

# America

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## Reformation Spirituality

THOMAS J. SHELLEY ON  
EAMON DUFFY

## Rights of Conscience

KEVIN O'ROURKE

# OF MANY THINGS

**I**t is high summer, and for many, including myself, that means time for leisure reading. Since I am no longer able to hike into the high country, I savor with added pleasure the escape into other times and places afforded by summer reading. Vacation still lies ahead for me, but I have already travelled into the 19th-century West on the Texas and Kansas frontiers.

One of the best of this past spring's books is S. C. Gwynne's *Empire of the Summer Moon*, a history of the Comanche on the Texas frontier. Frequently compared to *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, Dee Brown's 1970 story of Sitting Bull and the tragic surrender of the Lakota Sioux, Gwynne's book lacks the narrative drive of its predecessor, but what it lacks in pacing it makes up as a chronicle of frontier life at its most harrowing. The cast of actors is large, but the principals are members of the Parker clan, a family of Texas settlers, preachers and politicians and their captive and half-breed offspring, Cynthia Ann Parker and her son Quanah Parker, the last war chief of the Comanche.

Until I read *Summer Moon*, the Comanche had no distinct place in my own imaginative landscape of the West. They were ghostly warriors whose presence in westerns is made known by the fletching on their arrows. I could not place them, as I believe I might identify Apache, Navajo or Sioux. But as it turns out, one of John Ford's most famous westerns, "The Searchers," was loosely based on the Parker family's longtime search for Cynthia Ann. Until the arrival of horses on the Great Plains, the Comanche were a minor tribe in Wyoming's Wind River Basin. In time, however, they became the most successful warriors on horseback. Except for a couple of exceptional bands of Texas Rangers who adopted Comanche tactics, neither other native tribes nor the U.S. Cavalry was able to best the Comanche until these antagonists ceased riding into battle only to

fight on foot. Later the adoption of repeating rifles enabled them to match the dozen arrows a Comanche warrior could get off in the time it took to reload a single-shot rifle. But it was the buffalo hunters who, by wiping the bison from the plains, did the most to subdue the Comanche by eliminating the basis of their way of life.

In the end Quanah Parker led only a small band of warriors, but his wiliness and skill so won the admiration of the U.S. Army that, once captured, he was allowed to settle down in peace and became a successful businessman, politician and benefactor to his people. Eventually, though, like the others, developers cheated Parker out of his remaining land and he impoverished himself further by providing for others' needs.

Last winter I read with great satisfaction *Gunman's Rhapsody*, a reworking of the tale of the shoot-out at the OK Corral by the late Boston mystery writer Robert B. Parker, and I thought it would be hard to best it. But Mary Doria Russell's re-imagining of the Wyatt Earp-Doc Holliday friendship, *Doc*, is still a better read. It is a superior character study in which character drives plot. Russell's rendering of Holliday humanizes the drunkard dentist and gambler. It doesn't hurt, of course, that one of the characters is a Jesuit, a former Austro-Hungarian prince and cavalryman. Father Alex's learning and love for music elicit the best in the cultivated southerner's personality. Their Christmas meeting makes for the emotional climax of the book.

As long as Val Kilmer's portrayal of Doc in "Tombstone" remains vivid in cinematic memory, so will Russell's sensitive prose honor the haunted son of the Old South whom we have known, to our loss, merely as a gunman and gambler. In the hands of a filmmaker like Robert Redford, *Doc* would make a great western, too.

**DREW CHRISTIANSEN, S.J.**

# America

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

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

E-mail: [america@americamagazine.org](mailto:america@americamagazine.org);  
[letters@americamagazine.org](mailto:letters@americamagazine.org)

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Cover: "Sir Thomas More and His Family," by Rowland Lockey, shows the More family with their books of hours. Photo Credit: John Hammond/National Trust Photo Library/Art Resource, NY

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### Press Ethics

Reporters are privileged to be able to ask questions others cannot and to give a voice to those who have none. But there is a line between investigation and invasion of privacy, which the staff of the British tabloid *The News of the World* allegedly have crossed. They have been accused of hacking the phones of individuals ranging from a murdered teen to the families of fallen soldiers, as well as of bribing police officers and harassing politicians. The stories of corruption at the British publications owned by Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation seem to multiply daily.

The scandal has prompted outcry from readers, politicians and journalists. Even the Vatican paper, *L'Osservatore Romano*, has weighed in, calling for the establishment of "info-ethics" and for justice and "respect for the dignity of every human person." Investigations are underway, and we hope they will lead to reform.

At its best, journalism produces stories that allow for a more free and informed society. Journalists should be uncovering scandals, not perpetrating them. In order to operate freely, the press must refrain from collusion with law enforcement or politicians. Bribes and back-room deals among these groups can result in the downfall of all three. Already there have been at least 10 arrests related to the hacking and several high-profile resignations, including those of two Scotland Yard officers; the chief executive of News International, Rebekah Brooks; and Les Hinton, publisher of *The Wall Street Journal*. Ms. Brooks claims that *The News of the World* is not the only newspaper to use unscrupulous methods of reporting. The depth of this scandal is not only indicative of corruption but of a willing and enthusiastic market for stories like these. Certainly the publications should take responsibility for their actions, but readers must take a closer look at their own participation as well.

### Fiscal Countdown

Whatever happens in the days leading up to Aug. 2, the day when the United States will reach its approved debt limit, the tenor of the budget negotiations has been extremely dispiriting. What has been until now a routine matter of governance has developed into a no-holds-barred ideological battle. News that the Gang of Six senators is working on a bipartisan resolution is welcome, but it is still unclear whether they can convince Republicans in the House of Representatives to compromise.

The deficit is a matter of great concern, but Republican lawmakers have chosen the wrong moment to take a stand. Failing to raise the debt ceiling would only exacerbate the

nation's budget woes. Republican leaders in the House are pushing for a balanced budget amendment and drastic cuts in spending in exchange for a deal. More troubling, they refuse to consider any measure to raise revenue, even in the form of closing tax loopholes for high earners. So the poor, the marginalized and the sick—the primary victims of cuts in government spending—would be made to sacrifice while the affluent would escape additional tax burdens.

Simple fairness and a commitment to the common good demand a more equitable solution. A long-term budget-reduction plan must include an increase in revenue, not just a series of cuts. If necessary, this will require an increase in taxes, a measure in keeping with Catholic social teaching. The president has been unusually active in the budget negotiations, a welcome development, but he needs to exercise still greater moral leadership. A compelling case for shared sacrifice and the moral value of government has yet to be made.

### A New Tone in Rome

In 2009 Cardinal Franc Rodé, C.M., the former prefect of the Vatican congregation for religious, announced a "visitation" of women's religious orders in the United States convened in response to "concerns...about the welfare of religious women and consecrated life in general." The reaction of American women religious ranged from confusion and wariness to alarm and resentment.

Since then, things have changed. Cardinal Rodé has retired, and his successor, Archbishop João Bráz de Aviz of Brazil, is quickly setting a new tone for the dicastery. In a recent interview, he acknowledged that the visitation had been met with "mistrust" and triggered "confrontation" between the congregation and some women's orders. The archbishop expressed hope of proceeding in a different manner and remarked, "We have started to listen again." Admitting that some problems await resolution, he is optimistic that this can be done "in another way" than in the past.

Archbishop Bráz also brings a compelling personal story. He grew up in a poor family, and his seminary education coincided with the rise of liberation theology. On his way to say Mass as a young priest, he was shot several times in crossfire from an armed robbery.

The effort to "rebuild a relationship of trust" with women religious is of the utmost importance. It will go a long way toward allaying the tension that has arisen between the Vatican and American women's orders during the visitation. It may also draw appropriate attention to the invaluable work that religious women continue to do for the church in the United States.

# The New ‘Americanism’

In “*Testem Benevolentiae*,” an apostolic letter sent to Baltimore’s Cardinal James Gibbons in 1899, Pope Leo XIII worried over some liberal tendencies of the Catholic Church in the United States that he called “the errors of Americanism.” One wonders these days if a modern, conservative variant of Americanism is infecting the church. Representative Paul Ryan’s recent take on Catholic social teaching seems to endorse the tradition but then deploys it as cover for a budget-balancing act that threatens to harm the nation’s most vulnerable. A number of Catholics, Mr. Ryan among them, find much to admire about the objectivism peddled by the late Ayn Rand, whose “rational egoism” liberates the individual from obligations to others.

Worst of all has been a noticeable coarsening of attitudes among some Catholics toward those who have come to rely on government aid to sustain themselves in these difficult times. This emerging resentment forgets that the nation’s modest social services are directed primarily at supporting children, the elderly, the disabled and those hurt by the recent recession.

It is not surprising that the most powerful currents of a cultural mainstream should influence the course of its tributaries. In 1997 then Archbishop Francis George remarked that U.S. citizens “are culturally Calvinist, even those who profess the Catholic faith.” Over time many U.S. Catholics have internalized some unacceptable American conceits, like the primacy of the individual and the free market and the inherent inefficiency of government. They have come to view with suspicion mediating structures, like unions and advocacy groups, that challenge America’s understanding of itself or its role in the world.

Some Catholics make an idol out of ideology or a fierce faith out of nationalism, elevating personal responsibility while diminishing communal obligations. Their “Americanism” pretends that personal charity can adequately replace the need for social justice and distorts the meaning of subsidiarity into nearly unrecognizable form. Unlike his predecessor, Pope Benedict XVI has not directly addressed this modern mutation of Americanism, but he has called for better education among laypeople about church social doctrine and reminded them that it is their responsibility to bring the church’s social justice concerns into civic discourse.

