

America



THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC WEEKLY

NOV. 21, 2011 \$3.50

Restorative Justice

STEPHEN J. POPE

OF MANY THINGS

In 1969, after surveying his life's work in *The Journey Not the Arrival Matters*, the last of five short autobiographical volumes, Leonard Woolf concluded: "I see clearly that I achieved practically nothing." The world would be the same, he reasoned, had he played Ping-Pong or tended his garden full time instead. Yet for most of his 89 years he worked long days.

Woolf's brutal honesty sticks with me. Self-assessment is important, especially if it is realistic and humble. Having read Victoria Glendinning's 400-plus page biography, *Leonard Woolf*, I'm not sure whether I am more inspired by what she calls Woolf's "habit of loving" or by his habit of throwing himself into pursuits with unreachable goals—like world peace. Or do these two traits stem from the same root? That is the explanation I'm leaning toward.

You see, I am interested in why people live the way they do, especially if their actions are selfless and their circumstances difficult. I don't care how often they falter or whether they are cantankerous on the way (foibles add to the credibility of the human struggle) or if they accomplish their goals. Rather, I am eager to understand why they bother. What motivates ordinary people to be good, to reach beyond the quotidian, to create the arts or build structures for justice or charity on behalf of others? I watch for motivations like this among my friends and family and seek it in newspaper reports, in Scripture, in books, films and theater. And while the saints are a part of this community I cobble together, my world is also peopled by secularists and colorful stumblers of all sorts.

Most Americans know Leonard Woolf only as "the husband of Virginia." Yet Glendinning's biography convincingly shows that we would likely never have known of Virginia had it not been for Leonard. His sacrificial love sustained her and kept her mental state from crumbling even earlier. He

encouraged her to write and published her work through his basement startup, Hogarth Press. After her suicide, he promoted her genius—in which he wholeheartedly believed—until his own death 28 years later.

Leonard Woolf's contributions to society are exemplary. As a young district judge in Ceylon, he saw to the education of girls and tried to bend Britain's colonial rule to give locals more self-government and cultural expression. As a British public intellectual, he wrote *International Government*, a classic tome that influenced the formation of the League of Nations—his biggest idea. He had served on advisory committees in the Labour Party to develop its vision and structure and felt great disappointment when the party did not ultimately support the League.

Woolf was an active citizen all his life, who wrote, spoke publicly and lobbied behind the scenes. He championed local causes (as an elected member of the County Council, as school manager, president of the horticultural society, the literary club) as well as international ideals. Long before others did, he saw the world slipping inexorably into the darkness of economic depression, dictatorships and world war. He could not abide injustice, cruelty, intolerance and tyranny. Woolf wrote that the goal of defeating them was "enough carrot to keep a human donkey going." Yet those goals overwhelm most people.

Woolf was not overtly religious, but faith anchored his life and work. It wasn't easy being a Jew in late 19th-century England, nor during World War II. But Woolf had interiorized the precepts of his faith, basics that underlie Catholic social teaching, too. "Justice and mercy—they seem to me the foundation of all civilized life and society, if you include under mercy toleration," he wrote. And that "Semitic vision," as he called it, explained the purpose of life and the motivation for his own labors.

KAREN SUE SMITH

America

PUBLISHED BY JESUITS OF THE UNITED STATES

EDITOR IN CHIEF

Drew Christiansen, S.J.

EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT

MANAGING EDITOR

Robert C. Collins, S.J.

EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

Karen Sue Smith

ONLINE EDITOR

Maurice Timothy Reidy

CULTURE EDITOR

James Martin, S.J.

LITERARY EDITOR

Patricia A. Kossmann

POETRY EDITOR

James S. Torrens, S.J.

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Kevin Clarke

Kerry Weber

Raymond A. Schroth, S.J.

Edward W. Schmidt, S.J.

ART DIRECTOR

Stephanie Ratcliffe

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Francis W. Turnbull, S.J.

ASSISTANT LITERARY EDITOR

Regina Small

BUSINESS DEPARTMENT

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

Lisa Pope

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

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

E-mail: america@americamagazine.org;
letters@americamagazine.org

Web site: www.americamagazine.org

Customer Service: 1-800-627-9533

© 2011 America Press, Inc.

Cover: composite photo.
Shutterstock/America

CONTENTS



ARTICLES

13 FROM CONDEMNATION TO CONVERSION

Seeking restorative justice in the prison system

Stephen J. Pope

COLUMNS & DEPARTMENTS

4 Current Comment

5 Editorial Failure to Communicate

6 Signs of the Times

10 Column The Better Life

Kyle T. Kramer

19 Faith in Focus Night Shift

James M. Lang

22 Poem Weather *Donna Pucciani*

29 Letters

31 The Word What Are You Watching For?

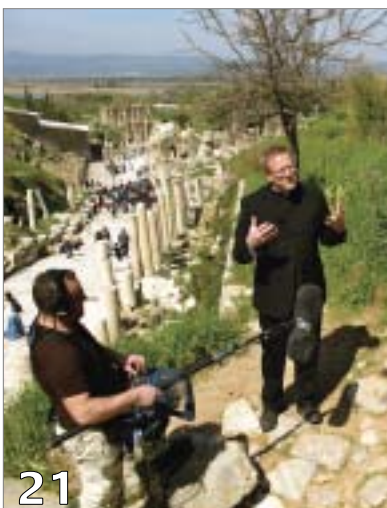
Peter Feldmeier



BOOKS & CULTURE

21 TELEVISION Robert Barron's 'Catholicism'

BOOKS *Clarence Darrow; Something Urgent I Have to Say to You*



ON THE WEB

Bishop Gerald Kicanas, pictured right, reports on a **visit to Iraq**. Plus, Austen Ivereigh reflects on the disappointing meeting of religious leaders in **Assisi**. All at americamagazine.org.



For Better or Worse

The multimillion-dollar wedding of the reality show star Kim Kardashian and the N.B.A. star Kris Humphries was broadcast in a two-part, four-hour special on E!. Each segment was watched by more than four million viewers. Their divorce—just 72 days later—has attracted even more attention. On her blog, Ms. Kardashian lamented getting “caught up with the hoopla and the filming of the TV show” and said she “probably should have ended my relationship” before the marriage. But these days, even couples without reality shows easily can be swept up in the preparations for their big day.

Wedding planning has become a multibillion-dollar industry (the Kardashian cake alone reportedly cost \$20,000). Then there are the television programs dedicated to finding the perfect dress, venue or florist and gawking at the not-so-perfect “bridezilla” tendencies of some women. One wedding planner laments the loss of manners and concern for guests at Southern weddings. She told *The New York Times* that many couples she meets are worried only about how they will benefit from their day, and they neglect the community that supports them.

Those concerned with promoting the sanctity of marriage may want to start by helping couples understand the serious nature of such unions. While reality shows can be entertaining and there is joy in finding the perfect invitation, worries about the details of the big day should not replace preparations for the ones that will follow. Couples must not lose sight of the fact that through marriage they enter into a commitment more important and, one hopes, longer lasting than the one they make to the caterer.

Civic Piety

The House of Representatives worked late on Nov. 1. The high jobless rate and President Obama’s jobs bill were not the order of business. The millions of Americans facing the threat of foreclosures on their home mortgages were not on the agenda. With an abundance of pompous words, the House was passing a bill to strengthen the status of “in God we trust” as the national motto.

The idea appears in the “Star-Spangled Banner” (1814): “And this be our motto ‘In God is our trust.’” The current wording first appeared on coins in 1864, giving a strange challenge to the injunction in Matthew’s Gospel that one cannot serve both God and Mammon.

The motto has stirred controversy. Theodore Roosevelt thought its association with money to be irreverent and “close to sacrilege.” It has survived legal challenges, though, and in

1984 the Supreme Court ruled that the motto did not violate the establishment clause because it had “lost through rote repetition any significant religious content.” This is subtle jurisprudence: it is not unlawful because it is meaningless.

With Congress’s approval rate now at 9 percent, it is hard to imagine the good to be derived from their dabbling in civic piety. Their endorsement hardly enhances trust in God. And trust does not absolve one from work. Instead of revising mottos or slogans, the country needs members of Congress to stop bickering, stonewalling and obstructing. They might also show that they trust others who trust in God: government workers, unions, the powerless, the poor, members of the other party. Then the people might even start trusting them.

Vatican Science Project

This month the Vatican convened a meeting of scientists to discuss the future of stem-cell therapies. The conference was part of an unusual foray by the Vatican into the field of scientific education and research. Teaming up with NeoStem, an international research company that focuses on adult stem cells, the Vatican has invested \$1 million in a foundation aimed at promoting adult stem-cell research. The goal is to advance stem-cell therapies that do not require the destruction of human embryos.

“We don’t see reason why we have to sacrifice human lives, while we have technologies that do the same [work] without harming anyone and without raising any moral difficulties,” said Tomasz Trafny, chairman of the science and faith department at the Pontifical Council for Culture.

The initiative has met resistance from some scientists who are wary of the Vatican’s intentions. They say the church is trying to close off an avenue for research when scientists should be encouraged to pursue all potential cures to intractable diseases. Yet at a time when embryonic stem-cell research is being fiercely promoted, the Vatican has every right to dedicate its own resources to avenues of research that are just as promising.

Among these is the field of induced pluripotent stem-cell research, which avoids many of the ethical dilemmas associated with stem-cell research. First created in 2007, these cells closely resemble embryonic stem cells, and because they come from the patient, they offer benefits that embryonic stem cells do not. More important, they do not require experimentation on human embryos. The Vatican is right to take advantage of this opportunity to find common ground with the scientific community. The scientists who took part in the stem-cell conference should be commended for collaborating with an unlikely partner.

Failure to Communicate

For the last 15 years, relations between Rome and Beijing have shown slow but steady improvement following the late Pope John Paul II's "One Church—Two Faces" policy in the mid-1990s. Catholics from both the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association and the members of the unregistered, so-called underground Catholic Church have moved toward practical and affective unity. Beijing and the Vatican quietly cooperated in the appointment of bishops and, in some cases, appointed a single bishop or coadjutor to succeed divided official and unofficial church bishops. Because the progress has been real, the current breakdown in relations is all the more difficult to watch.

Over decades of Communist rule, Catholics in China have struggled to manage the dual loyalties of faith and state. Many were driven underground; priests, bishops and laypeople were harassed and arrested. Some died in China's prisons. But in an era of greater tolerance, Chinese Catholics were beginning to live their faith—together—with growing confidence. The Vatican even quietly validated bishops previously ordained in the Patriotic Association. Official and back channel negotiations explored normalization of relations between the two sides.

Then, in 2007, Pope Benedict XVI released a letter exhorting unity, pardon and reconciliation among all Catholics; but it also frankly challenged the legitimacy of the Patriotic Association as "extraneous to the structure of the church." The association's current vice chair, Liu Bainian, a long-time party apparatchik charged with managing China's Catholics, backpedaled from his previous "hope" for a papal visit to China and quickly reoriented himself safely within party lines with an enthusiastic and familiar condemnation of Roman interference in Chinese affairs.

By the time a politburo vote in October 2010 favored party hardliners, the regression to historic postures became just about complete. Michel Marcil, S.J., the executive director of the U.S. Catholic China Bureau, reports that over the last year there has been a clear effort to corral the already limited religious expression of China's Catholics, and Beijing has once again begun to ordain bishops without Vatican approval. Pope Benedict has ramped up the church's response to the provocations by excommunicating the illicitly ordained bishops and threatening the same to others who willingly cooperate with the ordinations. The Vatican and Chinese authorities appear to have stopped talking and

have returned to wrestling over China's 14 million Catholics.

As if to emphasize that there is a new reality, in August Zhang Qingli, noted for his heavy-handed administration of Tibet, was appointed party secretary of Hebei, a province home to a quarter of China's Catholics and the site of the most passionate acts of Catholic resistance. Zhang's appointment likely signals that a harsher response to popular religious expression is coming.

Meanwhile, far below the headlines over bishops' appointments, roundups and harassment of uncooperative Catholic priests and laypeople has apparently accelerated. In September the State Department released its regular update on worldwide religious freedom. The report dryly noted that conditions had deteriorated over the past six months in China and once again duly listed the various offenses by Chinese officials against religious expression. The lack of a more significant reaction out of Washington in response to the deepening repression is disheartening.

