decision in summer 2007 to abandon its neutral stance and adopt policies supporting the worldwide decriminalization of abortion, much ink has been spilled on editorial pages and vitriol exchanged in the blogosphere. Yet little attention has been paid to the women and men whose efforts to promote global human rights have been severely disrupted by the policy change. Are they leaving Amnesty? Are they abandoning human rights advocacy altogether? If they continue the work to end torture and use of the death penalty, do they maintain ties with Amnesty International and its vast network?

What Is a ‘Proper’ Relationship?

Informal conversations with members of the Roundtable Association of Diocesan Social Action Directors, a project of the National Pastoral Life Center, indicate that most

JEFFREY ODELL KORGEN is secretary of the Roundtable Association of Diocesan Social Action Directors at the National Pastoral Life Center in New York City and author of *Solidarity Will Transform the World: Stories of Hope From Catholic Relief Services* (Orbis, 2007).

Catholic institutions are disaffiliating from Amnesty, some quietly, others with varying degrees of fanfare. The affiliation question, though, proves far less interesting than what comes next. Once a chapter disaffiliates, what constitutes a proper relationship with Amnesty? Initial conversations with some social action directors suggest that while a consensus may exist on the need for them to withdraw formally from Amnesty, the church has not yet reached clarity on what its proper future relationship to Amnesty might be.

As president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Bishop William Skylstad of Spokane wrote to Amnesty on Aug. 23, 2007, to express dismay at the decision to “promote worldwide access to abortion.” He noted, “...in promoting abortion, Amnesty divides its own members (many of whom are Catholics and others who defend the rights of unborn children).”

Amnesty took issue with the phrase “promoting abortion,” vigorously denying this interpretation and offering accounts of women raped during wartime as an example of the concerns driving their policy change. Amnesty’s subsequent policy prescriptions, however, reached far beyond rape victims. The organization has taken a position, for example, against the ban in the United States on partial-birth abortion, a prohibition that enjoys wide support among Americans.

By its own description, Amnesty International aims to “support the decriminalization of abortion, to ensure that women have access to health care when complications arise from abortion, and to defend women’s access to abortion, within reasonable gestational limits, when their *health or life are in danger*” (italics added). Many in the pro-life community view those last words as code for promoting access to abortion for virtually any rationale, since the term “health” has been widely interpreted to encompass mental health, and doctors have defined “mental health” quite liberally.

As the letters changed hands and editorials and blogs heated up the discussion, Catherine McKinney set off on the long drive from Texas to Indiana to resume her studies. Like many Catholic human rights activists, she and her peers faced a difficult choice. Amnesty International had introduced them to concrete methods for stopping torture and the use of the death penalty, yet the organization had

decided to champion access to a procedure the church considers “intrinsically evil.”

“I was driving back to school, and I got a call from Gary Nijak who was president [of the Amnesty chapter] at the time, saying that a discussion was going on and something was going to have to change,” recalls McKinney. “He made the decision to disaffiliate with Amnesty, since school was not in session yet.” A group decision would have to be made by fall 2007 if the group was to remain an officially sanctioned student organization, approved by the Notre Dame Student Activities Office. McKinney and Nijak convened the student members to determine the next steps. Their decision was clear: the mission would continue, even if the affiliation with Amnesty could not. They refounded the group as Human Rights Notre Dame.

Steps After Disaffiliation

Disaffiliating with Amnesty was simple. Laying out the details of a new relationship to Amnesty was not. Could the new Human Rights Notre Dame group use Amnesty resources in its work on cases of torture overseas? The Student Activities Office first ruled no, but reversed itself weeks later, maintaining that simply learning about the work of Amnesty and acting in concert on campaigns in accord with church teaching was not the same as affiliating as a chapter, with the full endorsement of all the organization’s work that this would imply.

Human Rights Notre Dame has severed contact with Amnesty International’s regional office, but continues to use Amnesty’s Web site as a source for its own urgent action messages on torture and death penalty cases. The student group also draws from OxFam sources, and for its Fair Trade campaign it uses Catholic Relief Services materials.

While happy with the continued student membership levels and the energy of Human Rights Notre Dame, McKinney, as the newly elected president, is concerned that fewer students who were involved with Amnesty in high school or their home parishes will now join Human Rights Notre Dame. The institutional loyalty that fostered a seamless transition in membership from high school to college is gone. She also wonders aloud why College Democrats and College Republicans are not held to the same standard,



Scott Langley, who is the Death Penalty Abolition Coordinator for Amnesty International in North Carolina, participates with Christian activists in a protest against a scheduled execution in front of Central Prison in Raleigh, N.C.

since “both of their [party] platforms have something which contradicts Catholic social teaching—access to abortion and the use of the death penalty, respectively.”

The number of students arriving at Notre Dame with high school and parish experience with Amnesty will undoubtedly drop, as new policies develop at the high school level in response to Amnesty’s policy change. At St. Francis High School in Mountain View, Calif., for example, it fell to Salvatore Chavez, director of campus ministry, to make decisions about the future of the school’s Amnesty International club. “I tried to figure out a way we could be connected with them, even though the church is not pro-abortion,” Chavez recalled. “I hoped maybe there was a way for the relationship to continue. When I read what they said, I didn’t see how we could. Then the diocese called and said that the church in San Jose was severing relationships with Amnesty and to look for some other way of keeping this club going.”

Chavez looked for another human rights organization with which to affiliate the club. At first Human Rights Watch appeared attractive, but when he studied their Web site he found the same policy on abortion as Amnesty International. The best approach seemed to be not to affiliate with any particular national or international group, but to create a wholly new organization. They called theirs “Voices of Hope.” Chavez is now working on a new strategy with the Voices of Hope faculty advisor to draw from a variety of sources: some country-focused, like Save Darfur, and some issue-based, like organizations working to free child soldiers.

With regard to Amnesty International, Chavez has determined that the best policy is to sever all contact, even bypassing their Web site as a source of cases to work on. "It's difficult—what are we teaching the kids by associating with Amnesty? Maybe as an educational institution we should teach them to find other sources and make a clean break with Amnesty," he explains. At his school, Chavez believes, students might hear the wrong message if Voices of Hope uses Amnesty materials.

How One Diocese Responded

The struggle over maintaining a proper relationship with

Amnesty in this new era is not limited to schools. In the Archdiocese of Detroit, Msgr. Robert McClory, the chancellor, has removed Amnesty International's links from the Web site of the Office for Catholic Social Teaching and revoked permission for a chapter to meet at Sacred Heart Major Seminary. "It's disappointing," he says. But Monsignor McClory has left open the door to collaboration on issues of common concern. "On particular cases, we can work together," he adds. "But the kind of in-depth collaborative work of the past would be stifled by the decision they've taken."

Monsignor McClory's approach would place Amnesty

International among a host of organizations whose missions set them at odds with the church on some issues and allied with the church on others. The church's peace and justice ministries regularly produce coalitions of strange bedfellows, such as collaboration with Planned Parenthood to stop welfare "family caps" in the mid-1990s. Such coalitions do not imply full endorsement of all the positions of a coalition partner. Amnesty's privileged relationship with the church may be finished, but coalitions on common issues may yet be possible, Monsignor McClory suggests.

If there is any encouraging sign, it is that a focus on mission guided by sound judgment seems to be showing a way forward for Catholic groups. A strong message has been sent to Amnesty about its new abortion policy through the loss of Catholic institutional chapters; yet groups continue, unaffiliated, under new names. Many (though not all) still make use of resources from Amnesty to some degree, frequently renamed for distribution.

One wonders if a new Catholic organization against torture and the use of the death penalty will emerge in the vacuum, or whether an existing abortion-neutral human rights organization like the Interreligious Campaign Against Torture will become more prominent. Meanwhile, the mission to stop torture and the use of the death penalty continues in countless Catholic institutions, regardless of the policy changes of Amnesty International or any similar secular organization. **A**



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Britain's Brave New World

A new hybrid embryo bill ignores ethical concerns.

BY AUSTEN IVEREIGH

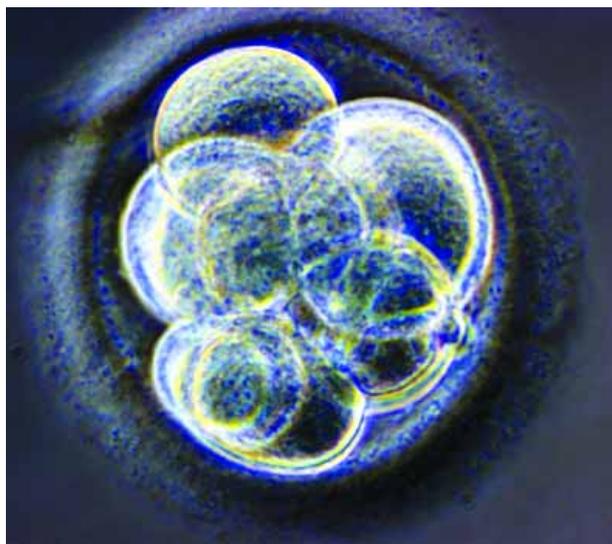
THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT'S decision on May 19 to allow laboratories in Britain to create a new kind of embryo, part human and part animal, was hailed as a victory for science over religious (and specifically Catholic) doctrine. In reality, it was the victory of a newly fashionable secularist dogma—the notion that scientific inquiry should be unconstrained—over the far more reasonable idea that tampering with human life for medical purposes requires a compelling ethical justification. The Parliament, in other words, has declared science in Britain to be an ethics-free zone.

This was made clear during a panel discussion held on the eve of the vote on the Human Fertilization and Embryology Bill. The case in favor was put by a professor of genetics at Newcastle University, John Burn, a pioneer of stem cell research in the same institute that in the mid-1990s brought Dolly, the cloned sheep, into the world. Instead of a passionate defense of how vital embryonic stem cells are to future cures of Parkinson's and Alzheimer's disease, Professor Burn candidly admitted that most of the funding and resourcing at his Center for Life went into ethically incontrovertible adult stem cells, where all the therapeutic advances have so far been made.