Counter to mainstream American culture, the church teaches that a society should be judged by how well it addresses the needs of its poor and vulnerable members. It

demands a preferential option for the poor, not the Pentagon, when moral documents like the federal budget are prepared, a point frequently noted by the U.S. bishops. The church does not accept the peculiar American premise that the poor are generally better off left to their own devices, lest their dignity be degraded by paternalism—a high-sounding slogan that can be used to abdicate collective responsibility.

When Representative Ryan began a well-publicized correspondence with Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan of New York, the two men lightly sparred over the modern role of Catholic social teaching. Mr. Ryan equated the Catholic concept of subsidiarity with the American tradition of federalism and used it to add a gloss of Catholic authenticity to his budget plan; Archbishop Dolan gently reminded him that solidarity remains another significant component of the Catholic tradition. It is one that persists regardless of the vicissitudes of the annual federal deficit or newfound political urgency to address the national debt.

Here is where Catholics can make their contribution to the current dialogue. Congressman Ryan’s concerns about a smothering national debt and an intrusive government are legitimate, but they cannot be allowed to produce near-term outcomes that in practice mean the abandonment of the vulnerable through deep cuts in food aid, health care and support for the unemployed.

As the nation attempts to balance the immediate needs of the least among us against the long-term demands of debt reduction, Catholics can bring their unique perspective to the table. Perhaps instead of surrendering to the new Americanism, they might “Americanize” the Catholic concept of the common good, helping to define how a just society with limited resources best sets spending priorities and seeks equitable sources of revenue. Certainly then the legitimate needs of the most vulnerable would not be sacrificed to protect the structural privileges of those who have enjoyed the greatest economic rewards in recent years. Certainly war-making would not be privileged over the basic needs of a sustainable civil society.

Catholics in America should value their faith’s contribution to the larger culture, not surrender its uniqueness as an impediment to a deeper and more personally fruitful assimilation. Unlike Ms. Rand, American Catholics cannot make a virtue of selfishness. Our path proceeds not from the gospel of prosperity, but the Gospel of Matthew.



EMBRYONIC STEM CELLS

## Pre-emptive Strike on Controversial Research

**B**ishop Leonard Blair of Toledo, Ohio, has prohibited parishes and parochial schools from raising funds for the Susan G. Komen Foundation, one of the nation's largest fundraising entities for breast cancer research. Since 1982 its Race for the Cure and other efforts have netted more than \$1.9 billion for breast cancer screening and research efforts.

The bishop's move represents a pre-emptive strike against embryonic research, since there is no evidence that the Komen Foundation is using any money raised now for this controversial research. Embryonic stem cell research, unlike adult stem cell research, requires the destruction of human embryos.

"In our 29 years, Komen for the Cure has never funded embryonic stem cell research," the local chapter responded in a statement posted at its Web site. "We remain focused on our mission to save lives and end breast cancer forever through our research program and through our affiliate partnerships."

In a letter on July 5 explaining his decision to Toledo Catholics, Bishop Blair said, "While we want to do everything possible to support the search for a cure [for cancer], sadly the landscape of medical research today is sometimes marred by the erroneous belief that research is not bound by moral norms rooted in faith and reason, as reflected in the teaching of the church."

Bishop Blair's action is certain to raise hackles among some Toledo Catholics. The bishop's order effectively cuts them off from one of the nation's most popular fundraising activities for cancer research. Some have joined a Facebook page to protest the decision.

Commenting on the controversy, the diocesan director of communications, Sally Oberski, said, "Bishop Blair's letter is neither a condemnation, censure, nor—as the [Toledo] Blade claimed—a 'ban' on the Komen

Foundation. Individual Catholics who want to contribute to Komen locally can continue to do so on the basis of Komen's assurance that no local funds go to Planned Parenthood or to embryonic stem cell research."

Bishop Blair's decision follows a similar decision on fundraising for Komen issued by Archbishop Dennis Schnurr of Cincinnati. "In order to avoid even the possibility of cooperation in morally unacceptable activities," Bishop Blair wrote, "the other Bishops and I believe that it would be wise to find alternatives to Komen for Catholic fundraising efforts." Bishop Blair suggested that fundraising efforts could support Ohio's Mercy Cancer Centers instead of Komen.

But one Ohio bishop took a different tack. Bishop Richard Lennon of Cleveland met with Komen officials in his city and released a joint statement on Sept. 4, 2010, in which the bishop

said he was satisfied that money raised in Cleveland would be used in efforts that would not be contrary to Catholic teaching.

Although the foundation has never previously funded embryonic stem cell research and has no plans to do so now, Komen officials acknowledge that the foundation does not specifically preclude the possibility of such funding in the future.

In his letter to parishioners, Bishop Blair also cited concerns that the Komen Foundation makes contributions to Planned Parenthood, a charge local Komen officials denied. The foundation reports that 25 percent of the money raised by its local Race for the Cure events, which have drawn more than one million fundraiser/runners since 2005, is spent on breast cancer research, and the remaining monies are directed to funding local cancer screening campaigns.



A crowd of 46,000 gathers for the Komen Race for the Cure in Columbus, Ohio, on May 16, 2009.



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM/AGESHOT

## SOUTH SUDAN

# World Welcomes A New Nation

**O**n July 9, South Sudan officially broke free of the north and became the world's newest independent state. The move offers hope for peace and economic development in the new nation even as it struggles to contain a confrontation along the new border with its northern counterpart.

Sudan has experienced intense suffering during decades of civil war that included more than two million deaths between 1983 and 2005. A comprehensive peace agreement in 2005 resulted in the first steps toward the south's secession. A referendum in January of this year on independence was supported by 99 percent of residents from the south, and now eight

million citizens can claim their own nation.

But independence will not wipe away the overwhelming poverty and vulnerability of the new country. The Republic of South Sudan remains one of the poorest and least-developed places in the world. The south, mostly African Christians and followers of traditional religions, also remains challenged by a military threat from the mostly Arab and Muslim north. Disputes over permanent borders and the distribution of oil revenue could lead to a breakdown of the new peace.

Hope persists nonetheless. Dan Griffin, advisor on Sudan to Catholic Relief Services, spoke of the lively spirit of the South Sudanese people after observing the independence ceremonies in Juba, the capital of the new nation. The people, he said, "have a very sincere appreciation of what has been achieved...[and] while they are mindful of the challenges ahead, they know they are on the right path."

Steve Hilbert, Africa policy adviser to the U.S. bishops' Office of International Justice and Peace, had a "sense that people in South Sudan are willing to start from scratch."

"They're saying, 'Yes, we're poor and we have a long way to go, but we are now masters of our own destiny.'" Building basic infrastructure, like schools and medical clinics, will be among the new state's near-term responsibilities, but there is also much work to be done in developing a "democratic government that practices good governance," Hilbert said.

John H. Ricard, the retired bishop of Pensacola-Tallahassee in Florida, traveled to Juba to represent the U.S.

bishops at the independence celebration. "The people of South Sudan have the vision and will to establish a state and to move forward," Bishop Ricard said, noting that "they will need outside help to achieve this, which we need to provide." The bishop added, "The church in South Sudan needs to support and challenge the government to ensure a just and equitable society."

The ravages of 50 years of violence cannot be quickly relieved. But "as a major service provider in the north and south," the church can help, said Vincent Bolt, Sudan country representative for the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development.

"While the achievement of independence should not be belittled, the event should not distract" from the challenges ahead, Bolt said. More than 800,000 southerners dislocated by the war are expected to return from the north. The path toward a stable and sustainable statehood will be long and arduous for the new African country. Nevertheless, the spirit of hope runs high for a community experiencing the first breath of independence.



A man waves South Sudan's national flag as he attends the Independence Day celebration in Juba on July 9.

## Cloyne Report Reveals Failure in Ireland

An investigation of the Diocese of Cloyne, in Ireland, by a government judicial panel suggests a continuing failure of the Irish church to implement effectively its own child protection procedures. Much of the blame in the Cloyne Report was placed on Bishop John Magee who “took little or no active interest in the management of clerical child sex abuse until 2008.” Investigators say Bishop Magee lied to the government about turning over cases to civil authorities and was even involved himself in inappropriate behavior with a young seminarian.

According to the report, Vatican officials (who declined to cooperate with the investigation) also had some responsibility for the breakdown in Cloyne. The Roman Curia refused to approve the Irish church’s 1996 guidelines for dealing with sexual abuse by members of the clergy. This position, according to the report, “effectively gave individual Irish bishops the freedom to ignore the procedures” they had agreed to.

## In China, More Excommunications

Cardinal Joseph Zen, retired from Hong Kong, interrupted his tour of North American Chinese communities to speak in New York on July 14 about renewed tensions between Beijing and the Vatican. That same morning in Shantou City, China’s state-sanctioned Catholic church ordained Joseph Huang Bingzhang as bishop. It was the third episcopal ordination this year arranged by China’s State Administration for Religious Affairs that had not received papal approval. A clarification from Rome

## NEWS BRIEFS

On July 19 Pope Benedict XVI accepted the resignation of Cardinal Justin Rigali of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and named Archbishop **Charles Chaput, O.F.M.Cap.**, of Denver to succeed him. The pope also accepted the resignation of Bishop J. Kevin Boland of the Diocese of Savannah on July 19 and announced that **Gregory John Hartmayer, O.F.M.Conv.**, will replace him. + The **Washington Theological Union** announced on June 27 that the school could no longer support itself financially and will close for good at the end of the 2012-13 academic year. + On July 14 Governor **Jerry Brown** of California signed a bill requiring public school social studies textbooks to recognize the contributions of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Americans. California is the first state to approve such a law. + In connection with **World Youth Day 2011**, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops will host a vocation day on Wednesday, Aug. 17, at St. Francis Borgia Parish in Madrid and a “virtual pilgrimage” online for those unable to travel. + The Vatican newspaper, *L’Osservatore Romano*, praised the final **Harry Potter film** for its focus on the values of sacrifice and friendship.



