America

THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC WEEKLY

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Arab Spring

ELIAS D. MALLON

Mending Broken Britain

AUSTEN IVEREIGH

OF MANY THINGS

When you inhabit an alternative reality—let's call it the Metro North Zone (like the Twilight Zone but with better landscaping)—sometimes it is hard to understand that we are living in deeply troubled economic times. Like the war in Afghanistan, I read about it in the paper, but I don't really see the Great Recession, at least beyond what I am aware of in my own poor efforts to deal with a fractured family budget.

On some morning commutes I can be forgiven for thinking that everyone in New York is gainfully employed at a Wall Street bank, so crowded is my Hudson Line rail car with pinstripes and oversized valises. There are shabbier shmoes, too, on the train, we of the business casual and frayed-khaki brigade. But when we stumble sleepily onto the morning train, we leave our class differences behind and proceed with as much grace as possible into Manhattan with our fellows from the financial sector. Hardly anyone will be caught thumbing through *Das Kapital* on the ride in, and class warfare is mostly limited to the occasional overextended elbow while passing down the aisle.

We don't often speak beyond pleasantries. What perhaps most unites this little commuting community, beyond our bleary eyes and morning coffees, is the simple fact that we have jobs, a reason to get up in the morning and head into Manhattan. The ones who are not on the train, the ones wearing their khakis or pinstripes during shorter commutes to the local library to search the job listings, are the invisible suburban casualties of the Great Recession.

They are now perhaps less invisible. After poring over recent data from the Census Bureau, the Brookings Institution reported in September that many of the nation's poor have moved to the suburbs. There are now 15.4 million people living below the poverty line in the 'burbs—a 53 percent increase in just 10 years—surpassing the 12.7 million in the cities, where most of us think the poor live.

In recent years, working class families followed jobs and the American dream into the suburbs. Now beaten down by two recessions that first obliterated manufacturing jobs, then took out construction and retail work, the new poor find themselves living the current national nightmare, unemployed and stranded in the suburbs with little access to the social service infrastructure that has long been established in U.S. cities.

Granted, the folks Brookings is tracking are not the commuters who have fallen off my train—yet. These latest, middle-class victims of the Great Recession have farther to fall before they pass any poverty thresholds. I doubt that fact gives much comfort to the guys gathering at the library.

During a recent Mass, the assistant pastor pointedly asked us to remember the nation's economic casualties wherever they are. He was perhaps responding to a request from New York's Archbishop Timothy Dolan, who has noted with alarm the nation's record numbers in poverty. More than 15 percent of all Americans now live below the poverty line—46 million people. In a recent letter to bishops in his capacity as president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Archbishop Dolan urged priests around the country to preach on the crisis.

"These numbers bring home to us the human costs and moral consequences of a broken economy that cannot fully utilize the talents, energy and work of all our people," Archbishop Dolan wrote.

It is hard to know how to respond as an individual to this ongoing economic disaster except to write a check if you can and perhaps remind your local Congressmember to make poverty-reduction a priority. I know at the very least I will not take my seat on the train for granted anymore.

KEVIN CLARKE

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Cover: Tunisian police officers and security personnel chant slogans during a demonstration in Tunis on Sept. 6, 2011. Reuters/Zoubeir Souissi

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ON THE WEB

Bryan McCarthy reviews **Vera Farmiga,** right, in the film "Higher Ground." Plus, James Martin, S.J., talks about his new book, ***Between Heaven and Mirth,*** on our podcast. All at americamagazine.org.

Catechesis or Theology?

Will there be a stand-off between bishops and theologians on the role of theology in Catholic higher education as we mark the 20th anniversary of "Ex Corde Ecclesiae"? (See the articles by Michael G. Lawler and Todd A. Salzman, 9/12, and by Cardinal Donald Wuerl, 9/26.) We hope not. Both have a case to make, and an intelligent way forward needs to be found. Students need to know the fundamentals of the faith to be able to treat theological issues critically; and not just theology but Catholicism itself will not be respected within the university if it lacks intellectual depth. A way must be found to achieve both goals: catechesis and theology. In many Catholic colleges, however, there is simply not enough space in curricula both to lay the groundwork in Catholic tradition and to study theology with suitable seriousness. Often no more than two theology courses are required.

For college-level theology to achieve its twin goals, it simply needs more space in the curriculum. Traditionally, some of that curricular space was given to philosophy. But that was before career-training put such pressures on liberal education. It was also a time when philosophy had an apologetic role in Catholic intellectual life and played a greater part in theological reasoning. Catholic students might acquire greater theological literacy if one additional required course was opened up for theology or, in some cases, switched from philosophy to theology. But administrators will have to take the lead in opening up the curriculum. Bishops should not expect theologians to lead the change from their small corner of the faculty; neither can other departments be expected to give ground without a fight. A Catholic education in Catholic institutions must depend on leadership from the top, from deans, provosts and presidents.

Fewer Puffs

The number of Americans who smoke cigarettes has been declining over the last 40 years, which adds up to a major achievement in preventive health. Fewer young people are taking up the habit and more adults have quit. A report published last month by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows that three million fewer Americans smoked in 2010 than in 2005—that is more than the entire population of Chicago. And while heavy smokers (30 or more cigarettes a day) keep puffing, their number has declined significantly. But the C.D.C. issued a note of caution concerning the rate of decline among smokers, which has slowed. Unless the rate speeds up again, the country will fall short of the C.D.C.'s national goal of no more than 12 percent of adults smoking by 2020.

Can legislation help reduce smoking? Consider this: In the eight years since New York City banned smoking in bars, restaurants and the workplace, the number of adult smokers has fallen by 22 percent; that is 450,000 fewer smokers. The drop is more impressive among young adults between 18 and 24, a group particularly affected by the city's tax hike on cigarettes and its anti-smoking advertising campaigns. States have also had success. Utah has the lowest smoking rate in the nation (9.1 percent); California (12.1 percent) is in second place. Some point to the price of a pack of cigarettes in New York City, $11.20, as the reason for the declining number of smokers. But a pack costs just $7.22 in Utah, and $5.19 in California. What all three places have in common is a statewide ban on smoking in public places. The law can help reduce smoking.

Switch and Bait

"Corn sugar" may soon be showing up in the list of ingredients in fine print on the label of your favorite soft drink, "healthy" fruit-like snack, cereal box and thousands of other food products. This sweetener is better known by its previous moniker: high-fructose corn syrup. Since the late 1970s high-fructose corn syrup has been replacing sugar as the sweetener of choice for profit-minded food conglomerates. But in recent years, corn syrup has begun to get a bad name. Some nutritionists and scientists believe corn syrup has contributed to the nation's diabetes and obesity epidemics; and many consumers, alarmed by this association, have begun to seek out products that use real sugar, not the syrup. Hence the desire of corn refiners to replace the term H.F.C.S. with "corn sugar."

The Corn Refiners Association—among its members are the powerful conglomerates Archer Daniels Midland and Cargill—has petitioned the Food and Drug Administration for the name change. It claims the rebranding should resolve consumer confusion regarding corn syrup. In fact consumer confusion is precisely what the corn industry seeks. Few consumers aware of the dangers of a diet too rich in H.F.C.S. are confused at all; they know they do not want it in their food.

A final determination has not been made, but the F.D.A. should dismiss this disingenuous appeal. The nation has had a hard enough time confronting the alarming health problems emerging out of the "normal" American diet. Disguising one of the prime suspects in the crisis behind a new identity will further frustrate efforts to help Americans eat better, stay healthier and live longer.

EDITORIAL

Save the Altar Girls

This is not a local story, but one that represents larger trends in the church—in the priesthood, the liturgy and in the role of the people of God. Recently Sts. Simon and Jude Cathedral in Phoenix, Ariz., changed its policy on altar servers. From now on only boys may serve; girls may apply for jobs as sacristans. Why? The rector of the cathedral told The Catholic Sun that the cathedral is not alone in making this regulation. A parish in Ann Arbor, Mich., and the Diocese of Lincoln, Neb., he argues, have found that replacing girls with boys as servers leads to more vocations to the priesthood.

These moves to limit laywomen's access to the altar threaten to drag the church back into the pre-Vatican II world. One wonders if next the altar rail will return, another barrier between the priests and the people.

According to the rector, people who are upset about this decision concerning Mass servers make a mistake in considering it "a question of rights," as if someone's rights were being denied. But, he says, no one has a "right" to be a server or even more a priest. One must be "called" to any church office. When the secular world comments on who should be an altar server, he says, it has only an emotional view, unguided by the light of reason.

The key issue is the status of the baptized: that the laity may be called by the Spirit to offer their talents in various roles. The rejection of altar girls disregards the counsel of the Second Vatican Council that the charisms of the baptized "are to be received with thanksgiving and consolation." By virtue of baptism, the council reminds us, "there is neither male nor female. For you are all 'one' in Christ Jesus." There is "a true equality between all with regard to the dignity and activity which is common to all the faithful in building up the Body of Christ" ("Dogmatic Constitution on the Church," Nos. 12, 32).

That this call should be fully welcomed does not appear to be a priority in Phoenix. Yes, the Vatican instruction "Sacrament of Redemption" (2004) allows women servers, but it leaves the decision to local bishops. In Phoenix the bishop leaves it to the pastors. This pastor did not consult the parish council, he says, because its members are not theologically trained.