Embryonic research, he said, was a small sideline, involving just 5 percent of its research grants and only two scientists. But he believed that embryonic stem cell research (legal in Britain since the original

AUSTEN IVEREIGH, former adviser to Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, is a writer and journalist based in London.

H.F.E. Act of 1990) should continue, because it could yet yield results; and because there was a shortage of human eggs available for cloning, he wanted to be



A photograph published May 19, 2005, shows a cloned human embryo, created at the Centre for Life in Newcastle upon Tyne, England, three days after the nuclear transfer took place. A team led by Miodrag Stojkovic announced that they created a cluster of human cells, known as a blastocyst, by inserting DNA into an unfertilized human egg and inducing it to multiply.

able to take a cow's egg and fuse it with human cells. The future of embryonic research, in other words, requires hybrids (half-animal, half-human) as well as cybrids (99 percent human, 1 percent animal). Embryonic research was justified because it gave scientists more information about the behavior of early stem cell development, not because it was expected to lead to cures. Professor Burn had no ethical problem with embryonic research and did not see why the Catholic Church—which, he claimed, had bizarre theories about 14-day-old embryos having souls—should be allowed to stop him.

Unlike the British prime minister, Gordon Brown, who has adopted the hype of the medical research lobby that embryo

experiments are vital to achieving “break-throughs” using stem cell research, Professor Burn stuck to facts. But what was missing from his justification was any moral calculation; there was no weighing up of the benefits of the ends against the ethical quandaries of the means. Having opened the door, he just wanted to open it farther, and he failed to see why anyone should block it with dogma.

Although the British press tried to raise it, Galileo's ghost was nowhere to be seen in this debate. In their mostly gentle statements (with the exception of Cardinal Keith O'Brien of Edinburgh, who could not resist some Frankenstein metaphors), Catholic bishops have been careful to point out the benefits of stem cell research while reminding people that “scientific pragmatism is always counterbalanced with ethical considerations,” as the Archbishop of Birmingham, Vincent Nichols, put it. The ethical duty that society owes to human life requires a stringent scrutiny of claims of possible benefits, he said. “If not, then early human life will become unprotected ‘fair game’ for any use at all.”

The church, in other words, was proposing a reasoned examination of the ethics weighed against the anticipated benefits—while the medical research lobby has been resorting to an entirely unreasonable claim to be free of any such examination.

The government went further, claiming that the prospect of cures made the research an “inherently moral endeavor.” By focusing a skeptical public on the prospect of freedom from crippling diseases and by conflating the achievements in adult stem cell research with embryonic



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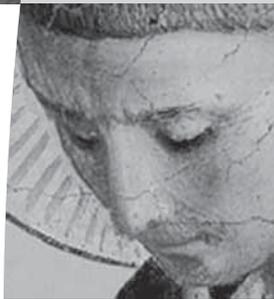
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ic research, there was no need to deal with the ethical reservations. Prime Minister Gordon Brown claimed quite untruthfully that scientists “are close to the breakthroughs that will allow embryonic stem cells to be used to treat a much wider range of conditions,” before adding, wildly, that medical researchers “argue that the safest way to maintain progress is to make use of animal eggs from which the animal genetic material is almost entirely removed.”

Yet the progress of adult stem cell research in no way depends on or has even benefited from embryonic stem cell research. As a number of leading stem cell scientists wrote in a letter to The Times of London, “such proposals are highly speculative in comparison to established sources of human stem cells and we remain unaware of any cogent evidence suggesting any might yield significant therapeutic dividend.” Ethical considerations aside, it would be far too dangerous: they are prone to forming tumors. Some months ago the highly regarded New England Journal of Medicine regretted that “the technical difficulties and ethical complexities” of using cloned human embryonic stem cells “were always likely to render it impractical.” As the neuroscientist Professor Neil Scolding wrote recently, “Few serious embryonic stem-cell scientists will speak in support of cybrid embryos specifically on the basis of their intrinsic potential for therapeutic research.”

The idea that there is no need to weigh ethical reservations about the use of human life against the anticipated benefits of research makes Britain’s neighbors nervous. In Germany, where creating chimeras (human-animal hybrids) is against the law, the German Medical Association said it showed that the British were “developing a completely different relationship to growing life.” Germany’s 20th-century experience of the commodification of human beings has sensitized its culture to the need for placing moral fences around scientific research. But in Britain, members of Parliament who had the same sensitivity were drowned out by the panegyrics to scientific freedom and the scornful dismissal of “religious” reservations. As Professor Burn told the panel, under the microscope 14-day-old human embryos “look just like semolina.” **A**

On Religious Liberty

BY JOHN COURTNEY MURRAY

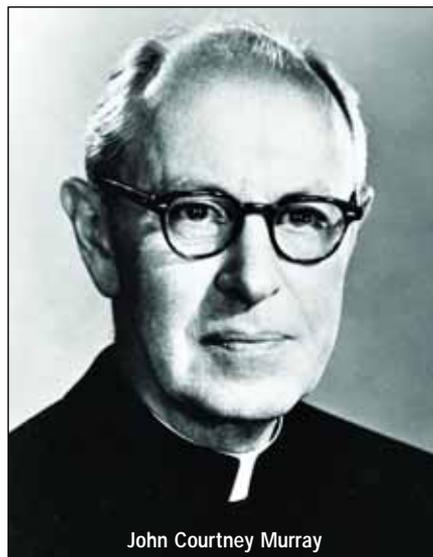
THE ISSUE OF RELIGIOUS liberty is of the highest interest to me both as a theologian and as an American. It is, as it were, *the* American issue at the Council. The American episcopate is greatly pleased that the issue has finally appeared on the agenda of the Council, notwithstanding many efforts to block discussion of it. Through Cardinal Spellman the American bishops made a strong intervention, demanding that the issue be presented to the conciliar Fathers. And all of them are prepared strongly to support, and indeed to strengthen, the text that has been written by the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity....

The Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity composed its text before Pope John XXIII published his encyclical *Pacem in Terris*. But the doctrine of the text is identical with the doctrine of the encyclical. The text represents the term of a lengthy development of theological thought in the matter, and the encyclical confirms the validity of this development.

There are, in general, two essential points of doctrine. First, it is asserted that every man by right of nature (*jure naturae*) has the right to the free exercise of religion in society according to the dictates of his personal conscience. This right belongs essentially to the dignity of the human person as such. Secondly, the juridical consequences of this right are asserted, namely, that an obligation falls on other men in society, and upon the state in particular, to acknowledge this personal right, to respect it in practice, and to promote its free exercise. This is, in a mode of general statement, the heart of the matter.

JOHN COURTNEY MURRAY, S.J., a former contributing editor to *America*, was instrumental in preparing the "Declaration on Religious Liberty" of the Second Vatican Council. This reflection, sent from Rome during the second session of the council, appeared in the issue of Nov. 30, 1963.

I think, however, it is necessary to take one further step. And here I speak as an American, out of the Anglo-American tradition of politics, law and jurisprudence. The American constitutional system is based squarely on two fundamental principles: first, man is endowed by his Creator with certain inalienable rights; second, government and the order of law exist pri-



John Courtney Murray

marily for the protection and promotion of these rights. These principles were clearly affirmed by Pius XII and by John XXIII. However, the American system also enshrines another principle, namely, the incompetence of government as judge or arbiter in the field of religious truth, as also, for instance, in the field of art and science....

This principle, which asserts the incompetence of secular authority in the field of religion, is deeply embedded in the true political tradition of the Christian West. It is also affirmed within the theological tradition of the Church. Leo XIII, for instance, made it quite clear that political authority has no part whatsoever in the care of souls (*cura animarum*) or in the control of the minds of men (*regimen animorum*). It is, of course, true that this political principle was obscured in Europe

for centuries, largely in consequence of the rise of royal absolutism and the "Union of Throne and Altar." The true tradition was, however, preserved in the American constitutional system. Absolutism never set foot in America, much to the joy both of the Church and of the American people. Together with my fellow countrymen, both Catholic and non-Catholic, I should like to see this principle asserted in the final conciliar text on religious freedom. It is, I think, essential to the case for religious freedom in society. It completes the theological and ethical arguments by adding to them a sound political argument. And this political principle, namely, that political authority is incompetent in the field of religion, needs particularly to be invoked when there is question of legal limitations to be imposed on the free exercise of religion in society....

In conclusion, I might note that two essential questions face the Council. The first is pastoral and ecumenical. The Church has always fought for her own freedom and for the freedom of her children. The question today is, whether the Church should extend her pastoral solicitude beyond her own boundaries and assume an active patronage of the freedom of the human person, who was created by God as his image, who was redeemed by the blood of Christ, who stands today under a massive threat to everything that human dignity and personal freedom mean. The second question is doctrinal. Is the assumption of this universal pastoral solicitude warranted? Is it grounded in the doctrinal tradition of the Church with regard to human dignity and the rights of man? I think the answer must be affirmative, if only the tradition of the Church is understood to be what it is, namely, a tradition of growth in fuller understanding of the truth. **A**



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Fidelity and Fecundity

A farmer explores a 'vocation of location.'

BY KYLE T. KRAMER

ALMOST A DECADE AGO, I bought a rough piece of neglected crop land and cut-over woods in southern Indiana to pursue a wild ideal—organic farming and sustainable homesteading. I knew such a choice might limit many other opportunities, and even though I hoped to be married and raise a family on my new plot of land, chances of that looked slim at the time. A local woman who cuts my hair (and knows the entire county) confirmed early on, with a sad sigh of finality, that my romantic situation was essentially hopeless: all the eligible local women my age had either already married or left the county or both.

