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THE TRUE COST OF CARE

UWE E. REINHARDT



Language and Liturgy
Victor Galeone

The Business of the Church
Thomas J. Healey

ON A SUMMER DAY in 1933, William Norris Clarke, an 18-year-old from Manhattan, was hurrying along a pier in Cherbourg toward a trans-Atlantic liner about to leave for New York.

Norris, as he was known to his family and friends, had a few months earlier finished sophomore year at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., and was planning to enter the novitiate of the Maryland-New York province of the Society of Jesus on Aug. 14.

In Paris, Norris had bought a dozen new books and stuffed them into a knapsack. As he ran, one of the satchel's straps broke and the books skittered across the wharf. Years later Norris's eyes twinkled with secret glee when he recalled the choice that had confronted him: abandon the books or miss the boat. While he was rounding up the books, the ship sailed without him.

That was the way he told the story, for he would never have blunted a good anecdote by adding anticlimactic details. But, of course, he did secure another passage, and he did enter the novitiate at St. Andrew-on-Hudson in Poughkeepsie, N.Y., as scheduled. When he died on June 10 of this year, he was 93 years old and had been a Jesuit for nearly three-quarters of a century. He was ordained a priest on June 17, 1945, and joined Fordham University's philosophy department 10 years later. After he was named professor emeritus in 1985, he continued to teach part-time at Fordham and as a visiting professor elsewhere.

Never in all that time did his mind idle in neutral. He wrote eight books, including, most recently, *The One and the Many: A Contemporary Thomistic Metaphysics* (2000), and some 70 learned articles. He was also a founding editor of the *International Philosophical Quarterly*. As recently as the spring 2008 semester, he conducted a seminar on "Twentieth-Century Personalism" for some young Jesuits studying philosophy at Fordham.

That was an appropriate topic for a farewell tour, because Norris believed, as he once said, that Thomistic metaphysics needs to be enriched by the descriptions of the actual lives of real persons that phenomenologists provide.

Like most men of his generation,

Father Clarke did not talk much about his own innermost life. The confessional style was not his. He preferred to talk about the ideas that struck him as really useful for understanding human existence.

All the same, he would surely have said, using the austere and matter-of-fact phrases of St. Ignatius Loyola, that the purpose of life is to love and serve God by the kindly service of others. His major service was, one might say, "doing philosophy." That meant more than talking about philosophy in the classroom. It meant really philosophizing when he was teaching and when he was engaged in captivating conversations with the people of all sorts who sought him out.

Now and then in these conversations nuggets of personal history would pop up for a moment. A few samples suggest their flavor.

Father Clarke's forebears were among the Catholic colonists of 17th-century Maryland. When it was suggested that this made him eligible for membership in

the Sons of the American Revolution, he would note with a conspiratorial

smile that in the 1770s the descendants of these Catholics were Tories.

As a small boy growing up in Manhattan, Norris attended the same children's dancing class as David Rockefeller. Several decades later, he studied philosophy from 1935 to 1939 at a seminary set up on the island of Jersey by the French Jesuits after they were banned from France by the secularizing laws of the 1880s. When it came time to return to the United States, war was on the horizon, and it was hard to book passage from England. Norris and two other scholastics (young Jesuits not yet ordained) made their leisurely way to the Mediterranean coast and crossed over to Algiers. Here they not only found a ship to New York but also became acquainted with an obliging Algerian who gave them a guided tour of the Casbah, a quarter off-limits to non-Arabs.

Nearly 70 years later, Norris Clarke made that last journey from which neither philosophers nor anyone else returns to report. Yet there could well be applied to him the words Cardinal Newman chose for his own gravestone: *Ex umbris et imaginibus in Veritatem*—"From shadows and images into the Truth."

John W. Donohue, S.J.

Of Many Things

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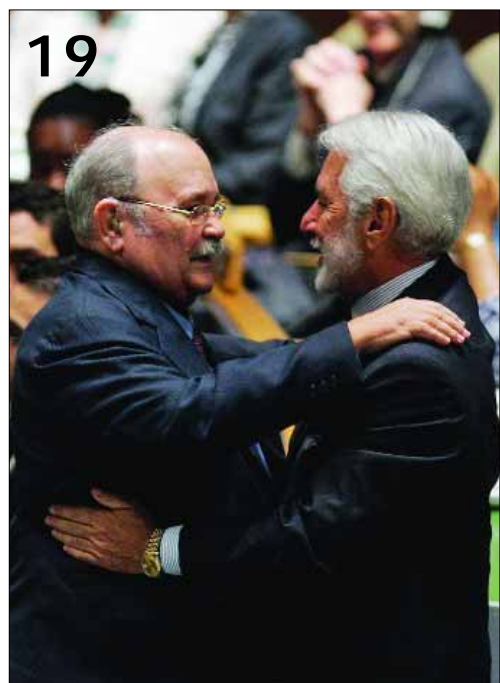
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America Connects

Uwe E. Reinhardt discusses health care reform on our podcast. Plus, from the archives, an interview with Miguel d'Escoto from 1985, and Richard H. Tierney, S.J., on religious oppression in Mexico. All at americamagazine.org.

The Wind Bloweth

The Statue of Liberty's torch alight through wind power? Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg of New York City raised that and other possibilities at a recent conference on alternative energy in Nevada. Around the country, many wind turbines are already in place. Boston has them at Logan International Airport. Southern California Edison recently signed a 20-year contract for the construction of a wind farm with 300 turbines. After Colorado voters approved an initiative requiring the state's largest utilities to generate 10 percent of their electricity from renewable sources, wind capacity quadrupled, a situation that has put oil and gas companies on the defensive, partly out of fear of jeopardizing their tax breaks. Texas now leads in overall wind power capacity. And the Texas oil billionaire T. Boone Pickens, who is vigorously promoting development of wind power, sees the Great Plains states as capable of satisfying 20 percent of U.S. electricity needs through wind.

According to the Earth Policy Institute, one of every three countries in the world, driven by worries over climate change and energy security (oil and gas are not inexhaustible; wind is) now generates at least some of its electricity from wind. Germany is in the forefront of total wind-power capacity. The United Kingdom's offshore capacity, the institute predicts, is expected to double by the end of next year, and by 2020 offshore wind capacity will be enough to meet the electricity requirements of all homes in Britain. The institute identifies the United States as the world leader in new installations, with its growth stimulated largely by a tax credit for wind production contained in the 2005 Energy Policy Act. The world may indeed be on its way to becoming greener. T. Boone Pickens, lead on!

A New Blessed Couple

Under the influence of the Second Vatican Council, with an added boost from Pope John Paul II, the church has worked hard to recognize saints whose lives can be more easily emulated by the married faithful. Soon to be added to the list of married saints (Mary and Joseph, Peter, Thomas More, Monica and Elizabeth Ann Seton among them) are Louis and Marie Zélie Martin, the parents of St. Thérèse of Lisieux. In August, Pope Benedict XVI announced that the two will be declared blessed on Oct. 19, during a Mass in Lisieux, France. In July the Vatican approved the miracle needed for their beatification, the step before canonization.

Ironically—for those looking for more examples of how to live a holy married life—the two had initially thought of living together as “brother and sister,” hoping to imitate the relationship of Mary and Joseph. Happily, a confessor later persuaded them to lead a more conventional married life. Louis (1823-94) and Zélie (1831-77) would eventually have nine children, five of whom joined religious orders. Some wondered if the two were being honored for their own holiness (which is evident) or because they were the parents of the Little Flower—though the miracle puts an end to such speculation. Zélie died at a relatively young age, and in later years Louis seems to have suffered some form of mental illness, a source of deep pain to his daughters, especially Thérèse, who wrote about her father extensively in her journals. The upcoming beatification of her parents is a reminder that sanctity comes in many styles, and holiness always makes its home in humanity.

In Record Time

Just how fast is fast? Viewers of the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing have a whole new set of answers to that question. In swimming and track and field in particular, world records tumbled with surprising frequency. The principal culprits were the American swimmer Michael Phelps and the Jamaican sprinter Usain Bolt, both of whom delivered performances that bordered on the superhuman. Yet while Phelps won eight gold medals with a body uniquely suited to swimming, Bolt outran his competitors with a six-foot-five-inch frame that was once deemed too tall for running short distances. Yet there he was, the aptly named Bolt, winning gold in both the 100 meter and 200 meter dash—plus the 4x100 meter relay—in record time.

Fans and athletes alike love to see records fall. It proves that no single athletic feat, no matter how remarkable, is the last word on human achievement. When the impossible is possible, people will keep watching, and runners will keep running. Yet if excellence is too often attained, it can lose some of its luster. In the case of Michael Phelps, the skeptical fan can be forgiven for finding less to celebrate in the swimmer's seven world records than in his ability to outduel his opponents eight straight times. When records are shattered this often, there is usually a reason; in Beijing's Water Cube extra lanes and added pool depth obviously played a role. With Bolt, no such shadow was cast; the pleasure found in his success was unalloyed. The only challenge to his legacy, one hopes, will come from another runner on another track, on a day when we will all be watching.

Secession Ethics

THE DRAMA OF GEORGIA continues to unfold. On Aug. 26, President Dmitri A. Medvedev of Russia announced that his country was recognizing the independence of the breakaway regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Georgia's President Mikheil Saakashvili, undeterred by his country's defeat in a rapid, well-executed Russian intervention, has voiced his determination to rebuild his army and retake the secessionist regions. Meanwhile, the West is reduced to proclaiming its support for Georgian democracy and pleading for Russian withdrawal, something the Russians seem unready to do. The question for onlookers is whether the Georgian crisis will remain a melodrama in which ambition led the leader of a small country to test the will of his much larger neighbor or will become a tragedy engulfing the entire region in a new cold war between a resurgent Russia and a hobbled West.

Secession is always a messy and dangerous business. Nationalist hotheads seem to drive the drama. The First World War began with the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo by the Serbian nationalist Gavrilo Princip, resulting in the breakup of the Austro-Hungarian Empire into several new European states. The disintegration in the 1990s of one of those successor states, Yugoslavia, was spurred on by nationalists like Slobodan Milosevic, Franjo Tudjman and Radovan Karadzic. Kosovo's eventual independence this year moved ahead after militants in the Kosovo Liberation Army shoved aside the longtime pacifist Kosovar leader, Ibrahim Rugova. Unlike Rugova, President Saakashvili seems disposed to be one of those hotheads who will drive a conflict well beyond the point where it is justified.

Secession is a difficult matter for political theorists; for once the division of a multinational state begins, it is difficult to anticipate where it will end. If the other major regions of the former Yugoslavia (Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, Macedonia and Montenegro) could break from Serbia, why shouldn't the Kosovo? If the Georgians, Ukrainians, Azeris and Armenians could break from the former Soviet Union, why should not the Ossetians and Abkhazians have license to secede from a newly independent Georgia? In fact, their dissent from the government of Georgia in these regions dates back to the time of

Georgian independence from the Soviet Union in 1991; and they have been able to thwart Georgian control and exercise a measure of autonomy ever since.

The Russians opposed the independence of Kosovo, and the United States supported it; but now the United States upholds the authority of the Georgian government and, by implication, the forcible accession of the two breakaway regions to Georgia. U.S. policy, no less than Russia's, has depended on its perceived interests and temporary advantage rather than on consistent principle.

Self-determination of peoples has been a principle of international affairs since the Treaty of Versailles in 1919. Its application, however, has frequently been a matter of contention and its theoretical foundations less than sure. Is a democratic majority by itself enough to establish a state? Do minority peoples have rights to self-determination by virtue of ethnicity or nationality, and must their rights supersede those of the majority? St. Thomas Aquinas warned against resort to armed conflict, even in situations of tyranny, if more harm would be done by the uprising than the government's injustice had already inflicted. The inevitable recourse to force in secessionist movements is therefore under a burden to show honestly the injustices suffered but also to acknowledge fair treatment of their rights by the majority.

WRITING OF WARS OF SECESSION, the political philosopher Michael Walzer has argued that control of territory and "self-help"—that is, the capacity for self-rule, including self-defense—are primary conditions for the rightful exercise of self-determination. But even if the secessionists' demonstration of these qualities justifies outside intervention, the goal of intervention should not be to win, but only to secure the secessionists' rights. According to Walzer, the values undergirding an intervention are protection of life and communal liberty. The invasion has now grown more problematic because of Russian control of Georgian resources and its occupation of other Georgian territory, like the port of Poti.

The application of the principle of self-determination is further compromised by the re-emergence of Russia as a powerful world actor and the threat of further aggression that the former Soviet states to its east and south have perceived in the intervention. While there may have been plausible reasons for Russia to intervene, any military move outside the secessionist territories, once a cease-fire has been concluded, would rightly be regarded as an act of aggression. Such aggression must be resisted, and the threat of its extension to other newly independent states must be thwarted.

No Letup in Anti-Christian Violence in India



A video grab shows people putting out a fire at a Christian orphanage burned by a mob in the eastern Indian state of Orissa. Church officials said that at least 11 people have died and church properties have been burned by Hindus angry over the killing of one of their leaders.

Catholic educational institutions across India closed Aug. 29 to protest the continuing violence against Christians that has left at least 11 people dead in India's eastern Orissa State. On Aug. 26 Cardinal Varkey Vithayathil of Ernakulam-Angamaly, president of the Indian bishops' conference, appealed to all Catholic groups to organize "peaceful rallies across the country to register strong protest against the repeated

attacks" on Christians. Reports indicated no letup in the anti-Christian violence. They recounted how armed men ransacked and burned church properties in the state. The Vatican condemned the attacks Aug. 26 and expressed its solidarity with Catholics in Orissa. It urged everyone to recommit to dialogue and respect for one another. The church also will observe Sept. 7 as a day of prayer and fasting for Christians in Orissa.

Novena Podcast for Days Before Election

The U.S. bishops are encouraging Catholics to pray a novena for life, justice and peace before the November national elections. The special novena is part of "the bishops' campaign to help Catholics develop well-formed consciences for addressing political and social questions," said Joan Rosenhauer, associate director of the U.S.C.C.B.'s Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development. The bishops adopted the document *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*:

A Call to Political Responsibility in November 2007. The novena for faithful citizenship can be used in the usual way, on nine consecutive days before election day, or on one day in each of the nine weeks leading up to the election or "in any way that works best for a community or individual," said Rosenhauer. The Conference has made available for download from the Internet a podcast of the novena for faithful citizenship (www.faithfulcitizenship.org/resources/podcasts). It will be available until the Nov. 4 election.

From CNS and other sources. CNS photos.

Labor Conflict at California Catholic Hospital

When Msgr. John Brenkle heard of the labor-management trouble brewing at Catholic-run Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital in California, he knew he had a touchy problem on his hands. Workers were telling him that the hospital's owner—the St. Joseph Health System, under the direction of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange—was strongly anti-union. But Monsignor Brenkle, pastor at St. Helena Parish in Santa Rosa and an experienced hand at labor law, told Catholic San Francisco, the newspaper of the neighboring Archdiocese of San Francisco, that he knew the sisters as having an exemplary record in battles for farm worker rights in the 1960s and for "the tremendous amount of good work they do for the poor."