There is much at stake. The church in China is growing; over the next 40 years there could come to be more Christians in China than in any other country in the world. In the past, China's Christians feared the might and the reach of the party. Perhaps Beijing now worries over a shift in that relationship.

Both Beijing and Rome have taken missteps; both should review lost opportunities and explore how to rebuild the relationship. They may also wish to reactivate the informal negotiations that appeared promising in the recent past and begin informal dialogue in neutral Catholic academic venues like Georgetown University.

Pressuring China on human rights can be perilous not just for U.S.-China relations but for everyday Catholics in China who are trying to live out their faith as discreetly and truthfully as they can. "No need to pull the tiger's whiskers to see if it still bites," Father Marcil says.

True enough, but the tiger might benefit from some plain speaking. The State Department and the Obama administration need to express forcefully their concern over the treatment of China's Catholics and other religious communities and the persisting problem of religious freedom in China. Annual report cards and scattered criticisms at press conferences are not enough. There should be no opportunity for misunderstanding. A heightened sense of urgency on religious freedom from Washington would be welcome.



SIGNS OF THE TIMES

IRAN'S NUCLEAR THREAT

U.S. Military Response 'Should Be off the Table'

A pre-emptive military response aimed at thwarting Iranian nuclear ambitions "should be off the table," said Gerald Powers, director of Catholic peacebuilding studies at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame. Powers was responding to a report released on Nov. 8 by the International Atomic Energy Agency, the U.N. nuclear watchdog, that expressed "serious concerns regarding possible military dimensions to Iran's nuclear program." According to the report, "Iran has carried out activities relevant to the development of a nuclear explosive device." The report concludes that "prior to the end of 2003, these activities took place under a structured program, and that some activities may still be ongoing."

Powers argues, however, that even if Iran has been pursuing nuclear capability, a military response meant to set that effort back would lead only to more instability in an already troubled region of the world. He said the "muted" U.S. response so far to the revelations contained in the new I.A.E.A. report was appropriate. "We have to be clear that the use of military force against Iran should be off the table—period," said Powers, who

called that response neither morally nor legally justifiable.

"The prospect of Iran developing nuclear weapons is deeply troubling," said Bishop Howard J. Hubbard of Albany, N.Y., chairman of the U.S. bishops' Office of International Justice



and Peace. "Iran has threatened its neighbors, especially Israel, and contributes to the widespread instability of the region." But, Bishop Hubbard added, "recent news accounts speculating on the possible use of force against Iran are also troubling."

IMMIGRATION

Annual Mass Unites Both Sides, Even Through a Border Fence

The Mexican bishop often exchanged glances with his American counterpart as they celebrated Mass on All Souls' Day. But instead of embracing at the kiss of peace, they touched palms—through the chain-link fence. Enduring dusty wind that created a brown haze, hundreds of Mexicans and Americans joined their bishops for the Mass. Bishop Armando X. Ochoa of El Paso, Tex., Bishop Ricardo Ramírez of Las Cruces, N.M., and Bishop Renato

Ascencio León of Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, concelebrated the annual border Mass on either side of the fence. The theme for this year's Mass was "Remembering Our Dead; Celebrating Life; Working for Justice."

Betty Hernández, 30, a mother of three and a youth minister at Corpus Christi Church in Anapra, Mexico, said the Mass helps unify El Paso and Ciudad Juárez in a common cause, remembering those who have died in the drug violence as well as those who

died in the nearby deserts. Making this Mass even more poignant for Hernández was the death of her neighbor, who was gunned down at a nearby burrito stand the previous week.

Behind Bishop Ascencio on the altar were seminarians from Seminario Conciliar in Ciudad Juárez. The Rev. Hector Villa, the seminary rector, said their presence underscores much of what they are learning for their future ministries. "This Mass is a sign of solidarity, especially for immigrants who try to cross the border and encounter so many troubles to reach their goal," Father Villa said. "We're asking the authorities in the U.S. to be more just with the people who want a dignified life through work, and this is



Woman walks past Iranian-made Sejjil and Ghadr-F missiles at Baharestan Square in southern Tehran.

“From a moral perspective,” he said, “in the absence of an immediate threat to attack others, military action against Iran would constitute an act of preventive war, which raises serious moral questions.”

Powers was most concerned about

the international “norm” that a preemptive strike aimed at nonproliferation would establish. “To say that counter-proliferation efforts should include the use of preventive military force would represent a major departure from moral norms on the use of force.” Where is the just cause? Powers asked, when an attack is planned based on a suspicion that a nation is developing nuclear capability, and what kind of precedent would that create? Other nations, he argued, could apply the same logic to their regional adversaries—Iran against Israel, South Korea versus North Korea, for example. “That’s a formula for enormous instability,” said Powers.

According to Powers, both the United States and Israel have credibility problems related to nonproliferation. The United States has already acquiesced to the development of nuclear weapons in India and has never disavowed a first-strike nuclear option even to a nonnuclear threat. Israel is not a signatory to the Nuclear

Nonproliferation Treaty of 1970 and is believed to maintain a significant nuclear stockpile itself.

Iran, Powers said, is a “tough regime, but the tough regimes are usually the ones you have to deal with the most.... The United States has to be open to diplomacy as part of the package. It can’t be all sticks; there have to be some carrots.”

However the United States proceeds in its relationship with Iran, Powers said that as a sovereign power, Israel is within its rights to defend itself as it sees fit. But, he said, a military strike would probably not succeed in diminishing Iran’s program. He pointed out that components of the nuclear effort appear to be scattered throughout the country and that an attack would not likely improve Israeli security. The military option might, in fact, encourage Iran to accelerate its nuclear weapons program. Worse, of course, Powers said, is the possibility that an attack could lead to another widespread war in the Middle East.

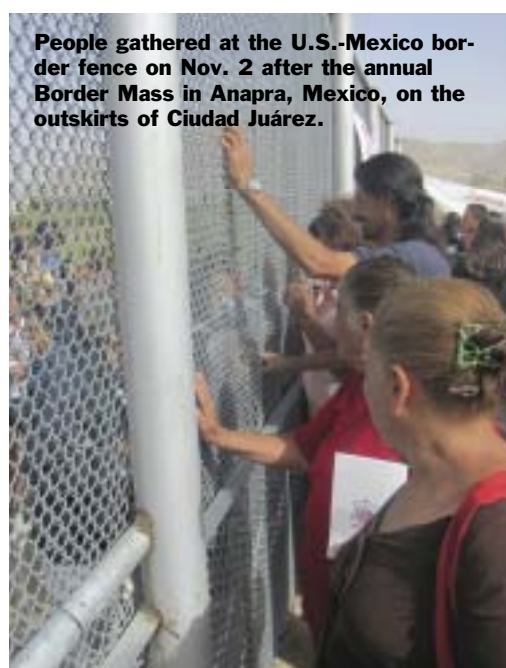
also a subtle sign for Mexico that they are responsible for providing work for these people.”

The Mass was initiated in 1999 at the height of the infamous murders of the Daughters of Juárez, female factory workers who disappeared and were later found to have been sexually assaulted and murdered. The number of these victims has been projected to be as high as 400.

Since 2006, Ciudad Juárez has seen about 8,500 murders as a result of a brutal drug war. And amid the death and sorrow are issues with immigration and human rights that include a redefinition of the term immigrant to include not only those seeking gainful employment in the United States but

also those fleeing the violence of Ciudad Juárez. It is estimated that since 2006 more than 200,000 people have fled the once vibrant city.

In his homily, Bishop Ramírez said the Massgoers had come together “once again to ask forgiveness” for the crimes, sins, violence and injustice that the border fence represents. He cited examples of violence and death taking place in of both Mexico and the United States. He said the physical barrier of the fence should not stop those on both sides of the border from loving each other “as the brothers and sisters they are in the eyes of God.”



People gathered at the U.S.-Mexico border fence on Nov. 2 after the annual Border Mass in Anapra, Mexico, on the outskirts of Ciudad Juárez.

Syrian Death Toll Passes 3,500

The brutal crackdown on dissent in Syria continues unabated despite the signing of an Arab League peace plan on Nov. 2. The United Nations human rights office reported on Nov. 8 that the death toll in Syria has now surpassed 3,500. “We are deeply concerned about the situation and by the government’s failure to take heed of international and regional calls for an end to the bloodshed,” said Ravina Shamdasani, spokesperson for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The day after the report was issued, Syrian forces continued a large-scale military operation, including the use of tanks and heavy weapons, to take control of the restive city of Homs. While the Syrian government announced the release of 553 detainees on Nov. 5 on the occasion of the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha, tens of thousands remain in detention and dozens more are arrested arbitrarily every day.

Hanoi Catholics Urged To Remain Calm

Redemptorists at a parish in Hanoi have urged local Catholics to keep calm after a mob led by government officials attacked a convent and church in early November. Tens of thousands of people attended 10 special Masses celebrated on Nov. 5 and 6 at Thai Ha Church in the capital. On Nov. 3, around 100 people, accompanied by security officials and members of the press, attacked a convent. They fled after the church’s bell rang out, bringing many people to the scene. “We strongly condemn this violent, rude and organized attack,” Joseph Nguyen Van Phuong, the Redemptorist priest who is pastor of the parish, told one

NEWS BRIEFS

After being denied in June, **federal funding for the AmeriCorps Education Awards** disbursed through the Catholic Volunteer Network has been restored to 75 percent of its 2010 funding. + **John Jenkins**, the Holy Cross priest who is president of the University of Notre Dame, was elected to the board of directors of the Commission on Presidential Debates on Oct. 20.



A Catholic volunteer at work

+ “Sustainability and Catholic Higher Education: A **Toolkit for Mission Integration**” is a new resource to help Catholic colleges and universities strengthen their commitment to mission-based sustainability efforts. + Catholics and Jews can most effectively **capitalize on five decades of progress** in their relations by joining forces to promote religious freedom, defend immigrants, face a common threat from fanatics and advocate for civility in politics and society, said Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan of New York in an address at the annual meeting of the Anti-Defamation League on Nov. 3 in that city. + Daniel Avila, the U.S. **bishops’ policy adviser for marriage and family**, resigned on Nov. 4 after he suggested in an opinion piece that same-sex attraction could be the work of the devil.

congregation. He urged them to “forgive them and avoid retaliation.” He said the motive behind the attack probably stems from an ongoing dispute with the government over seized church property.

Religious Leaders Seek To Preserve Foreign Aid

Auxiliary Bishop Denis J. Madden of Baltimore, Md., vice chairman of the board of directors of Catholic Relief Services, was on Capital Hill on Nov. 2 in the company of other religious leaders, urging senators to preserve funding in the foreign aid budget for antipoverty programs. The Rev. David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World, said that the funding at issue supports the most basic aid for poor people abroad. He told of recently vis-

iting an area of northern Bangladesh where he had lived 35 years earlier. Roads, housing, health, the quality and variety of food and particularly the status of women were much improved, Beckmann said, partly because of international assistance. Bishop Madden noted that although the public perception is that the United States spends 20 percent to 25 percent of its budget on foreign aid, the actual level is less than 1 percent. Programs like those that provide anti-retroviral drugs to people with H.I.V./AIDS, emergency refugee and migration assistance, debt restructuring, child survival and maternal health and international disaster assistance are among those facing steep cuts under the House appropriation proposal.

From CNS and other sources.

ARE YOU CALLED TO SERVE THOSE SERVING?



U.S. AIR FORCE
CHAPLAIN CORPS

All over the world, brave U.S. Airmen are defending our country. But without a Catholic priest serving as an Air Force chaplain, our Catholic Airmen go without the sacraments. Answer the call. Nurture our Airmen's Catholic identity through the Eucharist, reconciliation and continued faith formation. Without you there is no "Real Presence." Are you called to serve? Visit us on the web to learn more about becoming a priest in the U.S. Air Force Chaplain Corps.