In light of such bleak romantic prospects, I pursued a different sort of courtship, committing myself to making a home in this particular place. In a way, I began to see the farm itself as a sort of spouse. Granted, the union was more like an arranged marriage, since I had chosen and purchased the land without its consent. But as in a marriage contract, I'd bound our futures and fates together.

As I got to know the farm better, I felt a shift in my thinking from a sense of ownership and idealism to a deeper, more personal, even tender connection. I began truly to care about, not just to care for, this particular piece of land, and pledged fidelity to the relationship for better and for worse. Believing in what the farm

KYLE T. KRAMER is the director of lay degree programs at Saint Meinrad School of Theology in Saint Meinrad, Ind.

could become with good work and devotion, and in what I could become by providing them, I believed that it could be a worthy though humble vocation simply to nurture this patch of ground back to health and to tend it well.

The Final Frontier

As anyone in a long-term commitment knows, fidelity to a particular place or person means saying no to a number of other choices and opportunities. Such willing self-limitation runs counter to my

instincts and to American culture, where freedom seems to mean having a huge array of options and leaving all of them open; we think a new spouse, a new job, a new geography or a new gadget will finally bring us happiness and fulfillment. A frontier mentality resides deep in the American DNA, in mine as much as in that of the next person. Our temptation is to believe in the future as a panacea for the present. Why not keep moving, keep striving forward? Isn't restlessness the root of creativity and discovery? Doesn't stay-



ART BY DAN SALAMIDA

ing put and settling down lead to lethargy, stagnation and parochial small-mindedness?

Perhaps. But while we might still have a frontier mentality, we have no more frontiers. We ran out of country in the 19th century, and in the 20th and 21st we've run out of world. Of late we have come to see the finitude and even smallness of our planet—through high-speed travel, communications technology and global commerce, but also through the pressures of population growth, strained agricultural systems, pollution and climate change and the economy's voracious appetite for energy and raw materials. We cannot keep going west—or east, north, south, up or down.

With the closing of the external frontier, the human task becomes not one of seeking greener pastures, but learning to make green (and keep green) the pastures where we are. As the writer and farmer Wendell Berry has always insisted, this must ultimately be a concrete, local task: to inhabit fully the particular places we have chosen and to live with care within these borders. But how can we care about a place we do not love? How can we love a place we do not know? And how can we know a place except by sticking around long enough to make its acquaintance?

A Commitment to Place

The *Rule of St. Benedict*, a wise, 1,500-year-old document governing the life of monastic communities, stresses the importance of stability: monks make a commitment to spend their lives in one place, with one community. I am no monk, although I work daily around the Benedictine monks of Saint Meinrad Archabbey. I see how their vow of stability is really a simple invitation to truth: to work beyond surface impressions or pretensions to a truer, deeper sort of belonging to themselves and their community.

When one chooses a "vocation of location"—whether as monk or layperson, whether on a farm or in an urban neighborhood—notions of fancy soon fade against reality. As experience shifted my thinking from an abstract "field" and "woods" to *this* field and *these* woods, my farm revealed itself to me in wonderful and difficult ways. I learned where the soil is eroded and exhausted or deep and fertile, where it grows great melons or poor



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hay, where the sandy loam drains well and the heavy clay lies wet. In the woodlot, I discovered the black walnuts and their green-globed gifts in the fall; the shagbark and slickbark hickories, which split easy and burn hot in the wood stove—and the elms, which do not; the few old black cherry and tulip poplar trees that somehow escaped the chain saw and whose

Caring for a piece of land had engendered in me some degree of patience, nurture, attention and humility so crucial in our marriage.

girth I cannot get my arms halfway around (though I have tried). And I am coming to know the unkindness of lightning strikes and strong winds, the slow-healing scars of poor logging, the valiant and doomed struggle of trees against disease or the life-choking shade of a closing forest canopy.

A commitment to a particular place means learning not just what it truly is, but who you are in relationship to it.

Like a good spouse, the land is a patient teacher, showing me what it needs, instructing me in the art of stewardship, accepting and encouraging my best efforts and my dreams of what the place could be. But also like a good spouse, it confronts my mistakes and missteps, reacting to my ignorance and carelessness and laziness: gullies where there should be grass, collapsed and unrepaired tile lines, ruts of compacted soil from tractors driven over too-wet fields, unattended weeds proliferating. It can also witness my better moments of nurture and care: well-tended, bountiful vegetable plots, planted trees reaching for the blue roof of the sky, an ordered comeliness of house, barn and pond.

True Belonging

Belonging to a place must also mean belonging among its people. When I first began getting to know my neighbors, I foolishly chose to “fit in,” a false form of belonging. Aware of being an outsider in a long-memoried place where second and third generations of people are often considered newcomers, I tried to conform

myself to what I thought their expectations were of a neighbor. Amid practical people, I threw hay and fixed tractors, but didn't let on to being a musician or a writer. Amid folks with deeply conservative outlooks, I kept my political and theological views to myself. Amid conventional row-crop farmers, I felt I had to apologize for refusing to use chemicals on my little

organic farm.

As I got to know my neighbors, however, I learned a truer sort of belonging. I had seen them as the “salt of the earth” or, to borrow Flannery O'Connor's phrase, “good country people,” which they are. Yet their saltiness and goodness includes a full gamut of struggles and idiosyncrasies, a mixture of darkness and light. In relief at this discovery, I let myself unfold: to become more vulnerable, honest and transparent, less apologetic about who I am and what I believe. Then I began to feel an acceptance in the community, not based on how well I conformed to a generic ideal of the “good neighbor,” but rather on the blessed quirks and contradictions of who I am. And while I still keep most of my political and religious views to myself, I found that many of the things about myself I thought I had to hide were actually the best gifts I can offer to my neighbors. These have become key anchors for belonging in this rural community: providing music at neighborhood gatherings, tilling neighbors' gardens and offering advice about organic gardening, answering curious questions about the solar panels perched on the barn roof, even writing a poem upon a neighbor's passing.

God's Generosity

A tree bears fruit through its instinctive fidelity: by standing still and growing roots and branches. I believe that any human fidelity—attending to a place, a spouse, a vocation—brings a similar blessing of fecundity. Such fruit, however, does

not come as a reward for jaw-clenched discipline and self-enforced misery. For at its core, the power of fidelity is not duty or principle or moral uprightness or even truth in the abstract sense, but love, which St. Paul knew to be the deepest truth of all: “the greatest of all these is love.”

By its divine nature, love is wildly, wonderfully generous. Out of love God made the world, and so the world reflects love's generosity. As soon as the dry land appeared in the first chapter of Genesis, it brought forth seed- and fruit-bearing vegetation; the first command God gave the original couple was to be fruitful and multiply. In this we see a model for authentic human vocation: God invites us to love and belong in creation, and from our fidelity to places, relationships and good work within both will come the blessing of fecundity—whether it be children, a productive farm, a creative pursuit, a strong community, a healthy civic life or expansion of the “inner frontier” of personal growth and wisdom. God did not intend that we define ourselves as mere “consumers” of goods (hence, producers of waste and pollution), but rather as faithful lovers, whose love adds something precious and beautiful to the world.

In spite of my barber's dire predictions, after standing still and putting down roots I eventually met and married a wonderful woman who shared similar values and hopes, and who was willing to live several counties away from the nearest Starbucks. And while I am far from a perfect partner, I would like to think that being a faithful husbandman helped prepare me to be a faithful husband. Caring for a piece of land had engendered in me, often painfully and always imperfectly, some degree of patience, nurture, attention and humility so crucial in our marriage. As I saw how another new loyalty came to complement my commitment to my—now our—place, I discovered that all fidelity is of a piece: faithfulness in one arena can beget or strengthen faithfulness in another.

Divine love calls us to fidelity and promises us fecundity. As we come to belong fully and freely and fruitfully to our farms or cities or towns, to the people in our lives, to the wider world, we taste the promise of that yet more beautiful belonging where all may find a home in God. 

My Brother and Lazarus

‘If you had been here, my brother would not have died.’

BY PATRICK J. McDONALD

NEW S ABOUT MY brother’s death erupts in a late afternoon phone call. “John’s dead,” my brother-in-law Mike keeps repeating. “Dead,” he yells. “At a shopping mall shooting in Omaha. There’s a lot of other dead and wounded as well. The news is still coming in.”

I sit shaking as I take in the sparse information. Mike moves on to call other friends. I quickly inform my wife. She collapses into my arms and we hold on to each other and cry. Waves of vulnerability roll over us and we turn to familiar psalms for a mooring. Between sobs we read to each other, listening for the soothing cadence we know from Psalm 91:

*If you cling to me I will deliver you;
I will protect you because you acknowledge
my name.*

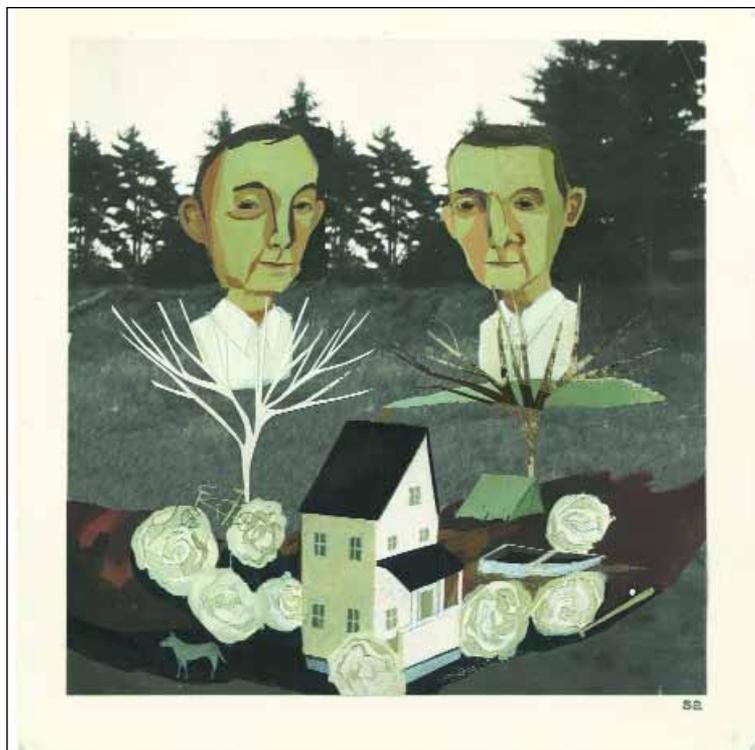
*You shall call upon me and I will answer
you.*

*I will be with you in time of trouble;
I will bring you safety and honor.*

*I will give you life long and full
and will show you my salvation.*

Ready for more details about the shooting, we link through the Internet to Omaha TV. Sure enough: at least six unnamed victims are confirmed dead and

PATRICK J. McDONALD is a marital and family therapist with a private practice in Des Moines, Iowa.



an unknown number wounded, several critically. An unidentified shooter had opened fire, then shot himself, during a busy pre-Christmas shopping day. We wait, we listen, we know the news is final, but I still plead, “Please Jesus, don’t let my brother die.”