United Healthcare Workers West, a unit of the Service Employees International Union, has been trying to organize workers at Santa Rosa Memorial for the last several years. The union filed a National Labor Relations Board complaint in March 2005 alleging the employer had used intimidation and threats during a workplace campaign leading up to an election on union representation. John Borsos, a union vice president, said the conflict started in 2004 when the employer hired a "union avoidance firm" in response to the organizing campaign. Far from reaching agreement on their differences, the hospital system and union have prolonged their battle and now are entrenched in a fight that has attracted the national media to the union's narrative about a Catholic employer's performance in light of church teaching.

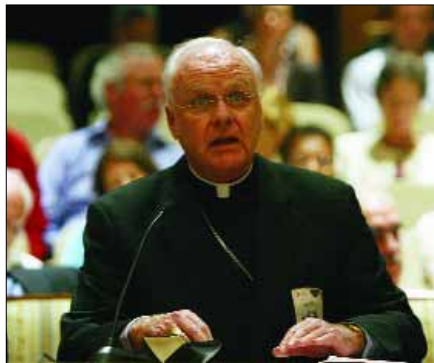
Church Works to Suspend Immigration Raids

Bishop Thomas J. Tobin of Providence, R.I., and 15 Catholic pastors have called on a federal immigration official to stop massive immigration raids in Rhode Island for the time being and to allow agents who disagree with such raids on moral grounds to step aside as conscientious objectors. In an Aug. 19 letter to

Signs of the Times

Stephen Farquharson, interim director of the Boston office of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the group urged that the moratorium stay in place until the country implements “a comprehensive and just reform of our immigration laws.... We need a moratorium until we can get this broken system repaired.” I.C.E. spokeswoman Kelly Nantel said agents have taken an oath to uphold the law. “We will continue to enforce the law and I would stress we do that in a very professional way with an acute awareness of the impact that enforcement has on the individuals we encounter.”

Maryland Bishops Testify Against Death Penalty



Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien speaks at the Maryland Commission on Capital Punishment.

While others debated the financial costs of maintaining the death penalty in Maryland, Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien highlighted moral concerns during an Aug. 19 appearance before the Maryland Commission on Capital Punishment. Testifying in the state capital for the first time since his Oct. 1, 2007, installation as head of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, Archbishop O'Brien said Catholic opposition to the death penalty is consistent with the church's respect for the sanctity of human life. He quoted from Pope John Paul II's 1995 encyclical *The Gospel of Life*, which calls for the defense of life from conception to natural death. “Woven into the fabric of the [pope's] exhortation was an appeal to end capital punishment—to stand against the killing of even those who have committed murder and, in so doing, have affronted God's dominion and denied their own

and their victims' God-given humanity,” said Archbishop O'Brien, who was accompanied by Bishop Eugene Sutton of the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland and Bishop John Schol of the United Methodist Church of Maryland.

Conscience Protection for Health Care Workers

The rights of doctors, nurses and other medical personnel who do not want to be involved in abortion and sterilization procedures for religious or moral reasons would get a boost under new rules proposed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Announced Aug. 21, the regulations are designed to increase awareness of three laws already on the books, the first dating to 1973,

regarding conscience protection for health care workers. Hospitals and other health care institutions that receive federal funds would be covered by the regulations as well. “The proposed regulations are absolutely essential,” said Deirdre McQuade, assistant director for policy and communications in the Office of Pro-Life Activities of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. “These regulations are implementing long-standing laws on the books. They're not expanding those laws, they're not changing them, they're not introducing new material except to raise awareness about their existence.” The rules would cover a wide range of activities, from full-scale participation in a procedure to the cleaning of instruments afterward, McQuade explained.

Bishops: Pelosi Misrepresented Abortion Teaching

The chairmen of the U.S. bishops' pro-life and doctrine committees criticized House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, saying she “misrepresented the history and nature of the authentic teaching of the Catholic Church on abortion” in a nationally televised interview Aug. 24.

Pelosi, (D-Calif.), who is Catholic, said in an appearance that day on NBC's “Meet the Press” that church leaders for centuries had not been able to agree on when life begins.

An Aug. 25 statement by Cardinal Justin Rigali of Philadelphia and Bishop William E. Lori of Bridgeport, Conn., said the church since the first century “has affirmed the moral evil of every abortion.”

“The teaching has not changed and remains unchangeable,” the statement said. “Direct abortion, that is to say, abortion willed either as an end or a means, is gravely contrary to the moral law.”

The statement recalled how in the Middle Ages “uninformed and inadequate theories” about the development of a child in a mother's womb led some theologians to suggest that human life capable of receiving an immortal soul may not exist until a few weeks into

pregnancy.

“While in canon law these theories led to a distinction in penalties between very early and later abortions, the church's moral teaching never justified or permitted abortion at any stage of development,” the church leaders said.

However, they added, scientists discovered more than 150 years ago that a new human life begins with the union of sperm and egg, making such a biological theory obsolete.

“In keeping with this modern understanding, the church teaches that from the time of conception (fertilization), each member of the human species must be given the full respect due to a human person, beginning with the respect for the fundamental right to life,” Cardinal Rigali and Bishop Lori concluded.

Citing the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Roe v. Wade*, Pelosi said specific considerations must be undertaken during each trimester of a child's development before an abortion can be performed. “This isn't about abortion on demand. It's about careful, careful consideration of all factors...that a woman has to make with her doctor and her God,” she told Brokaw.



National Civics Lesson

‘Despite what you’ll be reading, political conventions still matter.’

WE HAVE REACHED that stage of the election cycle when travel-weary commentators direct their ire at a hardy artifact of the old millennium, the national political convention. As thousands of delegates prepare for a few days of around-the-clock socializing and caucusing, their Boswells in the political press will scowl and grumble as they, too, book passage for Denver and Minneapolis-St. Paul, sites of this year’s nominating conventions. Judging by the bad press the conventions have had over the last couple of decades, you would think these meetings were devoid of drama, tension and relevance.

Well, for the most part, those criticisms happen to be true. But that does not mean that these quadrennial gatherings have outlived their usefulness. In fact, two words ought to persuade all but the jaded that conventions still matter. Those words are Barack Obama.

The Democratic nominee became the unlikeliest of household names thanks to his speech at the Democratic National Convention in Boston in 2004. He was a candidate for the Senate that year, and party leaders were looking to give him a little free exposure as he prepared for the fall campaign.

Obama’s speech four years ago transformed him into a political superstar. Without that speech, without that convention, without the national spotlight that these gatherings offered, it would be hard to imagine Obama’s meteoric rise from political unknown in 2004 to presidential nominee in 2008.

Despite what you’ll be reading and hearing from Denver and Minnesota,

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national political conventions still matter. That is an argument I have made here and elsewhere in the past, and every time I do it, I am told I’m living in the past. Sure, I understand that conventions have outlived their original intent, and they no longer produce the kind of drama and back-room dealing that inspired the prose of H. L. Mencken back in the day. But as the Democratic convention in 2004 demonstrated, what happens at the podium still matters, for better and for worse.

Murray Kempton, the great columnist who as a young man worked as Mencken’s copy boy, once wrote that it was hard to maintain faith in human nature after attending a political convention. I return from any long car ride in New Jersey with a similarly dyspeptic view of humanity, but that doesn’t mean I’ll give up my car anytime soon, nor do I believe we ought to revoke the licenses of most of my fellow Garden Staters, although it is a tempting thought.

As a veteran of just a half-dozen conventions—a puny résumé that ought to result in the revocation of my claim to political punditry—I have seen more than my share of folly at these gatherings. I’ve seen delegates act like college students on spring break. I’ve seen favor-seekers sucking up to minor officeholders, lobbyists sucking up to major officeholders (there is a hierarchy of foolishness at these events), and members of the media cheerfully taking advantage of hospitality suites without wondering what ethical boundaries they might have crossed.

What I have not seen during my convention assignments will confirm the skepticism of those who believe conventions are mere artifacts, and dusty ones at that. I have not seen drama over the choice of a candidate. The last time there was any such question about the convention’s choice was in 1976, when neither the incumbent Gerald Ford nor the chal-

lenger Ronald Reagan won enough votes in the primaries to guarantee a first-ballot victory. (Ford, of course, won the nomination after some old-fashioned back-room negotiations.)

I have not seen great ideological battles over party platforms. I haven’t seen public displays of disunity. I haven’t seen nearly enough good, never mind great, orators. What I have seen all too often resembled a carefully crafted political commercial.

But then again, I have also witnessed soaring speeches by Mario Cuomo, Barbara Jordan and Ronald Reagan. As a print journalist, I’ve covered small state delegation meetings where debates have occasionally broken out. I’ve been a fly on the wall for conversations about strategy, about issues and, yes, about the nation’s future. I’ve seen party members separated by geography and more come together to talk about what they had in common, and what still divided them.

It surely is true that the convention, as a form, can seem as relevant to the 21st century as a newspaper—and how it pains me to make what I consider to be an altogether fair comparison. Party activists no longer need to travel thousands of miles to learn more about one another. They have e-mail for that. That’s why they blog. And, truth be told, save for Obama’s electrifying speech of four years ago (to be followed, no doubt, by another such speech in Denver), convention oratory is not what it was as recently as 1984.

Even so, I think it remains possible to think of conventions as national civics lessons, as Walter Cronkite used to call them. Even if most of the oratory is trite, even if convention managers are more concerned with imagery than words, even if the Menckens and Kemptons of today have lost interest or, more likely, have moved on to a more stable line of work, conventions still offer the nation a chance to think about and perhaps even become engaged by politics, that once great national pastime that has become more of a cable-television cult in recent years.

Yes, the days of ballot fights and back-room deals are over. But as Barack Obama demonstrated four years ago, conventions have not lost their ability to surprise us.

Terry Golway



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/BILLY GADBURY

The complicated relationship between
the market and government health programs

The True Cost of Care

– BY UWE E. REINHARDT –

AS THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN goes into full swing, the American public is likely to be bombarded with the kind of misleading clichés and false dichotomies that distort serious discussion of health care reform in this country. One of these false dichotomies is “private market versus government” health care or “private market versus socialized medicine.” Both terms mislead because their users seem not to understand precisely what the terms mean or, if they do, use them mischievously. The term “socialized medicine” in particular conveys to some an objectionably “un-American” form of government: socialism.

A major problem with the term “private market” is that the term refers not to one single thing, but to a wide range of alternative mixtures in which a government interacts with private players in the health care sector. In fact, there hardly exists a private market in which the government does not play some role. Worse, the term frequently is misused as a synonym for “competition,” which, when placed in opposition to “government,” implies that government-sponsored care is not and cannot be competitive. Yet competitive health care already thrives in heavily government-controlled health systems, like Medicare. In Medicare and in the Canadian provincial health plans as well, private and

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public providers of health care compete purely on quality of service for patients covered by government-run health insurance systems.

Finally, in the American vernacular the term “socialized medicine,” when it is not being confused with “socialism” outright, often is confused with “social health insurance.” But these terms refer to very different things.

With “social insurance” a government operates or tightly regulates large risk pools to which individuals can shift the financial risks they face as individuals with premiums based on their ability to pay. Both Medicare and the Canadian government-run health plans work in this way. Typically, the sickest patients are not kept out of the pool, which includes all those who are eligible. Social insurance systems typically buy health care from a mixture of private for-profit and not-for-profit institutions. This takes place under both Medicare and Medicaid in the United States, under the single-payer, government-run provincial health plans in Canada and under Taiwan’s government-run, single-payer health insurance system. Examples of social insurance outside of health care can be seen in the principle of limited liability for corporate shareholders, which has made modern capitalism possible, in the federal government’s current bailout of Wall Street or in the federal government’s provision of disaster relief to afflicted states.

By contrast, “socialized medicine” implies that a government not only organizes the risk pools for health insurance, but also owns and operates the health-care delivery system. The National Health Service of the United Kingdom or the county-based health systems of the Scandinavian countries represent socialized medicine, as does the health system of the U.S. Department of Veteran’s Affairs. Luckily for our veterans, the V.A. is now widely regarded as being on the cutting edge of the smart use of health-information technology and quality control. A European must find it amusing to hear American politicians rant against socialized medicine while at the same time supporting the V.A. health system.

The advantages many proponents see in social insurance systems are these. First, they offer individuals financial protection over their entire lifespan. Second, they are relatively inexpensive to administer. Third, they obey the principle of solidarity, which requires that all members of society have access to needed health care on roughly equal terms. That principle is sacred in European nations, being viewed as part of the cement that forges a nation out of a group of people who happen to share a geography. It is a term not usually employed in the American debate on health policy. A pitfall inherent in these social insurance systems is that governments may underfund them.

In the United States, when private insurance is procured by an employer in the group market for health insurance,

premiums tend to be community-rated over all the employees in the firm. In a sense, such group insurance may be described as private social insurance. Because that form of coverage is tied to a particular job, however, it is temporary and lost with the job. On the other hand, if private insurance is purchased by individuals in the non-group market, premiums tend to be “medically underwritten,” which means that they reflect the individual’s state of health. Such insurance, like the social insurance systems just described, usually does not provide coverage for the full life-cycle.

Health System Basics

To think more clearly about the issue of private market versus government care, it is helpful to list the distinct economic functions any modern health system must perform, and then to ask who best can perform each of those functions, given the ethical constraints a nation is willing to impose on its health system. The five functions are:

- the financing of health insurance and health care, by which is meant the process by which money is extracted (premiums or taxes) from households and individuals, the ultimate payers for all health care;
- the protection of individuals from the financial inroads of illness through larger risk pools (i.e., health insurance);
- the production of health-care goods and services;
- the prudent purchasing of these goods and services by or on behalf of “consumers” (formerly called patients);
- the stewardship of the health system, by which is meant the regulation of the health system to assure safety, quality, integrity and fair play among the various agents interacting in the health system.

Whether individuals, government, a nongovernmental entity or the patient best performs each of these functions depends on two distinct considerations.

First, ideally there should be a political consensus on the ethical precepts that the health system is to observe. Should health care be available to all members of society on roughly equal terms, or is it ethically acceptable to allow access to health care, its quantity and its quality to vary by income class? Should health care transactions be ruled by the principle of caveat emptor, or would that be unfair? Is it ethically acceptable, as it seems to be currently in the United States, to let individuals and households slide into bankruptcy because of unpaid medical bills? In their debates on health policy, Canadians, Europeans and Asians usually



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

make explicit these ethical precepts and view them as binding constraints on public health policy. In the United States, remarkably, the social ethics of health care are rarely discussed explicitly. Instead, the ethical norms are allowed to fall out of the technical parameters—e.g., deductibles, coinsurance or the basis for setting insurance premiums—settled on in these debates.

Second, given an agreement on the social ethics that a health system is to observe, one can next inquire through robust empirical research who best performs each of the basic functions of health care: government, private not-for-profit entities, private for-profit entities or all of these.

To explore these two considerations further, it is useful to imagine initially a purely laissez-faire private health care market. In this context laissez faire means “let the health system do without government interference of any sort.” For all of the advantages one may claim for such a system (for example, the unleashing of human ingenuity and entrepreneurial energy), the arrangement also would have a number of attributes many Americans might find dubious:

- Real resources in such a system would be allocated strictly to those individuals willing and able to bid the highest prices for them—that is, to the wealthier members of society.
- Individuals with superior information about the health care being sold in this market (e.g., physicians) would be able to take advantage of individuals with less

information (e.g., patients).