Charles J. Chaput

on June 11 stated that both a bishop who consecrates without the apostolic mandate and a bishop who receives episcopal ordination in this manner incur excommunication through their actions under Canon 1382. It is not clear how many of the bishops who have participated in the three ordinations will be subject to excommunication, since many appear to have been forced to attend by Chinese security officers.

## Fewer Parishes, More Families

The Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate recently released a report from its project Emerging Models of Pastoral Leadership, titled *The Changing Face of U.S. Catholic Parishes*, tracking trends in U.S. Catholic parish life during the last decade. The report

found that “the number of Catholic parishes has declined by 1,359 since the year 2000 to 17,784 in 2010, representing a 7.1 percent decrease. The 2010 number is roughly equal to the number of U.S. parishes in 1965, 17,637, and 1,836 fewer than the peak number of U.S. parishes in 1990.” The report also revealed an increase in the number of families in individual parishes. “The average number of registered households in each U.S. parish grew to 1,168, and the average number of people attending Mass at Catholic parishes was 1,110 in 2010, up from an average of 966 a decade earlier.” These trends, probably due to parish mergers and closings, have caused a greater expansion of Mass schedules and bilingual adjustments across the United States.

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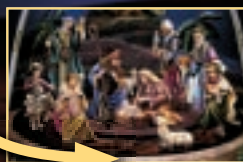
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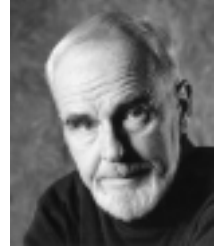
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# Economic Enigmas

**W**e are headed for a nasty election year in politics. Or is the word nutsy? Over the span of three days in July our elected representatives engaged in what anyone paying attention would call a bizarre exchange of verbiage that was supposedly a debate on raising the debt ceiling.

Congressman Joe Walsh, Republican of Illinois, huffed and puffed on his official Web site:

President [Barack] Obama, quit lying. You know darn well that if August 2nd comes and goes there is plenty of money to pay off our debt and cover all social security obligations.... Have you no shame sir? In three short years you have bankrupted this country and destroyed job creation. You are either in over your head or are hell-bent in turning us into some European big government wasteland.

Oddly, the Senate minority leader, Mitch McConnell (who twice stated that his main goal as leader is to prevent President Obama's re-election) had a different take. In an interview with Laura Ingraham, the senator warned that failure to raise the debt limit would likely ensure Obama's re-election. The Republicans will be blamed for a worsening economy, he said: "You know, it's an argument he has a good chance of winning, and all of a sudden we have co-ownership of a bad economy.... That is a very bad positioning going into an election."

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

More oddly yet, the Democratic Senator Claire McCaskill and the Republican Representative Ron Paul finally agreed on something: McConnell goofed. "He has lost his mind," declared the senator. "Obama must be grinning ear to ear," opined the representative.

The president, for his part, cautioned a group of Republican leaders against passing a short-term debt limit increase that he promised to veto. "Don't call my bluff," he said, apparently meaning that he was not bluffing.

The card game metaphor is as appropriate as it is scary. The fact that our situation is ridiculous should not lull us into forgetting that we are dealing with something extremely serious. Discourse has become so irrational and polarized that we find pundits on both right and left who hold that the opposition actually wants the economy to fail for their own political advantage. Has partisanship become so hardened in this country that both parties would rather have the country fail than have their pet ideologies compromised?

Perhaps the game analogy does not best apply, in the end. At least games have rules and logic in their procedures. In politics today, there seems to be little rationality. The president, having voted against raising the debt ceiling during the Bush administration, is now asking the Republicans to vote in favor of it. The Republicans, having done it multiple times during the Bush administration now refuse to do it for Obama. Hardened partisans like Representative Walsh accuse the president of

bankrupting our economy in three years, although anyone who looks at the evidence realizes that a rash rush to deregulation in 1999, an unneeded "temporary" Bush tax cut, two trillion-dollar wars, a sweetheart, unmonitored deal with drug companies and a housing collapse all occurred before Obama took office. The president is accused of radical economic policies even though many of his advisors are hold-overs from the previous administration or transplants from Wall Street.

If you think we might turn to economists to help us resolve this problem, you are wrong. You can find economists who offer more contradictory theories than you will find in the history of philosophy or a courtroom full of hired "experts."

Our situation, then, is dangerous, but it need not be fatal. House Speaker John Boehner and President Obama may yet muster allies within their parties who will seriously address our dangerously inequitable distribution of wealth, our illusions of endless entitlements, the diminishment of the middle class, the increasing misery of the jobless and the poor, the socialism that benefits those too big to fail, and belt-tightening for those too small to care about, and the 1,000-page morass of hidden loopholes and exemptions called a tax code.

It will take time. It will take imagination. It will take intellect and heart. But most of all, it will take courage to stand up to the nasty rhetoric and nutsy intransigence that haunts our political life.

The debt crisis is dangerous, but it need not be fatal.

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Howard Gray, S.J., is presently the Assistant to the President for Special Projects at Georgetown University. Prior

to this position, he has served in a number of leadership positions within the Jesuit community, including Provincial Superior, Formation Director, Tertian Director and Rector of university and formation houses. He has lectured nationally and internationally on Ignatian spirituality. His has written extensively on Ignatian spirituality, ministry and the apostolic mission of Jesuit high school and universities. He is a well-known director of Ignatian retreats in the USA, East Africa and East Asia. He earned a bachelor's degree in English and classics, a licentiate in philosophy and a licentiate in sacred theology from Loyola University of Chicago, and a doctorate in English from the University of Wisconsin. Fr. Gray has received five honorary degrees, the Georgetown Bi-Centennial Medal, the Jesuit Volunteer Corps Award and the Xavier University's Leadership Medallion. He served as the Vice President of the Major Superiors of Men from 1985-1988 and on the Papal Visitation of Seminaries in the U.S. from 1981-1987.

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# Rights

RESPONDING TO A  
BISHOP'S DISCIPLINARY  
DECISIONS

BY KEVIN O'ROURKE

# s of Conscience

Last December, the resident Catholic bishop of Phoenix, Ariz., Thomas J. Olmsted, declared that St. Joseph Hospital could no longer call itself Catholic because medical professionals at the hospital had performed a direct abortion to save a woman's life. According to Directive 45 of the *Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Services*, direct abortion, which is "the directly intended termination of pregnancy before viability or the directly intended destruction of a viable fetus, is prohibited in Catholic hospitals."

On behalf of the corporation sponsoring the hospital, Catholic Health Care West, Carol Keehan, D.C., president and chief executive officer of the Catholic Health Association, the national organization representing Catholic hospitals and long-term care facilities, disagreed with the bishop. Both Sister Keehan and Catholic Health Care West maintained that the act upon which the bishop based his decision and disciplinary action was not a direct abortion.

Are there grounds for deciding that the procedure was a non-direct abortion, in which the death of the fetus was not included in the intention of the moral act but was a foreseen side effect?

The medical team at St. Joseph Hospital made its decision based on a judgment that both mother and child would die unless action were taken to remove the cause of the underlying medical problem. It seems that preserving the life of the mother was the intention of the act because the infant would die no matter what was done or not done. Its death during the surgery was foreseen but not intended and so a non-direct abortion. There are responsible Catholic theologians and medical personnel who maintain that in these circumstances (including an inability to save the infant from eventual death), the principle of self-defense justifies removing the fetus from the mother's womb.

---

KEVIN O'ROURKE, O.P., is a professor of bioethics at the Neiswanger Institute for Bioethics and Health Policy at the Loyola University Chicago Stritch School of Medicine and a consultant for many Catholic health care corporations.

Despite a plea by Catholic Health Care West for a more prolonged theological study and a paper defending the thought of the ethics committee of the hospital, Bishop Olmsted issued a statement declaring that a direct abortion had been performed and imposed penalties: specifically that the hospital could no longer call itself Catholic and could no longer provide for the celebration of Mass or reserve the Blessed Sacrament. These penalties were in addition to an excommunication declared earlier by the bishop upon Margaret Mary McBride, R.S.M., the Phoenix hospital administrator who represented the hospital ethics committee in the medical decision that led to the death of the fetus.

### On the Horns of a Dilemma

Later Sister Keehan seemed to change course. In a letter to Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, she stated that the Catholic Health Association “has always said to sponsors, governing board members, managers and clinicians that an individual bishop in his diocese is the authoritative interpreter of the *Ethical and Religious Directives*.” The E.R.D. issued by the conference of bishops is the official guide for the delivery of health care in the name of the church in the United States. Was Sister Keehan contradicting herself? Not really, but a proper response to a bishop’s pronouncement in such a case is quite complex.

The situation was accurately explained in a statement issued a short time later by Archbishop Dolan: “I am convinced that Sister Carol believes she serves the bishops as much as she serves the hospitals.... She feels that the decision [of Bishop Olmsted] was terrible, but she knows that the bishop of the diocese is the authentic interpreter and implementer” of the U.S. bishops’ *Ethical and Religious Directives*.

This explanation demonstrates a well-known dilemma in regard to official teaching of the church and the reception of that teaching by the faithful: The diocesan bishop has the right to teach with authority, a right firmly established and affirmed by the Second Vatican Council, but that right is not without limitations.

In an article in *Theological Studies* in 2003, Thomas O’Meara, O.P., discussed these limitations. He argued that the grace of the Holy Spirit does not replace the need for study, learning and reflection on the part of bishops. This is an application of the insight of St. Thomas Aquinas that “grace does not replace nature but rather draws it toward fulfillment” (*Summa Theologiae* I,1,8). Father O’Meara also maintained that the doctrinal teaching of the magisterium calling for assent is not the same as a disciplinary statement requiring obedience—a distinction also made by Nicholas Lash in his article “Teaching or Commanding?” (*Am.*, 12/13/10).