AIRFORCE.COM/CHAPLAIN • 1-800-803-2452



The Better Life

By late fall, most of the crops on our fruit and vegetable farm have been harvested, and we are busy putting the land to bed for the winter. Recently our three children spent a day outside “working” with me, pulling up scores of tomato cages and knocking down spent plants. Though I tried to hold the kids’ feet to the fire, bedlam soon broke loose with a volley of green tomatoes that quickly became an all-out barrage.

We later turned to spreading old hay for a fresh layer of mulch in the vegetable plots. With a bale spear on the tractor’s rear hitch, I would back up and skewer one of the large round bales. Our twin 8-year-old daughters would usually leap onto the bale and hang on for dear life as I hauled it to a garden plot. Sometimes I raised and lowered the hitch repeatedly for a roller-coaster effect—even though, several months before, a bale once slipped off the spear and all three kids went flying in an explosion of flailing arms and legs (our 4-year-old son swore off bale riding after this incident). The Occupational Safety and Health Administration would certainly not approve.

The kids made a jungle gym out of each bale I deposited, happily tearing off hay as we unrolled the bale down the crop rows. I felt a wistful sort of joy, anticipating the rapidly approaching day when their unmitigated, simple pleasures will drown in the turbulence of their teenage years.

Later that day, our family piled in the car and drove an hour to visit rela-

tives in the city. We stopped first at the local mall, where I had grudgingly agreed to accompany my wife for some shopping. I despised almost every minute of it. Compared to our farm, where I feel at home and at ease (even when hard at work), in the mall I felt awkward and out of place, useless but for my credit card, claustrophobic, overwhelmed by the crowds, the neon, the maelstrom-gripped teenagers chattering among themselves and into their cellphones.

I am the first to admit that I am a bit cynical about shopping in general and malls in particular. For the most part, I simply don’t like buying stuff, and I have no knack for it, even when purchasing gifts. I have had to work my way up from giving well-intentioned presents of fluorescent light-bulbs, which went over about as well as if I had wrapped up a toilet plunger for my wife.

I marvel, then, as the Christmas shopping season begins, at how our culture has managed to make such an ideal out of emptying our bank accounts and filling our homes—and eventually a landfill—with things we mostly do not need. As Colin Beavan, the author of *No Impact Man*, points out in his reflections on his family’s year-long experiment in radical urban environmentalism, the consumption habit not only wrecks the planet and enslaves many of its poorer citizens but also, like a drug addiction, is not even very satisfying or meaningful. And at least for a few farm kids I know, it is not nearly as much fun as playing on hay bales or tossing toma-

atoes. I wonder if in our endless purchasing, what we have actually bought is a bill of goods.

Catholic social teaching, including Pope Benedict’s encyclical “Charity in Truth,” makes a vigorous critique of unchecked consumerism. Critique, however, generally falls on deaf ears. Perhaps more importantly, the Catholic tradition can also offer an alternative vision for the “good life,”

guided by values of humility, moderation and integral human development for individuals and communities. Articulating such values would be a very appropriate use of the Catholic megaphone in the public sphere—perhaps more helpful than strident Catholic voices condemning fellow

Are ordinary Catholics too taken in by the Gospel of More?

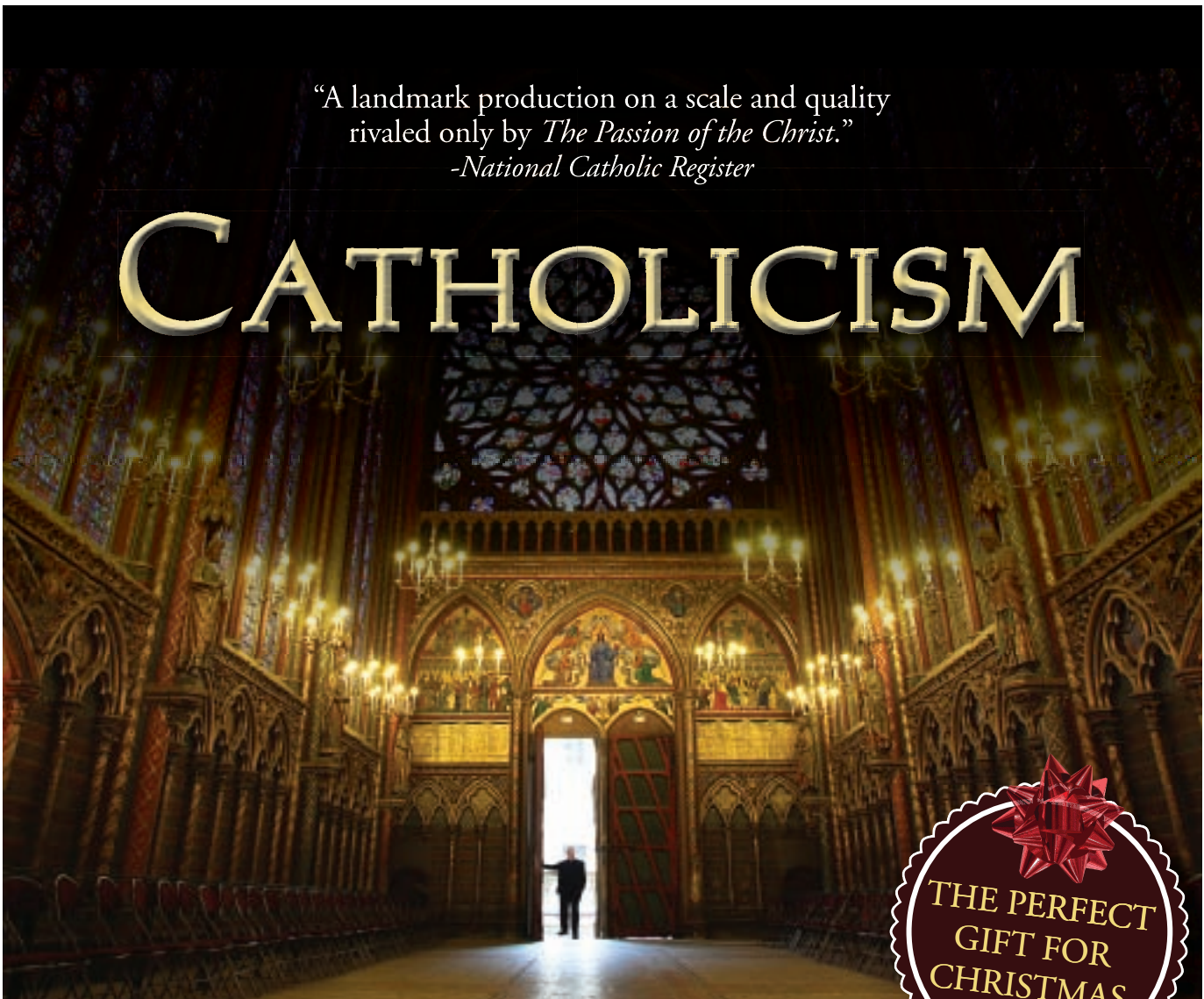
believers for not being the right (or left) kind of Catholic.

Articulating essential values in the public sphere is good and necessary, but in the end, mere words never suffice. The real question for us ordinary Catholics, then, is whether we too are taken in by the Gospel of More or if we can find ways to embody the good life of which our tradition so eloquently speaks. I have in mind not just ideals of justice, temperance and other theological abstractions, although any well-lived life will express those virtues. I want to know if and how our daily choices—economic and otherwise—help us and others become ever more fully alive. How can our lives become a witness and an invitation to wholeness, humor and deep, abiding joy? Are we having fun yet?

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

"A landmark production on a scale and quality
rivaled only by *The Passion of the Christ*."
-*National Catholic Register*

CATHOLICISM



PURCHASE THE DVD SERIES & BOOK TODAY AT

CATHOLICISMSERIES.COM

AS SEEN ON PUBLIC TELEVISION AND EWTN

*Journey with Fr. Robert Barron around the world and deep into
the true meaning of Christmas*

**"The most important media project in the
history of the Catholic Church in America."**

-George Weigel, papal biographer





SEEKING RESTORATIVE JUSTICE
IN THE PRISON SYSTEM

From Condemnation to Conversion

BY STEPHEN J. POPE

One evening, while trying to elude police, a 19-year-old lost control of a stolen Cadillac, slammed into a bus stop and killed four people. Following his arrest, he was convicted of reckless homicide and other offenses and was sentenced to 47 years in prison. This incident was not the only tragedy he had seen in his relatively short life. Abandoned by his father and raised by an alcoholic mother, the young man had never had a childhood. As a teenager, his friends used and trafficked in drugs and stole cars. Now a 30-year-old, he will eventually be released from prison. While it is too late to undo the harm caused by his actions, the kind of person he will be when back on the streets of Wisconsin remains an open question.

Presently 2.3 million men and women are housed in prisons throughout the United States—the highest rate of incarceration in the world. Three out of every 100 American adults are either on probation, in prison or on parole. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, every year nearly 650,000 people are released from state and federal prisons and many more from local jails. Reintegration often fails; half of all former state convicts will be incarcerated again within three years of their release.

Citizens want perpetrators of serious crime punished in the name of maintaining the rule of law, deterring future crime and ensuring that criminals “pay their debt to society.” Though we still refer to departments of “corrections,” the penal system in fact focuses on retribution more than rehabilitation. Stigmatizing offenders and demanding longer sentences make for good electoral returns. Yet as recidivism rates show, the result-

STEPHEN J. POPE is a professor of theology at Boston College in Chestnut Hill, Mass.

ing policies do not encourage the rehabilitation of offenders. Our neighborhoods are less safe as a result.

A central Christian theological affirmation is that God loves every human being. Christianity's strong defense of the dignity of the person—rooted in the belief that every human person is made in the image of God—encompasses the men and women in our prisons as much as the unborn and the elderly. We see this in Scripture, where visiting prisoners is one of the corporal works of mercy and charity toward the incarcerated is equated with love of Christ. One of Jesus' last acts before his death at Calvary was to extend mercy to a repentant criminal (and to his own unrepentant executioners). The message of Christ is powerfully expressed in his words: "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners" (Mk 2:17).

Incarceration is sometimes necessary to protect society from dangerous criminals. But holding an offender accountable is not the same as defining him by the worst thing he ever did. Likewise, incarceration need not be equated with moral banishment from the human race. Recalling the basic human dignity of the offender can bolster societal hopes for rehabilitation. This shifts the focus from condemnation to conversion, offering the possibility of a reconciled community of both victims and convicts. How can Christians form such communities?

A Different Type of Justice

An initiative in which I have taken part may serve as one instructive example, for it involves women and men across the country working to bring about restorative justice. Restorative justice seeks to establish right relationships between victims, perpetrators of crime and larger communities. It seeks healing for all parties.

Janine Geske, a former Wisconsin supreme court justice, is director of the Restorative Justice Initiative of Marquette University Law School. Part of her work is to facilitate biannual restorative justice workshops in Wisconsin's maximum-security prisons. Since I have conducted research on restorative justice and have worked as a volunteer in the Massachusetts prison system, I was invited to participate in one of these three-day workshops, held at Green Bay Correctional Institution last April.

Judge Geske's process centers on circle reflection, an adaptation of a Native American practice that aims to elicit transformative insight through honest, nonjudgmental conversation among participants. At this workshop there were

25 inmates, several women whose lives have been irrevocably changed as a result of crime and a number of law students from Marquette.

On the first day, workshop leaders defined and explained the concept of restorative justice; then small groups discussed the harmful ripple effect a criminal act often creates. The focus was not only on the negative consequences of our harmful actions, but also on the responsibility we bear for them.

Participants heard from three different crime victims: a mother whose son was killed by a drunk driver, the widow of a police officer slain in the line of duty and a wife and mother who had been abducted and raped at knife point. These speakers preferred to be called victim-survivors, to

make clear that they are not confined to the passive role of victim-only. In their compelling stories, the women communicated some of the harm they and their loved ones have suffered at the hands of others. As the inmates listened in rapt

silence, some were moved to tears, horrified by what they heard. Their emotions ran from anger at the perpetrators to guilt and deep remorse for the effects their own crimes have had on innocent people.