- Individuals with superior mental acuity (the quick-witted) would be able to take advantage of the less quick-witted.
- In the short run at least, and possibly even over the longer run, individuals with more “flexible” moral standards would be able to take advantage of individuals with more principled moral standards.

It is clear that no modern society would long tolerate the unfettered operation of such a laissez-faire market in health care. Indeed, since the Great Depression no society has tolerated such a market even for much less complicated goods and services, like financial services. Recently, for example, the chairman of the Federal Reserve and the U.S. secretary of the treasury both realized that as simple a market transaction as a mortgage loan requires much stricter government control than that imposed on it in the years just before the subprime mortgage crisis.


In sum, the choice in modern economies is never between government and private markets, but is among varying mixtures of government- and private-market activities. The false dichotomy between government and private markets is meaningless. Any politician caught mouthing that empty slogan should be asked to define precisely what is meant by those terms.

The Private Sector and Cost Control

But what about costs? It seems to be taken as an axiom in the U.S. debate on health care reform that private-sector institutions are inherently more efficient than are similar public-sector institutions, so that health systems relying heavily on private institutions operating in a free-market environment could control both quality and cost better than similar government-run institutions. That proposition, however, lacks any robust empirical foundation. In fact, the available research on this issue does not permit a general statement on the relative efficiency of different types of health systems.

To illustrate, it is frequently alleged that costs under the government-run Medicare program for the elderly are out of control, and that Medicare can be fiscally sustained in the future only if it is privatized, that is, administered by private health plans. The Medicare Advantage option introduced as part of the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003 is a legislative expression of just that opinion.

Under the program, however, taxpayers are required to pay an estimated average of 12 percent more for a beneficiary using a private Medicare Advantage plan than that same beneficiary would have cost taxpayers in the traditional, government-run Medicare program. In some regions, especially rural regions, the overpayment to private health plans is closer to 20 percent relative to traditional Medicare. If private health plans are more efficient purchasers of



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health care than is traditional Medicare, why do the private plans need extra payments to compete with government-run Medicare for enrollees?

Research has shown that when analyzed over several decades, Medicare spending per enrollee, although higher in absolute dollars than health spending for younger individuals, has not grown as fast as has health spending for privately insured individuals. As Cristina Bocutti and Marilyn Moon recently concluded in their comparative analysis of cost trends in Medicare and the private insurance sector: “Medicare has proved to be more successful than private insurance has been in controlling the growth rate of health care spending per enrollee. Moreover, recent survey research has found that Medicare beneficiaries are generally more satisfied with their health care than are privately insured people under age sixty-five.”

Finally, it is well documented that in nations using social insurance, coupled with a mixed delivery system or outright socialized medicine, health spending per capita tends to be only about half of what is spent in America in terms of comparable purchasing power. Although some costly high-tech services in those countries are rationed by the queue, recent cross-national research funded by the Commonwealth Fund does not support the notion that the United States ranks among nations uniformly at the top in terms of health status indicators or quality indicators.

In short, the proposition that a so-called private-market approach to health care would be the best means of controlling the cost and quality of care, or the annual growth in health care spending, does not find empirical support.



The Financing of Health Care

OWNERSHIP OF PROVIDERS	SOCIAL INSURANCE (Financed by ability-to pay)		PRIVATE INSURANCE (Actuarially financed)		NO HEALTH INSURANCE (Out-of-pocket)
	Single Payer	Multiple Carriers	Non-Profit	For-Profit	
Government	A	D	G	J	M
Private but non-profit	B	E	H	K	N
Private and commercial	C	F	I	L	O

Cell A represents pure “socialized medicine” such as the V.A. health system. In that system government performs all of the basic functions listed in the article.

Cells A to F represent “social insurance” systems. In these, government performs the financing and risk-pooling functions, and the insured’s contribution to that risk pool is based on her or his ability to pay. Health care under social insurance can be purchased under two distinct arrangements. One of these is the single-payer approach (cells A, B, C), such as Medicare, the provincial Canadian health plans or Taiwan’s single-payer national health-insurance system. The alternative model is a multiple-payer system (cells D, E, F), such as the private Medicare Advantage plans or Medicaid managed-care plans in the United States or the Statutory Health Insurance system in Germany, under which over 200 independent, nonprofit sickness funds compete for enrollees mainly on the basis of the quality of their services. Under either arrangement, however, the delivery side can embrace all forms of ownership and control. Government manages only the financing and risk-pooling functions and sometimes the purchasing function as well.

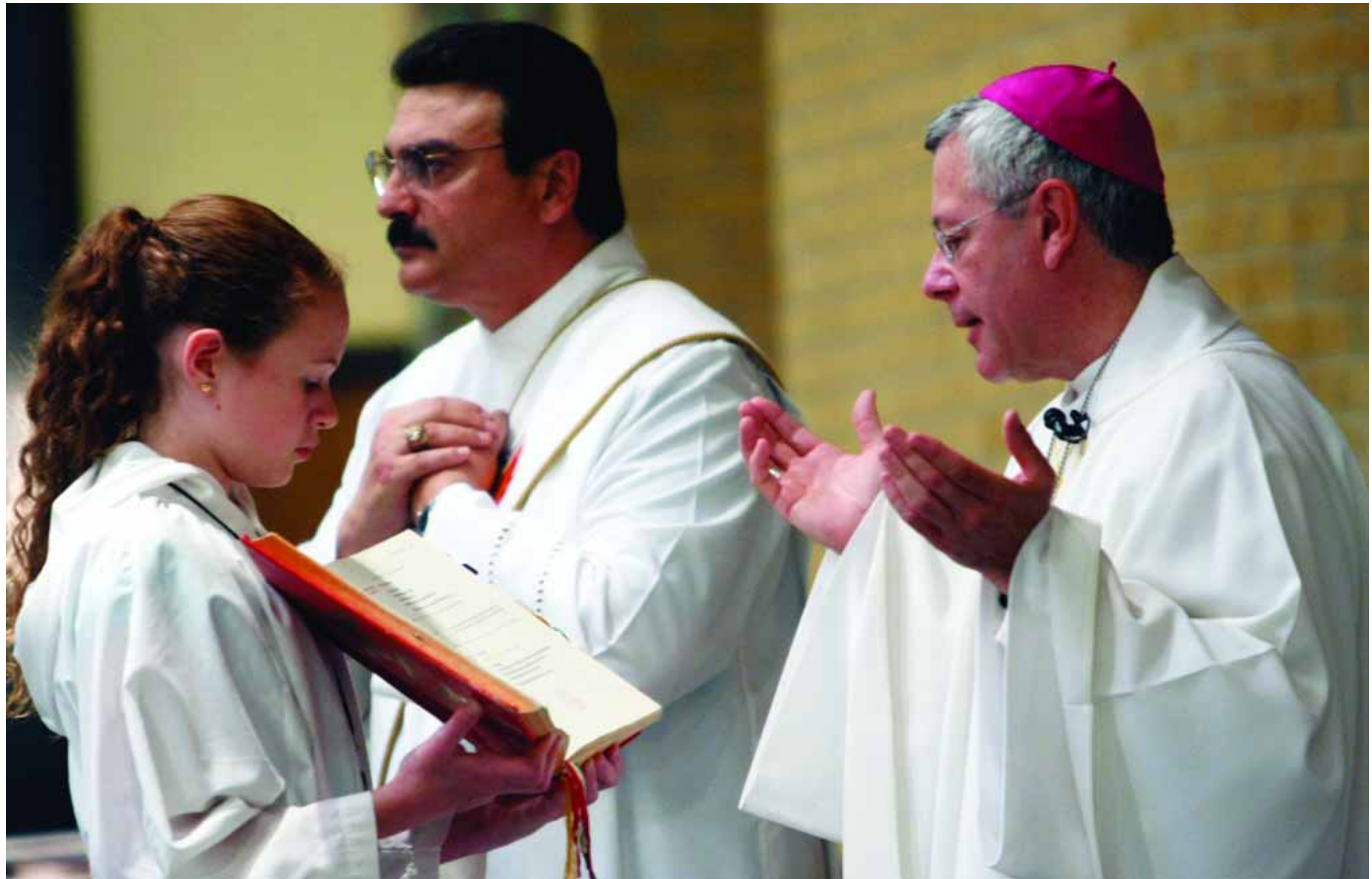
In health systems that rely mainly on private not-for-profit insurers (cells G, H, I) or for-profit insurers (cells J, K, L) the individual’s contribution to risk pools typically is not based on ability to pay, but is either a per-capita levy, if insurance premiums are community rated, or is a so-called “actuarially fair” premium based on the individual’s health status and set to come close to the insurer’s actuarially expected outlays for that individual’s health care in the coming period. In the eyes of Europeans and Canadians, the per-capita basis and even more the actuarially fair approach to setting premiums violates the principle of social solidarity. Many Americans, however, seem to find them ethically acceptable.

Finally, the complete or partial lack of insurance in cells M, N and O approximates a genuinely free market in health care, because it avoids the “moral hazard” inherent in health insurance. “Moral hazard” refers to the potential for overuse of health care, because at the point of using health care an insured person pays much less than the true full cost of producing that care. While some thinkers may deem this arrangement an ideal, few modern societies embrace it. First, it fails to harvest the benefits from protection against the financial inroads of illness. Second, it violates widely shared principles of fairness.

Expressing Holy Things

Why liturgical language should be accurate, faithful and clear

BY VICTOR GALEONE



Auxiliary Bishop Peter A. Libasci of Rockville Centre, N.Y., reads the prayer after Communion during a Mass in Sayville, N.Y.

Editor's Note: The Vatican recently approved a new English-language translation of some of the unchanging parts of the Mass, like the penitential rite and the Gloria. This article deals with the translation of changeable parts, like the opening prayer spoken by the priest, which have not yet been approved by the U.S. bishops and not yet submitted to the Vatican for approval.

AS EARLY AS FIVE YEARS after the introduction of the revised Order of Mass in 1969, among the liturgical reforms mandated by the Second Vatican Council, even progressive Catholic commentators were suggesting a dramatic overhaul was called for (see sidebar, p. 16).

With the appearance of the instruction *Liturgiam Authenticam* in 2001, the Vatican made clear its desire that the national conferences of bishops throughout the

THE MOST REVEREND VICTOR GALEONE is the bishop of the Diocese of St. Augustine in Florida.

world should revisit the translation of the liturgical texts to assure that they were in conformity with the Latin originals.

The earlier members of the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL), who translated the texts now in use, believed in the principle of “dynamic equivalence.” This meant trying to evoke in the hearts of a farmhand and a college professor the same response they had as children on hearing Psalm 23 for the first time. With dynamic equivalence, however, texts quickly go out of date, even if they are not banal to begin with. So for the last six years, ICEL has been working on

PHOTO: CNS/GREGORY A. SHERMIZ

a revision of the Mass texts to assure that they are in conformity with the Latin original.

Approaches to Translation

It is important to note that *Liturgiam Authenticam* does not mandate a strictly literal translation of the Latin. Paragraph 20 merely stipulates that the translation must render “the original texts *faithfully and accurately* into the vernacular.” In order to achieve that end, it is not necessary to sacrifice either clarity or fluency. But in my opinion, the newly proposed ICEL translations, for the most part, are a rather stilted rendering of the Latin. Before citing examples of this phenomenon, I believe it is necessary to examine two different approaches to resolving the current controversies over liturgical language.

One approach is to “freeze” the readings and prayers into some *static and never-changing formulas*. This allows doctrinal content to be formulated in a way that will not be changed and is not per se subjected to the ambiguities or distortions of the ever-evolving languages of the day. In the West, Latin did a good job of this for over 1,500 years. It was “correct” as well as stable and reliable, and it spanned the entire range of centuries of the Western tradition.

The other approach is to render the readings and prayers into *formulas and versions that are easily understood by the people*. This requires using the languages spoken every day, which are quite numerous and exposes the doctrinal content to potential “changes” in meaning, even if very subtle. Success depends on how well the translators understand the meaning and intent of the originals, how unbiased and faithful they are in rendering them into another language, and how skilled they are in the idioms and peculiarities of the target languages.

When the New Testament was produced, it was written not in archaic Greek, nor in Attic Greek, but in the everyday *koine* Greek of the commercial marketplace—which was not elegant or literary. When St. Jerome cast the Scriptures into Latin, he did not use the literary Latin of Caesar, Cicero, Livy, Tacitus or the like. He put them into the everyday language spoken on the street by the *vulgus*, the crowd—hence the name Vulgate.

Both the New Testament authors and St. Jerome demonstrate what St. Paul wrote to the church at Corinth:

“The foolish things of the world God has chosen to shame the wise; the weak things of the world God has chosen to shame the strong. What is common and contemptible in the world God has chosen—and even things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may glory in his sight” (1 Cor 1:27-29).

Second Thoughts

Latin was discarded; the celebrant about-faced; laymen were permitted to make themselves heard from the sanctuary; choirs were disbanded in favor of community sings. My God, it was beautiful! Or at least it would be, as soon as a few problems were worked out.... By now, however, the evidence indicating the current state of the liturgy is so overpowering that only a cleric could remain unconvinced.... So, you ask, what can be done about it? Bring back the Latin Mass! However, I realize we can never go back...but surely something can be done to recover some small part of the enchantment that is so patently missing from the Mass today.

—Dan Herr, “Stop Pushing!”
in *The Critic*, July 1974

Furthermore, the proposed ICEL translation, in some cases, does what not even the early church did in rendering the original texts into Latin. In transposing the Creed from Greek into Latin, for example, the fathers of the fourth century did not transliterate the Greek word *homoousion*; they translated it as *consubstantialem*. Not so with the proposed ICEL text, which has replaced the translation from Greek that is presently used, “one in being,” with a transliteration of the Latin, “consubstantial.”

In saying this, I do not mean to imply that the proposed translations are useless. On the contrary, I highly commend ICEL for having rectified many deficiencies in the present texts used at Mass. The banal expression “from east to west,” for instance, in the third eucharistic prayer now resonates with the Latin, “from the rising of the sun even to its setting”—thus evoking the prophecy of Mal 1:11. Also, before the reception of Communion, the bland “This is the Lamb of God...” now echoes the voice of the Baptist at the Jordan, “Behold the Lamb of God.”

Graceful Alternatives

That said, I still find fault with many of the proposed ICEL translations for rendering the Latin originals too literally, resulting in awkward English prayers. Every single prayer is rendered by one periodic sentence, as in the Latin. Classical Latin favors this style, with its subtle use of subordinate clauses and participles. But this does not work in modern English, even in formal speeches delivered on special occasions. Here is one instance, the example I used during my intervention in June at the U.S. bishops’ meeting in Orlando. On the floor, I quoted the ICEL translation of the prayer after Communion for Wednesday of Holy Week:

Fill our minds, almighty God,
with sure confidence that,
through your Son’s Death in time,

to which awesome mysteries bear witness,
you have given us perpetual life.

I proposed an alternate rendering that entailed merely rearranging a few clauses and adding a definite article and demonstrative adjective:

Almighty God,
fill our minds with [the] sure confidence
that you have given us perpetual life
through your Son's Death in time,
to which [these] awesome mysteries bear witness.

Then I alluded to the phrase "the gibbet of the cross" that occurs in the opening prayer of the same Mass: "The last time I heard the word 'gibbet' was in 1949, when our eighth-grade class was making the Stations of the Cross. For the vast majority of our people it is meaningless."