We turn this time to John’s Gospel, searching for a device to measure our anguish, and our vulnerability is stirred again over the Lazarus story (John 11). It deepens as a messenger delivers a concise message to Jesus, somewhere in the Judean wilderness: “Lord, the one you love is ill” (Jn 11:3). The message is from Martha and Mary, sisters of the sick Lazarus.

Rather than leave the wilderness and rush to Bethany, Jesus delays the trip, while the conversation languishes in double meanings about whether Lazarus is asleep,

sick, dead or alive—or destined to be an example for a new teaching. Jesus seems emotionally detached in his reflections on his friend’s situation. Two days later, after Jesus says that Lazarus is dead, he decides to go to Bethany. Yet Jesus frames the mission as an opportunity to awaken Lazarus from his sleep (Jn 11:14-15).

Official confirmation of the death of my brother comes with no clouded interpretation. It is now hot news on local television: John McDonald, age 65, grandfather to seven girls, dead with seven others at the Westridge Shopping Center in Omaha. The shooter, a 19-year-old male from the

area, is dead as well, apparently by suicide.

Questions

Our personal network comes to life. My wife and I find our office filling up with friends, visibly shocked by the magnitude of the tragedy.

The situation in Bethany seems to have been similar. The Gospel account describes a house full of friends, likely bearing food, no doubt telling stories about Lazarus—his life and his death.

Martha leaves home to greet Jesus as he approaches the village. Her greeting seems more an expression of faith than a warm hug. “If you had been here,” she says, “my brother would not have died, but I know that, even now, what you ask of God, he will grant you.” Jesus responds with what sounds like a stylized expression, perhaps a prayer formulation from

ART BY STEFANIE AUGUSTINE

the early Johannine community: "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will never die. Even though you die, if you believe in me, you will live" (Jn 11:25-26).

I am well known in my village, so a local television station asks if I will grant an interview. I weigh the implications of what is asked, knowing that if I can keep it together emotionally, I may be a voice of support and moderation for the other victims.

The interview flows smoothly, as I call for peace and forgiveness. I make the case that in outbursts of violence of this sort, we are all victims, since we all belong to the same human family. When one member suffers, we all suffer, including the shooter. I also say that this is another call to do something about the number of handguns and assault rifles within easy reach in the United States.

The television crew scans vacation photos I keep at my office: John and I river rafting, fishing, sightseeing at Glacier National Park. John's bright smile and captivating presence dominate every picture. Brothers.

Many of those gathered this night knew John as a man of peace, active in social justice concerns, always a reconciler. "Where is God in all this?" someone asks. "Why the timing?" "Why were John and his wife at the courtesy counter at precisely the moment the shooter stepped off the elevator and opened fire?" "Why could they not have been delayed by holiday traffic and miss the whole sordid event? Fifteen minutes would have saved their lives." Some of the questions sound too much like a paraphrase of Martha's assertion: if Jesus had been there, your brother would not have died.

As the night deepens, more news comes in. The shooter carried a military assault rifle, an AK-47 with two 30-round magazines, under his sweatshirt into the shopping area. He shot rapid-fire and randomly for six interminable minutes at anyone bracketed in his sights. He honed his killing efficiency at a store courtesy counter, where customers were getting Christmas gifts wrapped. John died near the counter while his wife of 40 years observed the killing. Then the shooter turned the rifle on himself.

I tell the story too many times, run out of tears, then return home depressed and

exhausted. Fearful of sleep, in the silence of a winter night, I turn again to the Lazarus story.

Tears

Martha returns home to Bethany and pulls Mary aside to inform her that "the Master" wishes to see her. With no announcement of her intentions, Mary leaves the house. A puzzled group of friends gather together and march behind her, believing that she is going to visit the tomb of Lazarus.

She greets Jesus by throwing herself at his feet, crying out from a black hole of loss, emptiness, hurt, impatience and anger. The Evangelist tries to describe her emotions by using the Greek word: *embri-masthai* (Jn 11:33). He characterizes the exchange as an expression of angry agitation. I see it as an unruly emotional escalation.

The escalation picks up momentum with Mary's unapologetic wailing. I see her collapse in the dust at the feet of Jesus, refusing help from those around her, hammering home a powerful protest: "If you had been here, my brother would not have died."

Jesus is clearly moved and becomes agitated until his emotional state intensifies into an outpouring of tears. Mary's cortege catches the wave, and the crowd swells with empathy, sorrow and accusation. Someone points a finger and says, "If this man could restore sight to the blind man, he could have saved Lazarus from dying." Jesus bluntly asks Mary, "Where have you put him?"

I get caught up in the entanglement and cry out to an empty room, "God help me; why didn't you save my brother?"

Silence.

During the next several days, the shopping mall carnage is cleaned up, the bodies are released, the funeral preparations are made, the family does its work and we move to rituals of farewell.

As life begins to redefine itself, the different styles of grieving embraced by Martha and Mary continue to haunt me. My thoughts shift back and forth between the resurrection statements of Jesus and the unruly emotions connected with loss. Nothing fits together. Only occasional insights about the meaning of life and death offer any relief from the cruelty of a violent crime.

Burial

St. John's campus church at Creighton University becomes the site of a moving liturgy. It is a homecoming celebration of sorts, since John and I both graduated from Creighton Prep; our school building was part of the old Creighton campus. The formal and labored liturgies of a pre-Vatican II church were sold to us as an essential part of our early formation. The unfeeling God of my youth has moved on and the God of unconditional love now dwells in this sacred space. That makes homecoming a lot easier. John and his family are Creighton University graduates. A cousin, Dan McDonald, S.J., from the Gregorian University in Rome, is the main celebrant.

The liturgy lifts our awareness to new heights by reminding us that the risen life is the final destiny of all those present. My brother's life becomes a living symbol of the power of the resurrection. It becomes clear to me that he really did not die. He is in the presence of the God whom he loves in a totally new way.

I now see glimpses of John's life reflected in those all around me. I see him in the talk of forgiveness, especially for Robert Hawkins, the 19-year-old shooter. Hawkins spent a number of his adolescent years moving in and out of correctional institutions in Nebraska, and was discharged upon reaching adulthood. His history of failure and feelings of inadequacy were reflected in a suicide note left behind for his mother and stepfather. He believed he was treated poorly for his entire life and was tired of it all. He intended to go out and take others down with him. His rage found violent expression in the carnage, grief and ruined lives of the Omaha killing day.

I heard no one, from the first breaking news to the meal at the end of the burial service, say anything about hatred, retaliation or vindictiveness. Forgiveness reflects the deep spirit of my brother.

So does peacemaking. In the fury of the shooting, John risked his life trying to get Robert to lay down his gun. Hawkins responded to him with his last expletive, then fired three bullets into John's head and one into his leg. Because of this rage, John's casket was closed at the service.

Hawkins then turned the gun on himself. One bullet under the chin and he was dead.

The Omaha police affirm that John's intervention probably saved the lives of 10 to 20 people. Hawkins had plenty of ammunition left to destroy others huddled just a few steps away in another room. But apparently horror upon seeing what he had done to my brother led Hawkins to kill himself sooner than he had planned.

As it was, victim and shooter died within seconds of each other, one affirming life and the other diminishing it.

Their convoluted exchange transcended time and space. Maybe John's efforts to reach out to Robert could be completed only in the resurrection milieu, and they were both redeemed by the action. I find echoes of my intuition in the Lazarus story.

Resurrection

It unfolds in layers while following two interrelated tracks. The resurrection promise is poetic and measured, spoken by Jesus to Martha during a teaching moment. Martha does not argue with Jesus; she understands that her brother is in good hands. The interpersonal dynamic around Mary, by contrast, is stormy, undefined and loose-ended. The interweaving of the two tracks leaves much unresolved, but it puts us in touch with a real drama of loss and emptiness.

I find Mary a more believable character than Martha, because she expresses her emotions freely. The notion that the truth in life comes from pain, emptiness and fear, and that these open us up to hear more clearly, is an unwieldy one. I heard the resurrection talk innumerable times in my life, but never so clearly as when I looked at John's closed casket and cried again.

I also find a kinship with Jesus, who stayed outside the tomb. Lazarus smelled, so there was no doubt about his being dead. Friend or not, Jesus kept his distance. Yet if he truly loved Lazarus, could he not have entered the dark tomb to retrieve him, or stretched out his hand to him, or given him a hug, or welcomed him back with some sort of affection? I wonder if Jesus was as reluctant to enter the tomb as I am to enter the darkness of my own mind.