The final day opened with a roundtable discussion of insights the inmates had gleaned from the previous day. These insights were then expressed through art, music and story. Participants performed small group skits, imaginative (and sometimes humorous) portrayals of how individuals locked in destructive behavioral patterns might arrive at more constructive ways of living. Though inmates wrestled with guilt and forgiveness, they expressed hope for the future and made practical commitments to behavioral changes. Even those without the possibility of parole agreed to make positive changes in their relationships with fellow inmates, the staff and their families and in how they viewed themselves.

After the Workshop

Restorative justice workshops can achieve several things. First, they are important milestones for victim-survivors. Speaking to a room full of offenders opens up avenues for healing—both for themselves and for the inmates present. All three speakers at the Green Bay workshop said they find it life-giving not to be reduced to silence or left to wallow in their suffering and resentment. This healing goes both ways: "I want you to know that there are people out there in the community who care about you," one speaker told the inmates. Their respectful listening, in turn, was important for the victim-survivors, who expressed hope that the inmates would see the profound effects of their crimes and

Incarceration is sometimes necessary, but it need not be equated with moral banishment from the human race.

be less likely to repeat them in the future. “If my talking here prevents one person from being a victim of a violent crime in the future,” a victim-survivor said, “it will have been worth my effort.”

Second, this workshop was the first time most of the inmates heard about the ongoing toll of crime from an actual victim, speaking in the first-person. Asking offenders—men steeled against any display of vulnerability or self-doubt—to reflect on their actions and share their insights with one another was also a significant challenge. For them, the hardest part was listening attentively to the suffering of the innocent.

Since the criminal justice process focuses narrowly on crime as a violation of the law, it easily loses sight of the victims. The adversarial nature of the legal process also undercuts the likelihood that perpetrators will grasp what their victims have endured and how they may continue to suffer. Even when victims speak at a sentencing hearing, their testimony is often used to justify the punishment of the perpetrator, not to repair the damage done to the victim.

By contrast, the testimonies of victim-survivors in the workshop setting help inmates to see the cascading effects of their actions. Many offenders admitted at the workshop that they had never seriously considered the human impact of their crimes. This may sound strange, but we must ask, how often do most of us know (or want to know) the full

negative impact of our own wrongdoing? The same holds true for those convicted of armed robbery, rape or murder.

Third, the workshop offered a forum for inmates to talk about their own troubled backgrounds. The pain of the crime victims summoned forth their own pain: a young teenager beaten severely by the gang members who ruled his neighborhood; a 5-year-old who watched as his mother was beaten and raped; a man who at age 9 was raped at knife point by his favorite teacher and then threatened with death to keep silent; a 13-year-old whose sister became a prostitute to feed her crack habit, only to be murdered on the street.

It is undeniable that those who damage others have often experienced damage themselves. This fact evoked compassion among the inmates for one another and also for the victim-survivors. Yet not a single inmate invoked childhood trauma to exonerate himself or to mitigate his responsibility. Nor was the telling of these stories an occasion for comparative suffering. Rather, it was a cathartic release of emotional energy elicited by inmates entering—however briefly—the trauma of another. Mutual sharing changed the way in which these offenders saw themselves and one another. “Because of you,” an inmate told a victim-survivor, “I can now face my demons.” “I want to thank you,” said another, “for giving me my humanity back.” The survivors’ testimony freed the men to acknowledge their own waves of frustration and disgust, anger and rage, guilt and shame. The com-



You will step into one of America's premier Catholic universities and carry on a rich tradition of ministry when you join the team of men and women who serve as rectors of 29 single-sex residence halls at the University of Notre Dame.

Under the direction of rectors, residence halls become communities of faith and learning, where students discover how to integrate the intellectual, spiritual, and social dimensions of their education.

The University of Notre Dame is an EEO/AA employer

Rectors
make a difference.

For application materials for the academic year 2012–2013 and a more complete description of the RECTOR position, visit the Office of Student Affairs website at osa.nd.edu.

passion they felt for the victim-survivors and for one another deepened past sorrow to new resolve and responsibility.

For me, the workshop's defining comment was made on the final day: "What I learned this week," one inmate said, "is that we're all broken, but we're not alone." This man, at 30-something, is enmeshed in a prison culture that views vulnerability as a weakness and an invitation for trouble. Yet he sees that he has been broken by his upbringing and his own bad decisions and need not pretend otherwise. He came to see that brokenness is a common human condition. His words articulated what many had discovered: a new sense of solidarity among those scarred by life and a new capacity for friendship with one another.

The Redemption Dimension

The restorative justice workshop was not itself a religious activity, yet many of the inmates expressed their faith in God and a desire to live rightly. Far from seeking "cheap grace," offenders confessed that they deserve to be incarcerated; a few even claimed to have "no right to be forgiven" for their offenses. Still others expressed a hope that they will someday be included in the care of the divine physician who came to heal

the sick, not the healthy. As one convict put it, "When you are down to nothing, God is up to something."

This workshop helped the inmates acknowledge their brokenness so that they could begin to lead lives guided by love rather than by fear and shame. As Jean Vanier and Stanley Hauerwas observe in *Living Gently in a Violent World*, "We cannot really enter into relationship with people who are broken unless somehow we deal with our own brokenness." By beginning to deal with their brokenness, inmates tapped into their heartfelt desire for healing—for their victims first and foremost, but also for themselves.

Christian belief holds that even if past wrongs cannot be undone or forgotten, they can be redeemed. Such redemption, if it is to be real, must begin here and now—and in a context of community. As Thomas Merton, O.C.S.O., observed, "No man goes to heaven all by himself, alone." Recognizing that "We're all broken, but we aren't alone" resonates with the Eucharist, in which Christ is broken and given in the great act of redemption. This truth applies not only to inmates in maximum-security prisons but to every one of us: broken and sinful, yet beloved and called by God into a future of hope, promise and reconciliation. **A**

ON THE WEB

More on the ministry of Gregory Boyle, S.J. americamagazine.org

VATICAN II INSTITUTE
FOR CLERGY FORMATION

Sabbath Rest...

A TWELVE-WEEK
SABBATICAL FOR PRIESTS

THE VATICAN II INSTITUTE offers a twelve-week sabbatical experience each September-December. The sabbatical session provides an integrated program of prayer, study, spiritual direction, growth counseling, recreation, and leisure in a community context for priests from all parts of the English-speaking world.

Located on the grounds of beautiful St. Patrick's Seminary in the heart of the San Francisco Bay Area, the Institute has welcomed over 2,000 priests since its founding in 1973.

VATICAN II INSTITUTE
320 Middlefield Road
Menlo Park, CA 94025
Phone: 650-325-9122
Fax: 650-325-6765
email: vat2ins@aol.com

For additional program information, please visit our website: www.stpatricksseminari.org and follow the link to the Vatican II Institute/programs

Will you preach for me?

As a Priest, You Can Make a Tremendous Difference in her World.

Positions are now available for English and bilingual (Spanish/English) Roman Catholic priests interested in preaching in the U.S. on behalf of Food For The Poor's ministry to destitute families throughout the Caribbean and Latin America.

Your participation will open hearts to the gospel message and create public awareness of the Third World's plight. Through your involvement, you will help Food For The Poor provide needy families with food, medicine, basic housing, education and more.

- Commitment is only for weekends
- Salary/stipend, travel and expenses provided
- No relocation necessary
- Must have permission from Bishop or Major Superior

Share the Gospel • Serve the Poor

Join the outreach of Food For The Poor today.
For more information, call Joan Vidal toll-free 877-654-2960 ext. 6419

FOOD FOR THE POOR, INC. 8401 Lyons Road, Coconut Creek, FL 33073
www.FoodForThePoor.org

Ecumenical Doctor of Ministry

For the experienced minister interested in educating other leaders in ministry

This degree integrates advanced theological studies with your rich experience. Through an intercultural perspective, you will learn about doing ministry in a global Church. And you will study with and learn from the most diverse and inspiring colleagues you could imagine.

Focus your studies in one of these areas: intercultural ministries, educating for witness, liturgical studies, spirituality, and Hispanic theology and ministry.

Participating Schools of Theology:

- Catholic Theological Union
- Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago
- McCormick Theological Seminary



**Catholic
Theological
Union**

Preparing effective leaders for the Church



Contact: Dr. Carmen Nanko-Fernández
Ecumenical D.Min. Program Director
773.371.5444, edmin@ctu.edu
or visit www.ctu.edu/DMin

www.ctu.edu

5401 S Cornell Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60615



THEOLOGY CHAIR

~ Department of Theology ~

Duquesne University of the Holy Spirit is seeking a chairperson for its Department of Theology. The position will be a tenured appointment at a senior rank, and is a twelve month position with a starting date of July 1, 2012. Area of expertise is open, preferably complementing the department's strengths. Candidates should have experience in Catholic higher education, as well as an administrative background. Experience in M.A. or Ph.D. programs is strongly desired.

The Department of Theology strives to enliven the conversation between faith and culture, as students and teachers intellectually engage scripture, tradition, experience, and contemporary thought in search of understanding. The faculty is committed to a theological enterprise which is catholic in the best sense and therefore deeply ecumenical, interreligious, global, and pluralistic. Coming from various faith backgrounds and from many parts of the world, the Theology faculty is diverse, open, collaborative, and dynamic in their experiences, education, and theological perspectives. The successful candidate will be well-versed in the Catholic tradition, committed to the university's Spiritan identity and mission, and willing to lead a department that values transparency, mutual respect, and warm collegiality.

The Theology chair will collaborate with seventeen full-time faculty colleagues in a comprehensive program which has responsibilities in the University and College Core, Honors College, and its undergraduate minors and majors program. The department also offers degrees on the Master's level in Theology, Religious Education, and Pastoral Ministry, and a Ph.D. in Theology. Presently it has affiliations with programs in Nigeria and Kenya, and the successful candidate is expected to develop new global initiatives and affiliations. The department has recently completed a self-study and external review of all its programs.

The chairperson will also provide academic leadership for the department as well as oversee and review long-range departmental goals and objectives. S/he will promote curriculum development, prepare and administer department budget, and provide written evaluation of faculty to the dean for tenure, promotion, retention, and annual performance assessments according to university policies and procedures, as well as recommend the hiring of full-time and part-time faculty members and graduate assistants.

Please send all applications electronically to Theology Chair Search Committee, at facultyjobs@duq.edu. Application deadline is December 5, 2011. Please include a letter of interest and vision accompanied by your *curriculum vitae* and the names of five references with contact numbers and e-mails.

Duquesne University was founded in 1878 by its sponsoring religious community, the Congregation of the Holy Spirit. Duquesne University is Catholic in mission and ecumenical in spirit. Motivated by its Catholic identity, Duquesne values equality of opportunity both as an educational institution and as an employer.