Several weeks later, I received a letter from the executive director of ICEL, commenting on my intervention in Orlando. He defended the ICEL (i.e., the Latin) word order, by pointing out that it avoided "a defect that many have noticed in the current translations of these prayers, namely that they often end weakly." He then went on to state that adding "these" to the text would imply that the "mysteries" being referred to were the eucharistic elements on the altar, when in fact, since the days of the Gregorian Sacramentary (812 A.D.), "mysteries" in this context refers to the Easter triduum, which begins the following day.

After explaining how difficult it was to find a proper translation for *patibulum crucis* other than "the gibbet of the cross," the executive director noted, "In choosing 'gibbet' to translate *patibulum*, the commission has been aware that the phrase 'the gibbet of the Cross' was used by St. John Fisher." St. John Fisher (d. 1535) also made use of the word "forsooth." Would ICEL also be willing to translate the Latin *vere* (indeed) as "forsooth?"

I have intentionally dwelled at some length on these interactions with ICEL's executive director because I believe they show that the present membership of ICEL falls squarely into the camp of those who prefer a translation that is frozen in static, never-changing formulas—even if comprehension is sacrificed in the process.

Why the Motion Failed to Pass

At the Orlando conference, it was pointed out that only eight bishops had submitted amendments to alter the proposed texts. The legal maxim "silence gives consent" should warrant the conclusion that the vast majority of bishops agree with the proposed translations. I submitted no amendments. I refrained from doing so out of frustration. At our meeting in Los Angeles two years ago, I submitted four amendments with well-reasoned explanations as to

why the texts were flawed. Not one amendment was accepted, nor was any reason given for their rejection. I have spoken with other bishops who feel equally frustrated.

It was also pointed out that four national conferences of bishops have already approved the texts (11 national conferences are members of ICEL). Why then, should our con-

The proposed ICEL translations, for the most part, are a rather stilted rendering of the Latin.

ference refuse to go along with them? My observation is that if the bishops in those countries felt the same frustration that many of our bishops are experiencing, isn't it possible that they might have approved the texts just to be done with it? The conferences that have accepted the ICEL texts represent only a small fraction of English-speaking Catholics worldwide, whereas U.S. Catholics represent 85 percent of the Catholic English-speaking world. That important point should not be lost.

In fact, following my intervention, three bishops

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informed me that although they agreed with me, they still voted for approval since they felt it was time to move on. At the conference, several bishops publicly voiced the same sentiment—as one of them expressed it, “With all its difficulties, the translation should go forward.” But Archbishop Daniel Pilarczyk of Cincinnati warned that it “depends on what you’re moving forward to,” arguing that the new texts would be “a linguistic swamp.”

Other bishops at the conference were in agreement with Pilarczyk. For example, Bishop Richard Sklba of Milwaukee admitted, “If I have trouble understanding the text, I wonder how it’s going to be possible to pray with it in the con-

text of worship.” He added that if the texts were approved, our priests and people would press the bishops to return to them time and again in order to remedy the perceived defects.

Bishop Donald Trautman of Erie has observed (*America*, 5/21/07) that the texts contain a number of archaic and obscure terms, such as “wrought,” “ineffable” and “gibbet.” He also lamented ICEL’s preference for replicating in English the structure of the Latin periodic sentence, thus making comprehension difficult. “John and Mary Catholic,” he concluded, “have a right to have prayer texts that are clear and understandable.” Clear and understandable—without sacrificing either accuracy or elegance—therein lies the challenge!

Since the motion failed to receive sufficient votes for either approval (166) or rejection (83), the Latin-rite bishops who were absent from the conference had to be polled by mail. With all the mail-in ballots counted, the motion still failed to pass. Consequently, we bishops will have to revisit the proposed draft of prayers at our November meeting.

In the past 1,500 years, languages spoken on the street have changed. And so the dilemma constantly recurs of how to represent the teaching of Scripture, tradition and the liturgy in a way that remains faithful to its original meaning but at the same time is easily understood by the people. It is no easy task, but proposing translations that leave our people scratching their heads is not the answer.

That is the reason the motion for the proposed texts failed to pass. We bishops who voted against the motion did not do so out of a spirit of obstinacy. We love the Lord. We love the church. We love the liturgy. And what we desire for our people is what the bishops at the Second Vatican Council approved in the “Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy,” No. 21, speaking of the restoration of the liturgy (emphasis added): “Both texts and rites should be drawn up so that they express *more clearly* the holy things which they signify: the Christian people, so far as is possible, should be enabled to *understand them with ease* and to take part in them fully, actively, and as befits a community.” **A**



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‘A Transplant of the Heart’

Miguel d’Escoto’s vision for the United Nations

BY GEORGE M. ANDERSON

I WANT TO REPRESENT THE POOR of the world, including the people of my own country, Nicaragua,” said Miguel d’Escoto Brockmann, M.M. We were sitting in the office of the president of the 63rd General Assembly of the United Nations. Elected to this one-year executive post in June 2008, he will take up the duties of his office in September.

Father d’Escoto’s fluent English reflects the fact that he was born in the United States and spent some of his childhood years with his parents on the Upper East Side of Manhattan (his father was a Nicaraguan diplomat). Currently a retired Maryknoll priest, under “limited suspension,” d’Escoto was Nicaragua’s foreign minister when the Sandinista National Liberation Front’s government held power from 1979 to 1990 under President Daniel Ortega. It was Ortega, re-elected to the presidency of Nicaragua in 2006, who put d’Escoto’s name forward as a candidate for the presidency of the U.N. assembly.

Reflecting on the global picture, d’Escoto deplors an increase in world poverty that has reached what he calls “totally unacceptable levels.” And because of nuclear arms, he said, there is also “the real threat of the extinguishing of the human species, as well as the life-sustaining capability of the earth.” D’Escoto’s firsthand acquaintance with global poverty came early; his first assignment after ordination took him to Chile, where he worked with a federation of slum dwellers. Later, through the experiences of Nicaragua during its eight-year war against the U.S.-backed Contras, and through the writings

of liberation theologians like those of his friend Gustavo Gutiérrez, O.P., d’Escoto became convinced that “the most important thing from which to be liberated is violence.” In today’s world, war-related violence is a virtual addiction, he said. Even a small portion of the money nations spend on arms and warfare could help lift the dispossessed half of the world from the extremes of poverty that include inadequate access to food, clean water and basic sanitation.

The 1996 World Food Summit’s objective of halving malnutrition by 2015, d’Escoto observed, is unlikely to be met. He sees the Millennium Development Goals, the education, health and development initiatives begun by the United Nations in 2000, as “unambitious” and “just



PHOTO: CNS/PAULO FILGUEIRAS

GEORGE M. ANDERSON, S.J., is an associate editor of *America*.

Samuel Santos Lopez, right, Nicaraguan foreign minister, congratulates Miguel d’Escoto Brockmann following his election as head of the U.N. General Assembly in New York.

tokenism.” “This is an issue we will address in the General Assembly,” he said. The slow pace at which the goals are being met and the poverty of the world—much of it created by war—have led him to add, “What we need is a conversion, a transplant of the heart.” We must accept “that we are all brothers and sisters, or else we will drown in what Tolstoy called our ‘insane selfishness.’”

Espousing Nonviolence

Miguel d’Escoto’s greatest heroes are those who have pursued nonviolence—

Tolstoy, Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., and Dorothy Day. “These are the people who most influenced me,” said d’Escoto. Daniel Ortega once invited Archbishop Oscar Romero to come to Nicaragua to rest, said

d’Escoto, who was looking forward to meeting him, “but then came the call about his murder while celebrating Mass.” D’Escoto made special reference to Tolstoy’s *The Kingdom of God Is Within You*: “That was the book that Gandhi discovered as a young lawyer working in South Africa.”

The incoming president also mentioned two 19th-century social reformers: William Lloyd Garrison, a journalist who sought the abolition of slavery, capital punishment and all war; and Adin Ballou, a Protestant abolitionist, pacifist and socialist, who founded the Hopedale Community in Massachusetts. The group embraced a concept of Christian pacifism called “non-resistance.” As he came to know the writings of Garrison and Ballou, and others like them, d’Escoto explained, “I began to realize that the Gospel itself is radically nonviolent. Gandhi convinced me that the means countries use in dealing with one another are the seeds from which the future will sprout; if we use violent means, we are just planting the seeds for more violence. We who are supposed to be preaching Jesus’ message of nonviolence, ‘Thou shall not kill,’ have made too many concessions.” For d’Escoto, one such concession is the just war theory.

In his acceptance speech in June, d’Escoto noted “acts of aggression such as those occurring in Iraq and Afghanistan.” Though he did not mention the United States by name, few would have failed to see in the comment an allusion to the U.N.’s host country.

In 1985, while serving as Nicaragua’s foreign minister, d’Escoto embarked on a lengthy fast for peace. Referring to a 1985 interview with the Nicaraguan periodical *Revista Envío*, he said that the fast was prompted in part by “the U.S.-declared, armed, financed and directed Contra war

against Nicaragua.” He said the fast was a religious act on his part, and many Nicaraguans joined him.

To be an honest disciple of Jesus, d’Escoto observed, “we must also be committed not only to the eradication of violence, but also to ensuring access to food at a time of escalating food prices, and to the sources of clean water lacking in many poor countries.” The lack of clean water is one of the issues he plans to focus on as president of the General Assembly. The situation is exacerbated because the water supply “is being increasingly privatized,” a matter that

poses special dangers for developing countries. Yet the right to water is among the most basic of human rights, he said. D’Escoto played a leading role on the Nicaraguan government’s water commission, though his country is fortunate, he said, in

being “rich in water through Lake Nicaragua, the most important resource in Mesoamerica” (Mexico and the countries of Central America).

His Views and Vision

As General Assembly president d’Escoto hopes to work toward greater democratization of the United Nations. “The founders of the United Nations believed that all the member countries were equal, but some see themselves as more equal than others,” he said, making an oblique reference to the major industrialized nations. He described them as creating a centralization of power that strikes at the root of a democratic spirit. He spoke of “the problem of the abuse of the veto privilege” of the Security Council’s five permanent members (the United States, Great Britain, France, Russia and China), who have the power to block any of the council’s decisions.

Miguel d’Escoto traces some of the United Nations’ problems back to the institutions that grew from the 1946 Bretton Woods agreements on international monetary systems, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. He referred to “their lethal prescriptions,” which are intended to improve the economies of countries struggling with poverty but in many cases have led to greater suffering. The major problem in the United Nations, d’Escoto said, is that “the opinion of the majority is not heard.” He cited as one example the embargo on Cuba. “Every year, the issue of the 45-year trade embargo comes up, and every year the General Assembly speaks of

We have to move together from the logic of ‘I and mine’ to the logic of ‘we and ours.’



From the archives, an interview with Miguel d’Escoto from 1985, at americamagazine.org/pages.

lifting it. But despite only four votes against removing it," he said, "the Cuban embargo remains in place because of a few countries."

Father d'Escoto expressed admiration for Cuba's excellent medical initiatives. These include, he said, not only the government's export of well-trained physicians to serve poor people in Latin America, but special undertakings like *operación milagro* (operation miracle). The project flies blind people from over 20 Latin American and Caribbean nations to Cuba for surgery to restore their eyesight. "People who have never even been in a car are flown to Havana for the kind of surgery that otherwise would have been impossible." He said, "It's a joy for me to see Cuba's generosity, even though there are some who denigrate it."

During the 63rd General Assembly, d'Escoto hopes to begin a dialogue on the democratization of the United Nations. He envisions three sessions: the first would focus on the Bretton Woods institutions; the second would transfer to the General Assembly some of the powers currently held by the Security Council; the third would devise checks on the Security Council and the members' veto power, which currently, he said, virtually guarantees their ability to act with impunity. He also hopes to address climate change and deforestation; nuclear disarmament, which needs a level of consideration it has not so far received; and terrorism, particularly insofar as the war against it is used, he said, as a pretext to "commit wars of aggression."

Prohibitions and Prayer

Since he was admonished in the 1980s by Pope John Paul II for his involvement in politics through his work as Nicaragua's foreign minister, d'Escoto has been unable to celebrate Mass. "I asked the Vatican if I could at least say Mass by myself, but they said no to that too," he said. "Nevertheless," he added, "the prohibition does not prevent me from living what I consider to be a eucharistic life, that is, a life of risk for the brotherhood and sisterhood." He said that about half of the people he encounters at the United Nations address him as "Father." The title is appropriate, for while d'Escoto is under suspension by the Holy See, from public priestly ministry, he is still a priest, according to Canonists.

When asked how he approaches the limits on the exercise of his priestly ministry, he replied, "I deal with it through prayer." He said he rises daily at 5 a.m. and spends two hours in prayer before

addressing the day's tasks. Even before beginning his work as Nicaragua's foreign minister in 1979, he said he "had already formed a habit of prayer through 'practicing the presence of God'—there is no time for me that is not a time for prayer." He went on to say, "I never pray for something to happen, only to do God's will."

After his acceptance speech at the United Nations, d'Escoto said, "Some people told me it sounded like a sermon; I replied, 'the only thing I've ever wanted to be is a priest, a disciple of Jesus of Nazareth.'" Despite the prohibition on his presiding at Mass, d'Escoto spoke of receiving strong support from the Maryknoll community. Shortly before our interview, in fact, he traveled to its headquarters in Ossining, north of New York City, to attend a Mass for jubilarians.

Father d'Escoto's support of liberation theology led to the founding of Maryknoll's Orbis Press in 1970. "I wanted to make the writings of my friends, Gustavo Gutiérrez and Juan Luis Segundo and those of others like them, widely known." When Orbis published Gutiérrez's *Theology of Liberation* in English, the cover image of the crucified Christ, by an indigenous Indian artist, was one d'Escoto himself had chosen.

The United Nations has designated the year 2009 as the World Year of Reconciliation. For Miguel d'Escoto, the year ought to involve moving toward "forgiveness, reconciliation and fraternity." He said: "We have to move together from the logic of 'I and mine' to the logic of 'we and ours.' The whole of life is about this transition from selfishness to love." It was a statement that summarized much of our conversation that morning in his office. In closing, the priest expressed his belief that "God will not abandon us in the struggle for a better world." **A**



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A Bold New Direction

*Richard H. Tierney and **America's** foray into politics*

BY JAMES T. KEANE AND JIM McDERMOTT

UPON HIS ARRIVAL IN New York City to take up duties as an associate editor of **America** in July 1914, Paul Blakely, S.J., was eager to meet the newly minted third editor in chief of the five-year-old magazine, Richard H. Tierney, S.J. “My first impression was not pleasant,” Blakely later recalled. When taken to Tierney’s door, “The ‘come in’ I heard was barked, much in the manner of a drill sergeant expressing his opinion of a particularly awkward squad. I came in, and got my first view of the biggest man, mentally and morally, I have ever known.”

Blakely’s penchant for hyperbole aside, more than a few colleagues and acquaintances over the 11 years when Richard Tierney stood at the magazine’s helm described him in similar terms. He was by all accounts a physically intimidating man, tall and pugnacious in appearance, solidly built and quick in gesture, with a personality to match. His fellow editors considered him inspiring but mercurial, and sometimes lacking moderation in both personal matters and editorial opinions. A later editor called Tierney “a man of strong personal views, detesting sham and doubletalk, and shrinking from no controversy.” From 1914 to 1925, he also substantially changed **America** from a pacific and low-profile magazine into a controversial journal of opinion on the international political scene, bringing both new influence and unexpected notoriety to the magazine in the process.