I struggle viscerally with the profound loss of John. I even feel some anger at times because he left his hiding place behind a pile of chairs to confront the gunman. He would still be with us as

brother and friend had he not been so selfless. I still have nightmares about what happened to him during the last five seconds of his life. I was not as close to the trauma as those on the scene, but nightmarish images of the last seconds now enslave my imagination. Part of me wants to know the details, yet I do not really want to know more. That is entering the dark tomb, and it is scary and cold in there. I might not find my way back out. Besides, the tomb is the domain of the dead, not of the living. I prefer to rest in the warm sunshine in the land of the living and retain memories of my brother's warm smile and pleasant manner as a defining image of his life.

We repeat that Jesus is both God and man, truly divine and truly human. I do not doubt his ability to bring Lazarus back to life. My brother's death has reconfirmed a trust in God that I might have taken for granted during easier times. That grounds me.

If we say that Jesus is truly human, he was subject to the same laws of doubt, denial and uncertainty about death as the rest of us. His delayed arrival in Bethany,

his desire to stay on the plane of thoughtful reflection in the presence of Martha and his absence from the interior of the tomb tell me a lot about his lived experience. I find his tears as reassuring as his utterances about the resurrection.

Deep truths flow from profound sources and evolve through messy and unwieldy experiences. We understand these realities both analytically and viscerally. To sidestep one dimension is to cheapen the other. The two dimensions of faith and hard-won wisdom always remain in an uneasy balance.

I plan to revisit the Lazarus story until I understand its layers more thoroughly. I also know that the story promises more freedom, yet to be discovered. As Lazarus stepped out into the warm sunlight, blinked a few times and thought about recreating his life, Jesus ordered, "Unwrap his binding and let him go free."

The account gives me permission to ask some trusted friends to help untie the cloth strips that bind me, to allow my tired spirit to feel the warm sunshine and to allow my eyes to marvel at the gift of life all around me. 

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Book Reviews

A Broader Religious Vision

Souled Out

Reclaiming Faith and Politics After the Religious Right

by E. J. Dionne Jr.

Princeton Univ. Press. 256p \$24.95

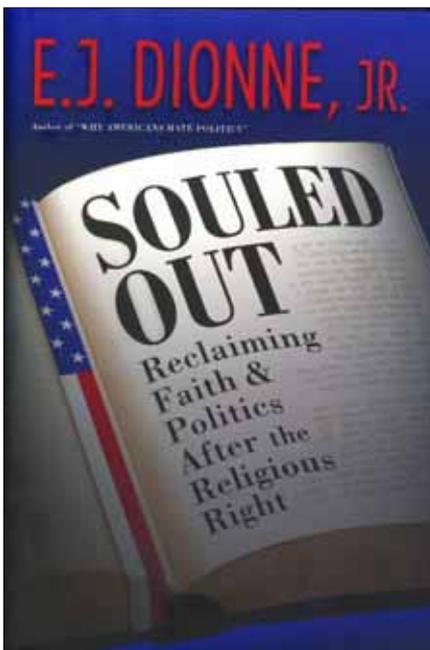
ISBN 9780691134581

E. J. Dionne brings special credentials to this book on the role of religion in American politics. As a former New York Times correspondent to the Vatican, current political analyst for The Washington Post and professor at Georgetown University, he knows the present with the keen sense of a beat reporter and the past with the perspective of the scholarly historian. He seems to have read and digested every book written on the subject, as 20 pages of footnotes amply attest. The result is an astute and important review of the intersection of faith and public policy.

How has religion intersected with American political life? Dionne discerns three phases. The first and longest, lasting from the founding of the nation well into the 20th century, was defined by “religious liberty and tolerance.” For complex reasons, in the 1960s the guiding principle was subtly altered by Supreme Court rulings interpreting the First Amendment’s prohibition of religious “establishment.” The earlier choice for religious “liberty,” which allowed prayer in the public schools, was set aside in the interest of a judicially constructed “wall of separation between church and state.” The third and present phase moves beyond tolerance and separation to exclusion of religion from public debate. Dionne expresses the current mood in this sentence of his concluding chapter: “Many Americans, and not just atheists, would like religious voices to shut up and clear out of the public square.”

Why has religion in politics become suspect to so many—believers included? One answer is suggested by the title of Dionne’s book, *Souled Out: Reclaiming Faith and Politics After the Religious Right*. When critics inveigh against religious

intrusion in politics it is usually “the religious right” that is the presumed danger. The religious right is criticized for its fundamentalist readings of the Bible and narrow moralism. These biblical literalists demand teaching Genesis over Darwin in the schools and invoking public sanctions against private “sins,” like homosexuality. The intrusion of these religious views into



politics has often driven policy during the administration of George W. Bush.

There is something out of place about the current reading of the religious right. “Right” is really a political term that fails to capture the role of religion in our political discourse within American history and even within fundamentalism itself. Putting on his historian’s hat, Dionne reminds us that that staunch fundamentalist William Jennings Bryan, lampooned for his defense of Genesis in the Scopes trial, championed in his long political career the federal income tax, railroad regulation, the Department of Labor, campaign fund disclosure and the abolition of capital punishment. None of the above are favorite causes of Focus on the Family or the Bush administration. If, for all his biblical fundamentalism, Bryan was socially progressive, so it is in the present day with such religious and politically conservative figures as Rick Warren, pastor of the 20,000-member mega-church in Orange County, Calif. Warren insists that beyond a firm stand against abortion, “we have to care about poverty, we have to care about dis-

ease, we have to care about illiteracy.... There are...far more [issues] than just the few that evangelicals have been most known to care for. I care about those.”

If evangelical religion is too complex historically and in its present representation to be categorized as politically conservative, so it is with other parts of the American religious spectrum. Black churches are in many ways “evangelical,” but no one would think that Martin Luther King Jr. was a political conservative.

Dionne, a Catholic whose social progressivism was initiated by Sister Genevieve’s views on racial justice in his sixth-grade class, has a special interest in the role of Catholics in the public square. Like evangelicals, Catholics are a mixed bag, running in politics from Ted Kennedy to Pat Buchanan. Dionne quotes Steve Wagner, a “shrewd Republican consultant”: “Catholics may be the most maddening electoral group in American politics, the demographic bloc that drives pollsters, pundits and politicians...to distraction.”

Dionne examines the voting patterns of Catholics in presidential elections going back to Eisenhower and shows they fail to hold a fixed position on the political compass. The 1972 contest between Nixon and McGovern is one striking example of how and why the Catholic vote is hardly monolithic. McGovern carried only Massachusetts and the District of Columbia. In Massachusetts it was the old-line working class Catholic vote that tipped the scales. In New York, where Catholics exist within a more heterogeneous cultural mix than in the Bay State, the Catholic vote went strongly for Nixon. Age, ethnicity and regional differences profoundly color the Catholic vote.

Dionne is a self-described liberal Catholic, and much of *Souled Out* deals

The Reviewers

Dennis O'Brien is the emeritus president of the University of Rochester, in New York.

David Garrison is professor of English and dean, College of Arts and Sciences, at Georgia Southwestern State University, Americus, Ga.

Bill Williams, a member of the National Book Critics Circle, is a former editorial writer for The Hartford Courant.

with the contest within the Catholic community about the role of faith in politics. In the election of 2004, the Catholic position in politics tended to be defined by threats of certain bishops to forbid communion to John Kerry, a Catholic, because he was “pro-abortion.” At the parish level, a pamphlet listing “five non-negotiable issues” that should determine Catholic votes was widely distributed by a shadowy organization in California. The non-negotiables were the usual “values” issues: abortion, homosexuality, same-sex marriage, stem cell research and euthanasia. Dionne is strongly opposed to the overt threats of officials—using the Communion rail as a political platform—but he is even more distressed by the perception fostered by the “non-negotiables” that these are the overriding issues for Catholic voters. More important in his eyes and, he argues, within a long tradition of Catholic social thought, are issues of economic justice and peace.

On the focal issue of abortion, Dionne argues that protection of fetal life can be better advanced by means other than the criminalization of abortion. The prevalence of abortion is not solely attributable to “moral and cultural breakdown.” Thus he supports the approach of the 23 pro-life and pro-choice Democrats who in 2006 introduced the “Reducing the Need for Abortion and Supporting Parents Act.” In addition to promoting contraception and parental responsibility, the proposal recognizes the clear relation between poverty and abortion rates. There are 44 abortions per 1,000 for women who live below the federal poverty level; only 10 per 1,000 for women at three times the poverty level.

Of special interest to Catholics will be the chapter entitled “John Paul, Benedict, and the Catholic Future.” Dionne begins by recalling an incident in 1986 when he was covering the Vatican. He found himself impressed by a speech of John Paul II defending the existence of angels. What a surprise for the good rational readers of *The New York Times* to confront angels “as they drank their morning cups of coffee.” Dionne’s enthusiasm for angels stems not only from a self-confessed love of Frank Capra’s “It’s a Wonderful Life,” in which a dutch-uncle angel named Clarence reveals goodness to a despairing George Bailey (Jimmy Stewart), he also appreciated the pope’s defense of a spiritu-

al dimension of human existence.

Having confessed his Catholic credentials and allegiance to the otherworldly mission of the church, Dionne notes that he “often tried to cover the Vatican as if I were still covering the New York State Legislature.” (Talk about politics!) The result of this dual vision, high spirituality and low-ball politics, is an unusual overall appraisal of John Paul II:

The odd thing was that the *less* Catholic I felt, the *easier* I found it to be sympathetic to John Paul’s...analysis of modernity’s corrosive effects on the Church, the task of proclaiming an uncompromising doctrine with great clarity.... Yet the more I thought of myself as a Catholic—a Catholic of a liberal sort—the more inclined I was to worry about the course John Paul and the Church were taking.