### Conscionable Options

How can the people affected by a bishop’s decision respond? For a Catholic who respects the teaching of the church, there seem to be two possible ways of responding: (1) accept the statement and follow it as the rightful teaching of the church, even though one disagrees with it; or (2) accept the authority of the statement but disagree with its reasoning and so not follow it because doing so would violate one’s conscience. This second option is what the Board of Trustees of Catholic Health Care West and Sister Keehan seem to have done, and it prompted the letter of Sister Keehan to Archbishop Dolan.

The first response is not unreasonable. To accept a bishop’s judgment while disagreeing with it is not a suppression of conscience but rather an acknowledgement of other elements besides one’s personal conviction. It implies that the recipient of the teaching implicitly realizes that his or her objections to the teaching may not be as well reasoned as the teaching of the resident bishop and that the bishop has the assistance of the Spirit (charism) when teaching. Indeed, the virtue of faith impels Catholics to consider seriously this type of response.

The second response is more difficult to understand and apply. Volumes have been written on the role of conscience in relation to the teaching of the church. An instruction issued by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (5/24/90) and a commentary on the instruction by Avery

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Dulles, S.J., (Origins, 3/28/91) provide guidance. The following is a brief synopsis of the pertinent ideas in both the instruction and the commentary.

If a bishop acting in union with the pope states an infallible church teaching, then it must be accepted by Catholics. Were a resident bishop to declare, for instance, that abortion is contrary to moral law, his statement should be accepted by Catholics because that is “the constant teaching of the church.” But if a resident bishop states that a particular action was a direct abortion, that is not a constant teaching of the church. Usually a disciplinary statement of this nature should still be accepted, but there may be arguments to support a contrary decision.

### **Noninfallible Statements**

Noninfallible statements are of two sorts: “reformable” or “prudential” statements. “Reformable” does not imply that the statement could be reversed but rather that in the future it might be better expressed, the better to be understood and to be more adequate to the truth it conveys. Reformable statements that are formal teaching should be accepted, in the words of the Second Vatican Council, with “religious submission of intellect and will.” This form of response is not an act of religious faith in revealed truth; rather it is an internal intellectual assent. One should follow church teaching unless one has serious reasons for offering only external respect for the teaching.

If the statement is a prudential application of church teaching based upon “contingent and conjectural elements,” it may be proven to be “not free of all deficiencies.” Then it may be challenged for objective reasons and in time even be reversed. Even prudential papal teachings have been reversed. At the press conference introducing the C.D.F. instruction in 1990, then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger gave several examples of teachings that have been reversed: statements promulgated by the Holy See in regard to ecumenical activities, to relations between church and state, to personal freedom and the rights of conscience in choosing a religion and declarations of the Pontifical Biblical Commission made at the beginning of the 20th century.

If one follows this second type of response to a bishop’s noninfallible teaching, the instruction advises:

- Contrary opinions must be based upon objective historical and theological reasoning, not upon subjective “rights of conscience.”
- When people object to church teaching, “rights of conscience” often become more important than truth.
- Statements of the hierarchy should not be rejected because they are hard to follow.
- Decisions of individuals contrary to those of resident bishops should not be presented as normative for other institutions or individuals.

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• Opposition to a statement of teaching or discipline should not be a “media event,” which may be harmful to the church, though opposition may be expressed in serious forums or journals.

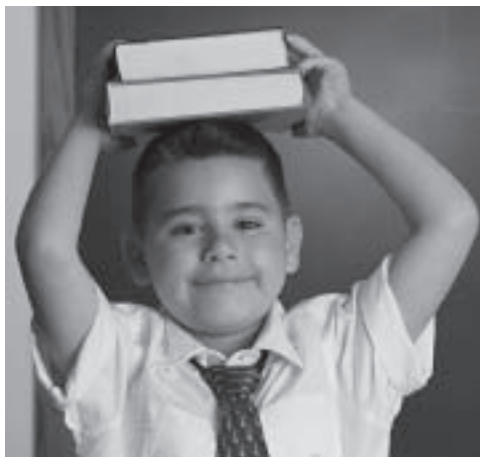
• Responses of this nature, “when a person cannot give intellectual assent,” are called “personal difficulties.” Both Cardinal Dulles and Nicholas Lash indicate that “dissent” is not a fitting term for this type of response. Mr. Lash prefers to label them “disagreements.”

## Conscience Formation

A well-formed conscience is an important part of one’s spiritual life. Thus, any decision of conscience that seems to be contrary to a statement of a church authority, for example, of a local bishop, should be made with caution and a clear view of the common good as well as the personal good of the individual. Authoritative statements of church officials are not mere opinions based on hearsay or weak evidence. Rather, the issuing authority seeks to found them on sacred Scripture, prior teaching of the church and a desire to foster the common good of the particular communities to which they are directed. Disagreements with such teaching must be based upon fact, not opinion. Hence, the first inclination toward official statements should be to follow the teaching or disciplinary statement, even if the teaching is not an infallible statement.

The church, however, admits that statements of church teaching are not all of equal authority. Infallible statements are not frequent. Most statements, especially those of local bishops, are in the noninfallible category. Moreover, the church admits that statements issued even by the highest authority may be subject to revision or correction. The document of 1990, referred to earlier, states: “One must take into account the proper character of every exercise of the magisterium considering the extent to which its authority is engaged.... The authority of the intervention becomes clear from the nature of the document, the insistence with which the teaching is repeated, and the very way in which it is expressed.”

In regard to a moral decision involving facts and challenges of contemporary society, it seems bishops should not make statements based solely on their own experience and knowledge. The people immersed in a particular moral situation may have unmatched knowledge valuable for a sound decision. This is especially clear in regard to moral questions arising in modern health care. In addition, the principle of subsidiarity opts for the right of people other than the bishop to speak to moral issues. The teaching authority of bishops is recognized by members of the church, but in order for that authority to be effectively exercised it must include the voice and expertise of other individual members of the people of God. **A**



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# Identity Crisis

New voter ID laws subvert democracy and Catholic teaching.

BY DAVID CARROLL COCHRAN

**P**hoto ID, please." An increasing number of Americans will be hearing these words when they show up to vote on election day. In a trend that has gained strength over the last several years and received a boost after the 2010 midterm elections, a growing number of states are passing laws requiring specific forms of photo identification for citizens to cast ballots at their local polling places. While this may strike some as a relatively minor technical adjustment in voting security, what is really going on is far more significant and deeply at odds with Catholic social teaching.

Over the past half-century the Catholic Church has emerged as one of the strongest voices on behalf of democracy in the political realm. Its core social teaching documents, from "Pacem in Terris" to "Centesimus Annus" to "Caritas in Veritate," strongly endorse fundamental political and civil rights, the rule of law, regular elections and an open political system. The tradition points especially to a need for broad participation in the democratic process on an equal basis for all citizens and warns against the political exclusion of the socially marginalized, especially the poor and racial, ethnic or religious minorities.

Pope John Paul II stated, in his message for the World Day of Peace in 1999, that "all citizens have the right to participate in the life of their community" and that "this right means nothing when the democratic process breaks down because of corruption and favoritism." Such "manipulated" elections, he said, are "an affront to democracy" because they "not only obstruct legitimate sharing in the exercise of power, but also prevent people from benefiting equally from community assets and services, to which everyone has a right."

This insistence upon free, open and equal democratic participation is most powerfully directed against autocratic regimes that deny basic political rights, but Catholics in mature democracies as well have a moral duty to heed it and to ask how they can better embody it. Scrutinizing recent efforts to require stricter voter identification is one way to do that.

Politics is often about convincing people there is a prob-

lem and then offering a solution. About a decade ago, some conservative activists and Republican elected officials began this effort by holding up the specter of voter fraud. In 2002 President George W. Bush's Justice Department announced a major initiative to identify and prosecute occurrences of this offense. Conservative America's well-developed infrastructure of advocacy groups and think tanks, talk radio and cable television soon took up the cause. Outraged stories of widespread fraud and conspiracies to steal elections, often featuring racially charged images of workers for Acorn, the recently defunct community organizing group, or the New Black Panther Party, are routine material in the conservative media circles. To counter this purported threat, the G.O.P. has pushed as a solution the addition of photo-identification requirements to voting laws in states from Florida to Indiana to South Dakota. About a dozen states have already instituted these requirements, and similar laws are working their way through the state governments of several more.

There are two things to know about this campaign. First, the problem it points to does not exist. Second, the real purpose of its proposed solution is to keep certain kinds of American citizens from exercising their legitimate right to vote.

## A Solution Seeking a Problem

Election fraud comes in different forms. "Registration fraud" occurs when people fill out registration cards with fake or inaccurate information. Workers paid to register voters, for example, could pad their totals by filling in forms themselves. While this does sometimes happen, there is no evidence that these fake registrants—Tony Romo, Mickey Mouse—actually show up to try to vote. "Absentee ballot fraud" occurs when someone other than the rightful voter marks and mails in ballots through bribery, deception or theft. There is some evidence that this occasionally happens too, but photo identification does not apply to absentee ballots.

Photo identification can prevent only in-person voter impersonation—when someone shows up at a particular precinct claiming to be someone else also registered in that same precinct. Studies consistently show that this type of fraud is rare to nonexistent. Impersonation is the hardest

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DAVID CARROLL COCHRAN is professor of politics and director of the Archbishop Kucera Center at Loras College, Dubuque, Iowa.

and least effective way for people to try to manipulate elections. (For all the talk of voting early and often, even corrupt political machines of the past found stuffing ballot boxes before or after votes were cast to be far more effective in swinging totals).

There is no evidence that in-person voter fraud at polling stations is a current problem in the United States. This is why advocates sponsoring photo ID laws are consistently unable to point to actual cases of fraud in their states and why that intense multiyear effort by the Bush administration's Justice Department to uncover fraud and convince local U.S. attorneys to prosecute it was a massive failure. There is nothing there.