Another issue is the image of the priesthood today. Is it wise to re-enforce the sense of the priesthood as a clerical caste? Is the acolyte supposed to be like the page who serves Sir Galahad until King Arthur dubs him a knight? In a culture where parents want their daughters to have the same opportunities as their sons—in co-ed Catholic colleges, in the armed services, in athletics, in employment—the church can look irrelevant, even foolish, in shunting them aside. The more the priesthood is presented as an exclusive club, the smaller and more remote it will become. Those who put up barriers between themselves and the people should, using modern parlance, recall Jesus' words to his disciples: "Look, how many times do I have to tell you? You are here to serve."

Inevitably the issue of women's roles in the church raises the question of women's ordination to the priesthood. Recently a cardinal in Lisbon and some bishops in Brazil, among others, also raised the question; but since Pope Benedict XVI, despite continued agitation, has reaffirmed the policy of John Paul II to allow no discussion of the topic, the matter of altar servers must be considered a separate and independent issue.

In no way should policies imply that women are second-class citizens—welcome to tidy up the sacristy, arrange flowers and clean linens but not to set the gifts at the altar or hold the sacramentary or censer. Rather, they must be welcomed into every service and leadership role, including catechists, lectors, chancellors and general secretaries of bishops' conferences. (The diaconate for women remains an open question and ought to be explored.) Churches that invite all their people to bring all their talents to the welfare of the congregation will thrive. To tell a young woman that she may no longer pour the water on the priest's fingers at the Lavabo looks like sexism. If the ban in these dioceses continues and spreads, perhaps women and girls will consider withholding their other services to the parishes, and men and boys, in solidarity with their sisters, will decline the honor of acolyte.

Having girls share serving opportunities with boys is an expression of their equality in Christ. Parishes must create a variety of social and service activities. A distinguishing characteristic of today's young men and women, even when they are not "devout" in the usual sense, is their rejection of discrimination in any form. They are highly sensitive to any hint of exclusionary policies in organizations. Perhaps if more young people believed they could continue that commitment to equality as priests, more would be ready to follow a priestly vocation.

GERMANY

Pope Promotes 'Unworldly' But Open Church

Young people await the arrival of Pope Benedict XVI in Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany, on Sept. 24.

On his first state visit to his German homeland, Pope Benedict XVI warned that godlessness and religious indifference were undermining the moral foundations of society and leaving its weakest members exposed to new risks. At a welcoming ceremony at the presidential Bellevue Palace in Berlin, the pope strongly defended the church's voice in public affairs. He said that to dismiss religious values as irrelevant would "dismember our culture." During his four-day visit, Pope Benedict repeatedly mentioned the duty to protect the unborn and proposed this as an area where Catholics and non-Catholics can work together.

The preferential treatment given the pope provoked some complaints from German politicians and a few protests. A speech in Berlin before the German Parliament was boycotted by some members. The pope told German politicians that belief in God was the foundation for Western progress in law, social justice and human rights through the centuries. Germany's Nazi past, he said, illustrates that without justice the state becomes "a highly organized band of robbers, capable of threatening the whole world and driving it to the edge of the abyss." Today, he said, with unprecedented opportunities to manipulate human beings, the threat is even more dramatic. He pointed to Germany's ecology movement as a step in the right direction. (A Green Party politician had made a point of walking out as the pope began to speak.) Pope Benedict said an "ecology of man" was needed to protect human dignity.

Meeting on Sept. 25 with about 1,500 Catholics involved in church

THE ENVIRONMENT

Jesuits Urged to Protect Creation

Jesuit communities around the world have been asked to make their buildings more energy efficient, help farmers use sustainable agricultural practices and launch programs in their universities that promote both theological reflection and scientific research on protecting the environment. A 68-page special report on ecology, "Healing a Broken World," published in Rome in mid-September by the headquarters of the Society of Jesus, calls on Jesuits and their collaborators to confront their own inner resistance and "cast a grateful look on creation, letting our heart be touched by its wounded reality and making a strong personal and communal commitment to healing it."

The report calls for biblical and spiritual reflection on the gift of creation and an understanding of environmental protection as a justice issue, since it is the poor who suffer first and most severely from the destruction of environment. "Creation, the life-giving gift of God, has become material, extractable and marketable," the document said. According to "Healing," people have allowed technology and rationality to dominate the way they look at the physical world, "blunting our sensitivity to the mystery, diversity and vastness of life and the universe."

The overuse of fossil fuels and the creation of greenhouse gases, the waste or pollution of waters, deforestation, polluting the ground with chemicals and the growing pressure put on the environment by increasing populations are issues that must be dealt with from a position of faith, personal responsibility and science, it said. "It is the very dream of God as creator that is threatened. It is the entire world, the one God put in the hands of humankind to keep and preserve, which is in real danger of destruction."

Restoring a right or just relation-

ministries, lay movements and civic, political or social activities, he pondered how the church might respond to self-inflicted wounds like the sexual abuse crisis and the decline of its membership in Germany. "Should the church not change?" he asked. "Must she not adapt her offices and structure to the present day in order to reach the searching and doubting people of today?"

Change is needed constantly, but change must begin with the individuals who make up the church, he said. And changes must be dictated by the Gospel, not the world. In fact, to carry out her mission, the church "will constantly set herself apart from her surroundings; she needs in a certain sense to become unworldly or 'desecularized,'" he said.

"History has shown that when the church becomes less worldly, her missionary witness shines more brightly," Pope Benedict said. "Once liberated from her material and political burdens, the church can reach out more effectively and in a truly Christian way to the whole world; she can be truly open to the world."

Celebrating Mass in Berlin's Olympic Stadium for 70,000 people, the pope appealed for a better understanding of the church, one that goes beyond current controversies and the failings of its members. On the plane carrying him from Rome, the pope told reporters he understood the feelings of German Catholics who have left the church because of revelations about sexual abuse by clerics, but he urged them to work against such crimes "on the inside." The pope later met with five sexual abuse victims in Erfurt, an encounter that the Vatican said left the pontiff "moved and deeply shaken."

Meeting with Lutheran leaders on Sept. 23 in Erfurt, the town where Martin Luther was ordained, the pope prayed for Christian unity and said ecumenism today faces threats from both secularization and Christian fundamentalism. "God is increasingly being driven out of our society.... Are we to yield to the pressure of secularization and become modern by watering down the faith?" he asked.

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ship with God, with creation and with other people is not simply a matter of personal prayer and appreciation. It requires a real change in the way one lives, the report concludes. Religious communities may not have the technical know-how and resources to reverse pollution, but they do espouse the moral values that are needed to promote new relationships with the world God created and with the poor, who experience hunger, drought, landslides and flooding because of environmental destruction, the Jesuits said.

In practical terms, the report asks Jesuits worldwide to: conduct assessments of their energy use and consumption patterns, taking their vow of poverty seriously to reduce their own negative impact on the environment; consider the huge impact the environmental crisis is having on the poor and commit themselves to advocacy work on behalf of the poor; promote sustainable agriculture practices; look for ways to explain and promote the spiritual and practical motivations for environmental concern.

"Healing" asks Jesuit schools, universities, theology faculties and research institutes to immerse their students in "real-world environmental issues"; promote an "environmental ethic" on campuses by supporting recycling and energy savings; and develop courses in business, science, ethics and theology that include environmental responsibility and reflection. The report suggests that Jesuits living in environmentally vulnerable parts of the world develop projects bringing together social and pastoral work, advocacy and scientific research to help the local people.

Planting an apple seedling at an organic nursery in Bachiniva, Mexico

Where U.S. and Iran Find Common Ground

Condemned for apostasy in Iran, Pastor Yousef Nadarkhani's impending execution has not aroused as much attention as the execution in September of Troy Davis in Georgia, which provoked an international outcry and renewed U.S. debate over the death penalty. Nadarkhani has twice refused to recant his Christian faith during court hearings. If he persists, he will be scheduled for execution. He was arrested in his home city of Rasht in October 2009 while attempting to register his church, an effort viewed as a challenge to the Muslim monopoly on the religious instruction of children in Iran. Perhaps in response to social unrest, executions in Iran have spiked this year, with more than 320 tallied by the end of June. It is in the use of capital punishment that the United States and Iran find themselves in a rare area of agreement. They are among the handful of nations that conducted executions in 2010: China (several thousand), North Korea (60), Yemen (53) and Japan (2). Last year Iran executed 252 people and the United States 46.

After End of 'Don't Ask,' Chaplains Uneasy

As "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" ended on Sept. 20, uncertainty remained among chaplains to U.S. armed services. The military's official position is that the repeal of D.A.D.T. will leave chaplains' activities essentially unchanged. According to a Defense Department statement: "Chaplains will continue to have freedom to practice their religion according to the tenets of their faith. Chaplains are not required to take actions that are inconsistent with their religious counseling...or modifying forms of prayer or worship." But some chaplains are not so sure. A group of veteran chaplains from various denominations is urging Congress to pass protections for chaplains. They fear that after the repeal, chaplains from faiths morally opposed to homosexual behavior will be "marginalized and even punished" for being true to their faith.