He views John Paul II as “a sign of contradiction.” There is the “liberal” social gospel pope preaching to the outside world, condemning “luxurious egoism,” affirming “the priority of labor over capital,” the champion of outreach who visits a synagogue and who condemns anti-Semitism “at any time and by anyone.” Then there is the other John Paul, preaching to the inner world of the church, condemning theologians, reining in liberation theology, intransigent on priestly celibacy and forbidding even discussion of women’s ordination. Dionne’s summation: “He was the most universal of popes, sensitive to cultural diversity inside the Church, yet he did more to centralize authority in the Vatican than any pope since the [Second Vatican] Council.”

The contradiction of John Paul II emerges in the clash between cultural diversity and restrictive dogmatism. Centralization of authority in the Vatican tends toward what Richard A. McCormick, S.J., called “magisterial maximalism,” in which allegiance to a few narrowly drawn issues becomes the litmus test of orthodoxy. McCormick referred to magisterial dogmatism as “faith in formaldehyde”—precisely not what Vatican II seemed to promise in its openness to dialogue with the world.

What happens when magisterial maximalism and litmus-test minimalism enters the political arena? The answer is suggested in the subtitle of the subsequent chapter, “The Agony of Liberal Catholicism.”

John F. Kennedy was roundly applauded when he made it clear that as U.S. president he would not be subject to dictation by ecclesiastical authorities. The ecclesiastical authorities raised no issues with this declaration of political independence. (This was the time of John XXIII and Vatican II.) When the Catholic John Kerry ran in 2004, ecclesiastical authorities had changed in a manner that appeared to demand ecclesiastical approval of political positions. “[C]onservative voices in the hierarchy were dominant, fearless, relentless—in brief, overwhelming” that Kerry’s presumed “pro-choice” stance made him unfit for high office. “[C]onservative leaders left little doubt that they supported the re-election of George W. Bush.” What happened to the “Seamless Garment” (the title of the chapter) that construed life issues from fetal life through problems of poverty on to war and the death penalty? Bishop Sheridan of Colorado Springs spoke for the conservatives when he declared that abortion “trumps all other issues.”

Dionne does not object to bishops staking a moral claim opposing abortion; what he rejects is allowing one issue to override the complexity of the political process. He concludes, “Ideally, the Catholic Church’s role in politics is to cause discomfort, to encourage questions, to challenge narrowly ideological views.... [I]f the Church causes discomfort only to one side in the [political] debate when both sides need repentance, it is not being the Church.”

Souled Out follows this admonition, since it should cause some discomfort across the polarities of Catholic thought: to conservatives who regard liberals as relativist renegades and to liberals who regard conservatives as irredeemably retrograde. The church, politics and life do not submit to simplistic solutions.

Dennis O’Brien



Visit *The Good Word*, our blog on Scripture and preaching, at americamagazine.org/goodword.

Passion for Thought... and Feeling

Selected Poems of Robert Creeley

1945-2005

Edited and introduced
by Benjamin Friedlander
Univ. of California Press. 360p \$21.95
ISBN 9780520251960

The poetry of Robert Creeley (1926-2005) is less a poetry of song and narrative than an artistry of language and thought, syntax and consciousness, syllable and word. Benjamin Friedlander's edition (the first "selected" poems since Creeley's death) brings together verse from 17 books and leads us through 60 years of exploration into the role of the poem as an act of investigation—investigation into ways of thinking (through the possible maneuvers of language) about ways of feeling. Friedlander has supplied an instructive and smart introduction, in which he points to four qualities central to Creeley's life's work: "particularity, commonality, language, and person." A journey through this collection is greatly rewarding as a check against glibness in our ordinary use of language and against the casual seductiveness of the romantic lyric.

Influenced by the modernist weight of Pound, Stevens and Williams, Creeley began publishing at the end of World War II. He worked closely with such poets as Charles Olson and Robert Duncan, and was a central literary figure in the experimental milieu of Black Mountain College (especially in the mid-1950s). His life and work intertwined with those of the Beat poets—in both San Francisco and New York. He lived and traveled widely, throughout the United States, Europe, New Zealand and Asia, and always those experiences and travels affected his understanding of poetry and its role in the dis-

covery and communication of feeling and thought. In the last two decades of his life he became an ur-poet father figure among the Language poets, with a particularly strong impact on the work of such writers as Charles Bernstein, Ron Silliman and many others. Creeley's language is always honest (and often playful, though wistfully so); it is also always *work*. When he was awarded the Bollingen Prize in poetry in 1999, the judges pointed specifically to the "stubbornly plain language that makes a Creeley poem instantly recognizable."

Friedlander has chosen not to reprint many of the less stubborn poems from the earlier *Selected Poems* (1991, chosen by Creeley himself), especially those one might classify as more deeply traditional. For example, the very early "Old Song," which echoes (in its pacing and diction) both Pound of the Troubadour period and vintage Burns: "Take off your clothes, love,/ And come to me.// Soon will the sun be breaking/ Over yon sea.// And all of our hairs be white, love,/ For aught we do// And all our nights be one, love,/ For all we knew." (The shift in that final verb

to the past tense has the tender and paradoxical effect of throwing the poem far into the elegiac future.)

Instead, Friedlander has chosen to organize this new volume around and through poems that grind in a more gnarly way over the tension between music and thought. One finds here a consistent danger in wanting to read the poems too quickly, attempting to smooth

over the abruptness of the line, often enjambed, in order to get to a (nearly graspable) narrative point. It is important to read these poems aloud, precisely because the internal lyricism is not obvious; a voice is essential for making plain the cadence, the staccato, the frequent syncopation of syllable. These lines from "For Love," a well-known poem from 1962, convey this artistry of tension and struggle:

*Love, what do I think
to say. I cannot say it.
What have you become to ask,*

*what have I made you into,
companion, good company,
crossed legs with skirt, or
soft body under
the bones of the bed.*

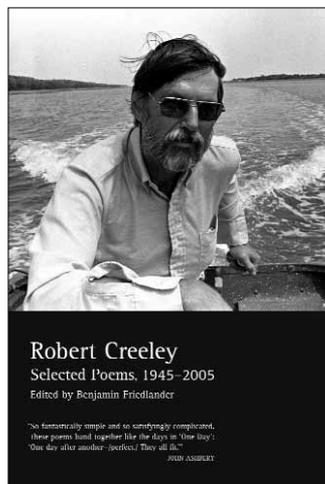
*Nothing says anything
but that which it wishes
would come true, fears
what else might happen in*

*some other place, some
other time not this one.
A voice in my place, an
echo of that only in yours.*

Lines such as these ask much of the reader, especially in their wit ("Nothing says anything"), a wit that is tightly related to Creeley's practice of making syntax dis-familiar. "Love, what do I think/ to say. I cannot say it," for example, asks us to understand that a second layer of syntax is the one that matters: the lines don't ask merely, "What do I think to say?" but also "What do [I find that] I think [in order] to say [what I find that I say]. I cannot say it." This elliptical, compressed, ambiguous attention to how we think with sentences—and how we think sentences—is at the essence of Creeley's art.

Much of Creeley's work in the last 20 years of his life was an attempt to translate into language commonplace feelings and thoughts of mortality and to acknowledge his own passion for the most ordinary of those feelings and thoughts. Hannah Arendt, in her lovingly analytical introduction to Walter Benjamin's *Illuminations* (1968), observed that for Benjamin "the size of an object was in an inverse ratio to its significance." One might say of Creeley, as well, that the size and scope of matters of consciousness—especially matters of self-awareness—were in inverse ratio to the importance of treating them artistically. Consider, for example, this passage from "When I Think," which appeared posthumously in *On Earth: Last Poems and an Essay* (2006):

*...When I try to think of
things, of what's happened, of what a
life is
and was, my life, when I wonder what
it meant,
the sad days passing, the continuing,
echoing deaths,*



*all the painful, belligerent news, and
the dog still
waiting to be fed, the closeness of you
sleeping, voices,
presences, of children, of our own
grown children,
the shining, bright sun, the smell of
the air just now,
each physical moment, passing, pass-
ing, it's what
it always is or ever was, just then, just
there.*

Robert Creeley is one of our finest poets. This selection, chosen from among poems that fill the two large volumes that make up the *Collected Poems*, provides us with the distinct story of his intensely simple desire to bring consciousness into a form that mediates something palpable from our passing days, that reminds us to pay attention just now, just here.

David Garrison

Strings on Skid Row

The Soloist

A Lost Dream, an Unlikely Friendship and the Redemptive Power of Music

By Steve Lopez
Putnam. 288p \$25.95
ISBN 9780399155062

The Los Angeles Times columnist Steve Lopez was heading back to his office one day when he came upon a homeless African-American man playing Beethoven on a battered violin at a busy street corner.

Lopez learned that the man, Nathaniel Ayers, had once been a promising student at the famed Juilliard School in New York City until a mental breakdown cut short his musical career. He ended up on skid row along with countless other mentally ill people.

The Soloist poignantly describes the growing friendship between Lopez and Ayers and the author's persistent attempts to persuade his homeless friend to move into an apartment and seek help for his schizophrenia. A motion picture based on the book is due out in the fall.

Lopez initially was drawn to Ayers because he sensed the makings of a good

newspaper column, but the more they talked the more he began to regard Ayers as a friend. After the first of a dozen columns appeared, Lopez was inundated with e-mails, including offers of instruments. Eventually, Ayers was given two cellos, six violins and assorted other instruments.

The author alternately feels compassion, curiosity and frustration as he tries to understand his friend's quirky behavior and rapid mood swings. Mental health experts offer Lopez conflicting advice, from forcible treatment to a more benign approach. One doctor tells the author the best thing he can do for Ayers is simply to be his friend.

Fearing the loss of his freedom, Ayers adamantly refuses to move indoors. He has grown accustomed to living out of a shopping cart and sleeping on sidewalks and in traffic tunnels. He is terrified that someone might try to medicate or institutionalize him against his will.