Tierney was willing to wade into any fight, but three topics in particular were the focus of his efforts and ever-present subjects on the editorial pages in those years. World War I naturally dominated news coverage in almost every journal from 1914 to 1918, and **America** was no exception, offering religious and political commentary throughout the conflict. Also receiving considerable treatment in the pages of the magazine were religious persecution in Mexico and the struggle for Irish independence. Because of its treatment of each, the magazine under Tierney engaged in numerous public dust-ups with President Woodrow Wilson and officials in his administration, visits to the office and correspondence with the editors from all manner of foreign officials

JAMES T. KEANE, S.J., and JIM McDERMOTT, S.J., are associate editors of **America**. This is the second in a series of articles on the history of **America**.

and dignitaries, seizures of copies of **America** by authorities ranging from the British government to American anti-espionage agencies, rumored death threats against Tierney and the staff, letters of commendation from two separate popes and, according to one editor, a wiretap on the office phones. While other issues were dissected and debated vigorously on the magazine’s editorial page (including Prohibition, women’s suffrage, the plight of Austria’s starving postwar population and U.S. government control over education), no

subjects brought more attention to the magazine or elicited more words from Tierney and his staff than World War I and the plight of fellow Catholics in Ireland and Mexico in the 1910s and 1920s.

Born in New York City on Sept. 2, 1870, Tierney had entered the Jesuit novitiate in 1892 after graduating from St. Francis Xavier College in New York. After completing his Jesuit training and spending five years as a philosophy professor at the Jesuit seminary in Woodstock, Md., Tierney came to **America** in 1914 at age 43. Though he had published a book and numerous articles on education, he had no journalistic experience. It was therefore a surprise to some of the staff when, a month after his arrival, Tierney was appointed to replace Thomas J. Campbell, S.J., and became the magazine’s third editor in chief.

Editorially, Campbell’s tenure had been a staid and polite period for the magazine, remembered by one editor as “that slack period of Taft’s administration, when no great causes wrung attention, when only minor efforts seemed crying for refutation, when Europe was silently and sullenly preparing for war, and the United States was smugly plodding along between Roosevelt and Wilson.” Campbell’s careful management in the five years since the monetary crises that immediately followed the journal’s founding had brought it to solvency, but financial ruin still seemed just a day away. The magazine had been forced to give up its original quarters in Washington Square for financial reasons, and printing strikes often resulted in sporadic production and unreliable delivery. When the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand in Sarajevo led to the outbreak of World War I in Europe, the price of paper and other raw materials soared; printing and distribution costs for the magazine rose accordingly. The editors were forced



to raise the price of a yearly subscription from three dollars to four.

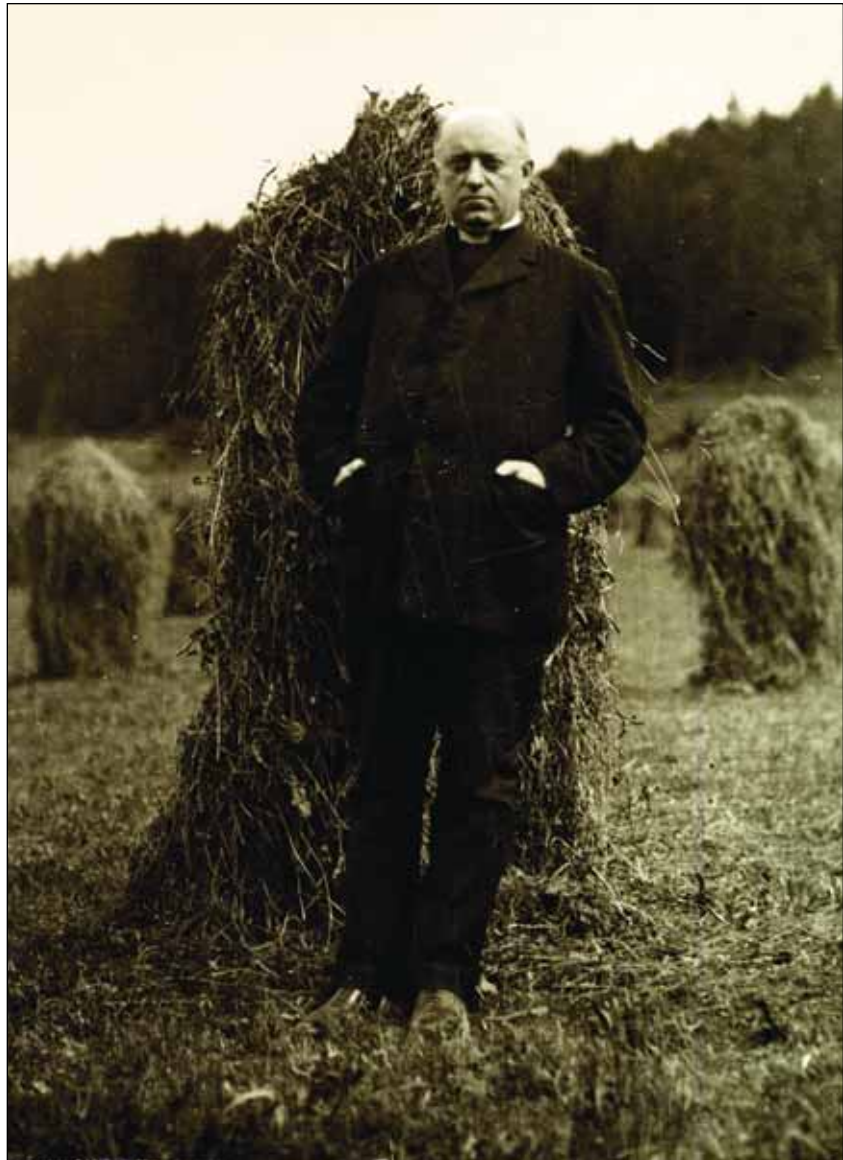
A War of Words

Tierney's most tense controversy came from an unexpected direction after the United States entered World War I in 1917. Government officials began monitoring suspected German sympathizers in the United States, and in one search of a suspected foreign agent's home found a list of editors and writers whose assistance was thought to be useful in eliciting public sympathy for the German war effort; among the names was Joseph Husslein, S.J., a member of **America's** editorial staff. The magazine had remained scrupulously neutral before the United States entered the war, even arguing against American entry into the conflict, while other journals were pushing for intervention on the side of the Allies. **America** soon found itself under government suspicion for pro-German sympathies. Other newspapers and journals similarly accused, including *The Freeman's Journal*, had already been shut down, their editors arrested for "obstructing the war effort."

Tierney issued an indignant denial through *The New York Times* of the magazine's participation in any fifth column against the American war effort, noting that Husslein's name appeared on the list without his knowledge or consent. After the entrance of the United States into the war, **America** had taken the "path of absolute loyalty to the declared policy of the Government," he wrote. When Tierney was summoned to meet President Wilson at the White House in 1918 to discuss "Catholic matters," he gathered the editors and asked them, "Are you all ready to be sent to Leavenworth Prison?" While the controversy proved to have short legs (and Leavenworth saw no Jesuit visitors), for the duration of the conflict **America** was obligated to send two copies of every issue to the solicitor general of the U.S. Post Office, where the magazine could be examined for disloyalty or sedition according to the terms of the Espionage Act of 1917.

South of the Border

After Mexico plunged into a series of coups and endless civil unrest after the Revolution of 1910, stories circulated in the United States about persecution of Mexican Catholics at the



Richard H. Tierney, S.J., Austria, circa 1919. "He was by all accounts a physically intimidating man, tall and pugnacious in appearance, solidly built and quick in gesture, with a personality to match."

hands of anticlerical forces. By 1915, Tierney claimed to have collected a large dossier of testimonies from prominent Mexican citizens and foreign nationals in Mexico that proved the persecution was not only widespread, but was occurring with the full knowledge of the U.S. government. **America's** repeated calls for the United States to protect the religious rights of the Mexican people turned the controversy into something of a cause célèbre in the second half of that decade. Loath to alienate their Mexican allies for fear of losing the valuable oil concessions controlled by American companies, U.S. President Woodrow Wilson's administration neither intervened nor acknowledged any persecution.

When administration officials claimed in 1915 that the State Department had no record of any atrocities commit-

ted in Mexico and that Tierney had been misled by propaganda and forgeries, Tierney responded abrasively and at length in the pages of **America**. “Some men who seem to think they are baptized politicians, not Christians,” Tierney wrote in a signed editorial, “are declaring that they are fearful that I have not the facts. These people mistake the object of their fear. They do not fear that I have not the facts: they fear the facts. Let them not worry: splints for spines and rubber holders for knees will prevent their bodies from wobbling. Their souls. Ah, that is another question!”

At the same time, Tierney was drawing large crowds to public speaking engagements in New York to expose Mexican persecution of Catholics and to call for official American condemnation of it. In one engagement at Carnegie Hall in 1916, Tierney recounted for a crowd of 2,000 a long list of atrocities committed by Mexican troops against nuns and priests. “It is a revolution of rapine,” Tierney insisted, “and one that is carrying on its turgid waves the mangled bodies of men and the living souls of women and children, who are wailing piteously, crying hopelessly for help.... They are humanity’s problem—issues that concern man because he is a man, not a beast.”

Continued public sparring with the Wilson administration led to private hints of further intrigues, including a supposed plot against Tierney’s life by Mexican government agents and later claims by one editor of **America** that someone had tapped the magazine’s telephones. Tierney (and Blakely, as the primary author of editorials during the time) continued to denounce atrocities and American inactivity in the face of increasing evidence of their frequency. At the height of these tensions, Tierney received a letter from Pope Benedict XV praising his work on behalf of persecuted Catholics in Mexico.

Across the Pond

Despite the fevered pitch of editorial comment, even the

Mexican controversy took a back seat on the magazine’s pages during Tierney’s editorship to the cause of Irish independence from Great Britain. The short-lived Easter Rising in Dublin in 1916 had been met by stubborn British resistance to Irish independence in the following years, but the cause of the rebels drew enormous sympathy

Tierney changed America from a pacific and low-profile magazine into a controversial journal of opinion on the international political scene.

among the huge population of Irish immigrants and their descendants in the United States. When President Wilson pledged not to interfere with British policies on “the Irish Question” after World War I, **America** accused Wilson of violating his own principles of self-determination for all peoples.

When press reports indicated that **America**’s editors would host the Irish nationalist Eamon de Valera for a dinner in June 1919 after de Valera had successfully evaded British ships attempting to intercept him on his voyage to the United States, the British government forbade distribution of the magazine on Irish shores and confiscated all extant copies. (To avoid the appearance of impropriety, the editors decided to welcome de Valera for a visit to their residence, which was festooned with Irish flags for the occasion, but declined to offer him dinner.)

Tierney and his staff remained unrepentant, and continued to advance the Irish cause of independence from Great Britain throughout the Irish Civil War of the early 1920s. He and **America** were accused by Irish and English partisans of every political persuasion of unfair bias against their cause, and until Tierney’s dying days the Irish Question remained a focus of the magazine.

A Catholic Voice

By the fall of 1924, Tierney’s fellow editors began to worry that his health was failing, though he was just 54 years old; some thought him in despair over the failure of his editorial efforts to achieve serious results. A few months later, he suffered a debilitating stroke. Though he remained in his position for a few more months, both his mem-

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ory and his speech were significantly impaired. Not until he attended a meeting of the American Jesuit provincials at Fordham University in the spring of 1925 did the extent of his disability become clear to his superiors. At that time he was replaced by Wilfred Parsons, S.J., who would serve as editor in chief of **America** for the next 11 years. Tierney died less than three years later, on Feb. 10, 1928. Obituaries noted letters of gratitude he had received during his career from both Pope Benedict XV and Pope Pius XI for his Catholic leadership through crises in the United States, Ireland and Mexico.

When Tierney first became editor in chief, Catholics in the United States had no authoritative voice to speak for them in the media. American Catholic bishops were not accustomed to meeting or communicating regularly on issues of national policy. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops did not exist; even its forerunner, the National Catholic War Council, was not created until 1917. Though Tierney remained frustrated with the apparent failure of his crusades to sway government policies, the magazine's increasing prominence under Tierney inserted a distinctly Catholic perspective into national debates about foreign and domestic policy. At his death, the lay-edited Catholic journal *Commonweal*, then in its fifth year of publication, noted "all interested in the advance of the Catholic press in America will mourn the death of Father Richard H. Tierney, S.J.... With his advent as editor of **America** in March 1914, that journal began to attract wide attention and as the years passed that attention was not only augmented but riveted. Few publications of such comparatively short life have been more widely quoted than was **America** in the first years of Father Tierney's editorship." **A**



From the archives, Richard H. Tierney, S.J., on religious oppression in Mexico, at americamagazine.org/pages.

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A Church Transparent

What Catholic leaders have learned from the world of business

BY THOMAS J. HEALEY



THE FIRST VISIT of Pope Benedict XVI to the United States focused the media on many of the ills plaguing the Catholic Church, from the sexual abuse scandals to the shortage of priests to the shuttering of schools and parishes by cash-starved dioceses. What receives virtually no exposure, by contrast, is the revolution quietly taking hold across the country in the way parishes and dioceses manage themselves financially and administratively. For a growing number, this has meant adopting the principles of financial transparency, accountability, economies of scale and personnel development—the same principles that have fueled the world’s most successful corporations.

Bishop Dennis Schnurr, treasurer of

THOMAS J. HEALEY, a retired partner of Goldman, Sachs & Co., is currently a senior fellow at Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government. He is treasurer of the National Leadership Roundtable on Church Management.

the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, set an appropriate tone when he said, “Parishes cannot afford to be mom-and-pop businesses with ‘Trust Me’ as their motto.”

Transparency in Boston

The Archdiocese of Boston—no stranger to scandal—has become something of a poster child for the movement to greater financial stewardship and reporting within the U.S. Catholic Church. Determined to put an end to the secrecy of the past, the archdiocese under Cardinal Sean O’Malley made an unprecedented commitment to openness several years ago through its Financial Transparency Project. Spearheading the initiative was a volunteer team of lay experts that included academics, accounting professionals and business leaders led by Jack McCarthy, who is a principal at Harvard University’s Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organizations and was global practice leader for education at PricewaterhouseCoopers. Blessed with

this fresh set of eyes, the Archdiocese of Boston issued online (www.rcab.org) a full disclosure report on its financial condition, including sexual abuse settlement information and an insightful look inside the organization of the archdiocese. Among the tools used by the Transparency Project for its review was a management discussion and analysis, the same vehicle used in 10K reports filed by public companies.

Cardinal O’Malley put the project in proper context by explaining: “[W]e hope to provide the faithful as complete an understanding as possible of our financial status...The commitment to financial transparency is a key element of re-establishing trust with the people of this archdiocese. It will now be part of our standard practice.”

Comprised of C.E.O.’s and senior executives of some of the country’s leading corporations—including Adobe Systems, Goldman Sachs, Korn/Ferry and McKinsey & Company—as well as major nonprofit, philanthropic and educational organizations, the National Leadership Roundtable on Church Management works with bishops, pastors and other church officials, making its members’ skills and experience available to the church.