Vatican Supports Two-State Solution

Addressing the U.N. General Assembly on Sept. 27, a Vatican representative called for "courageous decisions" after Palestinian leaders appealed for statehood. Archbishop Dominique Mamberti, the Vatican's secretary for relations with states, did not say whether the Vatican explicitly supported the Palestinians' U.N. initiative. But he said the Vatican viewed the Palestinian bid "in the perspective of efforts to find a definitive solution" to the Israeli-Palestinian question—an issue addressed by a U.N. resolution in 1947 that foresaw the creation of two states. "One of them has already been created, while the other has not yet been established, although nearly 64 years have passed," the archbishop said on Sept. 27. "The Holy See is convinced that if we want peace, it is necessary to adopt courageous decisions." Archbishop Mamberti called on the United Nations to work with determination to achieve "the final objective, which is the realization of the right of Palestinians to have their own independent and sovereign state and the right of Israelis to security, with both states provided with internationally recognized borders."

From CNS and other sources.

NEWS BRIEFS

Nobel Peace Prize laureate Wangari Maathai

The **Mexican Supreme Court** on Sept. 26 debated the legality of two states' constitutional amendments declaring that human life begins at conception. ✦ Movies that present assisted suicide in a positive light are adding renewed momentum to efforts to legalize **physician-assisted suicide**, said Dan Mindling, a Capuchin Franciscan priest, during a seminar conducted on the Internet on Sept. 20. ✦ Nobel Peace Price-winner **Wangari Maatthai**, founder of the Greenbelt Movement, which planted more than 30 million trees in Kenya, died on Sept. 25 at age 71. ✦ Archbishop **Timothy Dolan** of New York, who is president of the U.S.C.C.B., told President Obama in a letter dated Sept. 20 that his administration's fight against the Defense of Marriage Act will undermine marriage and create a serious breach of church-state relations. ✦ More than 200 Catholic theologians have signed a statement calling on the United States to abolish **capital punishment** and asking the church to work "unwaveringly" toward that goal.

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(Leviticus 19:33-34)

The Scripture calls us repeatedly to remember our history and to respect the displaced among us. Christ identifies with the stranger and those who are marginal, and calls us to welcome them because we all, at one time or another, are strangers. Pope Benedict XVI in his encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* writes: "Every migrant is a human person who as such, possesses fundamental, inalienable rights that must be respected by everyone and in every circumstance." In their talk, Kerwin and Gerschutz-Bell challenge us to align contemporary debate on the public policy on immigration with our religious convictions.

LECTURE & DISCUSSION

Beginning at 5:30 p.m.
Thursday, October 27, 2011
Helen Lerner Amphitheatre, McNulty Hall

FEATURING:

Donald Kerwin, Executive Director of the Center for Migration Studies

Jill Gerschutz-Bell, Senior Legislative Specialist, Catholic Relief Services, Washington, DC
Co-authors of ***And You Welcomed Me: Migration and Catholic Social Teaching*** (Lexington Press, 2009)

Fr. Jack Martin, St. Mary's, Elizabeth, NJ and the Haiti Solidarity Network of the Northeast

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KYLE T. KRAMER

True Vocations

Words are a risky business. They often fail at the heights of love and the depths of grief. Yet words can move mountains, and good conversation can lead to conversion of heart and habits—if we take the risk to speak truthfully and to listen with care.

Recently I took part in just such a truth-seeking conversation when I attended the 2011 Collegeville National Symposium on Lay Ecclesial Ministry (www.lemsymposium.org). The purpose of the gathering was to advance the national conversation about laity taking on professional ministerial roles, which has become increasingly common in the U.S. church since the Second Vatican Council.

Specifically, presenters and participants reflected together on the discernment of a vocation to lay ecclesial ministry and how effective leadership from the hierarchy can support and authorize people with such a vocation. We attempted to flesh out general principles laid out in "Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord," the U.S. bishops' 2005 document about lay ecclesial ministry.

The 230 participants were academics and in-the-trenches ministers—men and women, clergy, laypeople and religious—of widely varying ages, backgrounds, ethnicities and theological persuasions. Despite the potential divisiveness of such diversity, there was overall agreement on the importance of lay ecclesial ministry in an age when demographic, technological and cultural changes pose tough challenges to parish life. Lay ministers, said the sociologist Nancy Ammerman of Boston University, are essential for helping the church deliver social services, build social capital, teach civic skills and, most important, foster nurturing relationships and Christian identity.

Much conversation centered around eight theological statements about lay ecclesial ministry that were presented, discussed, revised and ultimately accepted by an overwhelming majority of those present. These points affirmed lay ecclesial ministry as a genuine ministerial vocation: inspired by the Holy Spirit, rooted in baptism and discerned within the ecclesial community. Formed for and exercising distinctive leadership roles in the church, lay ecclesial ministers serve publicly in the church's name, with the authorization of their bishop, having been recognized and empowered for their ministry by a public ritual. Their presence calls the church to provide supportive structures and policies to foster their ministry.

> Lay ministers continue their work to meet the needs of God's people.

A cynic might dismiss such a gathering as "a chase after wind" (to borrow a phrase from Qoheleth), a self-selected group of already-converted people filling a large room with a lot of talk. My impression, however, was not of wind-chasing or hot air but of truth-telling and careful listening that led to mutual inspiration and challenge. And the words of the Collegeville symposium will ripple outward: a report to the U.S. bishops, a forthcoming book of related essays, concrete action-item commitments from all 43 co-sponsoring organizations and 86 specific recommendations to advance lay ecclesial ministry. A grant program will fund further research and ministerial projects.

The ultimate proving ground of such a national symposium is, of course, the local diocese and parish. Most bishops and priests are aware of what would advance lay ecclesial ministry. Most have good will to do so, and many have supportive policies and programs in place. But for others, these concerns take a back seat to dealing with sexual abuse scandals, faltering finances, struggling schools, a shortage of priests and day-to-day ministry responsibilities.

Nonetheless, I believe that conversations like the Collegeville symposium will eventually effect substantial change (even if in fits and starts) as more bishops and priests recognize lay ministers as able partners who lighten the yoke of pastoral service. And echoing Bishop Blase Cupich's closing address to the symposium, I hope that while national conversations continue, the thousands of astoundingly patient lay ecclesial ministers will continue their daily trailblazing work to meet the needs of God's people. Their ministry led to these conversations, after all, and their ministry calls the hierarchy to listen and to lead—or else risk missing the movement of the Spirit in the signs of the times.

KYLE T. KRAMER *is the author of* A Time to Plant: Life Lessons in Work, Prayer, and Dirt *(Ave Maria Press, 2010).*

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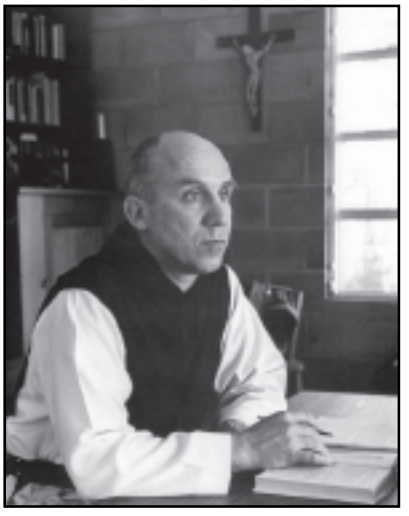
About Your Presenter

Fr. Anthony Ciorra is the Assistant Vice President for Mission and Catholic Identity at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, CT. Previously he was the Dean of the Graduate School of Religion and Religious Education at Fordham University and the Director of the Center for Theological and Spiritual Development at the College of St. Elizabeth. Fr. Ciorra was given the pontifical honor *Pro Eccelsia et Pontifice* by Pope John Paul II and awarded the Caritas Centennial Award in 2000, and author of *Everyday Mysticism*. He has graduate degrees in psychology, history and pastoral theology and a Certificate in Spiritual Direction. He earned his Ph.D. in Theology for Fordham University.



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Topics Include

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Protesters demonstrate against the Tunisian interim government in Tunis in July 2011.

PHOTO: REUTERS/ZOUBEIR SOUISSI

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE ARAB SPRING

Will Democracy Bloom?

BY ELIAS D. MALLON

On Dec. 17, 2010, a Tunisian street vendor named Mohamed Bouazizi set himself on fire to protest police harassment of his efforts to make a living on the street. His self-immolation set off a popular revolution that resulted in the overthrow of Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali, who had been president of that North African nation for 24 years, and then swept across the Arab world. Within weeks the revolution—named the Arab Spring by the media—spread to Egypt, Syria, Yemen, Libya and Bahrain.

The term Arab Spring, which tends to evoke romantic images of gentle weather, daffodils and new life, has proved misleading. The twin revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt were led by nonviolent activists who had been planning together for two years. But the resignations of Mr. Ben Ali of Tunisia on Jan. 14 and Hosni Mubarak of Egypt on Feb. 11 were anything but romantic, and what followed once the aspirations of others had been kindled turned far more violent.

The Arab Spring turned into a sizzling summer. The spectacular "democratic" successes in Tunisia and Egypt have not been replicated elsewhere in the Arab world. Even in Egypt some are beginning to question how successful their own democratic movement has been. Libya is still in turmoil, and Syria's government and military are brutally attacking nonviolent challenges to their authority. Neither Libya's Muammar el-Qaddafi nor Syria's Bashar al-Assad has followed the example of the Egyptian and Tunisian leaders who stepped down from office.

Three words associated with the Arab Spring are often used, but rarely analyzed: Arab, democracy and citizenship. Each is far more com-

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plex than common usage seems to recognize, and all three terms merit further consideration.

Arab or Arabs?