Ayers grew up in Cleveland, where it was apparent that he had enormous musical talent. At Juilliard, he excelled until his third year, when his behavior became so erratic that he ended up in the emergency room of a psychiatric hospital, diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia and calmed with Thorazine.

Lopez gradually persuades his friend to visit a men's shelter for meals and showers and, much later, to sleep in his own room there. One day Lopez wrangles an invitation for Ayers to watch a rehearsal of the famed Los Angeles Philharmonic. By now everyone there knows about Ayers because of the newspaper columns, and he is warmly welcomed as a fellow musician.

But Ayers still is troubled by wild mood swings and unpredictable behavior. Lopez frequently despairs, thinking maybe he should forget about Ayers and move on. He also worries about abandoning journalistic objectivity by befriending someone he is writing about and wonders if he is exploiting Ayers by exposing his personal life. The author writes in a chatty style that will draw readers into this saga of a homeless man for whom music is "a meditation, a reverie, a respite from mad-

ness." He wants to believe that with enough support Ayers can escape the claws of his mental illness, but then realizes he probably is deceiving himself. In one scary scene Ayers turns on Lopez, brandishing a trumpet in a threatening manner, screaming profanities and shouting that he never wants to see the author again. Later, he apologizes.

One senses that this friendship has changed Ayers's life for the better. A doctor cites the importance of relationship and describes how emotional involvement can spark biochemical changes. "You literally have changed his chemistry by being his friend," he tells Lopez.

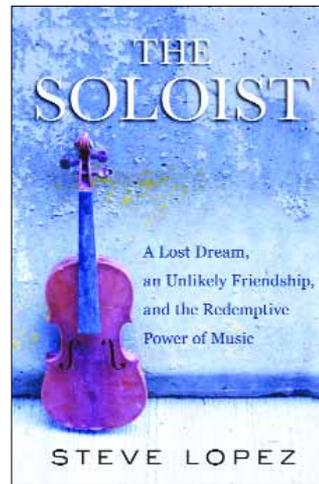
But the encounters also have transformed the author, who previously had never volunteered for anything. The experience prompts him to think seriously about giving up his newspaper job in favor of public service. "I wrestled with definitions of freedom and happiness," he writes, "and wondered at times who was crazier—the man in the tunnel who paid no bills and played the music of the gods, or the wrung-out columnist who raced past him on the way home from sweaty deadlines to melt away the stress with a bottle of wine."

Readers come away not knowing if Ayers will make it. "I've learned," Lopez tells us, "to accept him as he is, to expect constant backsliding, to prepare for the possibility that he could be homeless again or worse, and to see hope in small steps."

Although Ayers's story is memorable, Lopez resorts to the dubious practice of including extended conversations as direct quotations, with no explanation of how he could remember these encounters word for word. Perhaps Lopez carried a tape recorder, but he doesn't say.

That aside, Lopez has given us a remarkable story, told with sensitivity and insight—one that sheds light on mental illness, homelessness, journalistic standards and, as the subtitle says, "the redemptive power of music."

Bill Williams



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Wickenden Associates is conducting the search for July of 2009. Call (609) 683-1355, or visit www.wickenden.com to request the complete position description and details of the application process. Application deadline: Sept. 5, 2008.

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Gems From the Web



HERE IS A selection of writing from the **America** Web site. Our site features two group blogs, “*The Good Word*” and “*In All Things*,” as well as weekly archive articles (under the banner *In These Pages*). Plus, you can find podcasts, video clips, slide shows and reviews of notable films and books. To view a list of Web-only material, visit americamagazine.org/connects, or scroll through our blogs, which can be accessed on our home page.

A review of the HBO miniseries, “John Adams,” **America Connects**

History may largely be the product of great men and women, but it is always the product of flawed men and women. Its humanity is what makes it so interesting. When we gloss over that fact, when we allow history to become mythology by mistaking the lust of nationalism for the love of patriotism, we do the men and women of history, as well as ourselves, a great disservice. By allowing ourselves to inhabit Adams’s life these past few weeks, we have come to know not only the intimate, personal struggles of one of America’s founders, but the fearful and faith-filled human reality that is the genesis of America’s collective identity.

Matt Malone, S.J.

Debating Patrick Symmes’s book, *The Boys from Dolores*, **America Connects**

One point the discussion of Cuba always fails to mention is that any development within the island is always shaped by the overwhelming presence of the political, economic and military threat that the United States government represents. Typically this is dismissed in the United States. This is odd. The American people have not experienced anything that could approximate the systematic onslaught imposed on the island

by the United States since 1961. Yet we expect Cuba to act as if such policies were not in place.

Nelson P. Valdés

“Five Minutes with the Pope,” from Sept. 19, 1987, **In These Pages**

And while I am at it, Your Holiness, let me say that though I have subjective doubts about some of the doctrinal questions you have elected to stress (e.g., contraception), I join those who believe the church is never so grand as when it defies the spirit of the age. The challenge for the effective true believer is to believe genially, to avoid the mien of an inquisitor, and this you have succeeded gloriously in doing.

William F. Buckley Jr.

A review of the band The Hold Steady, **America Connects**

Craig Finn envisions his work in a rock band as an exercise in holy foolishness. He sees his role as the lead singer as analogous to a street preacher, “the guy on the corner trying to save people.” In this sense, Finn’s lyrics become virtually homiletic, testifying to the inherent dignity of the drug-addled and the dispossessed. And like any good street preacher, Finn is not solely concerned with the possibility of individual redemption. There is an implicit social commentary in Finn’s lyrics that contextualizes his characters not so much as outcasts, but as direct reflections of America’s spiritual disquiet.

Sean Dempsey, S.J.

“Philip, Samaria and God’s Plan,” **The Good Word** blog

The Bible is populated with many characters that appear briefly and then vanish from the scene. Philip, the most prominent person in Acts 8, is one of these. Except for a brief mention of his name in 6:5 and 21:8, all we know about

him involves two scenes of preaching. Yet he plays an important role in the expansion of Christianity in Acts...Søren Kierkegaard said that we live forward but understand backward. This certainly applies to Philip and the other characters in Acts. The entirety of God’s plan for them comes into focus only through hindsight. Philip’s activity in Samaria demonstrates that faith in the eventual knowledge of God’s plan can be powerful enough to initiate acts of discipleship.

Kyle A. Keefer

“The Perils of Catholic Education,” **In All Things**

This June our excellent parochial school is being closed after a hundred years. My live-in granddaughter Perry went there for the last eight years and has just moved to the local public school. I am grateful that she had the advantages of Catholic education that sociologists have described; these schools are rich in “social capital” because they provide a supportive community for learning and faith....Struggling to counter our secular culture’s ever growing “expressive individualism,” as Charles Taylor labels it, is no joke. Last week Perry came home from her new school and announced with an ironic gleam in her eye that in health class they were told to construct “self-esteem collages.” Ah, a Lenten project perhaps? We had a good laugh over this, but still... How is the faith going to survive without Catholic schools?

Sidney Callaban

“Remembering Archbishop Oscar Romero,” **The America Magazine Podcast**

Romero was always very cautious—for instance, if one reads his third pastoral letter he makes careful distinctions about the role of the church and the role of Christians in political movements for liberation, etc. It’s wrong to identify Romero as one who blurred the line incorrectly between faith and politics. If anything else I think he is a living embodiment of the kind of integral salvation that was talked about in magisterial documents from Medellín and Puebla to those of John Paul II.

Interview with Michael E. Lee

Letters

Reformulating Reform

In my review of Bishop Geoffrey Robinson's book *Confronting Power and Sex in the Catholic Church* (3/10), I professed a profound sympathy for much of Bishop Robinson's analysis of the clerical sexual abuse scandal. Indeed, I believe that his analysis of much of what ails the church is substantially on target. In the review, I noted my support of many of his proposals for reform. However, I also complained of some shoddy argumentation and offered three examples. In a subsequent issue of **America** (3/31), Bishop Robinson wrote a letter challenging these examples.

I am writing to acknowledge that two of his examples indeed have merit. I was troubled by his apparent rejection of the doctrine of the Ascension, but upon re-reading his text, I acknowledge that he was challenging only a literal understanding of that doctrine and not the doctrine itself. I also suggested he had appealed to a secular parliament as a model of church governance. In fact, in his book he uses the analogy of the parliament without ever suggesting that the church itself must actually adopt the model of the parliament.

Against Bishop Robinson's third complaint, I stand by my contention that his questions regarding church teaching on infallibility suggest some misunderstandings of that teaching. I also would insist that my claims about his theological argumentation still hold. His book's most significant failing is simply that he tried to cover so much ground that he left himself open to misinterpretation with sketchy treatments of complex topics.

The contrast is particularly evident if one compares the sweep of his book—which addresses topics as diverse as church teachings on artificial birth control, homosexuality, premarital sex, infallibility, the role of the curia, the election

of bishops and the structure of seminary education—with Archbishop John Quinn's book, *The Reform of the Papacy*, which considered a much more carefully circumscribed topic and offered a much more precise and well-developed agenda for reform.

In the light of the serious questions being raised by Robinson's own bishops' conference regarding his standing in the church, I felt a careful acknowledgement of the legitimacy of some of his complaints was justified.

Richard R. Gaillardetz
Toledo, Ohio

Chrysostom in Context

In "Jewish Views of Other Faiths" (5/19), Gilbert S. Rosenthal wrote that "John Chrysostom alone (fourth century) delivered eight vitriolic anti-Jewish sermons...." My father, Paul W. Harkins, translated these homilies in his 1979 book *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*. If he were still with us, he might explain more eloquently than I that he believed Chrysostom was preaching more against Christians who wanted to have it both ways as Judaizing Christians, rather than directing vitriol against Jews.