Uncovering Economies of Scale

In addition to Boston, the Diocese of Tyler in east Texas has actively embraced best-in-class practices. Nearly to the point at which it could no longer afford health insurance benefits for its lay employees, the diocese formed a select committee to explore the creation of a common health plan for all 15 dioceses across the state of Texas. The committee discovered that economies of scale could be used to tremendous advantage by building a single Catholic benefits group. Indeed, savings to all 15 dioceses—if they opted to participate—and to their 11,000 employees would amount to around \$6 million from the approximately \$43 million spent annually for health insurance.

To make the plan work, the committee encouraged all the dioceses to take part. While 100 percent participation proved impossible because of the differences among dioceses, the committee did manage to attract their attention. Four of the dioceses created a benefits package

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/DARREN KATIN

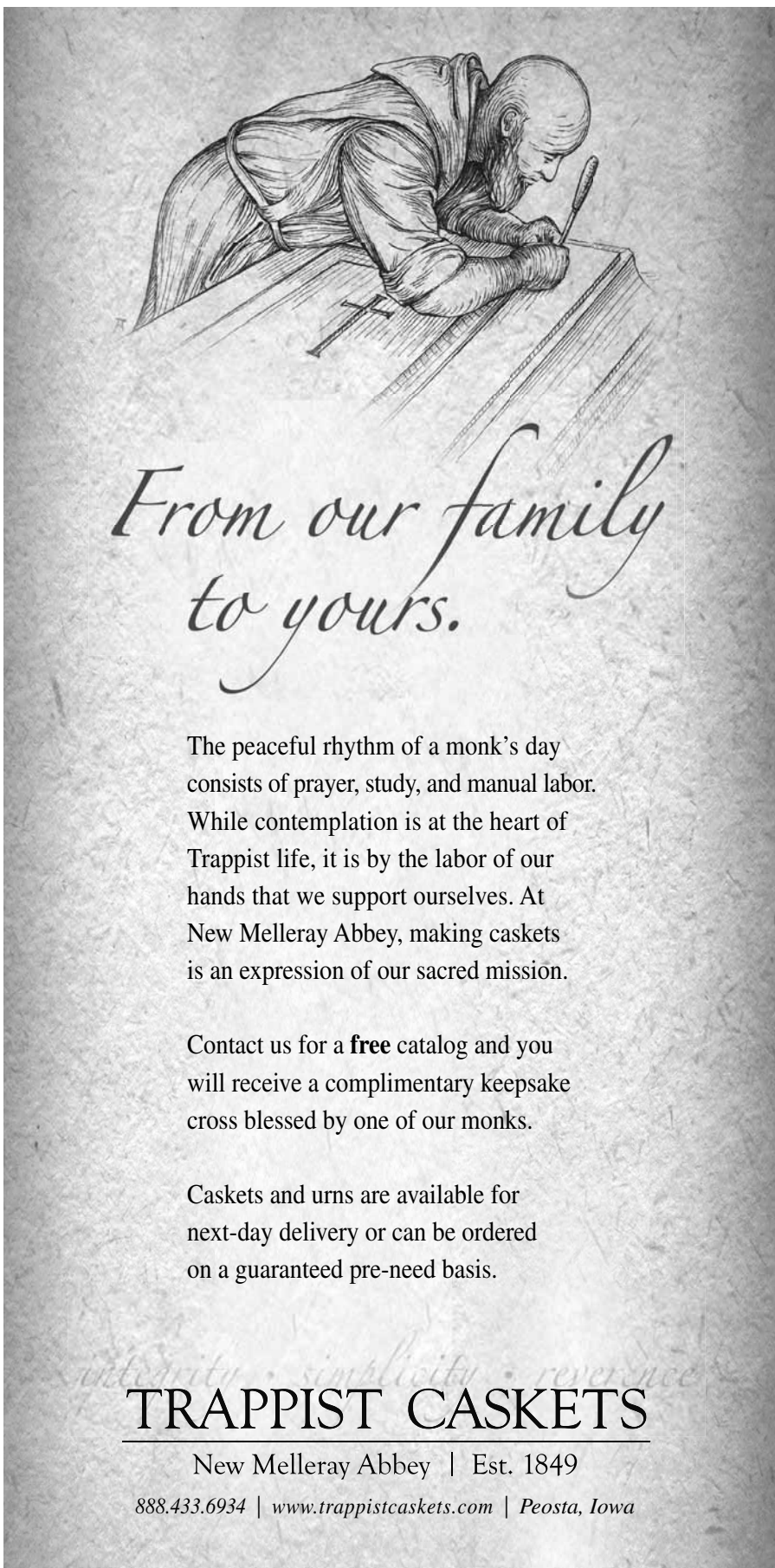
and put it out for bid; they selected Mutual of Omaha as vendor for the new Catholic Employee Benefits Group, which currently covers 1,100 people, including dependents. Now other dioceses have expressed an interest in joining the program as soon as their current policies expire.

Economies of scale are also central to an innovative new organization that identifies collaborative solutions to challenges facing the Catholic schools of six archdioceses and dioceses in Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, Delaware and the District of Columbia. In the area of finance, the Mid-Atlantic Catholic Schools Consortium is developing plans for centralized purchasing of such essentials as textbooks, transportation, waste disposal and energy. The goal is to capitalize on the collective buying power of the consortium and its member dioceses. Similarly, the organization plans to launch an interdiocesan leadership institute to provide professional and leadership development to current and future Catholic school leaders, including lay principals, administrators, teachers, pastors and seminarians. Its founders view the institute as a model that could eventually prove useful in other reform-minded diocesan school systems.

Standards of Excellence

The Diocese of Gary, Ind., affords yet another telling sign of systemic change occurring within the Catholic Church. Gary became the nation's first diocese to adopt formally the new Standards for Excellence for Catholic dioceses, parishes and nonprofits. This far-reaching code calls for strategic planning, annual finance audits and reports, performance evaluations and a commitment to transparency. Bishop Dale Melczek reported that his diocesan priests' council, after carefully studying the sections relating to finance, management and human resources practices for parishes, recommended implementing the standards throughout the diocese.

Other Catholic dioceses and nonprofit organizations are now starting to implement the standards as well. They are actively embracing the laity, using lay/clergy cooperation as a vital tool in helping the church transform its stewardship practices. In the process, the church is bringing itself into a 21st-century operating mode. **A**



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Blessed Interruptions

God can be found in the moments that upset our rhythms.

BY KYLE T. KRAMER

GROWING FRUITS and vegetables for market on our 27-acre farm takes time. But time is at a premium for me, with a full-time job and three young children, so during the season I'm up and running at 5 a.m. to take advantage of two precious hours for farm work before heading off to my day job.

My morning chore time is essential not just to keeping the farm running; it is also when I get some vital time by myself. I do some of my best praying in the morning, usually with a hoe handle or a tractor steering wheel in my hands. I often listen to public radio or podcasts to keep my brain alive and functioning. I savor the lovely silence of the waking day and the soft, early light of summer-solstice mornings.

One morning last season I was cultivating some of the bottom-land market garden beds, a few hundred feet from our house. Back and forth among the rows, I walked behind our big Troy-Bilt tiller. The tiller's engine loud, my earmuffs on and iPod going, I focused on not running over young plants, savoring my cocoon of vision and sound.

At the end of the long row I wrestled the tiller around for the next pass and saw my 3½-year-old identical twin daughters, Eva and Clare, right behind me. As my wife and infant son slept, they had

awakened early, and finding me nowhere in the house but hearing the tiller engine going, they had put on their garden clogs and wandered down in their pajamas through a head-high field of uncut hay to find me.

A Merry Parade

I am far from a perfect father. I love my kids endlessly, but I also marvel at my

impatience, my quick temper, my frustration with them, my desire to be left alone from them. I marvel even more, however, that in spite of all this, my girls are devoted to their papa and look for every opportunity to spend time with me, even in the early dawn hours. I am not deserving of this love, or of this desire for my company. I'll even admit, with some shame, that among my first thoughts in seeing them

down in the gardens was a Type-A concern that they would slow down my work so much that I could not finish cultivating in time to beat the coming rains.

But seeing this pair of young twins, wet with dew and eager for inclusion, is enough to melt even my strongest focus on a given task. I shut off the tiller and my iPod and gave the girls a kiss and a big bear hug. After asking what I was doing, they piped up in unison: "We want to help, Papa!"

And so began our merry parade, in various iterations. First, they simply walked behind me like little ducklings as I guided the tiller down the rows. Then they insisted on holding my hand, so I steered the tiller as best I could with one hand, while they each grabbed a finger of the other. Every 20 feet or so, one would lose a shoe and cry out at being left behind, and the train would stop. Finally, wanting a more active role, they took turns at holding on to the tiller han-



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

ART BY DAN SALAMIDA

dles. I straddled them, tried to guide the tiller with them and accidentally ran over more plants than I care to mention.

Perhaps it is because I work at a Benedictine monastery that I have long held a rather monastic vision of the life of prayer: regular periods of time set aside each day for stillness, silence, Scripture reading and other devotions. But I am not a monk, and even monks are busy. Like many I know, I struggle constantly to find a way to nurture my relationship with God while at the same time juggling the various responsibilities of adult life as husband, father, farmer, carpenter, employee and so forth. I have tried the Liturgy of the Hours, journaling, meditation of various ecumenical flavors, the Rosary, you name it, always seeking some silver bullet or magical combination that will order the day and assuage my ever-present Catholic guilt that I am not doing enough spiritually. Most of these practices have been of some help, but managing to stay at them consistently, particularly amid the exigencies of parenting young children and farming, has generally proven a task far beyond me.

The Rhythms of the Spirit

Even though I fail at these practices as often as not, they are still valuable to me. I do not want to give up trying to allow them a rightful place in the rhythm of my days and weeks and months. But if true spiritual growth means getting these practices firmly ensconced in my life's routine, then I'm sunk—as are many of us, I suspect.

I still think routine is essential for staying spiritually grounded. But to my mind, what is important about the routine is not that it follow some prescribed form of piety or devotion (although it can), but that it simply connects a person to essential things. For me, during much of the year that connective routine is the manual work of operating an organic farm and trying to tend the earth kindly and well: tilling, planting, weeding, harvesting, spreading manure, cutting firewood, fixing machinery and tools. For my wife, it is changing diapers, nursing, cooking and preserving, and minding young children as a stay-at-home parent.

Even a good routine, however, can become a rut, or a god—especially for someone with a driven, task-oriented

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For Winslow



The substance of God
is in the hills.

In their lines, their
color, their voices.

In the deep purple of
dusk, fiery red of
autumn, in the
black branches of
the winter
time.

In the snap of the
screen door

in the porch voices,
and the first at bat
of a reluctant spring.

In confidences.
In swung fence gates.

It is the very frame
of the hills, their
juts and crags, trails,
pools, descending
roads.

It is buried under snow, blows
with leaves in fall and spring,
sits still in summer heat.

William Bagley

WILLIAM BAGLEY is the senior philanthropic advisor for the Trustees of Reservation, a nonprofit conservation organization in Massachusetts. Art: "Passages XI" (above) by Winslow Myers, from the collection of Maia Hart of Damariscotta, Me.

personality like mine. When my daughters bounded down through the fields to upset my well-laid plans, they came also as holy interruptions, as messengers from the world of *kairos* time. They reminded me that while God may well be found in the grounding rhythms of my morning work, God is also and more insistently present in the very things that upset those rhythms.

I did not get as much farm work done that morning as I had hoped, and what I did accomplish was not done as well or quickly as I would have managed without the company of my daughters. Nor did I have the soul-feeding interior silence and solitude I had planned on. But I was fed nonetheless, and transformed by an incarnational, unexpected grace. Wendell Berry has it right when he insists that one of the most important products of a farm is not just the harvest, but the content of the farmer's mind and character. If so, then that morning, in saying yes to the blessed interruption of my children, I reaped bounteously. **A**

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Film

Homage to Catalonia

Woody Allen in Barcelona

BY RICHARD A. BLAKE

VICKY CRISTINA BARCELONA, Woody Allen's delightful new romantic comedy, reminds me of a platter of tapas. The master chef takes familiar ingredients, adds a few new spices, devises several clever combinations of flavors, alters the presentation a bit and creates something that appears innovative but also fulfills the diner's expectation of the recognizable. Olé! Comfort food with a zing. Old Chef Woody is up to new tricks. Also, tapas are light, merely adding to the enjoyment of

RICHARD A. BLAKE, S.J., is professor of fine arts and co-director of the film studies program at Boston College in Chestnut Hill, Mass.

the wine; by themselves they don't provide a satisfying full meal. This film brings its own kind of light satisfaction. It is breezy yet thoughtful, but without the bulk of, say, "Crimes and Misdemeanors" or "Manhattan."

Heading south, far from his usual claustrophobic caverns of New York or London, Allen creates a fresh look for his film in the sun-bathed streets and lush gardens of the Mediterranean. The camera of Javier Aguirresarobe lovingly caresses golden architecture, lush foliage and open skies. This does not look like a Woody Allen film. Nor does it sound like one. The music has an appropriately Latin sound, rather than the characteristic Dixieland renditions of Gershwin and

Porter. The script also contains fewer of those quotable one-liners than we might expect. This time comedy flows more from character than from language. Allen has often used an off-camera narrator to fill in the back story or comment on the action, and most frequently he reads the script himself. The unmistakable voice adds its own flavor to the text. In this film, Christopher Evan Welch reads the lines, but never appears on screen. The perfectly neutral voice eliminates the need for expository scenes to fill in background, provides smooth transitions and fills in details nicely, without making us think of Woody Allen.

For the most part the cast consists of newcomers to Planet Woody. Scarlett Johansson is the veteran; she also appeared in Allen's "Match Point" and "Scoop." Allen and his longtime casting director, Juliet Taylor, have chosen the actors with uncanny skill. Their choices make the film far more successful than it should be.

The physical appearance of the actors actually reveals a tremendous amount about the inner workings of the charac-



Javier Bardem and Rebecca Hall in a scene from the movie "Vicky Cristina Barcelona."

PHOTO: CNS/MGM

ters. As the sensuously beautiful Cristina, Scarlett Johansson looks unsettled and vulnerable. With her height and sharp features, Rebecca Hall, as Vicky, uses the cool appearance of an aspiring academic to mask inner panic at the uncertainty of her life. Javier Bardem, fresh from his Academy Award as the psychopathic killer in “No Country for Old Men,” blends the same sense of menace into the romantic lead, an artist named Juan Antonio. Penélope Cruz, as Maria Elena, Juan Antonio’s estranged wife, has the wiry figure, burning eyes and ample mane of wild black hair to suggest the turmoil of her inner life. (As their marriage burst apart at the seams, it’s not clear who tried to murder whom.) Patricia Clarkson, as Judy Nash, the “older woman,” has the thin lips, tightly combed straight hair and nervous gestures that suggest years of suppressed frustration. These five actors could appear in a set of still photographs, and one could devise a plausible plot for a film script.

The splendidly conceived personalities wrestle with the same existential questions and suffer from the same neuroses that Allen’s Manhattan-based characters have for the past 40 years. As the story opens, best friends Vicky and Cristina have just arrived in Barcelona to spend a summer as the guests of family friends, Mark (Kevin Dunn) and Judy Nash. Vicky will do research on her master’s thesis on Catalan culture. Her dedication or skill may be questionable, since even at this point in the project, her Spanish remains less than rudimentary. No crisis, however. She is engaged to Doug (Chris Messina) a wealthy up-and-coming attorney, who looks as though he just stepped out of a Lands’ End catalogue. She will be taken care of, master’s or not. If Vicky cannot see it, we can: 10 years of marriage to Doug will turn her into Judy. She compares security to freedom and cannot decide what she wants.