Arabs are those people who speak the Arabic language. Some commentators would incorrectly add that Arabs are Muslims. In fact, while Arabic is spoken from Iraq to Morocco and while modern standard Arabic is the language of the media, the average Arabic speaker uses a local dialect of Arabic. Locals who live less than an hour's drive from one another often speak different dialects, many of which include words from older local languages, like Aramaic, Syriac and Berber. As a result, native speakers often have difficulty understanding a local dialect other than their own.

Religiously, the Arabic-speaking world is also more diverse than many outsiders realize. While Islam is the religion of the vast majority of Arabic speakers, it is not monolithic. There are four different "schools" within Sunni Islam. And up to 15 percent of the Muslim world follows Shiite Islam, a minority whose adherents often face discrimination. In addition, large, significant groups of Alawites, Christians, Druze, Jews, Mandaeans and Yazidi live in Arabic-speaking countries. From a distance one might speak of an "Arabic culture, language and religion," but up close the reality is more complex.

Citizenship is a crucial element in civic and political development and serves as a barometer of how democracy is evolving.

The countries involved in the Arab Spring are diverse in size, population and ethnicity. The tiny Kingdom of Bahrain in the Persian Gulf is roughly four times the size of Washington, D.C. Its hereditary Sunni monarchy governs slightly more than one million subjects, 70 percent of whom are Shiite Muslims who experience disenfranchisement and discrimination. Libya, by contrast, which is roughly the size of Alaska, has a population of nearly six million people, 90 percent of whom live along its Mediterranean coast. Libya's population consists of Arabs and indigenous North African peoples: Berbers, black Africans and Mediterranean groups. Egypt is the most populous country in the Middle East. Roughly the size of Texas and New Mexico combined, its 80 million people include Arabs, Copts (who sometimes see themselves ethnically as Egyptians, as opposed to Arabs) and Nilotic peoples. While 90 percent Muslim, Egypt has a large, indigenous Christian population that comprises almost 10 percent of the population. Under tremendous pressure and often subject to violence, Coptic Christians nevertheless form a vibrant, educated community amid Egypt's Muslim majority.

While many countries in the Middle East have long and ancient histories, they are relative newcomers to the modern nation state. For hundreds of years many were provinces of the Turkish Ottoman Empire. Few, if any, existed in their present geographic form before the 20th century. Only after World War I did the victorious French and British divide the Ottoman Middle East into "spheres of influence," which resulted in the emergence of new countries on the Middle East map; the straight borders of many show the artificiality of what was done.

New countries with new names appeared, such as the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, while old regions with names like Syria and Lebanon were given new geographic boundaries. In Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Syria and, to a lesser extent, Saudi Arabia, the colonial powers set up kingdoms. But between the two world wars, Iraqis and Syrians (and in the 1960s Egyptians and others) overthrew their kings and set up fragile democracies. Many forces worked against these new democracies, and most became authoritarian regimes. One sees a pattern of dictatorship: Hafez al-Assad of Syria held office for 30 years (1970-2000) until his death; Hosni Mubarak was president of Egypt for 30 years (1981-2011); Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali was president of Tunisia for 24 years (1987-2011); Muammar el-Qaddafi held office for 42 years (1969-2011); and Ali Abdullah Saleh has been president of Yemen for 33 years, since 1978.

It is important to note that all these regimes had very different political ideologies; that each leader held onto power for a very long time; and that neither in these countries nor in the region's monarchies (like Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the Gulf States) has there been an opportunity to develop functioning, democratic institutions. There is diversity in civic governance. In Kuwait, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia the parliaments or *shura* have at best advisory functions. In Bahrain the Shiite majority has little or no voice in the government and faces discrimination. Recently King Abdullah of Jordan granted the National Assembly (House of Nobles appointed by the king; House of Representatives elected popularly) greater voice in the government. While an improvement, Jordan still has an authoritarian government.

Democracy or Democracies?

There is a great deal of talk about democratic movements. Democracy, however, is not a univocal term. While people who live in democracies tend to think their form of democracy is the best and only form, other forms of democracy do exist. Failure to recognize this fact could lead to considerable disappointment if democracies develop in the Middle East. The United States, Canada, the United Kingdom,

France, Turkey and Israel all have democratic systems, but they differ significantly. The United States is a pluralistic democracy with separation of church and state. The United Kingdom is a constitutional monarchy with an established church. France is a secular democracy where religion is to play no role; *laïcisme* is the term used to describe the secular character of France's political system. Turkey is also a secular democratic state, but it is not a pluralistic democracy. Israel is a democracy intimately linked with one religion, Judaism, and one ethnic group.

Two questions should be asked about the Arab Spring: Will democracies arise in the countries involved? And if so, what kind of democracies?

One strong bond links all the countries of the Arab Spring—Islam. A word of caution: though tiny Bahrain is mostly Shiite and the other countries are overwhelmingly Sunni, Sunni Islam is no more monolithic than Islam in general. In each of these countries Islam has distinct characteristics that have arisen from the local history and culture. This is to be expected. Roman Catholics in Ireland are different from Roman Catholics in the Philippines, though they are all Roman Catholics. The same situation exists in Islam. It is fairly safe to assume that however democracy develops as a result of the Arab Spring, Islam will play a significant role. It is unlikely that it will play the same role in each country. While extremist Muslim movements are often hostile to democracy, there is no indication that this disdain is shared by a majority of any population in the region. In fact, majorities in the countries of the Arab Spring indicate that they want some form of democracy.

Islam and Democracy

Are Islam and democracy compatible? Remembering that Islam is not monolithic, it is important to note several things. Democracy does not arise fully developed overnight. Democracy in Western Europe took several centuries to develop in each country; and there were false starts, setbacks and detours. To expect the countries of the Arab Spring to be fully developed, problem-free democracies in five years is naïve and unfair.

Democracy requires that the population understand the concept of citizenship and take part in it. Citizenship is a crucial element in civic and political development and serves as a barometer of how democracy is evolving. Equal citizenship has been part of the church's vision for the continuing Christian presence in the Middle East since the 1995 Synod for Lebanon. Citizenship was also mentioned often in the documents of the Catholic synod of bishops' Special Assembly for the Middle East, which took place last fall.

Citizenship as understood in modern democracies expresses a relationship of mutual rights and obligations that exist between an individual citizen and the state. That

relationship is built not on religion, race, gender, wealth or education but on participation in public life. In contemporary democracies, citizenship has been separated from religious affiliation. One must not lose sight of the fact that the separation of citizenship and religious affiliation has been a long, painful process within most Western democracies.

While Islam has developed the concept of the *dhimmi*, the protected non-Muslim inhabitant of a state, there is no developed notion of the citizen (*muwâtin*) in classical Islamic political thinking. Although belonging to a "protected minority," the *dhimmi* in no way enjoys the full rights and obligations of a citizen in a modern democracy. While it is extremely important that all citizens enjoy equal rights and obligations independent of race, gender or religion, it is naïve to think that this can be achieved easily or quickly in most countries of the Arab Spring. At the same time, the rights of religious, ethnic or linguistic minorities and the rights of women will be an important gauge of how democracy is evolving.

Religious Minorities, a Test Case

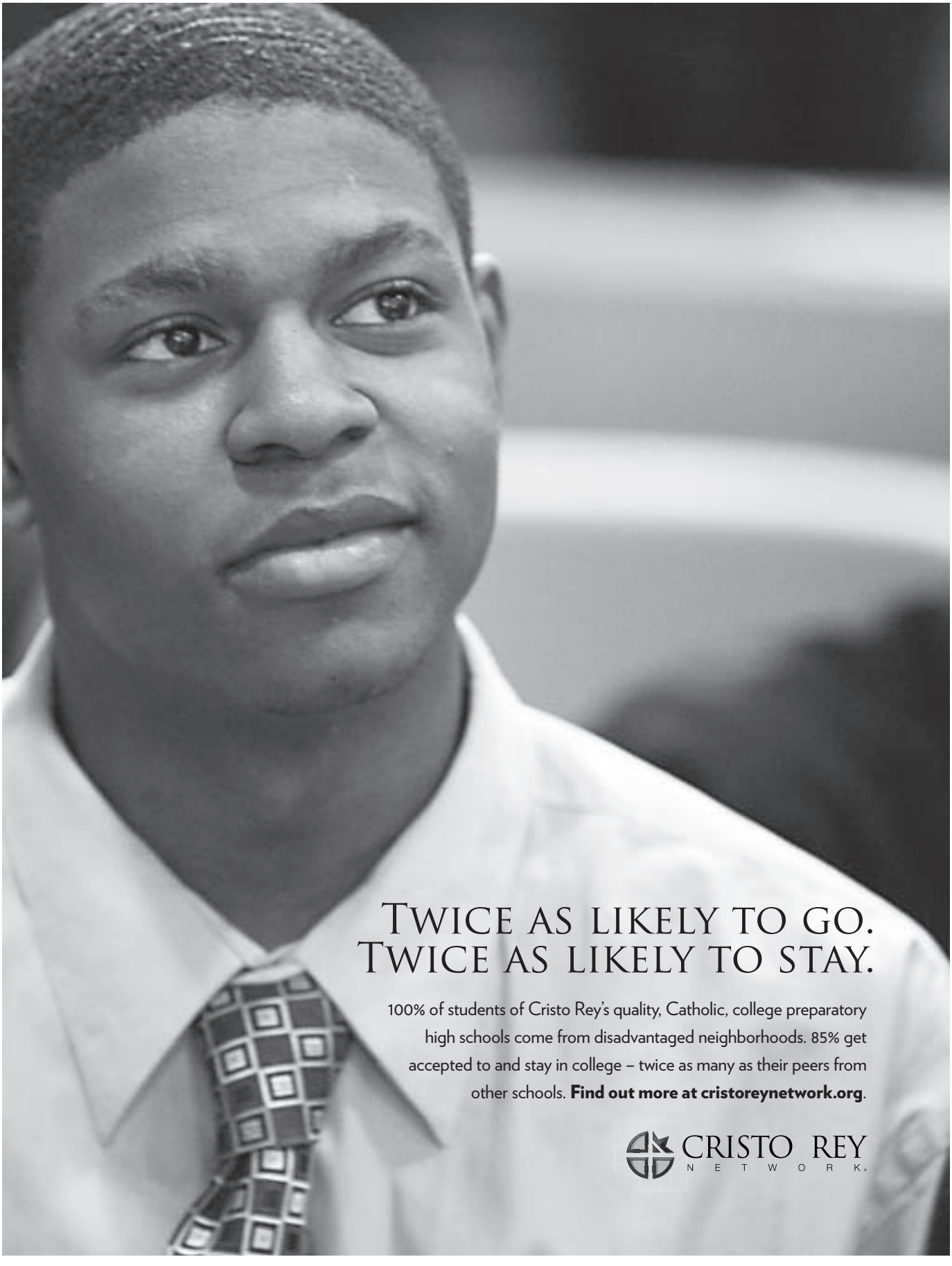
In recent times the situation of religious minorities, like Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians and Mandaeans, has become increasingly precarious in the Middle East. The increase in violence against Christians in Iraq and Egypt underlines an important issue. In a region where religion plays a major role in the public arena, the treatment of religious minorities provides a benchmark against which the rights of all citizens can be measured. Islam is no more or less compatible with democracy than is Christianity, Judaism or Buddhism. No major religion was founded at a time when democracies were functioning. And while religions have at times developed structures for consultation that have some democratic characteristics, these structures govern only the members of that particular religion.