Patrick Harkins
Terre Haute, Ind.

Demographic Trends

Thank you for developing your wonderful Web site. Each week this 87-year-old, a reader of the print edition of **America** for almost 50 years, eagerly looks forward to discovering what's on tap online. The variety of subject matter and interesting presentation both add much richness to your magazine.

Carol Bocain
Albany, N.Y.

Archaic Translation

Re: "A New Roman Missal," by the Rev. Paul Turner (5/26): I find it curious that after all the work done in revising the English translation of the Mass, there has apparently been no effort to update the translation of the "Our Father." A significant amount of time and effort has been spent by scholars and bishops on the "I/We" phrasing in our translation of the Nicene Creed and on the "And also with you/And with your spirit" phrasing of the response of the congregation at Mass. But will there be no modernizing of "art," "hallowed," "thy" or "trespasses" in this holy prayer? I seldom use these words in conversation or in worship except for this archaic translation. If God's faithful can courageously endure "the dew of the Holy Spirit" in the new translation of the Mass, I think they will

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The Word

The Pauline Year

Saints Peter and Paul, Apostles (A), June 29, 2008

Readings: Acts 12:1-11; Ps 34:2-9; 2 Tm 4:6-8, 17-18; Mt 16:13-19

"I have competed well; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith" (2 Tm 4:7)

THIS YEAR THE FEAST of the great apostles Peter and Paul supersedes the 13th Sunday in Ordinary Time. The readings for the Masses during the day (and the vigil) stress the complementarity between the two apostles. The passage from Acts 12 shows how much Peter and others suffered for their fidelity to the Gospel, and how God miraculously rescued Peter from imprisonment. The selection from 2 Timothy 4 is part of Paul's farewell discourse, or testament, in which the apostle looks back on his career ("I have finished the race") and looks forward to his eternal reward ("the crown of righteousness"). The famous text from Matthew 16 features Jesus' blessing of Simon Peter as the recipient of the revelation about his true identity ("the Christ, the Son of the living God") and his promise to build his church on Peter as its "rock" (a play on Peter's name). According to early Christian tradi-

DANIEL J. HARRINGTON, S.J., is professor of New Testament at Boston College School of Theology and Ministry (formerly Weston Jesuit School of Theology) in Chestnut Hill, Mass.

survive the translation of the "Our Father" into modern English. At the least, it ought to be an option.

(Rev.) William C. Moisant
Tualatin, Ore.

Anachronisms

"Ireland's Jewish Patron Saint," by Thomas G. Casey, S.J. (5/26), was a lovely article, but Casey's statement that St. Patrick was from England cannot be true, because there was no such place as England at the time. St. Patrick seems to have come from Roman Britain. It was the later Anglo-Saxon invasions that led to the develop-

ment of what we know as "England."

ment of what we know as "England." Pope Benedict XVI has proclaimed the period from June 29, 2008, to June 29, 2009, as the Pauline Year. This is meant to commemorate the 2,000th anniversary of the apostle's birth. Although biblical schol-

Praying With Scripture

- Read Gal 1:11-20 (the second reading for the Vigil). How is Paul's conversion related to his vocation as the apostle to the Gentiles?
- Read 1 Corinthians. In what sense are Paul's problems our problems too? How might Paul help us find the right answers?
- How might you (and your community) best observe the Pauline Year?

ars argue about the precise year of Paul's birth, the observance of the Pauline Year provides a good opportunity to reflect on Paul as one of the most important and influential figures in Christian history.

Next to Jesus, Paul is the most prominent person in the New Testament. Of its 27 books, 13 are letters attributed to Paul.

ment of what we know as "England."

Fergus O'Donoghue, S.J.
Dublin, Ireland

Constancy and Creativity

As an academic liturgist and a facilitator of parish liturgies, I have often benefited from the lectures and articles of Robert Taft, S.J., as I did from "Return to Our Roots" (5/26). But I was disappointed with some of his comments on variety and creativity in liturgical celebrations, which seemed to lack a "both/and" perspective or nuance.

Taft is correct, up to a point, that "repetition is of the essence of ritual



More than half of the Acts of the Apostles is devoted to Paul's conversion and his apostolic activities in spreading the good news about Jesus around the Mediterranean world. Paul is best described as a pastoral theologian. He perceived his apostleship as preaching the Gospel where it had not yet been heard and founding new churches (see Rom 15:14-29). His letters were extensions of his pastoral work, and he formulated his theology mainly in response to problems and crises that arose in the churches he had founded.

The Paul who emerges from the New Testament is an angular character. He is energetic, committed and heroic. But he is also defensive, sarcastic and even nasty (see Gal 5:12 and Phil 3:2). His opponents dismissed him as weak in bodily appearance and contemptible in speech. Paul's greatness resided in his passion for the good news about Jesus and his desire to share it.

ART BY TAD DUNNE

behavior." On the other hand, mindless or lazy repetition of rituals without any creativity is also the essence of liturgical boredom. And the more often our people experience bland and boring worship, the more they leave for rituals in other churches that speak to and inspire them because their liturgical leaders put time, money and talent into deeply moving and powerfully creative rites, even if such rites can sometimes lack a sense of being rooted in a tradition.

Taft also laments those who think they are Beethoven or Shakespeare when bringing creativity to liturgy. However, the "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy"

The church of the 21st century can learn much from Paul about the human condition, how Jesus has changed everything, the church as the body of Christ and the people of God, the role of women in Paul's collaborative ministry, worship in everyday life, the centrality of baptism and the Eucharist, the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the balance between present blessedness and the crown of righteousness. Paul the apostle stands out not only as a great figure in earliest Christianity but also as a wise guide to the present and future of the church.

The Wisest Teacher

Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)
July 6, 2008

Readings: Zech 9:9-10; Ps 145:1-2, 8-11, 13-14; Rom 8:9, 11-13; Mt 11:25-30

"Come to me, all who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest" (Mt 11:28)

NEVER IN HISTORY has so much information been accessible: one need simply turn on a computer and connect to the Web. Yet information is not the same as wisdom. Information demands a context or intellectual framework; it requires interpretation and calls out for practical action or implementation. Those processes are what we mean by wisdom. Today's

calls for every person who facilitates our rituals to put effort into a nourishing, inspiring and challenging balance of sameness and surprise, of constancy and creativity. It says that "pastors of souls must...realize that, when the liturgy is celebrated, more is required than the mere observance of the laws governing valid and licit celebration. It is their duty also to ensure that the faithful take part knowingly, actively and fruitfully." This cannot be done by emphasizing repetition at the expense of creativity.

Taft carefully notes that "too much variety is the enemy of popular participation," so he is obviously not opposed to

Scripture readings remind us that in Jesus we have the wisest teacher of all.

To many of his contemporaries Jesus would have looked like just one more Jewish wisdom teacher. He attracted a core of students, or disciples, and used literary forms employed by ancient wisdom teachers: proverbs, warnings, parables and so on. He gave instructions about happiness, money matters, sexuality and social relations, as did other Jewish wisdom teachers.

Today's reading from Matthew 11 shows us that Jesus was uniquely wise, however, in that the wisdom of Jesus was divine teaching. In what sounds like a saying from John's Gospel, Jesus himself proclaims that his teaching had been revealed to him by his heavenly Father and that he had intimate knowledge of the Father and the Father's wisdom. His wisdom, then, is divine revelation.

Jesus enjoyed his greatest success with unlikely persons, whom he calls "the childlike." These were the simple people of Galilee, some of whom were regarded as "sinners," but whose minds and hearts were nevertheless open enough to receive Jesus' wisdom and to act upon it.

In a kind of "infomercial" for his wisdom school, Jesus invites all who labor and are burdened to come, and he promises them rest. Jesus uses the image of a yoke, a harness placed on beasts of burden like oxen when they shared a load like pulling a plow or powering a mill. He insists that his yoke is easy and his burden is light. Jesus characterizes himself as gentle and humble of heart. Today's Old Testament passage from Zechariah 9, with its picture

some variety. I would have preferred, however, that his comments on repetition, variety and creativity manifest a more balanced and holistic view.

*Richard Ling
Highlands Ranch, Colo.*

A Guarantee

Thank you for "The Forgotten," by Pierre de Charentenay, S.J. (6/9). The fate of Iraqi Christians should be as important to humanity as was the fate of Muslims in Sarajevo in the early 1990s, and their tragedy should inspire the same solidarity around the world, especially from the liberals and progressives who

of a "meek" Messiah figure, portrays Jesus as more than a simple teacher. The final product of Jesus' invitation is "rest," or what might be called peace of soul.

Who was the best teacher you ever had? It was probably someone who could reach the slowest students while also challenging everyone in the class to go beyond the superficial, someone who made you work hard, but in helping you learn a lot, made learning seem easy and refreshing. Jesus the master teacher did all of these things. But this teacher is also the Messiah and the Son of God. He was and is a special teacher, and his school was and is an ideal place to learn genuine wisdom.

This Sunday we begin a series of five readings concerning "life in the Spirit" from Romans 8, one of the most important chapters in the New Testament. In general, Paul's teaching focused on the effects of Jesus' life, death and resurrection in our lives. In today's excerpt he explains that Christian spirituality proceeds from the initiative of the Holy Spirit, and that it means living in the realm of the "spirit" (as opposed to the "flesh").

Daniel J. Harrington

Praying With Scripture

- Who was your best teacher? What characteristics best define that teacher? Do any apply to Jesus?
- What distinguishes Jesus from other teachers?
- How do you understand the term "spirituality"? What is distinctive about Christian spirituality?

were so actively involved in the Balkan dramas. As de Charentenay rightly notes, the survival of Christians in Iraq (like moderate Muslims in Bosnia) is the guarantee that people of different faiths and origins can live together.

*Jean-Paul Marthoz
Brussels, Belgium*

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