Complex Love Triangle

Cristina, however, has few doubts. After college she spent three years making a 12-minute film on the various phases of love, but she isn’t sure about becoming a filmmaker. She comes to Barcelona for adventure, for the art and for the opportunity to “find herself.” At an art gallery both women become fascinated by Juan

Antonio, a local artist, with heavy lids, full lips and a three-day beard. They exchange glances with him. Later that night, at a restaurant, Juan Antonio comes to their table, and without bothering with small talk, abruptly invites them to spend a weekend with him in Oviedo, on the northern coast. They will enjoy the scenery, the art, the wine and, of course, the sex. Vicky finds the proposition crass, but Cristina finds it intriguing. Vicky agrees to go along for the art, but she remains adamant about the rest of it, insisting on separate rooms. Cristina harbors no such inhibitions. As it turns out, however, fate intervenes, and Vicky succumbs to his charms before Cristina.

Before this triangle can sort itself out, Doug arrives from New York with a grand scheme of having a romantic wedding in Spain before a church wedding for their friends back home. He has been so busy making money that this may be the first romantic or impulsive thought he has ever had in his life. Vicky must choose between Juan Antonio and Doug; between the Dionysian and the dull. As she tries to think through her dilemma, she happens upon Judy in a compromising situation. Humiliated, Judy tries to explain to Vicky how miserable her life with Mark has been. Her therapist asks why she has not left her husband, and she admits that she is too afraid to go. Vicky sees her own life through the prism of Judy’s.

While Vicky dithers, Cristina renews her pursuit of adventure and moves into Juan Antonio’s studio. While one triangle seems to have resolved itself, another develops. Maria Elena, fresh from her latest suicide attempt, returns to Juan Antonio; the three share the studio, and the women share Juan Antonio. Despite this arrangement, the two women eventually become close friends. The three seem to inspire one another in their artistic work, and Cristina discovers that she may actually have talent after all.

In an Amoral Universe

All these erotic shenanigans actually make a profoundly moral point in this PG-13 rated film. Throughout his career, Allen has examined the emptiness of urban life. Without any recognizable belief in a God, or as he puts it “a moral structure to the universe,” he shows his characters in pursuit of meaning in the ephemeral. He finds

the quest of the modern urbanite both poignant and, at the same time, terribly funny in its inevitable futility. Their love affairs are fleeting and ultimately empty, but with nothing else to reach for, his characters cherish the momentary joy they bring to life. In his seduction speech in the restaurant, Juan Antonio persuades Vicky and Cristina with a summary statement of Allen’s grim view of the world: Why hesitate if there is no morality? The artist creates his own moral universe.

Most of Allen’s New York characters dwell on the fringes of the literary and academic worlds. They are writers of undemonstrated talent who can’t quite finish their novel and can’t quite admit that they may be deceiving themselves. In their insecurity, they twitch and stammer, like the character Allen plays so often himself. Juan Antonio’s self-possession and clarity of vision make him doubly menacing to the women in his life. He speaks and paints without hesitation or self-doubt. Vicky and Cristina feel inadequate in his presence. Judy admires him from a distance. He keeps Maria Elena teetering on the edge of madness. His art represents the ideal they can never achieve.

In this film, language provides another clue to Allen’s sense of alienation. None of the Americans speak Spanish with any fluency. Juan Antonio and Maria Elena both speak English, but in moments of passion they revert to Spanish, thus excluding Cristina and Vicky from their more intimate exchanges. Juan Antonio’s father is a great poet, but he will not publish his poems. He keeps his thoughts to himself. Doug and Vicky repeatedly try to use cellphones that do not work. At every turn, these people cannot or will not communicate. When Doug and Mark make small talk about a mutual business associate in New York, the inanity of their exchange seems to build a wall between them. In their convivial chatter, they make language a defensive weapon.

Don’t listen to their annoying blather. Sit back and enjoy the tapas, the wine and the conversation with Woody Allen. You’ll feel refreshed, but not stuffed. **A**



Two theology students review “The Dark Knight,” at americamagazine.org/connects.

Book Reviews

'A Striking Original'

Jesus

A Portrait

By Gerald O'Collins, S.J.
Orbis Books. 246p \$25 (paperback)
ISBN 9781570757839

I am always intrigued by the epigraph an author uses to set the thematic mood for his or her work. Gerald O'Collins is prodigal with epigraphs, often providing one or two to introduce each chapter. Perhaps most telling is the one with which he prefaces the last chapter of his latest book, *Jesus: A Portrait*. It comes from an address by Pope Benedict XVI and reads: "If we let Christ into our lives we lose nothing, nothing, absolutely nothing of what makes life free, beautiful, and great." The professor emeritus of systematic theology at Rome's Gregorian University has, in effect, responded in a most personal way to the further question the epigraph poses: who is this Christ whose following makes our lives "free, beautiful, and great?"

O'Collins frames his portrait in a fascinating way. His opening chapter, "The Beauty of Jesus," is a lovely meditation inspired by St. Augustine's praises of the beauty of Christ: "beautiful in heaven, beautiful on earth, beautiful when inviting to life, beautiful when laying life down." This aesthetic sensitivity permeates the book, as O'Collins invokes painters like Michelangelo and Caravaggio, and musicians like Bach and Mozart. And the last chapter, "Jesus the Abiding Presence," offers an extended reflection upon 10 encounters with Jesus in the Fourth Gospel, prototypical of disciples' ongoing relationship with the Lord.

This way of framing his portrait indicates a further salient feature of O'Collins's approach. An exploration into the mystery of Jesus is no disinterested investigation; it engages the whole being of the one embarking on the quest. From the first words of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel—"what do you seek?"—to the pivotal question put at the midpoint of the

Synoptics—"who do you say I am?"—the identity of Jesus and the identity of the seeker are inextricably related. The portrait of the Lord invariably bears traces of the self-portrait of the disciple.

The canonical Gospels serve as inspiration and criterion for O'Collins's own re-presentation. His long-standing commitment to a hermeneutics of trust in the Gospel accounts has only been reinforced by the careful study of Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, upon which he liberally draws. Further, in eminently Catholic fashion, O'Collins reads Scripture within (and not separate from) the church's tradition. He early on makes clear his Chalcedonian optic and commitment, devoting Chapter 3 to "Jesus Divine and Human."

The compelling attraction of the book, however, is O'Collins's personal meditation and appropriation of the Gospel tradition. His palette brings out the distinctive colors of a portrait that has faded for some because of a presumed over-familiarity. What progressively emerges is the striking originality of Jesus, whose beatifying vision saw all creation charged with the presence of the Father and whose stupendous imagining evoked a humanity transformed. Jesus proclaimed the extraordinary magnanimity of God, often in sad contrast to human mean-spiritedness: God's generosity in counterpoint to human begrudging.

Thus the chapter on "Jesus the Story-Teller" rehearses well-known parables, displaying them in a suggestive configuration of invitation and reception, ardent living and confident expectation. O'Collins's treatment enkindles a new appreciation of the integrity and urgency of Jesus' summons to lay hold of the pearl of great price, as well as a new realization of the cost of such commitment. Little by little the pearl is revealed to be the parable-weaver, Jesus himself.

With Jesus, of course, the cost was no less than everything. Unlike some portraits that tend to marginalize the death of Jesus, minimizing its salvific import, O'Collins devotes two chapters to "Facing

Death" and to "Jesus the Suffering Servant." In an important methodological move, he sets the events of Jesus' last days within the context of his characteristic attitudes and actions, the dispositions and decisions that guide his entire ministry. The life and death of Jesus illuminate and interpret each other. The gift of Jesus' life is perfected in the gift of his eucharistic death. As O'Collins writes: "his words and gestures at the Last Supper incorporated his suffering and death into the great project of universal salvation, God's coming kingdom."

It is only fair to ponder how Gerald O'Collins's portrait compares to Pope Benedict's in his *Jesus of Nazareth*. There are, certainly, surface differences. The pope understandably draws for the most part upon German exegetes and discussions, while English-language scholars are O'Collins's primary dialogue partners. The second part of the pope's portrait still awaits completion, while O'Collins fills out his own with a careful consideration of the Lord's death and resurrection to new life.

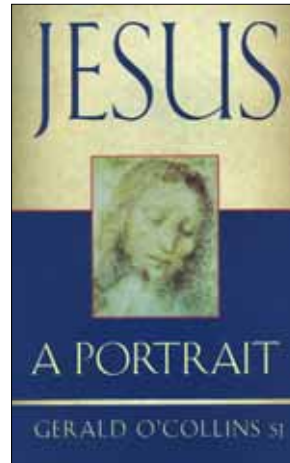
Perhaps more substantively, Pope Benedict's writing style strikes me as more allusive and associative (in a word, more "patristic"). His reflections on Jesus' conflict with the power of Satan, for example, the enemy of humankind, bathe his canvass in dramatic darkness, while O'Collins colors his portrait in softer hues—da Vinci to Ratzinger's Tintoretto. In addition, the pope is more direct in relating the following of Jesus to present-day challenges.

The Reviewers

Robert P. Imbelli, a priest of the Archdiocese of New York, teaches systematic theology at Boston College.

Russell B. Connors Jr. is professor and chair of the theology department at the College of St. Catherine in St. Paul, Minn. He is co-author of *Character, Choices and Community: The Three Faces of Christian Ethics* (1998) and *Facing Ethical Issues: Dimensions of Character, Choices, and Community* (2002), both from Paulist Press.

Peter Heinegg is a professor of English at Union College, Schenectady, N.Y.



But there is really scarce need to choose between them. As the ending of the Fourth Gospel insists: “Many other things Jesus did that are not written here. Indeed, if every one of them were written down, I doubt the world itself could contain all the books that would be written.” Father O’Collins’s carefully crafted book provides an alluring portrait of Jesus, whose beauty remains ever ancient and ever new. He most certainly concurs with the pope’s conviction, expressed in Benedict’s first encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est*: “The beginning of Christian existence is not an ethical decision or a sublime idea, but rather the encounter...with a person who gives life a new goal and, at the same time, a sure growth.” **Robert P. Imbelli**

‘Participant Observer’

Catholic Moral Theology in the United States

A History

By Charles E. Curran

Georgetown Univ. Press. 353p \$26.95 (paperback)
ISBN 9781589011960

Charles E. Curran is a highly regarded theologian whose works have been widely read and appreciated by colleagues for nearly 50 years. He is also well known beyond the academy; in the best sense, he has been a “man of the church,” who has not shied away from controversy when he thought the good of the Christian community was at stake. For both reasons Curran has been a key figure in the story of Catholic moral theology in this country since the Second Vatican Council.

In the preface of this history, Curran indicated that he would write as a “participant observer” and that he would “strive to be objective in reporting and assessing” theological issues about which he has his own well-developed positions. He has done so very well. He neither over- nor understates his own significant influence on the discipline.

Curran’s book is divided into 10 chapters. The first three present the story of Catholic moral theology in the United

States prior to Vatican II: “The Nineteenth Century,” “The Twentieth Century Before Vatican II” and “Twentieth-Century Social Ethics Before Vatican II.” Curran acknowledges that he does not have the expertise of a historian and that he has relied heavily on the work of the Redemptorist historian of moral theology Louis Vereecke, as well as many secondary sources. Historian or not, Curran has done his homework—encyclopedically, one might add.

Chapter 1 is particularly well done and will be helpful to anyone who may not be familiar with the significance of the manuals of moral theology. These textbooks for seminarians emerged after the Council of Trent in the 16th century; their purpose was to prepare future confessors for their role in the sacrament of penance. Though they were a “creative adaptation to the needs of the time,” they unfortunately gave rise to an act-centered, sin-conscious and often legalistic view of the Christian moral life. Little was said of virtue and grace; little connection was made between moral theology and Scripture, or between morality and spirituality. Appreciating this, Curran insists, is important.

The manuals are not ancient history. The moral methodology of these textbooks continues to serve as the foundation of current Catholic teachings on many medical and sexual issues. Curran’s historical overview of the manualist tradition, its current influence and the movements for reform will be especially helpful to graduate students, upper-level undergraduates and all others who may not be familiar with this important part of the story.

The three central chapters of Curran’s history are the heart of the matter; they concern the impact on moral theology of Vatican II and of *Humanae Vitae*, Paul VI’s 1968 encyclical letter on birth control: “The Setting of Moral Theology after Vatican II,” “The Aftermath of ‘Humanae Vitae’” and “The Aftermath of Vatican II and Other Developments.”

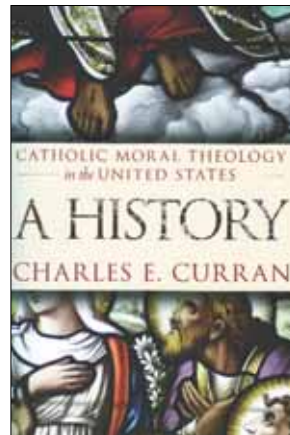
In a masterful fashion Curran chronicles the way the moral methodology of the manuals—focused on individual acts too

far removed from persons and context—was at work in the conclusion of *Humanae Vitae* that contraception always and everywhere is “intrinsically dishonest.” That, at least, is the judgment of those theologians whom Curran calls “revisionists.” The teaching on contraception and on several other issues, they believe, betrays physicalism, “the a priori identification of the human moral act with the physical or biological aspect of the act.” Instead, these theologians (the late Richard McCormick, S.J., and Curran himself chief among them) urge that such teachings be revised in a way that attends more to the personal, relational and contextual nature of human actions, as some of the documents of Vatican II seem to suggest. Curran’s goal in these chapters does not seem directed to converting readers from one view to another. Rather, it is understanding that he is after, and by the connections he has made with the moral methodology of the manuals he has framed the *Humanae Vitae* debate in a way that can promote such understanding.

Curran covers a tremendous amount of ground in these chapters, over complex and controversial territory. Some academic colleagues of Curran might wish he had given certain topics more detailed attention, for example in regard to the pros and cons of “proportionalism.” But he is to be given high marks for the way he has summarized carefully and fairly the theological arguments

with which he has disagreed. His discussion of Germain Grisez’s “new natural law theory” is a good example.

The final four chapters discuss specific areas of Catholic moral theology: “Fundamental Moral Theology,” “Sexuality and Marriage,” “Bioethics” and “Social Ethics.” Though they are well connected to the chapters that precede them, they could stand alone for readers looking for an overview of these areas of Catholic moral theology subsequent to Vatican II. These chapters resemble the “Notes on Moral Theology” published annually in *Theological Studies*, providing a clear and helpful overview on who, as Richard Gula notes on the book’s back



cover, “has shaped this discipline, what have been its major concerns, and why we are facing the issues we do today.” Curran’s discussion of the current retrieval of “virtue ethics” (especially his discussion of Jean Porter’s works), his comments on contemporary textbooks by theologians, his summary of the works of those writing on marriage and the family, and the categories he provides for reviewing diverse approaches to Catholic social ethics are among many highlights.