Few religions ever had to deal with the religious "other" except as an object of proselytization, competition or scorn. No religious tradition on its own has ever developed a way of dealing with the other as equal. Yet that is precisely what citizenship entails: all citizens, regardless of religious affiliation, are equal before the law.

Christianity spent several centuries in conflict and reflection before it found a way of living in societies where members of other religious traditions were equal before the law. The Roman Catholic Church officially committed itself to freedom of religion in the "Declaration on Religious Freedom," approved at the Second Vatican Council on Dec. 7, 1965. It cannot be expected that Islam will reach that position overnight, although the community of nations must keep religious equality before emerging democracies as an important and achievable goal.

Modern Muslim thinkers have been reflecting upon and writing about the relationship of Islam to the modern state since the beginning of the 20th century. In 1925 Ali Abdel Raziq (d. 1966), an Egyptian legal scholar and Shariah judge, first explored the separation of religion and state in a book whose Arabic title can be translated "Islam and the Foundations of Government." The work was very controversial and not generally accepted, but it opened discussion of democratic government among Islamic scholars. More contemporary figures—for example, Mahmoud Muhammad Taha (executed for heresy by the Sudanese government in January 1985), his student Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im, the Iranian Shiite scholar Abdolkarim Soroush and others—form part of a growing list of Muslim scholars who are dealing with the challenges contemporary Muslims face as they attempt to develop democratic institutions and governments. The work of these scholars shows clearly that Islam is not inherently incompatible with modern democracy.

The journey toward democracy will be neither easy nor short. The emerging democracies of the Arab Spring need all the help and support they can get. Those who would help, however, must realize that democracy does not mean "just like us." Any attempt to help that lacks sensitivity to the historical, cultural and religious situation of each country is ultimately no help at all and could nip the Arab Spring in the bud. A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Looters run from a clothing store in London on Aug. 8, 2011.

Mending Broken Britain

BY AUSTEN IVEREIGH

Britain's orgy of arson and looting in early August left five dead and hundreds of homes and businesses destroyed. It took four nights and nearly 20,000 police to regain control. The unprecedented disorder led to 2,000 arrests and fearful talk of a feral, criminal underclass that the state is powerless to contain.

People at an East London community meeting in August worried that the problems laid bare by the riots are too deep-seated to be dealt with easily or soon and that the breach between young people and wider society may now become irreparable. Rates of divorce and family dysfunction in Britain are at record levels. A growing proportion of families are dependent on state benefits. More than 600,000 young people under age 25 in Britain have never done a day's work in their lives, but they are no longer pursuing an education. Where might they look for models of moral constraint? Not to the state. If there was one consistent message from the rioters, it was their hatred for the police and the public authorities who, in the vacuum of family and institutions, loom large in their lives.

The justice secretary, Ken Clarke, said in September that three-quarters of the convicted rioters over 18 are "known criminals…a feral underclass, cut off from the mainstream in everything but its materialism." He used the figure to make his case for reform of prisons, which he said should focus more on rehabilitation than on punishment alone.

But the idea that the riots were a revolt by the "criminal classes" distorts as much as it reveals. A very large proportion of the rioters were under 18, while most of those detained, primarily as a result of police poring over closed-circuit television footage, were already known to the police and therefore most likely to be arrested. True, gangs and criminals were the chief organizers of those nights of chaos. They put aside their rivalries and joined forces, using

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PHOTO: REUTERS/DYLAN MARTINEZ

BlackBerry messages to galvanize networks of young people to gather at targets they had identified—typically brand-name stores selling sportswear and gadgets.

But many of the rioters were far from being career criminals. Even in white-stuccoed Pimlico, where members of Parliament retire to pied-à-terres after late-night debates, youths from a bordering housing estate looted the Hugo Boss store in nearby Chelsea and set alight garbage bins to keep the police at bay. That was a sideshow compared with the conflagrations involving hundreds in London's Croydon and Brixton neighborhoods, but it made the news when a few days later, dozens of police publicly smashed down doors on the estate to arrest some of the looters. One of them, Angolan-born Mario Quiassaca, 18, was marched away, together with bags of Hugo Boss shirts, under the gaze of invited television cameras.

When Mr. Quiassaca later appeared in court, he was revealed to be a promising young man, a semi-professional footballer in his third year of studies at a decent local college. Asked to explain, he could speak only of his resentment of the police.

'Disconnected' Youth

The riots had exposed a deeply unorganized society, where the bonds of trust and the vigor of institutions are weak, in which young people are prone to the "mimetic rivalry" of consumerism yet powerless to attain the objects of their desire—except by looting. Most of the rioters were disconnected from both market and civil society and therefore drawn, in chaos, to the only organized leadership around them, that of the gangs.

What most concerned residents who discussed the riots at that East London community meeting in August were the thousands of young people like Mr. Quiassaca, drawn into the violence, grabbing "free stuff" at the urging of the gangs. But churches and social institutions include young people who can identify with and find their lost peers, says Derron Wallace, an organizer of the group London Citizens and a youth worker in an evangelical church in southeast London. The civic crisis is "an opportunity now for churches to reach out beyond their four walls."

ON THE WEB
Austen Ivereigh blogs from Europe.
americamagazine.org/things

Beyond the problem of Britain's disconnected youth is something deeper, something that the sober analyses of both left and right have implicitly acknowledged but cannot yet name: the failure of the liberal project. A democracy geared to the peaceful coexistence of differences and a market dedicated to the expansion and satisfaction of individual desire cannot alone generate the values and virtues on which a functioning society depends. The egotism and criminality of the "feral underclass" mirror a "feral elite"—bankers, politicians, business executives, journalists—who have looted their own institutions for private gain. Who can generate sobriety, frugality and self-restraint? Who can muster the energies for a common purpose of social regeneration?

Rebuilding Community

The government, energized, feels vindicated by the riots, which have bolstered the Conservative case for the "Big Society." This is a government now committed to tackling not just the financial deficit but the "social deficit" as well. The riots, Prime Minister David Cameron said on Aug. 15, must now force Britain to deal with the explosion of "social problems that have been festering for decades." His speech opened the sluice gate to a flood of initiatives and reforms: a gang task force advised by the former police chief of Los Angeles, Bill Bratton; a national citizens' service for 16-year-olds; education reforms to prevent failing schools; toughening social security; policies to bolster the family; and so on. This is not just about reforming the way the state acts on society but about helping to encourage stronger communities, stronger families, greater social responsibility and civic leadership.

But the Big Society agenda shies away from the deeper cultural question of where future sources of values and virtues will be found. Culture needs to be shaped by ethical criteria that are not of its own making, criteria traditionally supplied by the major faith traditions. Pope Benedict XVI's call in his address to Parliament a year ago for culture—"the world of secular rationality"—to open itself to "the world of religious belief" now seems especially timely.

Churches and faith congregations in north London are holding their own "citizens' inquiry" into the origins of the riots through public hearings, at which the voices of both "the looters" and "the looted" will be heard. And London Citizens is looking to expand a community-based scheme they have pioneered over the past three years, based on experiences in cities in the United States, like Baltimore.

CitySafe brings faith congregations into relationship with local businesses, schools and the police, creating in effect a civil-society gang to counter the power of the criminal gangs. Next year, six weeks before the Olympic Games begin in London, London Citizens and Catholic Church leaders will announce "100 Days of Peace," reviving the ancient Olympic idea of a truce. They will hold town hall meetings in boroughs across London and Birmingham to use the games as an opportunity to establish more CitySafe sites and zones as safe havens.