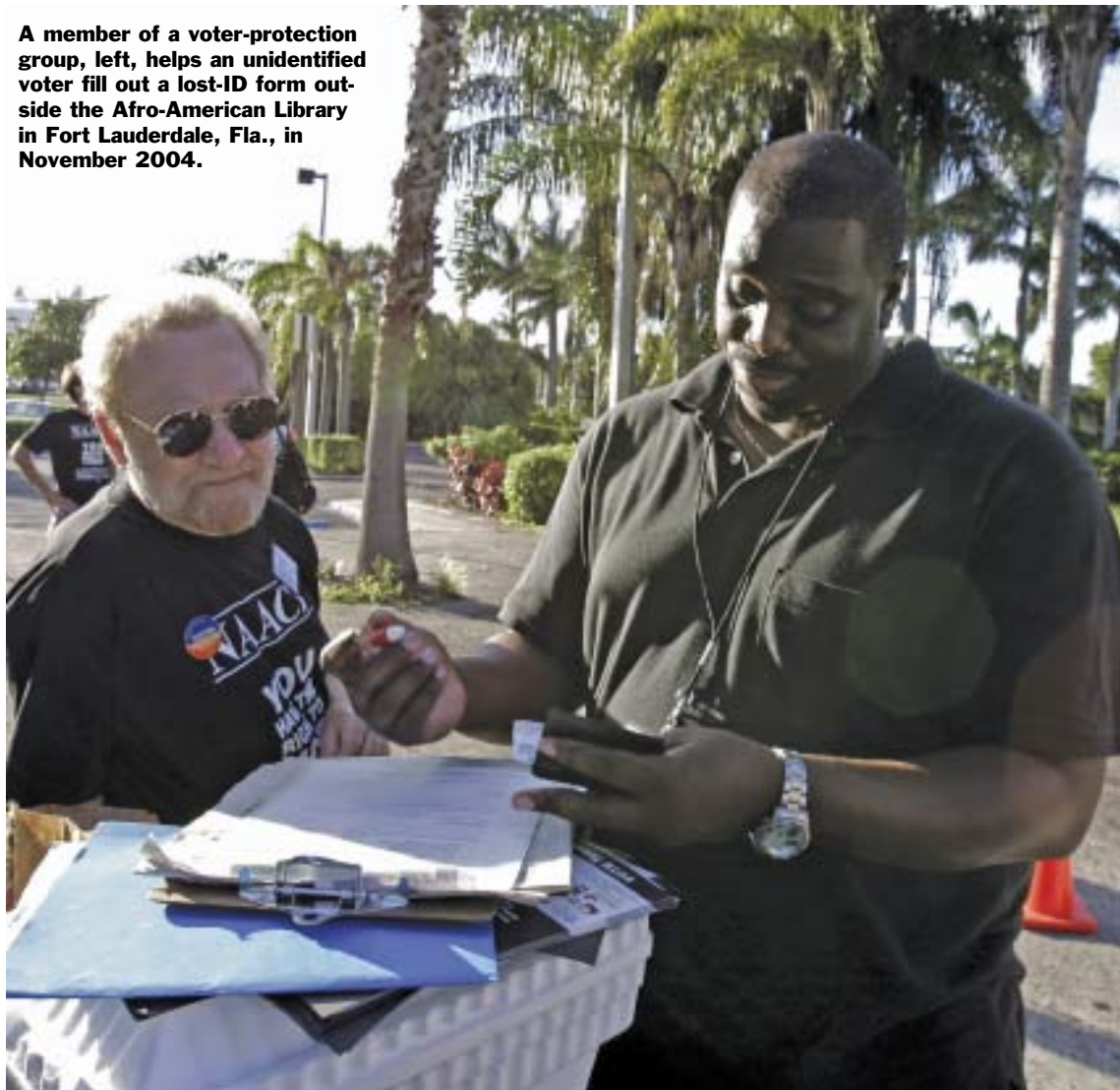
So if the problem does not exist except in the rhetoric of the conservative movement, what is the point in proposing a solution?

Here is where things get ugly. These new laws have little impact on most voters, because they already have photo identification in the form of a driver's license. But some citizens are far less likely to have a driver's license, since they do not own a car or drive much. These include the poor, especially black and Hispanic citizens in urban areas, the elderly, the disabled and the young (college students, for example, may have a driver's license but not in the county where they attend school and are eligible to vote). Most of these groups are more likely to vote for Democrats.

Photo ID laws do allow those who do not have a driver's license to present an alternative ID, but this must be obtained well before election day. To acquire such an ID, they need to collect documents like a certified birth certificate, take time off work (for the poor, usually unpaid time) and find a way to get to county offices to wait in line for the ID. Political science has long established that requiring additional steps for such voters, especially steps that are

time-consuming and inconvenient, will reduce the rate at which that group votes. Voter identification laws clearly have this effect. Studies show that while they do not prevent fraud, they do significantly lower turnout among Democratic-leaning groups, especially low-income African-American and Hispanic voters. This is the real goal of such laws. Though defenders of the Indiana voter ID law, described as the strictest in the nation, could not point to a

**A member of a voter-protection group, left, helps an unidentified voter fill out a lost-ID form outside the Afro-American Library in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., in November 2004.**



single case of in-person fraud to justify the new requirements, the law was upheld by a federal court. U.S. Circuit Court Judge Terence T. Evans wrote in his dissent: "Let's not beat around the bush" about "not-too-thinly-veiled attempts to discourage election-day turnout by certain folks believed to skew Democratic."

### **The Fraud of 'Anti-Fraud' Efforts**

The negative effect of additional requirements at polling places on the turnout of minority citizens in particular has a long and repulsive history in the United States. Low

PHOTO: REUTERS/GARY I. ROTHSTEIN

turnout was the intent of poll taxes and literacy tests. Today minority voters face longer lines, less convenient locations, higher rates of uncounted votes and a greater likelihood of being wrongly removed from voter roles by periodic “purges.” In states that do not require a photo ID but allow poll workers the option of asking for one if they want, black and Hispanic voters are asked far more often than others. Researchers have even found that blacks and Latinos are frequently asked for identification even in states where this is not allowed by law.

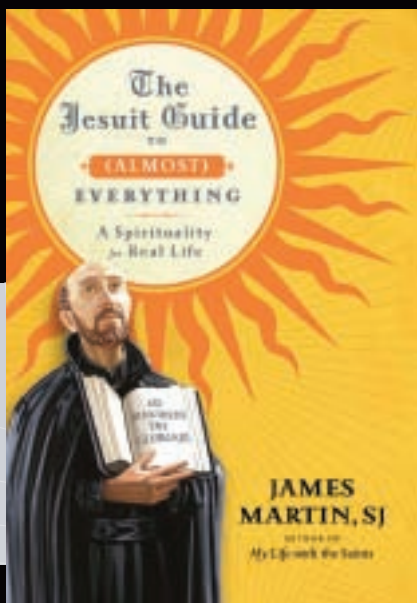
Activists pushing mandatory photo ID laws know full well the effect these will have on keeping legitimate Democratic voters from casting ballots and clearly craft the laws to do so. They restrict their “anti-fraud” efforts to voter impersonation at the polling place, where there is no evidence of a problem, rather than the absentee process, where there actually is some evidence of fraud but where Republican candidates typically poll well. In challenging Georgia’s photo ID law, career civil rights lawyers in the Justice Department revealed that the law’s chief sponsor acknowledged it would keep more African-Americans from voting, which, in her view, was fine since “if there are fewer black voters because of this bill, it will only be because there is less opportunity for fraud.” (Bush administration political

appointees overruled these career attorneys and approved the law anyway.) A new Texas photo ID measure will allow a concealed handgun permit to be used but, like South Carolina’s new law, prohibits the use of a university photo ID. Is that because students are increasingly leaning Democratic? The New Hampshire House speaker seemed to acknowledge that when he defended his own state’s efforts to make it more difficult for college students to vote; he said they are “foolish” and just vote “liberal.”

Politics can be an unsavory business. Both parties try to gain advantages where they can. Distortions, trading favors and backroom deals are part of the package. But the movement to require photo IDs for voting is especially cynical because it pumps up a fake problem in order to justify a solution whose real purpose is to prevent some of our most vulnerable citizens from exercising a right the Catholic tradition considers fundamental. Unfortunately, too many Catholics, who on other issues embrace church teaching, enthusiastically support these new laws and vote for them in state legislatures. We can only hope that the truth about this movement becomes more widely known and that Catholics, of whatever political stripe, will join together to resist such a clear violation of our tradition’s core moral commitments. **A**

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I love the smell of cinnamon in the morning. I love the smell of the ocean in the afternoon. I love the smell of apple-scented candlelight at night. Most of all, I love the smell of old books, even though they smell like dust.

I have been writing, editing and publishing Catholic books for the past 40 years, so I probably smell like a 1966 *Dutch Catechism*. And a 1966 *Dutch Catechism* smells like an old wooden shoe.

When I was a child, I took out

books from two different libraries, but I also loved riding my Schwinn to a used bookstore in Chicago with a storefront window that displayed books both old and mysterious. I would chain my bike to a lamppost, enter the quiet store and journey out into new worlds. I solved mysteries with the Hardy Boys, sailed through storms with Jack London and swung from tree to tree with Tarzan and Jane. And I went on holy adventures with saints in books like *Damien the Leper*, *Joan of Arc* and *Saint Francis of the*

*Seven Seas*. You could buy books like that for a dime. The Music Box, my neighborhood movie theater, cost 15 cents. Books that play in your mind longer than a movie have always been a bargain.