*Nourish Your
Soul, Body
& Heart.*

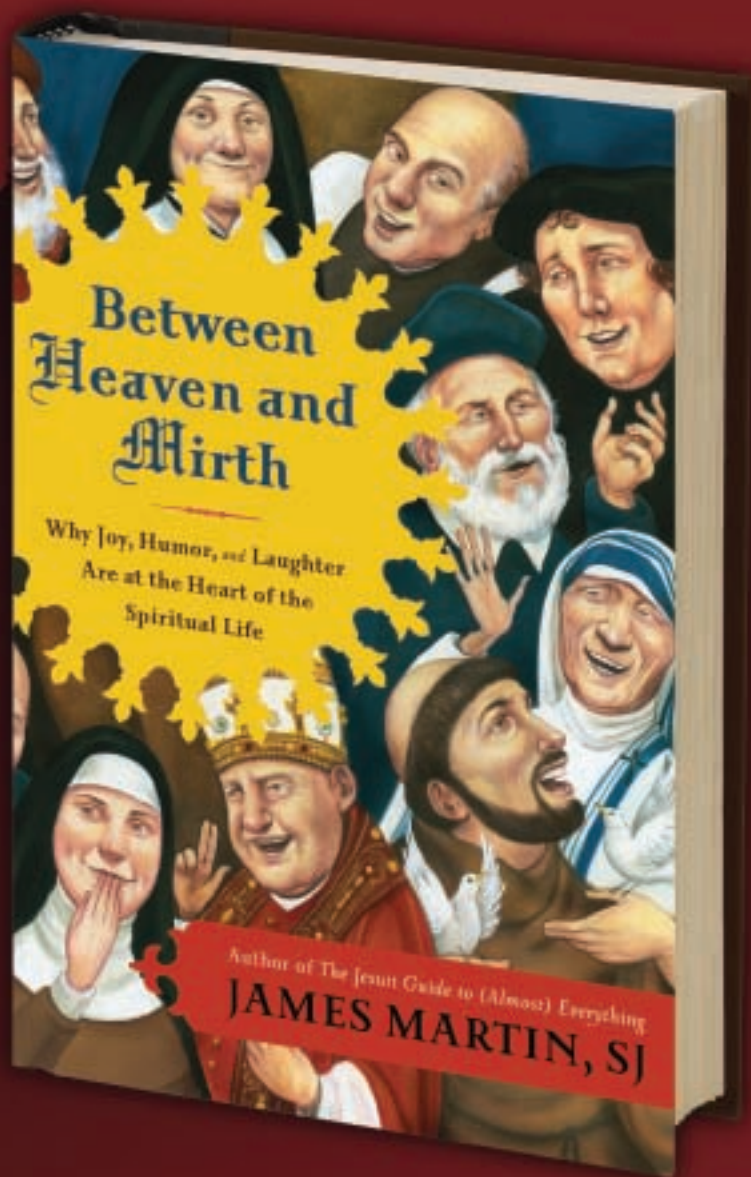
Attend a retreat. Encourage a loved one to participate in a retreat. Give a donation to a retreat house.

Retreat listings are posted on
www.americamagazine.org

Retreat centers can advertise in America's print or online editions, or both. For more information contact Julia Sosa:
ads@americamagazine.org; (212) 515-0102.

*“Between Heaven and Mirth
will make any reader smile...”*

—The Most Reverend Timothy M. Dolan, Archbishop of New York



Read the new book from
The New York Times
bestselling author of
*The Jesuit Guide to
(Almost) Everything.*

Available wherever
books and e-books
are sold.

“Winsome and comical but also provocative and thoughtful...”

—Publishers Weekly

Night Shift

How I learned to take homelessness personally

BY JAMES M. LANG

At 2:00 a.m. I was reading the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* by the red light of the Exit sign burning above my head. I was hoping its stately prose would lull me to sleep—no offense to the wise church fathers who composed the tome—in spite of the less than ideal conditions in which I found myself that Monday morning: in a sleeping bag on a metal cot in the function room of Blessed Sacrament parish in Worcester, Mass.

I was the volunteer overnight chaplaine for three homeless families—all single mothers with small children—staying at the parish for a week under the auspices of the local Interfaith Hospitality Network. Different parishes in the network house, feed and care for families for a week at a time for four to six months on average; parish volunteers provide the food and stay with the families during the morning, afternoon and evening hours and overnight.

Family Promise is the umbrella organization that pioneered this innovative approach to assisting homeless families by sharing the burden for their care among an ecumenical network of local parishes. It currently operates 163 networks in more than 40 states. In 2010, the networks assisted nearly 50,000 homeless children and adults. According to the program's Web site, close to 80 percent of the families that receive shelter in the net-

work eventually land long-term housing, an astonishing success rate.

Numbers like these are heartening, especially in the face of the current deep recession, when the line between having a low income and falling into homelessness has become precariously thin. One disaster—a house fire, a tornado, an unexpected medical problem—can make the difference between being housed and being homeless for those who live on the poverty line.

But promising numbers and heartening thoughts provide little comfort on that long overnight shift; I spend most of it torn between a desire to fall asleep and a realization that it would probably make more sense to get up and do some work in this quiet, which I can never seem to find at home or at the college where I work.

I am especially ill at ease on this night. I had tried to do some spiritual preparation by reading *Loaves and Fishes*, Dorothy Day's chronicle of her commitment to the Catholic Worker movement and her lifelong dedication to the poor and homeless of New York City. I expected to find in her writings a confirmation of my own politically liberal sympathies—exhortations, for example, for government and political leaders to do more for the poor and homeless. Instead, I found her firm support for personal responsibility: a conviction that individuals, families and parishes should bear the burden



for helping our nation's most impoverished citizens.

"It seems to me," Day writes, "that in the future the family—the ideal family—will always try to care for one more. If every family that professed to follow Scriptural teaching, whether Jew, Protestant or Catholic, were to do this, there would be no need for huge institutions, houses of dead storage where human beings waste away in loneliness and despair. Responsibility must return to the parish with a hospice and a center for mutual aid, to the group, to the family, to the individual."

I was taken aback by this argument, which ran not only through her writ-

JAMES M. LANG is an associate professor of English and director of the college honors program at Assumption College, Worcester, Mass.

PHOTO: CNS/DARIO PIGNATELLI, REUTERS

ings but also through her life work. I found it difficult to understand why Day, on the front lines in the struggle against poverty, would not want all hands—including the government’s—pitching in to help. Only later, in the weeks that followed my overnight stay, would I explore Day’s philosophy of Christian anarchism, which helped explain her position.

But beneath that glowing Exit sign, as the night drifted lazily toward the hour when I could head home, I remembered something else—a saying that Day attributed to her co-worker Peter Maurin, who argued for the establishment of “houses of hospitality” for the poor. “We need houses of hospitality,” Maurin used to say, “to give to the rich the opportunity to serve the poor.”

At some point I fell into an uneasy sleep that night. I awoke at 6:30 a.m. and packed up my belongings, while the guest families packed themselves into a

van that took them to their respective jobs, schools or day care centers. On the way home I stopped to pick up donuts and egg sandwiches for my wife and five children. When they had all left for school—my wife to teach, my children to learn—I crawled into my own bed to catch some rest. Before I fell asleep, though, I had begun to see Day’s position more clearly and to understand more deeply the truly Christlike work of organizations like the Interfaith Hospitality Network.

Help given to the poor by government bureaucrats, even if administered in what Day called “houses of dead storage,” can provide the basics to those most in need. But it ought not remove an opportunity many of us need: to provide the service to which Christ has called us. Like Day’s Catholic Worker movement, the Interfaith Hospitality Network offers as much to its volunteers as it does to its homeless families.

To me, homelessness would mean one more faceless man asking for change on a street corner were it not for those nights I spent (not) sleeping in the parish center; it would mean an article on page four of the daily newspaper; it would mean a pleasant argument about politics with my friends, sitting at a party over drinks and appetizers. As a result of those nights, however, homelessness now means a 5-year-old girl with a ponytail and missing front teeth, knocking on my door at 6:30 a.m. and pulling a fairy wand out of a box of toys someone had donated. Because of those nights, homelessness has a face; homelessness has entered my life.

I still believe that government should devote more money and resources to fighting poverty in the United States. But I also understand, thanks to Dorothy Day and the Interfaith Hospitality Network, that I must play my personal part as well. **A**



THE CENTER FOR THE CATHOLIC INTELLECTUAL TRADITION

Director

Duquesne University invites applications and nominations for a full-time Director to lead the Center for the Catholic Intellectual Tradition (CIT). The position begins on July 1, 2012.

The mission of the Center is to animate and strengthen the Catholic identity of the university through research, teaching, and the support of programs focused upon the Catholic intellectual tradition, including the tradition’s commitment to social justice, peace, and the integrity of creation. Understood as a living, dynamic tradition of dialogue between faith and culture, this tradition will be evidenced in every aspect of the university’s academic programs. Duquesne offers undergraduate and graduate degree programs in natural and environmental sciences, leadership, business, nursing, health sciences, pharmacy, law, education, music, and the liberal arts.

For further information about the university, please visit the website: <http://www.duq.edu>

The search seeks individuals with a terminal degree. Candidates for the position should have an established record in higher education with success in teaching and scholarship, expertise in the Catholic intellectual tradition, and appropriate leadership and administrative skills. The Director will pursue an agenda that is cross-disciplinary and integrative, fostering conversation between faith and the disciplines. Rank is open for a tenured or tenure-track position.

For consideration, please send three letters of reference and curriculum vitae, electronically to: **Search Committee Chair, CIT Search; Office of Human Resource Management; Duquesne University; 600 Forbes Avenue; Pittsburgh, PA 15282; Email: facultyjobs@duq.edu**

Review of applicants will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled. There will be telephone interviews with select candidates and finalists will have campus interviews.

Duquesne University was founded in 1878 by its sponsoring religious community, the Congregation of the Holy Spirit. Duquesne University is Catholic in mission and ecumenical in spirit. Motivated by its Catholic identity, Duquesne values equality of opportunity both as an educational institution and as an employer.

America

TO SUBSCRIBE OR RENEW

- New subscription Renewal

Yearly rates are \$56 for each subscription. Add \$30 for postage, handling and GST on Canadian orders. Add \$54 for foreign subscriptions. Payment in U.S. funds only.

- Payment enclosed Bill me

On occasion **America** gives permission to other organizations to use our list for promotional purposes. If you do not want to receive these promotions, contact our List Manager at our New York offices.

FOR CHANGE OF ADDRESS AND RENEWAL:

Please attach the mailing label from the front cover when writing about service or change of address. Allow 3 to 4 weeks for change of address to take effect. Thank you.

EA0605

Name

Address

City

State

ZIP

E-mail

Mail to: **America**

P.O. Box 293159, Kettering, OH 45429-9159
or call 1-800-627-9533
or visit www.americamagazine.org

BOOKS & CULTURE

TELEVISION | MAURICE TIMOTHY REIDY

TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

Robert Barron's 'Catholicism'

Even by the standards set by Ken Burns, 10 hours is a hefty length for a documentary. Then again, the series under review is not telling the story of baseball or the Civil War but of Catholicism, an enormously rich tradition that, 10 years into a career in the Catholic press, I am still learning about. When you consider that *The New Catholic Encyclopedia* clocks in at 12,000 pages, 10 hours seems almost slight.

Produced by Word on Fire

Catholic Ministries, *Catholicism* is written and hosted by the Rev. Robert Barron, a priest of the Archdiocese of Chicago who teaches at Mundelein Seminary. Father Barron is best known (at least until now) for Web videos in which he engages with various cultural trends, from the new atheism to the theology of "The Dark Knight." He is both a genial host and a stout defender of the church, who is not afraid to acknowledge its failings. "Catholicism" is a media project far

beyond anything Father Barron has done before. In addition to its impressive length, the documentary boasts exquisite cinematography and enormous range. Teaming up with Matt Leonard of "The Today Show," Father Barron set out to convey the universal nature of the church. The film hops from Mexico City to Israel to Uganda to Rome to the Philippines and a handful of other destinations, with a not unexpected stop in John Paul II's Krakow along the way. More than once, I was put in mind of Niall Ferguson striding across Europe to explain World War II or international monetary policy. (At times, the production can play like "Where in the World is Father Barron?")

Rev. Robert Barron on location in Ephesus, Turkey



Father Barron has a talent for television: He speaks confidently and cogently on camera. (And shots of him

gazing contemplatively into the distance are thankfully few.) He is an engaging conversation partner, though not one with whom everyone will always agree. Students of Ignatian spirituality, the Second Vatican Council or contemporary theology, for example, may find his treatment of the faith incomplete. Of course, no documentary, even of this length, could touch upon every tradition within the church. Yet with such a grand title, "Catholicism" invites some argument about what should be included.

A shortened version of "Catholicism" aired on several PBS affiliates in October, though at least one station declined to show it because of its explicitly Christian content. And this documentary is, indeed, a work of apologetics. It may look like your standard slice of public television, but Father Barron is not interested in an objective, clinical examination of the faith. He wants you to, as he says several times in the film, "fall in love with Christ." And few media projects can claim they came about thanks to the intercession of St. Thérèse of Lisieux. (Watch the final credits.)

The series, then, is an exercise in evangelization as much as education, and one of its chief accomplishments is that it is, in the words of George Weigel, "rooted in friendship with Jesus Christ." Every element of this story, from the Annunciation and the conversion of St. Paul to an examination of the Eucharist and the history of the saints, is refracted through that lens. At a time when the church sometimes seems as polarized as the political culture, "Catholicism" is an essential reminder that we are all brothers and sisters in Christ.