Here is the hope amid the ashes: acceptance that the old binary model of state and market is exhausted and that the vision and energies of civil society must now be engaged. But will it be enough, soon enough? A

TELEVISION | MAURICE TIMOTHY REIDY

HOW DRY WE WERE

Ken Burns and Lynn Novick revisit Prohibition.

So what was all the fuss about? The question looms large over the decades-old fight over alcohol consumption that culminated with the 13-year era of Prohibition (1920-33). In the hazy light of historical memory, the anti-alcohol movement seems like nothing but a grand mistake, a period whose only redeeming quality is the culture it spawned. The Prohibition era, after all, gave us jazz, flappers and that wonderfully evocative term, "speakeasy." Not to mention the aphorisms of H. L. Mencken.

As a political movement, though, Prohibition was impossibly naïve, a flimsy moral edifice built on hubris and a fundamental misunderstanding of human nature. Ban booze? Come on, who were they kidding? In the great arc of American history, it is tempting to view the anti-alcohol forces as a historical anomaly, a minor obstacle that interrupted the march from women's suffrage to the New Deal.

Tempting, but wrong.

The inconvenient fact is that Prohibition was inextricably linked with the progressive movements of both the 19th and 20th centuries. The Christian abolitionists who fought slavery prayed to the same God to end the scourge of alcohol. The campaign for women's suffrage would not have succeeded apart from the battle against "demon rum." Give women the right to vote and they will help pass Prohibition. The federal income tax, too, was a child of the Prohibition movement. Since the tax on liquor was a significant source of government income, the only way to ban alcohol was to find another revenue stream.

The story of Prohibition is rife with irony, an episode from the past that is largely forgotten yet surprisingly relevant. In their new documentary, **Prohibition,** which began airing on PBS this month, Ken Burns and Lynn Novick explore the rich lessons offered by this fascinating detour in American history.

The incredible nature of Prohibition is best summed up by Daniel Okrent, author of *Last Call: The Rise and Fall of Prohibition* and a creative consultant on the PBS documentary: "How the hell did this happen?"

How indeed? Though the temperance movement was a strong moral force in American history, the complete ban of alcohol was far from inevitable. In 1826 Lyman Beecher founded the American Temperance Union, which grew quickly, especially in northern states where it found common cause with the abolitionist movement. Women were among the earliest promoters of temperance. They saw alcohol as a corrupting force that wrecked marriages and left children orphaned.

This argument was made again and again by the Women's Christian Temperance Union. Founded by Frances Willard, the W.C.T.U. was, according to the church historian and theologian Martin Marty, the first "expressive" movement of women in America. Their fight against alcohol was in many ways a fight for their own survival. In the 19th century, there was no such thing as divorce. Police were not expected to protect women from domestic violence. Then there was the horrible reality of marital rape. These were the unspoken but very real factors that drove hundreds of thousands of women into political life.

In the beginning, the focus was on temperance, a virtue that has sadly fallen out of favor today. Over time, however, temperance leaders decided it was insufficient just to preach against excess; only the force of law would bring real change. Enter the Anti-Saloon League. Founded in Oberlin, Ohio, the league rose to power under the leadership of the indefatigable Wayne B. Wheeler. Unlike the W.C.T.U., which had a broad progressive platform, the Anti-Saloon League focused exclusively on banning alcohol. The group vowed to drive out any elected representative who did not toe the dry line, and it succeeded.

The wet forces had formidable allies of their own. The nation's brewers mounted a large lobbying campaign promoting the healthy effects of beer. But they suffered a public relations blow when the United States entered World War I and companies with names like Busch, Pabst and Schaeffer were seen to be less than patriotic.

The nation's immigrants, too, were on the side of the wets, but they lacked political power. The Irish may have held Tammany Hall, but rural Protestant voters still controlled the federal government. Consider this appalling fact: after the passage of the Volstead Act, which prohibited the sale and manufacture of "intoxicating liquors," Congress delayed constitutionally mandated reapportionment for a full eight years. It knew the cities would take a greater control of the government and be able to end Prohibition.

Catholics, too, were very much

Izzy Einstein, left, with other agents of the federal Prohibition Unit, dumped liquor into the gutter in 1922.

PHOTO COURTESY OF PBS/ NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

against the ban on alcohol. Though the law included an exception for sacramental wine, Catholics from Ireland and Italy saw Prohibition as an infringement on their cultural customs. Meanwhile the dry forces, which included the notoriously racist and anti-Catholic Ku Klux Klan, were fiercely against immigration.

Congress passed the Volstead Act in 1919. Forty-six states ratified the law, making it the 18th Amendment to the Constitution. The victors celebrated with a prayer service in Washington, D.C., led by William Jennings Bryan, the famous orator and perennial presidential candidate. They were convinced that the battle was over; after all, few things were as permanent as a Constitutional amendment.

The next 13 years provided a case study in unintended consequences. From the beginning, Congress failed to provide enough money to fund the enforcement of Prohibition. Most states chose not to enforce law, leaving it to the federal government, whose courts quickly clogged. Boats freighted with booze anchored along the Atlantic coastline, unafraid of the country's anemic Coast Guard. In Chicago and elsewhere, Prohibition served as a kind of "graduate school," as Okrent calls it, for organized crime, which capitalized on the funds generated from bootlegging to extend their criminal empires.

ON THE WEB
Bryan McCarthy reviews the film "Higher Ground."
americamagazine.org/culture

Perhaps most distressing, at least for the stout-hearted women who lobbied so hard for Prohibition, was the unexpected change in mores. Drinking did go down in the 1920s, but public drinking, especially by women, seemed to blossom. With no saloons to frequent,

March 21st

Where is a measured clarity?
I work, obsess, give up, despair—
not like the singing world in vernal

balance. If I possessed internal
equanimity, I'd keep
a steady state like equinox.

No overlooking, though, the shocks
that bracket equal day and night—
through droughts and quakes and hurricanes,

somehow resilient Earth maintains
its equilibrium, with time
and timeless, unknown sense.

The spring will play in plot and sequence—
snowdrop, crocus, tulip, lily—
allotted spaces, days to flower.

Winter doesn't dint their power:
it allows it. Constant blooming
would fracture greater symmetry.

Daily roses would limit me,
as well. I'll trust in wider arcs
circling into parity.

BARBARA LYDECKER CRANE

BARBARA LYDECKER CRANE *is an artist and poet from Somerville, Mass. Her new work is forthcoming in Comstock Review, The Flea and 14 by 14. This poem was the third runner-up in this year's Foley Poetry Contest.*

men drank at parties and in homes, inviting young women to join them. For the proper ladies of the W.C.T.U., it was no small scandal.

One of the pleasures of PBS's "Prohibition" comes from hearing from the young women who came to define that age. Two such women are interviewed, and it is revealing to watch photographs from their youth fade into their now elderly faces. This woman could easily be your grandmother, you think; and she was the one breaking the law. (Here the directors echo a central insight of Okrent's book.) That is one of the lessons of "Prohibition": A law widely broken ceases to have force.

The legal scholar Noah Feldman makes that point onscreen, joining an impressive array of talking (and exquisitely lit) heads that includes Daniel Okrent, Pete Hamill, Michael Lerner and Catherine Gilbert Murdock. Hamill, a reformed alcoholic, is called upon to elegize the culture of the immigrant saloon and the illegal speakeasy. He emerges as the poet of "Prohibition," this year's Shelby Foote.

Of course, it is easier to romanticize the saloon than to defend the Prohibitionists. Yet the few men and women who discuss the dry movement are surprisingly compelling. Sylvester Mather remembers how his family was terrorized by their neighbors because his father, a Prohibition enforcement official, broke up local distilleries. But he continued in his work and eventually was killed on the job. Justice John Paul Stevens describes his mother's disdain for young men who took a drink: "Lips that touch wine will never touch mine."

Though the prohibitionists may have been misguided, it is still possible, even at this historical distance, to feel the moral force of their argument. They wanted to save the family, and they did not know how else to do it. They believed in the progress of the human spirit and saw the abolition of alcohol as the next step in that journey.

It is these questions that make the story of Prohibition relevant. How do you defeat a moral evil when moral suasion is not enough? What role should the law play in the curtailment of objectionable behavior? In the middle years of Prohibition, some within the Anti-Saloon League argued for focussing on changing hearts and minds rather than imposing penalties through the blunt instrument of the law. They were overruled.

There is this lesson, too: after the 18th Amendment fell, it actually became more difficult to buy a drink. Laws were passed setting a minimum drinking age. Blue laws limited when and where liquor stores could operate. It turned out that legal restrictions could work when applied with prudence and precision.

With the advent of Prohibition, the moral majority thought that human behavior would change, that the absence of alcohol would lead to a surge of virtue. They were very wrong, of course. But in a way, their failure confirmed a central tenet of their Christian faith: the need for a grace that no human law can provide.

MAURICE TIMOTHY REIDY *is online editor of* ***America.***

ST. JUDE AMONG THE BRAMBLES

A lengthy study of the Victorian poet Christina Rossetti persuaded me to stoop for the first time to yard art. Which is to say, the author of "Goblin Market" and "In the Bleak Midwinter" made me put a statue of St. Jude in my blackberry patch. In truth, I am fundamentally uninterested in nature per se and disdain yard art.