When I was 14, I entered Quigley Preparatory Seminary. In the back of the old bookstore, under Occult, I found a fat book on Catholic apologetics that promised to help me confound anyone who did not believe what I did. My Uncle Barney was an atheist, so I tested out my new knowledge on him. During one argument, Uncle Barney said that someday scientists would be able to create human beings in a laboratory. I told him that was Frankenstein talk, and anyway only



Beware the man  
of one book.

—St. Thomas Aquinas

God can make a tree. I was obnoxious and have never liked apologetics since. Uncle Barney was not a bad guy, and if he were alive today he would probably resist the temptation to say, "See, I told you so," about those lab babies.

At 15 I got my comeuppance when I came across a book by an ex-priest with a beef with the church. Since I could think of no better vocation for me than being a priest—other than centerfielder for the Cubs—I bought the 35-cent book out of curiosity. It knocked me down like a fastball to the head. I learned about the Inquisition and the Crusades and popes who made their babies popes and all kinds of crimes and misdemeanors. My Catholic guilt erupted: I knew I would go to hell just for reading it. So I went to confession to Father Ciezadlo, the kindest priest I knew. He not only absolved me but did not make a federal case out of it. "If your faith is built on a foundation of truth," he seemed to say, "nothing can hurt it. Do not be afraid."

### **A Candy Store of Books**

The book did not hurt my faith. Instead it made me more interested in seeking truth. And in truth, the author was on target about a lot of things. Since that time I have read and given away thousands of Catholic and other religious books with many points of view, and each one has in one way or another enriched my faith. Today, the only thing I would rather be than Catholic is still centerfielder for the Cubs.

When I was 16 my neighborhood bookstore closed, but a brand-new Catholic bookstore opened in downtown Chicago, the Thomas More Bookstore. It was the world's greatest candy store of Catholic books. I was working weekends and summers as an usher at Cubs, Bears and Blackhawks games, so I had plenty of money to buy books and see movies. I loved the rack of Image Books, a line of classics pub-



## **BRINGING HEALTH CARE TO LIFE** *for the FAITHFUL*

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The Catholic Health Association is pleased to offer a collection of homilies for 2011 to help clarify health care issues for parishioners and the communities we serve.

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Catholic health ministries are dedicated to continuing the healing mission of Jesus by improving the well-being of the communities we serve. One out of every six patients in America is treated at a Catholic hospital each year.

#### **JULY 3, 14th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

Ann M. Garrido, D.Min.

#### **AUG. 14, 20th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

Sr. Carolyn Osiek, RSCJ, Th.D.

#### **SEPT. 18, 25th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

Fr. Thomas Nairn, OFM, Ph.D.

#### **OCT. 23, 30th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

Fr. Joseph Driscoll, M.Div.

Visit [www.chausa.org/homilies](http://www.chausa.org/homilies) for these homily aids.

For more information, contact Brian Yanofchick, CHA senior director, mission services and leadership development, at [byanofchick@chausa.org](mailto:byanofchick@chausa.org) or (314) 253-3503.



*A Passionate Voice for Compassionate Care*

lished by the Doubleday editor John Delaney. They had *Mr. Blue*, *The Diary of a Country Priest* and *Practice of the Presence of God*; books by Fulton J. Sheen, G. K. Chesterton and Thomas Merton; and classics from Augustine, John of the Cross and Teresa of Ávila. They also had a whole table of Catholic novels with covers that created an instant love affair with anyone passing by. I experienced *The Power and the Glory* with Graham Greene, tasted *Wise Blood* with Flannery O'Connor and walked on *The Edge of Sadness* with Edwin O'Connor. The Thomas More Bookstore, an Aladdin's castle of Catholic literature, closed years ago, but you can still smell the bouquet of books when you walk past the building on Wabash Avenue.

**Today's Stores**

Today Catholics can keep their

Schwinn in the basement and get any book online or at the nearest mall. Or they can visit a modern Catholic book and gift shop that smells like incense and offers a wide selection of books, cards, art and music. One model is the Gift Shop at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels in Los Angeles. The cathedral, the third largest in the world, offers Mass in 42 different languages and is the mother church to four million Catholics. Its shop offers parishioners a wide variety of books and gifts, ranging from \$5 rosaries strung with ruby-colored glass beads to porcelain sculptures of Jesus, Mary and the saints.

Isabel Lorient, manager of the shop, points out: "In today's changing world, books barely make a profit. Catholics also desire sacramental objects that remind them of the sacred in life and these gifts support the

books. The profits then go to the church's mission. Everyone benefits." Isabel was drawn to her vocation through a back door. As a little girl from a nonreligious family she went to church alone and loved to spend time in the tiny shop tucked away in the vestibule. "It was both a guilty pleasure and a comfort," she remembers.

I'd hold a figurine of the Blessed Mother and look at her peaceful gaze and know that somehow, somehow, I was safe. I'd study the saints on holy cards and see valor and generosity. I'd read from spiritual books and begin to understand God wants only good for me and everyone no matter what things look like. Everything I saw or touched in that little shop reminded me that there's so much more to this world than meets the eye. Now I love to share with customers the *Aha!* of a new book I read or just listen to their questions and concerns and be as helpful and open as I can.

Some 1,500 Catholic bookshops and gift shops offer this kind of service around the country. To find a Catholic bookstore near you, go online to the Catholic Marketing Network ([catholicmarketing.com](http://catholicmarketing.com)) or the Catholic Retailer's Association ([catholicretailers.com](http://catholicretailers.com)). There are also more than 100 publishers of Catholic books in the country. You can learn about them by going to the Association of Catholic Book Publishers at [cbpa.com](http://cbpa.com). All have excellent books that you won't find reviewed in your local newspaper, but they will inform, inspire and enlighten you and remind you why it's worthwhile to stay Catholic.

You can also pay attention to your Sunday church bulletin, and when the parish offers a speaker on a weekday night, surprise yourself and go. Some

**ON THE WEB**  
 Rev. Terrance W. Klein reviews the series "Falling Skies."  
[americamagazine.org/culture](http://americamagazine.org/culture)

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Back in the 1960s, someone asked the theologian Karl Rahner, S.J., "Will the Catholic book have a future?" Father Rahner said: "It will be transformed, but it will endure. It will achieve this even if it takes the form of an unending variation upon the single basic theme: 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'"

THOMAS J. SHELLEY

## MARGINAL SPIRITUALITY

### MARKING THE HOURS

English People and Their Prayers, 1240-1570

By Eamon Duffy

Yale Univ. Press. 208p \$25

Few things are more annoying to a bibliophile or even to an ordinary reader than to check a book out of the library and discover that a previous borrower has scribbled personal notations in the margins of the text. Believe it or not, these marginalia are the essential ingredients in Eamon Duffy's latest book on the English Reformation, *Marking the Hours: English People and Their Prayers*.

"Hours" refers to a type of popular devotional book, known as a book of hours, used by the laity in late medieval Europe that contained prayers, psalms, Gospel passages and

Even then it will endure and will lead us to that point in our human existence at which this existence is thrown headlong into the redeeming mystery."

You may find direction in an old book that smells like dust or a new one that smells like plastic. Maybe the way will appear on a screen with pixels you hold in your hand or, the day after tomorrow, implanted on the inside of your eyelids. But heed the words of Aquinas and do not become "a man of one book." Have fun, be adventurous and, as Father Ciezadlo advised, "Don't be afraid!"

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**MICHAEL LEACH**, *writer, editor and publisher, is the recipient of a Lifetime Achievement award from the Catholic Book Publishers Association. This article is an edited excerpt from his book Why Stay Catholic? Unexpected Answers to a Life-Changing Question (Loyola Press).*



the like and, in many cases, decorative illustrations. These books of hours have been studied and analyzed extensively by church historians, liturgists, theologians and especially art historians, but Duffy approaches them from

a fresh and even unique perspective. First he provides an informative description of the origins and varied contents of these prayer books, which began to appear in the 13th century as a spinoff of the monastic office and the breviary of the secular clergy. They were sometimes the most valuable possession of the lay man or woman who owned them.

Duffy's primary interest, however, is not the Latin text or even the sumptuous illustrations but the markings, the marginal glosses that were made by the owners of the books or by scribes employed by the owners. This book is an attempt, says Duffy with his customary wit, "to trace a history written quite literally in the margins." These annotations provide a rare insight into the personal religious convictions of those who used the books daily to sustain their spiritual life. The fact that many of these laypeople were women adds an extra dimension of interest and originality to Duffy's research. The book of hours was popular with such dissimilar characters as the unscrupulous King Richard III, hard-faced London grocers, pious country gentry, devout widows, St. Thomas More and even Thomas Cromwell, the ruthless royal minister who engineered More's downfall and execution.

For the most part the marginal annotations were personal prayers, and their content was as varied as the background of their owners. They included prayers to be used at the elevation of the host at Mass, expressions of contrition when sacramental confession was not available, petitions for relief from a toothache and for a woman to conceive a child and to prevent one's house from burning down, and especially deliverance from *mors improvisa*, "a sudden and unprovided death."

Sometimes the prayers crossed the line from intercessory prayer to magic,

promising guaranteed results when performed properly, such as 100 Aves recited every day for 10 days. Few of the prayers were original compositions. Laypeople collected prayers as we do recipes today and showed “a magpie tendency” to keep the best ones. “They articulated their hopes and fears, however deeply felt, in the borrowed words of others,” says Duffy, “which they made their own in the act of recitation.” The prayer of laypeople in the late Middle Ages was essentially “ventriloquial,” to use Duffy’s evocative word.