From a production standpoint, "Catholicism" is nearly flawless. The Parthenon, St. John Lateran in Rome, Lourdes, the shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Lough Derg—these are just some of the sites the production team visits. (No green screen for Father Barron.) The documentary is a little heavy on European cathedrals, though the team does visit the United States, with a particularly moving visit to the corner of Fourth and Walnut Streets in Louisville, Ky., to discuss the spirituality of Thomas Merton. Father Barron also tells the American stories of Peter Maurin, Dorothy Day and St. Katharine Drexel.

Individual believers play a large role in "Catholicism." This is not a documentary about councils and papal encyclicals but about men and women who sought to follow Christ in the unique circumstances of their times. The project's patron saints, if they may be so called, are Thérèse of Lisieux and Thomas Aquinas, doctors of the church whose paths to God could not have been more different. Pope John Paul II also plays a leading role, not only in the story of his own life but also in the spirit of heady evangelization that infuses the series. Father Barron is not interested in dwelling on the problems facing the church. There is nothing here on the priest shortage and only passing mention of the clergy sexual abuse scandal. Instead, he focuses his energy and obvious passion on the graces the church provides. His discussion of the Eucharist is especially affecting, the only time I noticed that his voice cracked with emotion. How appropriate.

"Catholicism" is likely to find its way into parish halls across the country. It is being heavily marketed in the Catholic press, and the filmmakers clearly hope it will be used as a catechetical tool. Some of the episodes will work nicely in that regard. In particular, the introduction to Sts. Peter and Paul and the theological explanation of

Weather

Tonight thunder hangs on the sky
like God's underbelly.

We soon forget the deep rubbings
of crickets in the scorched night

and God becomes kabuki
in a white mask, her performance

crackling over the hushed audience
of earth. Lightning cloaks

the black bones of night,
fastens the hidden folds of stars.

The night my father died, I'd watched
for storms, some cosmic reflection

of his demise, this human being
of gigantic proportions, now unscripted,

consigned to the wings, insensible body
shrouded in sheets of electric white.

But no tempest, just tropical heat
in the wrong hemisphere,

mute claustrophobia, little wooden
flutes of humidity.

D O N N A P U C C I A N I

DONNA PUCCIANI has published three books of poetry, the latest being *Chasing the Saints* (*Virtual Artists' Collective*).

the liturgy are superb. Other episodes, like "Ineffable Mystery of God," may require a bit more background in the Catholic tradition. The soul-searing images of Catholic art and architecture might even prompt some viewers to consider conversion, just as, for centuries, a trip to Europe often awakened searchers to the beauty of the Catholic tradition.

One virtue of Father Barron's easy-going style is that it invites conversation, even disagreement. After spending 10 hours with him, I am comfortable enough to mount a few friendly arguments. I was puzzled, for one thing, by his decision to highlight the church's teachings on angels and devils. Are these essential to our faith? Including them seems like a deliberate move to emphasize the "otherness" of Catholicism. In discussing the doctrine of purgatory, Father Barron visits Lough Derg in Ireland and commends the spiritual athleticism of the pilgrims who walk without shoes on the island's harsh terrain and stay awake for days as a form of penance. Yet why feature Lough Derg and not any other retreat house or movement, unless to reassert the value of a certain pre-Vatican II Catholicism?

The Catholic Church presented in "Catholicism" comes across as a bit old-fashioned. Consider the art and music. After 10 hours of stained glass windows and Gregorian chant, I found myself yearning for kitschy church mosaics and the strains of the St. Louis Jesuits. The cathedrals of Europe are awe-inspiring, but they can seem far removed from the reality of parish worship today. It is wonderful to contemplate that we share a faith with the men who crafted the rose windows at Notre Dame and the African martyrs who died in Uganda. And "Catholicism" is a valuable reminder of this rich patrimony. Yet in general the film fails to convey that the church is a living tradition, one that continues to inspire artists, musicians and writers, as well as young the-

Strategic
Planning

Leadership
Search

Leadership
Development

Fund
Development

Peace-
making/
Mediation

Focus: Your Future

Are you looking for . . .

- . . . a strategic plan for moving your organization into a vital and hopeful future?
- . . . search processes that bring you new and dynamic leaders to guide you into the future?
- . . . leadership development to deepen the vision, skills and capacity of your leaders?
- . . . new funding resources to support your re-vitalized future?
- . . . strategies for dealing with change and managing conflict as you make your hoped-for future a reality?

Call The Reid Group

We have extensive experience helping Catholic dioceses, parishes, religious communities, colleges and universities and professional associations meet their unique challenges.

Contact us to start transforming your challenges into opportunities for a strong and vibrant future.

The Reid Group, 12535 15th Ave. NE, Suite 211, Seattle WA 98125
800-916-3472 / 206-432-3565 / info@TheReidGroup.biz



Transforming Challenges Into Opportunities

Partners: John Reid, Tom Reid
and Maureen Gallagher

america

OUR FUTURE DEPENDS ON YOU!

**PLEASE
REMEMBER
AMERICA
IN YOUR WILL**

**OUR LEGAL TITLE IS:
AMERICA PRESS INC.,
106 WEST 56th STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10019**

Seek Wisdom

Taizé Contemplative Retreat
December 2-4
Melinda and Bruce Gardiner

Buddhist Meditation Retreat
January 27-29, 2012
Roshi Pat Enkyo O'Hara

Contemplative Retreat
in the Quaker Tradition
February 24-26, 2012
Linda Chidsey & Carolyn Moon

Sexuality & Spirituality
March 23-25, 2012
Donald Bisson, FMS

WISDOM HOUSE
229 East Litchfield Rd.
Litchfield, CT 06759
860-567-3163
www.wisdomhouse.org
info@wisdomhouse.org

LOOKING FOR A JOB

IN THE CATHOLIC SECTOR?
HIRING AT YOUR
CHURCH OR SCHOOL?
GET THE WORD OUT WITH
AMERICA!

Job Listings are accepted for publication in America's print and web editions.

For more information contact Julia Sosa at jsosa@americamagazine.org Telephone: 212-515-0102 or visit:

WWW.AMERICAMAGAZINE.ORG

America



ologians and lay ministers. Shots of worshippers in Mexico and the Philippines are not enough to capture the vitality of the church today.

At several points, Father Barron argues for the importance of spiritual heroism; he believes that Catholics should actively seek to be saints. He is right that out of false humility, we often shy away from seeking spiritual greatness. Sometimes in his telling, however, spiritual heroism is presented as a kind of warfare against the world. In explaining Jesus as the "Davidic warrior," Father Barron argues that Jesus went *mano a mano* with the powers of his day and won. Later he cites the Egyptian obelisk in St. Peter's Square—probably the last thing Peter saw before he was crucified—as a "gentle, in-your-face" reminder that Christianity prevailed over its enemies. Setting aside the question of whether the hedonist spirit of early Rome is really dead, this portrayal has the unfortunate effect of presenting

Christianity as fundamentally in opposition to the world.

Of course, there are times when the church must take a stand against the culture; but the world is full of riches, too. In his commentaries for "Word on Fire," Father Barron deftly engages with that world, offering incisive cultural analysis of books, journalism and film. Yet "Catholicism" offers little indication that its heroes found wisdom outside of the tradition—that Thomas Merton, for example, was studying Eastern religions when he died. Nor does it give much sense that sometimes the church itself stood in opposition to its most fervent believers. These details make for a messier story, but they also show how truly alive Catholicism is.

Like the church itself, "Catholicism" is sometimes a source of frustration; but it is also a testament to the beauty at the heart of the tradition.

MAURICE TIMOTHY REIDY is online editor of *America*.



The Society of Jesus
in the United States

Responding to the
Call of Christ.

Everyone has a great calling.
Let us help you discern yours.

www.Jesuit.org

ATTORNEY AT LARGE

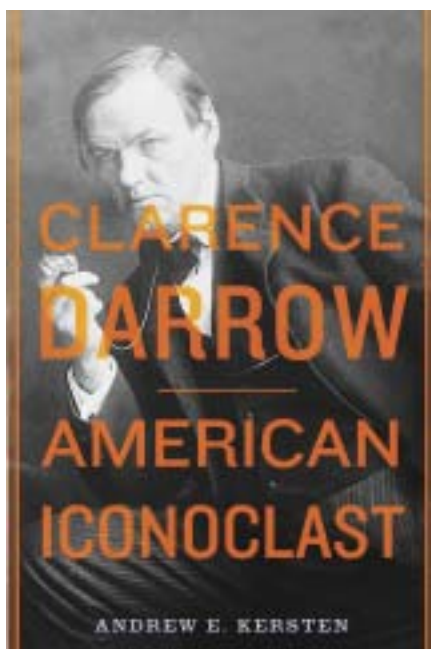
CLARENCE DARROW American Iconoclast

By Andrew E. Kersten
Hill and Wang. 320p \$30

When we think about the American legend Clarence Darrow, the images in our heads conjure a turn-of-the-century figure larger than life, a lawyer who fought for the underdog and tackled controversial issues of his day.

In *Clarence Darrow: American Iconoclast*, Andrew E. Kersten, a professor of history at the University of Wisconsin, reveals these known images of Darrow and a lot more. Kersten relates an American ideological journey that is passionate and opinionated yet not always consistent or smooth. Darrow's journey resonates with the ideological struggles our society experiences now, with many of them with roots in Darrow's time. Whether it is Darrow's ability to manage media trials, his struggles over supporting a war despite basic pacifist beliefs or his fierce frustration with being unable to convince the public that union struggles were important to their own well-being, Kersten portrays a man who could easily walk alongside us, struggling with our issues. How Darrow chose to think his way through big issues was as important to him as his ultimate choices, and these can teach us some important lessons.

Lesson 1. Surround yourself with people willing to take the intellectual journey, even if (especially when) they do not agree with all of your beliefs. Darrow was raised in a freethinking household by parents who bucked the norms of their small Midwestern town. In Chicago Darrow created a salon of thinkers to discuss and debate issues, and they included a diverse range of views. Today people tend to listen only to those who share their



views, but Clarence Darrow modeled a very different approach. He had strong views but was famously open-minded. As Kersten writes: "...at no time in his life did Clarence Darrow subscribe to any clearly defined grand philosophical tradition. He remained dogmatically antidogmatic throughout his life. But he held dear a constellation of ideas and political commitments."

Lesson 2. Focus on a few issues at a time; do not spread yourself too thin. Darrow worked on many causes

throughout his long life. They included supporting union activists, working to abolish the death penalty, establishing mental illness defenses, advocating penal reform, advocating for safety in industry, advocating against prohibition, fighting for civil rights for African-Americans, fighting governmental intrusion into religious beliefs (including the right not to believe in any religion) advocating on behalf of government involvement in World War I and then, afterwards, advocating against the government for limiting the free speech rights of those who were against war.

Darrow worked as a political appointee, lawyer for companies, lawyer for famous and not-so-famous "cause" clients, public speaker, author of both fiction and non-fiction. But at any given time, Darrow limited himself to a few issues. His priorities changed, as did his methods for expressing his views, but limiting his work kept him influential and focused.

Lesson 3. Do not be afraid to change your mind publicly about issues. Darrow was always an original thinker. Darrow thought for himself, evaluated data and reached his own conclusions. Sometimes this process led him to disagree with important allies, at some cost to his personal and professional standing. One famous example was his support of America's entry into World

Are you experiencing problems with the on-time delivery of America?



Postal regulations require that there be at least three instances of late or no mail delivery before requesting a publication watch.

You should notify your local post office and make a complaint and/or request a publication watch. You may also notify us at (212) 581-4640, or by e-mail at subscriptions@americamagazine.org and we will contact the USPS.

War I, which he believed was necessary to stop fascists from bullying ordinary workers in Europe. Most of Darrow's friends were against the war, seeing it as large corporate interests pitted against each other. Darrow was public in his support of the war and alienated many friends. After the war, he was equally vigorous in defending antiwar groups against criminal sedition laws, alienating his government friends. He changed his mind about feminism, first supporting equal rights for women and then opposing women's voting rights. Whether one agreed with his views or not, Darrow was always thinking for himself and unafraid to take a stand or change his mind.