Recently, I have been studying the later works of Christina Rossetti, a poet whom I have always loved, in part because she is so transparently bored, alienated and depressed. (Her poems tend to have titles like "Dead Before Death" and "Sleeping at Last" and opening lines like "When I am dead, my dearest.") Rossetti's writings were perhaps the last place I would have expected to find a cure for malaise, and her answer was not one I would have foreseen.

Addressing an individualistic, heavily industrialized and increasingly skeptical late-Victorian England, Rossetti asserts that her readers could escape their alienation from nature and from one another if they would just allow the liturgy to transform their imaginations. Had I come across this idea in a column in a religious magazine, I would have cynically dismissed it as mere devotional sentimentalism, but Rossetti is one of the greatest poets of the last 200 years. Nothing she says about the imagination is to be dismissed lightly. So for the last year or so, I have been trying to work through her logic about the liturgy and apply it, to see, if I can, as she sees.

The Power of Liturgy

If, for Rossetti, liturgical worship has the power to reverse our isolation and alienation, it possesses this power only because in it we encounter the person of Jesus in a particularly intimate and powerful way. She depicts the incarnate Christ as unlocking the meaning of all creation, both by his explicit teachings—which "made the earth bring forth spiritual food for our nourishment"—and by his act of *kenosis* in taking on material form at all. In Rossetti's incarnational logic, Christ bridges all our forms of isolation, as he enters and redeems time, sacramentally transforms the physical world and shapes his disparate followers into a united body, the church.

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As an Anglo-Catholic, Rossetti sees her church's liturgy as an expression of a mode of worship that originates with the apostles and apostolic fathers and is still shared in common by Catholics, Anglicans and Orthodox. This liturgical act of worship remains the same in its fundamentals across historical eras, cultures and even ecclesial communions. In the liturgical sacrifice, matter is offered up to God and made divine; in the liturgical calendar, time itself is offered up to God and transformed into an image of eternity. In liturgical prayer, a collection of isolated and messed up individuals becomes the Body of Christ.

This liturgical vision has the potential to transform how we view ourselves and our world. This is why Rossetti and other Victorian Anglo-Catholic poets picture liturgical worship as a classroom in which we must learn again how to read and how to perceive. The liturgy's combination of Old Testament, New Testament and Gospel passages offers a model for reading Scripture, just as its renaming of days and seasons and sacralizing of bread, wine and water offer models for viewing time and the material world. If we let it, the liturgy could teach us how to relate the faith of the past to that of the present, how to make sacred the common things of earth, how to redeem the times and places in which

we find ourselves. I find in this thought an immense challenge to the way I experience the Mass. Certainly, I go to Mass each week hoping to be taught something, some tangible lesson that I can take home with me and incorporate into the life I am already living. But do I go to Mass hoping to learn to see?

Rossetti did. She carried home the method of reading she learned at matins and evensong and used it to reinterpret the mornings and evenings of her life. Most of her devotional prose consists of attempts to understand nature, time and other people in light of the liturgy. In books like *Called to Be Saints: The Minor Festivals Devotionally Studied* (1881) and *Time Flies: A Reading Diary* (1888), she uses the liturgy as a key to unlock the symbolic meaning of the world around her.

Spiritual 'Fruit'

For a basic example, let's go back to blackberries. The feast of Sts. Simon and Jude falls on Oct. 28, toward the tail end of the liturgical year; they are the last of the Twelve Apostles to be commemorated in the liturgical cycle. Advent is just weeks away, and the Lectionary readings will soon emphasize the Apocalypse, when, as Rossetti writes, "the end of all cometh" and spiritual "fruit" will be "the one thing requisite," the only thing that really matters. St. Jude, according to tradition a missionary who was violently martyred and the patron saint of hopeless causes, has long been a favorite of the melancholy and beleaguered and well fits the mood of this season of nasty weather and gritty faith. Rossetti sees the late October landscape as the physical expression of her liturgical vision, and fixes on the blackberry plant as an appropriate symbol for St. Jude.

The blackberry is an ugly and invasive plant—as Rossetti points out, it is a mere "bramble" or "thorn bush." Nonetheless, the wild blackberry plant "without culture or care" produces an abundant harvest; providing "a feast of God's bestowal not of man's purveying" to "birds and human wayfarers." Blackberries, as I have found in my misadventures in gardening, are nearly impossible to kill or even to confine; they are always jumping the fence that separates grass from garden; and if a weed trespasses on the blackberries' turf, it is the weed that dies. Inspired by the liturgy, Rossetti imaginatively sees the blackberry as an emblem of the long-suffering St. Jude, or more generally of the persecuted church of the Last Days and all days, persisting, spreading and bearing fruit in an almost inverse proportion to the care with which it is treated.

For Rossetti, with her liturgical angle of vision, the whole world—indeed "everything cognizable by the senses"—becomes a mystical symbol. To move just three days down the liturgical calendar to Nov. 1, All Saints' Day, we honor all holy people known and unknown. This feast causes Rossetti to ponder the merits of a plant similarly ubiquitous and similarly overlooked: common grass. To Rossetti's meditative mind, grass reveals both the beauty of all we dismiss as ordinary and the strength of all we dismiss as weakness.

Life, in fact, is made livable by the graces and graced people whom we

overlook and even thoughtlessly crush. Though the "grasses" are "trodden at all seasons by all feet," "stripped" of them "earth would lack half her refreshing charm." The fields of grass, like the masses of unknown saints, bring vitality, color and renewal to the world that ignores them, as they sway with the wind (of the Holy Spirit) and point heavenward toward God. In a late poem Rossetti applies these lessons from the feast of All Saints to the life of the individual Christian. Meditating on the grass, she finds the courage to be one of the forgotten saints, herself paradoxically "strong in patient weakness till the end."

All Things Holy

Rossetti's liturgically inspired reading of the world about her is beautiful, creative and even daring. I do not simply accept her symbolic ascriptions; I am not suggesting that we should use her work as a kind of field guide to liturgical horticulture. Blackberries cannot symbolize St. Jude, or grass represent the saints, for me in quite the same way they did for Rossetti. But to adopt Rossetti's ideas mechanically is in some ways to miss the point. Rossetti is challenging us to learn from the liturgy how to see the whole world as a symbol of God. If we simply adopt her symbols, we have abstracted the result from the method. We have cribbed the answers from the back of the book and have failed to learn to work the problem. We still haven't learned to see.

The mental discipline of interpreting clock time in light of liturgical time, of material objects in light of sacraments, must start somewhere if it is to take any specific incarnational form at all. While blackberries and grass are as good a place to start as any, each of us will probably start somewhere else.

CHENE HEADY *is assistant professor of English at Longwood University, Farmville, Va.*

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LETTERS

How to Become Irrelevant

In response to Cardinal Donald Wuerl's "A New Relationship" (9/26): The church has followed for centuries the axiom that theology is *fides quaerens intellectum* (faith seeking understanding)—faith being the catechetical part, understanding the theological. Often the church has misunderstood and condemned theologians—Origen, Thomas Aquinas, John Courtney Murray, Yves Congar, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and others—who were actually breaking new ground in faith through their understanding, only to be embraced later on. In fact much of the work at the Second Vatican Council was inspired by once-silenced theologians.

Our current leadership does not seem to have learned much from the past. Most theologians, especially bishops, like Cardinal Wuerl, see their role as explaining church teaching; a smaller group—like David Tracy, Paul Lakeland, Richard Kearney, Elizabeth Johnson and others—reflect on the faith in language that can be understood in the post-modern world. They do this by entering into dialogue with the culture.

Too many of our young people are walking away with a yawn. Who will show them the relevance of faith? If all we can offer is events like World Youth Day, with its photo-ops and sound bites to advertise the faith of today's youth, and at the same time we condemn those, like Sister Johnson, who reach out to a world we think can be ignored, we are becoming irrelevant.

KEN LOVASIK
Pittsburgh, Pa.

What Really Went Wrong

Cardinal Wuerl writes in "A New Relationship" (9/26), "For too many people, their religious instruction failed them at several levels. Something went wrong." It seems to me that what failed us was not the religious instruction but our new understanding of the church's history, its myriad leadership failures over the centuries—yet its insistence in every age that the magisterium always knows best. This argument just gets wearying to read as it casts itself yet again in a renewed attempt to get the "faithful" to row a foundering boat. No, it was not the instruction that failed. It was not the theologians who erred in pursuing new avenues of understanding. It was the leadership that failed and still fails to be instructed by the being-born of our time.

CATHERINE McKEEN
Calverton, N.Y.

Partners Also Need Support

A thank you to Cardinal Donald Wuerl for "A New Relationship" (9/26), a thoughtful reflection on the roles of bishops and theologians. I found myself agreeing with everything. American Catholic higher education and academic theology are certainly at a crossroads.

Will our institutions become secularized, with the emphasis on academic excellence, or will they return to their roots, handing on our faith and culture? As theologians will we explore the riches of our traditions or become one of the social sciences committed to deconstruction and critical thinking? We need the bishops to help us identify new structures for collaboration that will avoid hurt and suspicion.