I am grateful for Curran’s scholarly work in this book. As a “participant observer,” Charles Curran has chronicled history fairly and clearly—no small accomplishment for someone whose own voice has been such an important part of the story. **Russell B. Connors Jr.**

Sentimental Journey

All That Road Going

By A.G. Mojtabai
Triquarterly Books. 216p \$21.95
 ISBN 978080152007

Older readers—well, really old readers—may recall a ditty sung by the irrepressibly cheerful Dinning Sisters back in 1946; “Soon the sun disappeared from view./ The stars came out like they always do./ Then I cuddled up close to you,/ And we both fell in love on a Greyhound Bus./ That’s us—in love on a Greyhound Bus.” Darken the mood considerably, take “us” to be a small cross-section of America, and the song might serve as a summary of this new novel by A. (Ann) G. (Grace) Mojtabai. Apart from a few rest-stops and a handful of scenes in bus terminals, all the action takes place on a Greyhound speeding first west and then east across the middle of the country (Oklahoma, Missouri, Illinois, etc.), mostly at night, with a motley assortment of passengers who could be fairly described as lovelorn, en route to God knows what.

The leader of this chorus of what Herman Melville would call “isolatos” is the folksy-but-reserved driver, O. M. Plumlee, who, unlike his passengers, isn’t going through some sort of crisis. O. M. spends as much time keeping a snoopy,

fatherly eye on his charges as he does on the road (local highways rather than the Interstate); and he sometimes breaks into improbable lyrical or philosophical flights: “We’d been having one of those clover days in early April, golden, glossy, everything buttered with sunshine, buds fattening, bird sounds—bright sounds—I won’t say ‘songs.’ Not all birds sing.” He’s heard it all, seen it all, even as he wonders whether and how the many stories he’s met up with could ever fit into “the big story”—an unsolvable puzzle that he’ll have to leave to “the wife,” whose religious faith he doesn’t share.

The passenger list includes Pierson, a 70-ish man fleeing the deathbed of his devoted life-companion, Marie, after she slips into dementia; Dee Anna, a 15-year-old girl who has been raped and impregnated by a friend of her stepbrother, then forced to surrender her baby by a team of righteous ladies from the prayer chain of Blazing Victory Apostolic Church; Sam Shevra, a chemist and a failure at business and marriage, who thinks he’ll give Pittsburgh a try; Roberta, a runaway wife of one year who decides to return to her cheating husband in St. Louis after he has her paged in the Tucson bus station; Eileen, an 85-year-old woman bringing one of her famous poppy-seed cakes to her moribund sister-in-law in Evanston; a strange, unwashed young outcast named Rakhim Amin from Uzbekistan; a brother and sister, Clem (8) and Sasha (6), traveling alone to Philadelphia, sent away by their alcoholic mother (who is living with her abusive boyfriend); and a few others.

The only happy ones in the group are a black couple with their baby daughter (and they’re coming back from a wasted 600-mile trip to show the child to her great-grandmother, who wouldn’t touch her). The rest all tell their sad stories to one another or Plumlee himself, not as if they wanted or expected to find help, comfort or enlightenment, but because they can’t sleep, have nothing better to do or happen to be sitting next to someone whose curiosity overpowers their reticence.

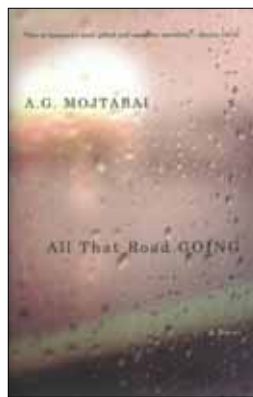
This being the United States of

Alienation, no bonds are forged. In an over-the-top moment of American Gothicality, the obnoxious young Clem almost sells his irritating sister to a creepy stranger he meets in the men’s room. (There is also a homeless, ticketless wretch stowed away in the bus’s toilet.) Love of one sort or another is on everybody’s mind, but it is love that has either been lost or has chances ranging from slim to none.

True, chatty Eileen seems wise and well-adjusted enough; but no one is listening to her. And sweet, innocent Dee Anna impulsively refuses to get off at her “home” in Hunters Junction, Mo., instead buying a ticket for Columbus, where she knows not a soul but where things could hardly be worse. Otherwise, the travelers are, psychically speaking, going nowhere. In a typical snatch of conversation, an old man who ran away from Vinita, Okla., at age 11 reflects: “Funny, his going back only when his sight was near gone.... He wondered sometimes: What if he’d lasted it out in Vinita? What would he be doing now? Pumping gas? Making curly fries? Would he even recognize himself if he passed himself on the street? And would he have been happier, after all?”

Questions, questions—but, needless to say, not ones that Mojtabai is about to answer. The story ends, or breaks off, with a confused shooting in an unidentified terminal; and the characters disperse. It’s all perfectly formulaic (the all-American road adventure, named after a line by Jack Kerouac), but told in a humble, gentle, sympathetic voice. Mojtabai does a better job with her women than with her men, who can occasionally sound schematic. Still, she knows the people and places whereof she speaks (she is currently at home in Amarillo); and she quietly brings them to life, with their limited coping skills and their unlimited vulnerability. She also airbrushes away all but a few signs of 21st-century America, so that the mini-world she creates has an oddly timeless flavor (all transactions are in cash, for example). The Dinning Sisters—who, by the way, were very good singers—while saddened by all the heartbreak in that Greyhound bus, would surely be moved.

Peter Heinegg



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Letters

The Democrats and Abortion

Debates will continue on the efficacy of criminalization as an antidote to the practice of abortion, but I agree heartily with John F. Kavanaugh, S.J. ("Dear Senator Obama," 8/18) that it would be folly to put all our eggs in that one basket. I hope someone on Barack Obama's staff will bring Father Kavanaugh's article to his attention, and that he will respond favorably to the concerns expressed therein. I was heartened to learn that Senator Bob Casey, a pro-life Democrat from Pennsylvania, will be addressing the convention, which is in line with Father Kavanaugh's second suggestion. The ideal candidate and the ideal party do not exist in the real world, where we often have to settle for doing all we can to make actual parties and candidates responsive to our concerns. Bravo to Father Kavanaugh for his effort in that vein.

Walter Bonam
New Orleans, La.

A Social Illness

In my 30 years practicing obstetrics and gynecology, I never met a medical person who believed abortion was a primarily good thing, only a remedy for a perceived social ill. Perhaps it is time to recognize that attempting to eliminate abortion by legislative means is not reducing the number of abortions. Perhaps it is time for pro-choice and pro-life people to discern their common values and work together to remove the social evils that cause some women to believe that abortion is their only choice.

Making abortion the only criterion for selecting our president may continue the wars of choice, capital punishment, hunger, homelessness, (inadequate) health care and refugees without eliminating or even reducing the number of abortions.

Larry Donohue, M.D.
Seattle, Wash.

Doubting Obama

I have my doubts that Senator Obama will "move a bit to the middle" on abortion, as John F. Kavanaugh, S.J., hopes. After all, this is the same man who voted against the Born Alive Infants Protection

Letters

Act and refuses to call a born-alive baby who by God's grace manages to survive an abortion—a baby. This is infanticide and cannot be reconciled with the teaching of the Catholic Church, no matter what you may think of the war in Iraq.

*Laura Quigley
Gaithersburg, Md.*

Healing the Spirit

The cartoon drawing at the top of “Mercy Toward Our Fathers,” by Camille D’Arienzo, R.S.M., (8/18) angered me. It shows a priest being lowered from the roof to be healed by Christ when it should be the victim being lowered for healing. My way to God was obliterated by the priest. Many Catholics have no idea how horrible it is to lose your Catholic faith in God. It’s a hard road and no one in the church is helping victims where they need help, namely with their spirituality. First, parishes have to listen to the victims speak of what happened. We need a grass-roots effort to reach out with warmth and kindness and do what it takes to help each victim.

*Aline Frybarger
Jackson, Mich.*

Works of Mercy

Thank you to Camille D’Arienzo, R.S.M., for putting into words what I feel so strongly about forgiveness. I have a dear friend who has extended a loving hand to two priests accused of abuse. She made them welcome at her table along with family and friends. From them we heard firsthand the pain and humiliation they suffered. Because of my friend’s total acceptance of these men and hearing their stories, I felt God’s abundant mercy and forgiveness. I have a new and deeper appreciation of Communion.

*Mary Griesemer
Norwood, Ohio*

Generation Missing

As someone who worked with both Marti Jewell and Dean Hoge on the

Emerging Models of Pastoral Leadership project, I commend them on their recent survey of young adults (“Will They Serve?” 7/21). The results of their research confirm a worrying trend: young people in their 20s and 30s are largely absent from pastoral ministry. This poses a problem not only for the next generation of church leadership, but for this generation as well.

If the church were to have a “preferential option” for young adults in ministry recruitment, Hoge and Jewell’s study would have had much different results. Instead, we have simply accepted that lay ministry is relegated to a growing “second career” for people in their 40s and 50s. Perhaps the church (both clergy and lay) simply needs to try to understand this generation better, which may in turn lead to more effective recruitment. In a world of cutting-edge technology that is also filled with uncertainty and the madness of terrorism, our church often looks archaic and disinterested in the world young people live in. Yet from my work with Paulist Ministries and Bustedhalo.com I have learned that young people are looking for solid tradition to depend on in their uncertain world. We need the gifts of young adults right now—but they also need people already engaged in ministry to recruit and mentor them.

*Mike Hayes
New York, N.Y.*

Wider Realities

In “Religious Life in the Age of Facebook” (7/7), Richard G. Malloy, S.J., gives as fine an analysis of the vocation quandary as I have read, but perhaps we need to move back, way back, to view the wider realities of both church and society. There is no doubt about it: the continental plates of Western culture are shifting, engendering fear and uncertainty. With the Second Vatican Council, the church dared to reformulate itself to deal with

global Catholicism, releasing amazing hope and enthusiasm, but it shuddered and a retrenchment ensued. The fundamental problem is this: we in the West doubted and lost our story line. The Christian mythos around priesthood, formal vows and regimentation is not holding.

In early August I participated, as I have on and off for the past 30 years, in the Jesuit Volunteer Corps orientation program for 100 young, vibrant, wonderfully alive, largely Catholic university graduates, always more women than men. They are consciously out to be, as we say, “ruined for life,” just like those who join our novitiates. Each year their holy joy tells my bones a new Church is being born. They astonish me with their purity of intention, their courage and their enthusiasm for the values of God’s reign. Perhaps the Spirit is trying to lead us where we don’t understand?

Clericalism that draws a rigid line between the savers and the saved is no longer functional, as the fallout from sexual and financial scandals shows. The charism of baptism, that we are all a royal priesthood, is working its way under the power of the Holy Spirit into territory formerly claimed by the ordained and those under formal vows.

The official church may refuse to change, but the two-edged sword of God’s word will accomplish the purpose for which it is sent. There is a time for everything under the sun, a time to build and a time to tear down. We ignore these wider signs at our own peril.

*Jack Morris, S.J.
Rockaway, Ore.*

God’s Favored

Thank you for your beautiful tribute to St. Elizabeth Ann Seton by Regina Bechtle, S.C. (“An American Daughter,” 9/1). What a giant of history and the spiritual life she was! Mother Seton is a testament to the fact that God favors the lowly and fills them with good things. I have personally known many Sisters of Charity, and I know that Mother Seton’s good work continues in them.

*Patricia Marks
Morristown, N.J.*

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The Holy Cross

Exaltation of the Holy Cross (A), Sept. 14, 2008

Readings: Nm 21:4-9; Ps 78:1-2, 34-38; Phil 2:6-11; Jn 3:13-17

“And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up” (Jn 3:14)

TODAY WE STEP aside from the usual sequence of readings for the Sundays in Ordinary Time to celebrate the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. Since many Catholic institutions (schools, churches, religious communities, etc.) bear the name of “Holy Cross,” the expression may be so familiar to us that we fail to appreciate the paradox and challenge it represents.

In the context of the first-century Roman Empire, crucifixion was a terrible and shameful mode of execution. It was reserved for slaves and rebels—a public action aimed at deterring others from rebellious activities. There was nothing “holy” about it. So when Christians use the expression “holy cross,” they are making a surprising, paradoxical and even shocking statement.

From earliest times Christians have claimed that through the crucifixion of Jesus, God has enabled us to put aside our past sins, to relate to God in a new way and to gain an access to God that had not been possible before. In that sense the cross is indeed holy. In that sense the crucifixion of Jesus was and is a triumph or exaltation rather than a defeat or shame.

The conviction that the cross of Jesus was a victory rather than a defeat is expressed neatly in today’s reading from John 3: “And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up.” To appreciate that claim it is necessary to recall the mysterious episode of the bronze serpent in Numbers 21. There the image of a bronze serpent being lifted up on a pole brings healing instead of death to the people of God wandering in the wilderness. It also helps to know that in John’s theological vocabulary the verb “lift up” is his way of

talking about Jesus’ being lifted up on the cross (his crucifixion) and his being lifted up to the heavenly Father (his resurrection and exaltation). This is why we can speak of the “holy cross.”

An even more striking and theologically significant text about the holy cross appears in today’s reading from Chapter 2 of Paul’s letter to the Christians at Philippi in northern Greece. Paul wrote it in the mid-50s of the first century A.D., 25 years or so after the crucifixion of Jesus. In writing to what is often described as his favorite community, Paul’s purpose was to provide theological advice about certain pastoral problems that had arisen in the Christian community there.

Today’s Pauline passage seems to be a quotation from a very early Christian hymn that both Paul and the Philippian Christians knew and affirmed. Paul used it as a stimulus for the Philippian Christians to show greater unity and respect toward one another. But as the text stands, it also provides precious testimony about what early Christians believed concerning Jesus. It offers concrete evidence for what has been aptly described as an explosion (rather than a mere development) of doctrine regarding Jesus.

According to the hymn, early Christians believed that in the beginning Jesus was in the “form” of God and possessed a certain equality with God. Remember that the earliest Christians, like Paul himself, were predominantly Jews, and that the fundamental theological principle in Judaism of the time was monotheism—that there is only one God and only one Lord. Yet Paul and other early Christians saw no conflict in describing Jesus in these exalted (divine) terms. Furthermore, early Christians believed that in becoming human, Jesus in some way had “emptied himself” (*kenosis* in Greek) and humbled himself in obedience to his Father’s will, even to the point of enduring a shameful death on the cross. His incarnation, his taking flesh and



ART BY TAD DUNNE

becoming human, led to his death on the cross. Thus Jesus became one with us in the most complete sense imaginable—by sharing and embracing suffering and physical death.

But the cross was not the end of Jesus’ story. Early Christians also believed that Jesus, who suffered death on the cross in obedience to his Father’s will, had been raised from the dead and was exalted to his heavenly Father once more, and that God had bestowed on Jesus the name of “Lord” (*Kyrios* in Greek)—the name that Greek-speaking Jews reserved for God. According to this very early hymn, therefore, it was and is appropriate that all creation should join in the confession that “Jesus Christ is Lord.” In this narrative of our salvation, the cross is the pivot between the incarnation and the exaltation of Jesus. That is why we can call the cross “holy.”

Daniel J. Harrington

Praying With Scripture

- What immediately strikes you when you hear the phrase “holy cross”?
- In what sense does the cross of Jesus bring healing? Have you experienced such healing in your own life?
- What do you believe about Jesus? How do your beliefs compare with those expressed in Phil 2:6-11?

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