Lesson 4. Hone your craft and give 100 percent of your talents. Darrow was an excellent lawyer and a great speaker. On behalf of paid or pro bono clients, he was brilliant. He worked a case thoroughly, with careful strategizing and analysis. A professional is someone who gets the job done through hard work and excellent craft, always keeping the client's goals in mind.

Lesson 5. Sometimes a public person has to rest, regenerate and rejuvenate (what Kersten calls Darrow taking care of Darrow). Darrow lived more than 80 years. His work in politics and in the courtroom were stressful, and Darrow suffered from "dark moods." There were periods when he chose less stressful ways to earn a living—public speaking, writing or taking on clients just for the money, for example. While he was criticized by some when he retreated from causes, respite always brought him back to important work.

Lesson 6. What goes around comes around. Hard-to-solve issues in American discourse are still hard to solve, but they are worth solving. Should lawyers shape media perception of big trials? Should unions be supported? Should religion play a role in public life? Should the government legislate to regulate controlled sub-

stances? Should the state execute people? Are prisons meant to reform or punish? Do all citizens enjoy equal rights? Darrow tackled some of the hardest issues of his day, which remain some of the hardest issues of our day. But there are differences. It is helpful to remember that in the late 1800s, labor was fighting for an eight-hour work shift, fighting for basic safety standards (many workers were killed in industry), fighting to keep children out of the workforce and fighting against the company town, where a worker could never free himself of debt. Many of the core positions for and against unions can be seen today in states discussing elimination of state employee collective bargaining or in the rhetoric blaming union wages for industry decline. The battle over whether to tax "millionaires and bil-

lionaires" follows these lines. Reading how Darrow analyzed issues helps frame them in a historical context.

In addition to these lessons, Kersten reveals Darrow's human foibles—his difficulties with women, which unfortunately may have contributed to his philosophical distancing from feminism; his sometimes naked political ambition; and, most damning, his possible (some think probable) participation in bribing jurors, for which he was indicted but acquitted. Kersten does not ignore these significant flaws but weaves them into a human portrait. Darrow offers us not only lessons to follow but also lessons about what not to follow.

KIMBERLY E. O'LEARY is a professor of law at Thomas Cooley Law School, Lansing, Mich.

JAMES T. KEANE

THE EVERYDAY POET

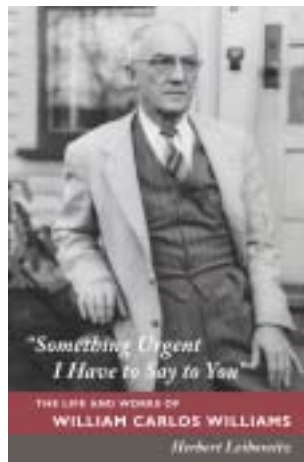
'SOMETHING URGENT I HAVE TO SAY TO YOU' **The Life and Works of William Carlos Williams**

By Herbert Leibowitz
Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 528p \$40

The life of William Carlos Williams would have provided enough material for a full biography even if the man had never put pen to paper. A trusted physician known simply as Doc to generations of patients in Rutherford, N.J., he shared correspondence and friendship with everyone from Ford Madox Ford, Charles Olson and Allen Ginsberg to Man Ray, Denise

Levertov and Marcel Duchamp. A publicly devoted family man, he married the sister of his first love and spent the rest of his life betraying her by his philandering. A patriotic American (son of an English father and a Puerto Rican mother) who promoted a home-grown literary and cultural voice, he found himself accused of traitorous political associations just as his status as an American icon reached its peak. A chronicler and observer of the quotidian and the concrete, he counted as one of his closest confidants the very epitome of their opposite in Ezra Pound.

Of course, it is as a poet that we remember Williams, not just for his



“The Red Wheelbarrow” (endlessly anthologized) or “This Is Just to Say” (endlessly quoted by hipsters every time they see a few plums), but for his masterworks, like the sprawling five-book *Paterson*, the later “Asphodel, That Greeny Flower,” or even his early Imagist collection *Kora in Hell*. Most significantly, Williams is recognized as the leading American Modernist poet, an innovator who rejected the poetic conventions of the time in favor of a distinctly American kind of verse. “No ideas but in things” has been lifted from his work as a kind of slogan for his poetry, and Williams also resisted the urge (so common among his peers) to seed his work with literary allusions or to force the rhythms of American diction into traditional poetic forms.

In *Something Urgent I Have to Say to You*, Herbert Leibowitz makes liberal use of the poet’s own prolific verse to illustrate and expand on the biographical details of Williams’s life and times. That life “was interwoven with his literary aspirations and achievements,” Leibowitz notes. “We cannot understand one without reference to the other.”

Leibowitz, the founder and editor of *Parnassus: Poetry in Review* and the author of *Fabricating Lives: Explorations in American Autobiography*, is not the first to undertake a biography of Williams (although Paul Mariani’s *William Carlos Williams: A New World Naked* is now three decades old); but his focus on the degree to which Williams’s poetry can reveal detail and nuance about his life makes this biography an important contribution to our understanding of the man the critic Randall Jarrell called the “America of Poets.”

At its best, this close scouring of Williams’s poetry reveals startling insights into realms of his life that would be hard to glean from simple biographical detail. Leibowitz introduces new perspectives in this way on everything from Williams’s frequent



Our priests are messengers of hope

A friendship waits to be born between a family in Illinois and a little girl living in poverty in Honduras. Before long a teenage boy in the Philippines and a parish youth group in Connecticut are going to become acquainted through the exchange of encouraging letters. In Idaho a woman with grandchildren of her own will soon enter into a blessed relationship with an elderly woman in need of help in Kenya.

All they need is a CFCA priest to bring them together.

The priests who work with CFCA celebrate Eucharist in parishes across the country while sharing the good news of our Hope for a Family sponsorship program. They travel for weekend assignments only and accept as many or as few assignments as they like. We especially need bilingual priests, and we offer just compensation.

If you would like to learn more about preaching for CFCA, contact Tim Deveney at (800) 875-6564 or cfcaoutreach@cfcausa.org.



Christian Foundation for Children and Aging is an international movement of people who support and encourage children, youth and the aging in developing countries. Founded by lay Catholics acting on the Gospel call to serve the poor, CFCA works with people of all faiths. To learn more, visit www.hopeforafamily.org.

infidelity (both physical and intellectual) toward his long-suffering wife, Floss, who read on the page about affairs and misdeeds whose details she had never been told, to his withering takes on his own poetry, which he once attacked as “waves like words all broken—/ a sameness of lifting or falling mood,” to the ways in which his creative and mental processes prefigured his 1953 committal to a mental hospital.

At its worst, the technique risks too much engagement with a kind of unfettered psychobiography and the language of pop psychoanalysis. Leibowitz informs us on occasion that Williams’s verse demonstrates that he “never got over” some of his conflicts with his father, that his partnership with Floss was a “blatant example of marrying on the rebound” or that he was engaged in an “oceanic’ struggle for dominance of himself between two kinds of desire.” It is the kind of language Williams himself would have loathed (he also distrusted psychoanalysis), specifically because of its flight from the concrete into vague

generalization and cliché.

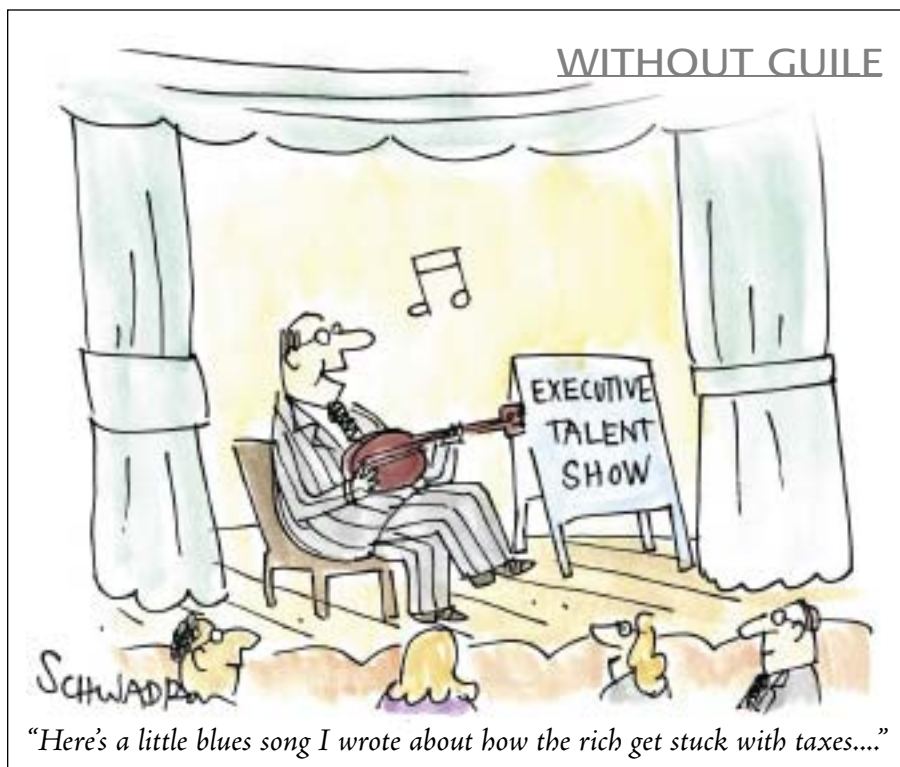
Perhaps only psychology, however, could attempt to make sense of Ezra Pound, whose presence in Williams’s life was both entertaining and maddening; dare we call him the consummate “frenemy”? Leibowitz aptly depicts Pound as a sort of perfect villain—a boorish, needy, self-aggrandizing lout who by turns praised Williams for his poetic genius and ridiculed him as a hopeless country bumpkin. One cannot escape the sense that without Pound’s looming presence in his life over the decades, Williams would have been twice as happy a man and half as successful a poet. Ironically, Williams’s own struggles with depression and mental illness in the later years of his life were paralleled by Pound’s own public descent into supposed madness, in a desperate attempt to escape the hangman’s noose.

Another complex and puzzling character in Williams’s life was Allen Ginsberg, that native of Paterson who saw Williams as a mentor and credited him with much of his first poetic success. Their correspondence and friend-

ship made me curious about an unexplored area of Williams’s career: the relationship between Williams’s poetic innovations and desire to represent the concrete and the everyday, and the rise of the American folk musicians (with a similar emphasis on the local and the quotidian) to prominence just as Williams was reaching his greatest recognition in the 1940s and 1950s. Ironically, just 16 miles from Paterson, N.J., stood Greystone Hospital, where the great American folk music pioneer Woody Guthrie lived from 1956 to 1961 as his health declined. While much has been made of the back-and-forth influence between Ginsberg and Bob Dylan, for example, would it be too far a stretch to imagine some of Williams’s efforts at representing an American diction and imagination were influenced by Woody Guthrie, and vice versa?

Like Guthrie, Williams’s politics were decidedly to the left (he is practically alone among the Modernists in this regard), and the whispered suggestion by certain red-baiters that Williams harbored Communist sympathies eventually cost him a consultancy with the Library of Congress in the early 1950s. That disappointment, and the ensuing public tempest, seems to have been a primary cause (along with a stroke) of the depression that caused him to be hospitalized in 1952. Six years later he suffered the third of a series of strokes that left him increasingly incapacitated, struggling to read or write, a phase of his existence that Denise Levertov described as “a slow ending to a life so quick and quickening.” His death in 1963 had little of the romantic or poetic flourish about it, but as Leibowitz notes about his funeral, it fulfilled Williams’s “profound conviction that life should not copy art.”

JAMES T. KEANE, S.J., a former associate editor of *America*, is a student at the Jesuit School of Theology, Berkeley, Calif.



CARTOON BY HARLEY SCHWADRON

LETTERS

Make Charities Catholic

Re "Fighting Bias" (Current Comment, 10/31): The federal government's recent denial of funds for the U. S. Bishops' Office of Migration and Refugee Services should come as no surprise. Whoever controls funds controls how the funding agencies operate. This is nothing new.