John Talbot, the first earl of Shrewsbury and a professional soldier, filled his 15th-century book of hours with prayers for preservation from harm on the battlefield and the defeat of his enemies. He included the famous Charlemagne Prayer, which was still being carried into battle by both French and German soldiers in the First World War. In the 16th century, while awaiting death in the Tower of London, Thomas More made extensive annotations in the psalter that was included in his book of hours, making frequent comparisons between his own fate and that of the psalmist. On one of the blank pages in the psalter More composed an original prayer that Duffy calls “one of the high points of late medieval piety,” but he also points out that “it contains nothing that any devout early Tudor Christian, reflecting in their closet on their own mortality, might not have uttered.”

Duffy disputes the contention of some historians that the popularity of the book of hours in the late Middle Ages reflects a growing dichotomy between a communal spirituality centered around the liturgy and a personal spirituality based on the private recitation of the book of hours. “Interiority is by no means to be equated with individualism,” he reminds us and emphasizes that the late medieval church measured the

success of its catechesis by the degree to which it enabled people to interiorize their religion. The book of hours was often recited communally in parish churches, and one of the most popular prayers was the one that was to be used at the elevation of the host at the consecration during the Mass. Even at home it was not unusual to use the book of hours for family prayer, as is evident from the famous Holbein drawing of the family of Thomas More gathered together for their morning prayers. Everyone is holding a book, and it is the same book, the book of hours.

*Marking the Hours* is Professor Duffy’s fourth book on the English Reformation and further enhances his reputation as one of the leading historians of Tudor England. Professor of the history of Christianity at Cambridge University and fellow of Magdalene College, Duffy revolutionized English Reformation studies

almost 20 years ago with *The Stripping of the Altars*. In that magisterial work Duffy not only successfully challenged the prevailing orthodoxy that the English Reformation was a genuine grass-roots movement but also documented the rich spiritual heritage of late medieval English Catholicism. *Marking the Hours* is a valuable addition to our knowledge of that heritage, and it is served up with Duffy’s characteristic panache.

It should be mentioned that Duffy’s pursuit of marginalia has not led him to neglect the illustrations for which many editions of the *Book of Hours* are justly famous. No less than 114 of these magnificent illustrations have been beautifully reproduced in full color on coated paper and are a stunning visual delight.

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**MSGR. THOMAS J. SHELLY**, a priest of the Archdiocese of New York, is a professor of church history at Fordham University in New York.

JOAN M. NUTH

## A COMPLEX VISION

### JULIAN OF NORWICH, THEOLOGIAN

By Denys Turner  
Yale Univ. Press. 288p \$40

“*This boke is begonne by Goddes gifte and his grace, but it is not yet performed, as to my sight.*” Thus Julian of Norwich closes the Long Text of her *Revelation of Love*, acknowledging the incompleteness of her efforts to probe the profound mystery of God’s love. Similarly, Denys Turner, the Horace Tracy Pitkin Professor of Historical Theology at Yale, writes his commentary *Julian of Norwich, Theologian*. The simplicity of the title says it all. Having read Julian for years, he confesses his need to write a book to figure out for himself her “complex, rich, and also coherent vision that falls into the

shape of a genuinely ‘systematic’ theology.”

To read this book is essentially to encounter the nature and process of theology, which indeed is never complete in this world, since its only finality can be the beatific vision of God. Thus Turner does not attempt a complete survey of Julian’s theological system, but concentrates on several points puzzling to him and examines each in depth. This is a very personal work, as a result, and if answering certain questions raised by Julian’s text to his own satisfaction raises more questions for the reader, so be it, for that is the very nature of the theological enterprise.

That Julian is a theologian has been noted by many. Thomas Merton called her “one of the greatest English theologians,” who has produced “a

coherent and indeed systematically constructed corpus of doctrine" (*Mystics and Zen Masters*). Edmund Colledge and James Walsh, in their critical edition of *Showings* (1978), situated Julian within the rubric of monastic theology in contrast to scholasticism. Since then, the historian and writer Bernard McGinn has defined a third type of medieval theology, called vernacular theology, found primarily in the writings of women visionaries. But Julian is resistant to all categories. In their recent critical edition of Julian, Nicholas Watson and Jacqueline Jenkins describe her text as having "no real precedent: a speculative vernacular theology, not modeled on earlier texts but structured as a prolonged investigation into the divine, whose prophetic goal is to birth a new understanding of human living in the world and the nature of God in his interactions with the world, not just for theologians but for everyone." Not bad for the first known female writer in the English language!

In Chapter One, Turner asks in what sense Julian is a theologian, in the process giving a mini-treatise on the nature and method of theology. He concludes that she is certainly a systematic theologian, although not in the same way as either the scholastics or monastics; she is in some sense an anchoritic theologian; she is a vernacular or, better, "demotic" theologian, since she writes in English for the common folk, her "evenchristen." This last can be misleading, for "her theology is unquestionably difficult, morally demanding, intellectually complex and resistant of simplistic solutions to dauntingly intractable theological problems." Turner bemoans today's



"bowdlerization" of Julian's text, fragmented into "pious pericopes" in spiritual anthologies. Contrary to much popular opinion about Julian, Turner does not find her work particularly "charming."

Before entering into conversation with the substance of Julian's theology, in Chapter Two Turner "clears a conceptual space" within which to consider it, particularly her notion that sin is "behovely," an idea central to her explication of divine providence, sin and salvation. The Middle English word, translated as "befitting," "expedient" or "appropriate," has much in common with the Latin "conveniens," neither

absolutely necessary nor arbitrarily contingent, but "fitting" within the particular story of salvation as it has occurred in human history. Nor is it necessary for clarity that we know exactly how sin is behovely. Within the story of this world that is ours, sin holds a place that will not in the end prevent all from being well. I found this chapter to be very helpful, since without understanding this essential point, Julian's whole theology could well devolve into incomprehensibility.

Equally brilliant and enlightening is Chapter Three, "Two Stories of Sin," in which Turner draws a contrast between how God views sin and sin's own story of itself. Drawing on insights from Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Turner considers the "unreality" of sin as the illusory and self-destructive misperception of the way things are. The story of sin told by God's love, which alone is "real," is completely different, even though shrouded in mystery. It invites our participation in faith and hope.

In the remaining chapters, Turner delves into substantial points of Julian's theology: the parable of the lord and the servant and the incompleteness of narrative, the relationship between prayer and divine providence, and Julian's theological anthropology of substance and sensuality. In all three chapters, Turner keeps before our eyes the exquisite balance of Julian's theology, which maintains the necessary tension between the eternal and the historical, the already and the not-yet of human fulfillment. He also answers convincingly persistent complaints as to Julian's orthodoxy. A concluding chapter summarizes Julian's soteriology.

This is a book for the intrepid reader, someone unafraid to tackle in meticulous detail the finer points of Julian's theological system. Since it assumes substantial knowledge of Julian's theology, I would advise gaining some familiarity with her writing as a prerequisite to reading it. The Paulist Press edition of Julian in modern English would be a good starting point (1978), as would the critical edition of either Colledge and Walsh (1978) or Watson and Jenkins (2006).

I found myself easily following Turner's arguments because, admittedly, they conform to my own. Many of his conclusions were familiar and others deepened my previous knowledge. The author writes with erudition, theological precision and flashes of humor. This is an enlightening book that makes an important and impressive addition to Julian scholarship.

**ON THE WEB**  
 This month's Catholic Book Club selection.  
[americamagazine.org/cbc](http://americamagazine.org/cbc)

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**JOAN M. NUTH** is associate professor of theology at John Carroll University and director of the Ignatian Spirituality Institute, a training program for spiritual directors. She is the author of *Wisdom's Daughter: The Theology of Julian of Norwich (Crossroad) and God's Lovers in an Age of Anxiety: The Medieval English Mystics (Darton, Longman & Todd/Orbis)*.

## LETTERS

### Maryknoll Memories

"100 Years of Maryknoll," by James T. Keane, S.J. (6/20), stirred memories. My uncle, Joseph Connors, was a Maryknoll priest in Korea until the Japanese imprisoned him after Pearl Harbor. Eventually released, he headed two Maryknoll seminaries in the United States. When the Korean War broke out, he returned to Korea for another 15 years.

My uncle's tales stirred my childhood imagination with visions of suffering missionaries and their people. To his nephews and nieces, he was warm-hearted, funny and serene. Though Father Joe was more pastor than prophet, I listened to living room

conversations with visiting Maryknollers about the politics of China and Korea and the militant anti-Communism in Washington and down the street. I was (and probably remain) something of a cold war Catholic, but I picked up the Maryknoll brand. Like many others, this brand led me to political and religious experiences that triggered faithful but chastened reconsideration of Catholicism, the United States and much else.

Today, some bishops have decided they can do without Maryknoll, viewing its pastoral commitment to the poor as quaint but a bit out of fashion. But Maryknoll's work continues, and its missionaries (now including young couples) can still teach us about the

peaceable kingdom we all seek, and the pastoral care and political truthfulness that might someday get us there.

DAVID J. O'BRIEN  
Worcester, Mass.

### A Daytime TV Education

Agnes Nixon's "All God's Children" (7/18) reminds me of a department at my workplace in the 1980s that took their lunch during "All My Children." One character contracted AIDS despite the fact that she was neither gay nor a drug addict. The script was written to show the outrage of the townspeople, their fear of her and their desire to isolate her out of sheer ignorance about AIDS. It also included experts mixed with actors to "teach" townspeople all about the disease. I

## CLASSIFIED

### Parish Missions

**INSPIRING, DYNAMIC PREACHING:** parish missions, retreats, days of recollection; [www.sabbathretreats.org](http://www.sabbathretreats.org).

### Pilgrimage

**HOLY LAND PILGRIMAGE.** May 19-31, 2012. Galilee, night at Dead Sea Spa, Jerusalem and more. Meetings with Patriarch of Jerusalem and Arab Catholics in Cana and Bethlehem; day of service. Michael Cooper, S.J., S.T.D.: [parabletravel@verizon.net](mailto:parabletravel@verizon.net); Ph: (727) 744-4684. Web site: <http://parabletravel.wordpress.com>.