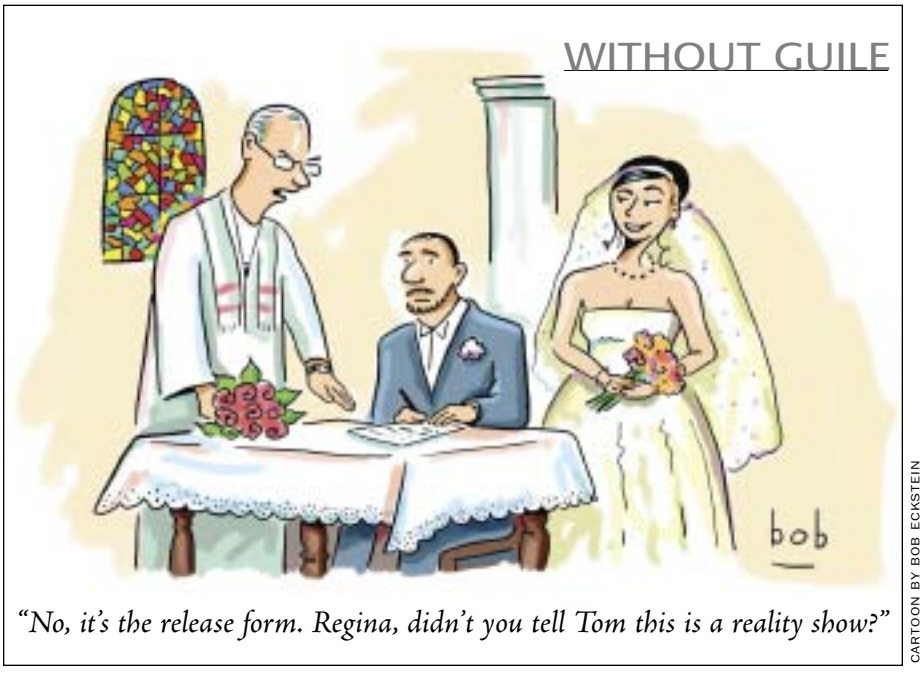
One example is the case of Elizabeth Johnson, C.S.J. Those who know her can find no theologian more faithful to the Gospel. If her word warrants criticism, so be it. But that she was investigated in secret and criticized harshly and publicly without an opportunity to speak for herself is scandalous to many of us.

But we need the bishops' leadership while we journey as partners. We need correction, when appropriate, but also appreciation and support.

DAVID GENTRY-AKIN
Moraga, Calif.

Innocent Israel

Supporters of Palestinian statehood should recognize the factually inaccurate history in the editorial "A State of Their Own" (9/26). There is no evidence that "Israeli fighters used terror tactics to drive more than 700,000 Palestinians out of urban neighborhoods." Indeed Israelis forced some Palestinians out of border and urban locations, but many more heeded Arab



"No, it's the release form. Regina, didn't you tell Tom this is a reality show?"

CARTOON BY BOB ECKSTEIN

broadcasts to leave to make the Arab invasion easier. Syria's Prime Minister Amin admitted this: "We ourselves are the ones who encouraged them to leave. Only a few months separated our call to them to leave and our appeal to the United Nations to resolve their return." Yet documented evidence indicates that the overwhelming majority of Arabs who left did so to avoid the violence of the invasion by five Arab countries to destroy the Jewish state.

Arab countries rejected recognition and negotiation after the 1948, 1956 and 1967 wars. In 1977 the Palestinians refused to attend the Camp David peace talks; in 2000 Arafat rejected President Clinton's peace plan. In 2008 Abbas never responded to Olmert's offer of peace based on territorial compromise and recognition, and today Abbas refuses Netanyahu's plea to negotiate without preconditions.

Could it be that the Palestinian gambit at the United Nations is designed to make an end-run around negotiations, where painful compromises are required from both sides? Palestinians should make a case for statehood based on truth, not the denial of historical facts, which serves only to falsely blacken Israel rather than help the Palestinians or achieve peace.

(RABBI) EUGENE KORN
Center for Jewish-Christian Understanding and Cooperation in Israel
New York, N.Y.

Editor's Note: Israel's new historians have documented steps taken before, during and after the War of Independence to drive Palestinian civilians from their homes. See especially Ilan Pappe, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (OneWorld, 2006).

Step up to the Plate

The editorial "A State of Their Own" (9/26) hits the nail on the head. The Palestinians, living in Palestine and exiled in refugee camps, deserve to get their country back—not just the bits they now live on, but the land they had before 1967. As for internal divisions: yes, the Hamas Gaza is a problem, but no one is solving that one right now. What is now the Palestinian Authority will be able to assert its sovereign control over all the land of the new state.

It is time for the United States to step up to the plate and do the right thing, this time without thousands of troops on the ground plus thousands of persons dead or displaced. It's easy. Just say yes.

PATRICK HUGHES
St. Augustine, Fla.

Pandering Politicos

Forgive me if I sense just a bit of a broad-brush treatment in your indictment of the governors of Wisconsin, Indiana and elsewhere for their alleged determination to weaken collective bargaining in "Art and Toil" (Current Comment, 9/12). What is happening in those states is a reaction to public service union leaders capitalizing on the willingness of politicians to pander to union members by awarding exorbitant welfare and pension benefits that society simply cannot afford. Wittingly or unwittingly, your coverage of this important nuance confuses the issue.

PAUL A. BECKER
Bluffton, S.C.

Bishops Back Workers

The report on the U.S. bishops' Labor Day statement (Signs of the Times, 9/12) is very welcome. This year's statement is most timely, considering the efforts of the legislatures in Wisconsin and Ohio to attack unions and restrict the right of workers to collective bargaining.

It is timely because Catholic commentators have said the church's past support for unions has been overstated and that the encyclical "Rerum Novarum" (1891) no longer applies today. This year's statement rejects that view and affirms that "difficult times should not lead us to ignore the legitimate rights of workers." It coincides with the letter of Archbishop Timothy Dolan requesting that his brother bishops "lift up the human, moral, and spiritual dimension of unemployment, underemployment, and pervasive poverty." The best way out of poverty, he says, "is the living wage."

JOSEPH A. FIORENZA
Archbishop Emeritus
Galveston-Houston, Tex.

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To Pay or Not to Pay

TWENTY-NINTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (A), OCT. 16, 2011

Readings: Is 45:1, 4-6; Ps 96:1-10; 1 Thes 1:1-5b; Mt 22:15-21

"Repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God" (Mt 22:21)

The Pharisees and Herodians in today's Gospel, who pose the question to Jesus about paying tax to Caesar, are not seeking guidance in making a difficult moral decision. They are trying to trap Jesus into a no-win situation with a sticky question that has no easy solution. Since the Roman occupation of Palestine in 63 B.C., Jews were obliged to pay a census tax, or head tax, on each man, woman and slave. The amount was one denarius (one day's pay) per year, and was to be paid with Roman coins, which in Jesus' day bore the image of the emperor Tiberius, who reigned from A.D. 14 to A.D. 37.

The attitudes of Jesus' fellow Jews toward the Romans varied, as did their strategies for resistance to the occupiers. Some resigned themselves to do what was necessary in order to live peaceably and dutifully paid their taxes, even while harboring resentment. Some paid the tax because they regarded the Romans as representing God's authority (see Rom 13:1-7; 1 Pt 2:13-17). Some, like the Herodians, derived their power from the Romans and would have openly advocated paying tribute to Rome. Others were in desperate straits because of the exorbitant taxes levied on them and feared losing their land or falling so far into debt that they would be sold into slavery (see Mt 18:23-35).

Some would have said that they should pay nothing to Caesar because everything belongs to God (Lv 25:23). Some would have opposed any collusion with Rome. There were those who harbored strong nationalist sentiments and fomented armed revolt against the occupying powers. Josephus tells of several first-century revolutionary leaders, including Judas the Galilean (Acts 5:37), who led unsuccessful tax revolts.

In asking Jesus to take a stand on this thorny question, the Pharisees hope to discredit him. If he supports paying the tax, then he would be seen as cooperating with the enemy, and his credibility as a prophet who preaches God's ways as opposed to Caesar's imperial ways is compromised. If he replies that the tax ought not be paid, then he places himself at risk vis-à-vis the Romans.

Jesus finds a way through these two opposite choices: one should give the coins back to Caesar, since they belong to him. He then turns the focus toward "what belongs to God," which, for believers, is everything. Thus Jesus relativizes the authority of the emperor by emphasizing God's ultimate sovereignty over all. This clever answer leaves Jesus' opponents astounded. They have no response, and they depart to await another opportunity to ensnare him.

In the Gospel, Jesus' interlocutors are not asking a sincere question; they are intent on undoing him. Nonetheless, the text can be an aid for contemporary Christians who genuinely seek to discern how they will relate to a government that takes actions or enacts laws that they oppose on moral grounds.

Should one withhold paying taxes, for example, as some Christians (like Raymond Hunthausen, former archbishop of Seattle) have done to express their opposition to the stockpiling of nuclear weapons? Should one refuse to pay federal income tax as a way to protest war, as Dorothy Day did? Or should one pay taxes but diligently lobby, vote and participate in nonviolent protests as ways to communicate an oppositional stance?

Jesus' single-mindedness about the reign of God and his cleverness in turning a verbal duel into an invitation to become more deeply centered on the Holy One can help us discern our responses in our day.

BARBARA E. REID

PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

- What "things of Caesar" are presently at odds with "the things of God"?
- Ask the Spirit to help you become ever more centered on "the things of God."
- Ask Jesus to help you discern your response to governmental policies or laws that are at odds with the Gospel.

ART: TAD DUNNE

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. Her latest book,* Abiding Word: Sunday Reflections for Year B *(Liturgical Press), is a compilation and expansion of articles that first appeared in* ***America****.*

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