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remember thinking that probably more people learned about AIDS from that one show than anywhere else.

A. F. JOHNSON  
Arlington, Va.

### Should I Stay or Go?

Thank you for Cynthia Reville Peabody's "Staying Power" (7/18). I am a Providence associate, connected to the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Ind. We lay associates were privileged to be part of the congregation's recent chapter. The sessions exuded trust and servant leadership at work. These women are grown-ups acting as grown-ups, with integrity that is palpable. As I see it, they exemplify what is needed if we are, in the author's words, to "rebuild the church that we long for."

TRACY SCHIER  
Hudson, N.H.

### Dispatch From Memory Lane

Francis X. Hezel, S.J., has an odd way of making his point about hope and rebirth in *Of Many Things* (7/4). He writes of a "sentimental journey," but all I heard was frustration over being cheated out of something by a city he left behind. On my reading, his fond memories were overshadowed by criticism and innuendo, suggesting a city full of blight and crime. Though his words about Buffalo might be taken innocently by some readers, he unwittingly did us and our struggling city a grave disservice by his expressions of nostalgia. Thanks for the memories!

PAUL EMERSON  
Buffalo, N.Y.

### Islanders and Steelers

As the pastor of a parish with a large Filipino community, I want to thank you for "That Other Minority" (6/20). Our sisters and brothers from the Philippines greatly enrich our parish. Their vitality and faith commitment inspire and encourage.

As a Pittsburgh Steelers fan, however, I must point out that Troy's last name is Polamalu (not Palomalu), and

he is a safety, not a linebacker. Plus, Hines Ward is a wide receiver and not a running back. I hope, as your comment suggests, that you do give more attention to Asian Pacific Islanders. As for coverage of the Steelers, I would be happy to help in any way I can.

(REV.) JOHN MADDEN  
Worcester, Mass.

### Nuclear Ethics

In your editorial "After Fukushima" (7/4), you failed to mention a significant moral issue. Even under normal operation, nuclear power creates large amounts of radioactive waste, with a half-life of thousands of years. Such waste cannot simply be buried and forgotten but must be repackaged every 250 years or so to avoid inevitable catastrophe. This is an

enormous burden to place on future generations.

ROBERT E. ULANOWICZ  
Gainesville, Fla.

### Which Church?

"Love One Another," *America's* comment on the approval of same-sex marriage in New York State (7/4), speaks about "the church" and its opposition to such unions. You neglect to mention the fact that the Catholic "people of God"—who are part of the church—do not all share the Vatican's views on this issue. Polls have shown for several years that a majority of Catholics in the United States support gay marriage. Accurate reporting should note this distinction.

CHRIS LANE  
Denver, Colo.

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

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# Out of Sheer Silence

NINETEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (A), AUG. 7, 2011

Readings: 1 Kgs 19:9-13a; Ps 85:9-14; Rom 9:1-5; Mt 14:22-33

*“After the fire there was a sound of sheer silence...” (1 Kgs 19:13)*

At the conclusion of a recent performance of a symphony, a few seconds elapsed before the audience burst into applause. During the ensuing intermission, a handful of patrons remained and sat still, quietly relishing the exquisite sounds they had just heard. The majority, however, quickly whipped out their cellphones and checked voice mail, texted or talked. The need for constant communication won out over the momentary gift of contemplative silence. Today’s readings invite us to choose to enter into spaces of silence, where it is easier to hear the one who is constantly communicating divine love to us.

In the first reading, Elijah is discouraged and afraid for his life. He has fled from the deadly intentions of Jezebel into the desert and has plopped himself under a broom tree and asked God to let him die. God has other plans, however, and an angel provides him with food and drink. Twice the angel has to urge him to eat and drink. He finally does so and is thus fortified for his 40-day trek to Mount Horeb, also called Sinai. At this same mountain, God had been revealed to Moses, who likewise stood in a cleft in the rock as God’s glory passed by (Ex 33:21).

At a time of deep fear and distress, Elijah goes to the place that connects him again with the roots of Israel’s

covenantal bond with the Holy One. But God is not manifest in devouring fire, like that which surrounded the mountain at the giving of the law to Moses (Ex 24:17). Nor can Elijah hear God in the fierce, crushing wind or in the earthquake. It is in “a sound of sheer silence” (see NRSV; the NAB translates *qol demmamah daqqah* as “a tiny whispering sound”) that Elijah hears the voice of God.

“What are you doing here, Elijah?” is the probing question that invites Elijah and us to reflect on whether our actions and choices are leading us to fulfill our hearts’ deepest desires for oneness with God and God’s purposes (1 Kgs 19:13). The subsequent verses sketch out how God strengthens Elijah for the remainder of his prophetic mission before he dies.

In the Gospel, we see Jesus likewise retreat to a mountain by himself to pray, following the noisiness of healing and feeding a crowd of more than 5,000 people. That previous episode began with the note that Jesus had just heard of the death of John the Baptist and had withdrawn to a deserted place by himself (Mt 14:13). But the crowds find him and he breaks out of his solitude to respond compassionately to their needs.

Today’s Gospel begins with Jesus’ effort to retreat again. Even at night, the peoples’ need for him does not abate. His disciples have been in distress in their boat on the lake ever since he left

them at evening. He does not go to them immediately, however, but waits until the fourth watch of the night—the last watch, about three hours before dawn. We can surmise that although he is aware of the strong wind that is tossing them about, he remains in solitude, in the necessary inner stillness, where he experiences



## PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

- Where is the mountain where you can hear God’s voice in the sheer silence?
- Ask Jesus to help you know when to put aside urgent demands so you can seek solitude for prayer.
- Give thanks for the times you have been fearless in stepping out into roiling waters by taking Jesus’ hand.

oneness with God and becomes strengthened to continue to minister compassionately.

Coming to the disciples at last, he shares with them his gift of fearlessness. Although his beloved mentor has been executed, and although he can see a similar fate awaiting him as well, from the still center of his heart set on God, he can do what seems impossible. The disciples, too, when they grasp his outstretched hand to come to him, find in him the still center, where his contagious courage dispels all fear.

**BARBARA E. REID, O.P.**, a member of the Dominican Sisters of Grand Rapids, Mich., is a professor of New Testament studies at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, Ill., where she is vice president and academic dean.

# Dogged Faith

TWENTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (A), AUG. 14, 2011

Readings: Is 56:1-7; Ps 67:2-8; Rom 11:13-15, 29-32; Mt 15:21-28

*“Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master’s table” (Mt 15:27)*

They call themselves “brain-tumor moms.” Three mothers in Massachusetts have banded together after receiving the heart-breaking news that their young daughters have brain cancer. Bent on advancing progress beyond outdated pediatric brain research, they have raised \$250,000 in one year alone by walking, pleading and repeated asking, despite frequent rebuffs.

In today’s Gospel there is an equally determined mother, who pleads with Jesus to heal her daughter. It happens in the region of Tyre and Sidon. It is puzzling that he should go there, since the Matthean Jesus is intent on ministering only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Mt 10:6). Matthew has just recounted the execution of John the Baptist, preceded by the ominous notice that Jesus has also come to Herod’s attention (Mt 14:1-12). Most likely, Jesus goes to the coastal cities to get out of Herod’s jurisdiction and to lie low for a while. He needs time to grieve over his beloved teacher and relative. He can be anonymous in Tyre and Sidon and can regroup and strategize about when and how to continue his mission publicly.

But he is recognized. A Canaanite woman comes pleading for her daughter. By labeling the woman with the outmoded term Canaanite, Matthew makes her the archetypal enemy; one of those with whom Israel struggled for possession of the land. Oddly, this so-called enemy knows both the right Jewish prayer formulas and the proper messianic title for Jesus. Her impas-

sioned plea, “Have mercy on me, Lord,” echoes Ps. 109:26 as well as the pleas of the blind men (Mt 9:27; 20:30, 31) and the father of the boy with epilepsy (Mt 17:15). In those instances, Jesus quickly heals. To the woman he makes no response at all. Never before has Jesus ignored someone who pleaded with him for compassion. The disciples also urge him to send her away. When he finally speaks with her, he insists he has nothing for her and that his mission is only to his own people.

If the woman had been seeking healing for herself, she might have given up, but there is nothing that fuels a mother’s audacity more than concern for her child’s well-being. She kneels before Jesus, a gesture of homage, but in so doing she also blocks his way, insisting that he act on her behalf. This time Jesus’ response is terribly insulting: “It is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.” Some biblical scholars try to tone down the insult, understanding it as an endearing address to a pet. Others think Jesus is reciting a common saying of his day that reflected the animosity of Galileans toward the people on the coast, to whom their wheat would be exported, even in times of shortage (see 1 Kgs 5:11; Acts 12:20). Whatever the genesis of Jesus’ comment, calling the woman a dog is a gross insult.

Rather than turn away or return insult for insult, the mother redirects her rage, finding clever words and remaining respectful toward Jesus: “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from the master’s table.” With that, something shifts in Jesus. The woman stretches him to see her not as “other,” or as “enemy,” but as one of his own, one with whom he shares a common humanity, a common faith in God and a common desire for the well-being of children. He recognizes her great faith, having often

## PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

- Pray for the wisdom to know how best to advocate for women, children and the most vulnerable.
- Pray for the grace to stand firm and speak truth respectfully, even when insulted or ignored.
- Pray for the grace to act out of inclusive love, from which no one is excluded.

chided his disciples for their “little faith” (Mt 6:30; 8:26; 14:31; 16:8; 17:20). Beyond securing the healing of her daughter, the narrative depicts this woman sparking in Jesus the idea that his mission is for all people, a notion that will be fanned into flame by those who carry on his mission after his death (Mt 28:19).

**BARBARA E. REID**



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