Before governmental grant restrictions there were limits placed on local Catholic agencies by United Way and other community fund-raising groups that resulted in repeated denials of funding until the local C.Y.O. and Catholic Charities groups ceased asking.

Some very deserving programs no longer exist not just because they lost community funds. Those programs had seen no need to maintain their connection with the local Catholic community and to seek its support. But when they turned to parishioners for assistance, they found that they had become unknown entities to local Catholics. Catholic charitable programs that depend on government funding for their existence are seen by many people, Catholics included, as no longer Catholic or charitable. They are contracted programs of the government.

It is time for the Catholic Church in the United States to wean itself away from the government and return to Catholics for support of its works of charity. This may result in fewer programs offered, but at least they will be Catholic charities.

(MSGR.) MIKE BRAUN
Bakersfield, Calif.

They Won't Be Back

I assure you that Valerie Schultz's "Raised on Faith" (10/17) is accurate. It is as if she were describing half of my adult children.

All seven were raised in the faith, Sunday Mass included. My wife and I even administered a C.C.D. school in

our parish. Now several of our children lead Christian lives and show concern for their fellow men and the common good, but they have given up on the church. I always hope for their return, but with the focus of the new Roman Missal being a throwback to the pre-Vatican II past, I doubt they will be back. This is not the way to engage the younger generation in the lives they live.

ART MAURER
Penfield, N.Y.

Read Yourself Back

Re Valerie Schutz's "Raised on Faith" (10/17): Hope is not lost. The lost faith of Catholics raised with a sense of social justice can be regained through contemplation. Francis of Assisi, Dorothy Day and Charles de Foucauld, models of charity, knew the church was not perfect, but they loved

it. As I read their life stories I could look past the annoyances that are part of human institutions. Some days I would have to give up the soup kitchen work to concentrate on spiritual reading. Unfortunately there is little encouragement of serious reading in either the church or secular culture.

BARBARA SIROVATKA
Brookfield, Ill.

Arrogant and Presumptuous

I appreciate America's openness to a variety of viewpoints. Every issue is informative and inspirational. "Life or Death Decisions" (10/31), by Charles F. MacCarthy, M.D., and John P. MacCarthy, M.D., O.Praem., gave me an insight into their thinking.

The two physicians explain that medical professionals will not ask the opinion of a bishop "unless the bishop is a friend or has participated in ethics

To send a letter to the editor we recommend using the link that appears below articles on **America's** Web site, 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. They should be brief and include the writer's name, postal address and daytime phone number. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

CLASSIFIED

Parish Missions

INSPIRING, DYNAMIC PREACHING: parish missions, retreats, days of recollection; www.sabbathretreats.org.

Retreats

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

Translator

SPANISH TRANSLATOR. Luis Baudry-Simon, specialized in religion/human sciences, will translate into Spanish any book, article, essay, blog or Web site. Also available for Spanish copywriting/editing and S.E.O. Contact: luisbaudrysimon@gmail.com, (815) 461-0321.

Wills

Please remember America in your will. Our legal title is: America Press Inc., 106 West 56th Street, New York, NY 10019.

America classified. Classified advertisements are accepted for publication in either the print version of America or on our Web site, www.americamagazine.org. Ten-word minimum. Rates are per word per issue. 1-5 times: \$1.50; 6-11 times: \$1.28; 12-23 times: \$1.23; 24-41 times: \$1.17; 42 times or more: \$1.12. For an additional \$30, your print ad will be posted on America's Web site for one week. The flat rate for a Web-only classified ad is \$150 for 30 days. Ads may be submitted by e-mail to: ads@americamagazine.org; by fax to (928) 222-2107; by postal mail to: Classified Department, America, 106 West 56th St., New York, NY 10019. To post a classified ad online, go to our home page and click on "Advertising" at the top of the page. We do not accept ad copy over the phone. MasterCard and Visa accepted. For more information call: (212) 515-0102.

committee discussions." It is fair to summarize their view: they will not consult a bishop out of respect for his teaching office.

I did not expect open disrespect for the office of a bishop from Catholic doctors. I was even more surprised by their arrogance and presumptuousness. They cannot imagine saying to a patient that they have talked to the bishop about this. They say the patient's response would be: "The bishop! What does he know about this? You are the doctor."

I know at least a few Catholics who as patients would not react in this way. In the face of the attitude of your authors, one of whom is a priest, I find the decision of the Bishop of Phoenix easier to understand.

DAVID BURTON
Steubenville, Ohio

Audience Gasps and a Great Pumpkin

"Patrons and Companions," by James Martin, S.J. (11/7), is one of the best

explanations I have read of what makes a saint and why we need them after their death. His tales of the bishop, the gasps of the audience and the Great Pumpkin story show the ridiculous ways in which the church has propagated a false image of sainthood so polished and farcical that it resembles a fairy tale rather than real life. It is refreshing to see an example of how a priest can stand up to a bishop. Behind the humor there is a serious message.

PHIL EWING
United Kingdom

God Plays Favorites?

Stories of saints and miracles, as discussed in "Patrons and Companions" (11/7), confuse me. What are we really to make of the saints beyond seeing them as role models? Why would God favor those who have friends or school children in C.C.D. to pray for them and dismiss the needs of others simply because they do not have that kind of support? Does God play favorites?

ANNE CHAPMAN
Los Angeles, Calif.

Bury Those Talents

The Word column "Unmasking Greed," by Barbara E. Reid, O.P. (11/7), is a very different way of looking at the parable of the talents. This is encouraging, because the move to the right in both the United States and Canada suggests that government should be more libertarian. Individuals are encouraged to want more money than they need. Those who expect entitlement are going to be disappointed as social systems are destroyed by Conservatives or Republicans, depending on which country you are referring to. The movement for less government and more protection of the rich is a way to defeat the Gospel, which calls on us to love our neighbor as ourselves.

VIRGINIA EDMAN
Toronto, Ont., Canada

Asymmetric War

Your editorial "Conscience in the Mud" (10/31) does not give its sources for the so-called negative view of the United States in the world. Are they the usual suspects who hate because of ideology or envy? Your evaluation of the drones is flawed because you do not accurately perceive the moral circumstances. This is asymmetric, not traditional warfare. The enemy is militant Islam intent on destroying the West and specifically the United States. The enemy relies on host countries like Pakistan. Drones target these enemies and operate within the parameters of Catholic social teaching by limiting damage to combatants and avoiding innocent civilians. Until you see this, your analysis will remain flawed.

FRANK C. TANTILLO
Freehold, N.J.

TOOLBOX for PASTORAL MANAGEMENT

A Seton Hall University and Leadership Roundtable Initiative
The management tools you'll need for the parish your parishioners deserve

The Toolbox for Pastoral Leadership is for new Catholic pastors who understand that management skills are essential for creating and sustaining the dynamic and vibrant parish that is vital for living out the Gospel.

Learn more and download a registration form at
TheLeadershipRoundtable.org/Toolbox



Jacksonville, Florida
Marywood Retreat Center
January 8-13, 2012

Long Branch, New Jersey
San Alfonso Retreat House
July 15-20, 2012

Each seminar is **FREE** for the first 30 new pastors to register.

For information, please call Father Paul Holmes at (973) 495-7817 or email paul.holmes@shu.edu.

America (ISSN 0002-7049) is published weekly (except for 12 combined issues: Jan. 3-10-17, 24-31, May 2-9, June 6-13, 20-27, July 4-11, 18-25, Aug. 1-8, 15-22, Aug. 29-Sept. 5, Nov. 28-Dec. 5, Dec. 19-26) by America Press, Inc., 106 West 56th Street, New York, NY 10019. Periodicals postage is paid at New York, N.Y., and additional mailing offices. Business Manager: Lisa Pope; Circulation: Judith Palmer, (212) 581-4640. Subscriptions: United States, \$56 per year; add U.S. \$30 postage and GST (#131870719) for Canada; or add U.S. \$54 per year for international priority airmail. Postmaster: Send address changes to: America, 106 West 56th St. New York, NY 10019. Printed in U.S.A.

What Are You Watching For?

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT (B), NOV. 27, 2011

Readings Is 63:16-19, 64:2-7; Ps 80:2-19; 1 Cor 1:3-9; Mk 13:33-37

“What I say to you, I say to all: ‘Watch!’” (Mk 13:37)

Advent, from the Latin *adventus*, means arrival or coming. Something is coming, and we are commanded by the Lord to “Watch!” What kind of Advent are we watching for?

The first reading from Isaiah is a lament of a community returned from exile. Instead of being exhilarated by returning home, they are disheartened. The prayer has everything from repentance (“Our guilt carries us away like the wind”) to appeal to God’s memory (“Return for the sake of your servants, the tribes of your inheritance”) to blame (“You let us wander...and harden our hearts”).

Perhaps the most dramatic line of this prayer, however, is the plea: “Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down, with the mountains quaking before you...” Isaiah’s call for God’s direct, definitive intervention in history reflects an often repeated expectation of “the Day of the Lord.” The Gospel reading from Mark’s apocalyptic chapter aligns with this expectation. Jesus speaks of destruction, abominations, false messiahs and finally his rending the sky and coming down: “And then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in the clouds’ with great power and glory...” (13:26).

Jesus ends this discourse with the passage we read today, a parable about a man going on a journey and leaving

his servants in charge, each with his own work. The gatekeeper, and indeed all the servants, are commanded to watch for fear that their owner would return when they least expect him and are least prepared.

At the beginning of Advent, the church provides Scripture readings that point us to Christ’s second coming. There need not be any confusion here. Advent is, for sure, a preparation for the celebration of the Incarnation, the humble coming. It directs our thoughts to that moment in history when God became one with us, and God’s eternity one with our destiny. Human history and even time itself became redeemed at that moment. Christ’s return—the glorious coming—then is a completion that God established in his person by the Incarnation. Both looking back at the Incarnation and looking forward to the second coming are really two aspects of the same eternal gaze.

That same gaze, the same eternal truth we see, is ours now. Since we already possess Christ, whose Spirit dwells within, we possess our own future glory in him. Our future is Christ. In this sense, eternity is already within us, already part of us, already recreating us and drawing us to the glory that is already ours, though not fully realized. Now is the advent of Christ in our lives—the hidden coming.



What shall we do with this eternity in time? The first thing to remember is that the servants continued to work as they anticipated the master’s return and that the gatekeeper continued to watch. Watching and working are both important expressions. One takes a contemplative posture and the other an active one. We might want to quiet ourselves during this Advent season with more prayer. We might also allow our-

PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

- Take some time to think about a moment in your life that was particularly graced.
- Consider how that moment helped you to understand your past. How does it affect your future?
- Make an Advent commitment to God, a short-term vow, to listen to and watch more closely the movements of the Spirit in your life.

selves to become more eager to respond to God’s work of transforming this world and drawing it to himself (1 Cor 15:24-28).

Working and watching imply each other: If every moment in history draws meaning from God, then nothing is negligible and every thread is a part of a pattern God weaves. Authentic action already is divine encounter. Paying attention is both a religious duty and a sacred possibility.

PETER FELDMIEIER

PETER FELDMIEIER is the Murray/Bacik Professor of Catholic Studies at the University of Toledo.

FROM AMERICA PRESS MERRY CHRISTMAS

Searching for the perfect Christmas gift for a loved one?

Give the gift that feeds the mind and the spirit!

This Christmas you can give **America** at the special Christmas gift price of only \$36 for one full year.

THAT'S OVER 75% OFF THE COVER PRICE!

Share all the insight, hope and inspiration that you have come to love with this very special gift.

Know someone who loves the Internet? Perhaps they'd like a Web-only subscription.

Give a Web-only subscription this Christmas at the special price of only \$18 for one full year!

With your order the recipient will receive an announcement.

To take advantage of either offer, call our toll free number: 1-800-627-9533

(mention code BC3180), or fill in the cut-out form below and mail it to:

America Subscription Department, PO Box 293159, Kettering OH 45429-9159.



Code: BC3180

For additional orders, please include each name and address on a separate sheet of paper.

To cover postage and GST, please add US \$30 for Canadian subscriptions.

All subscriptions payable in US funds only. All new subscriptions will commence 4 to 6 weeks after receipt. Offer valid on new subscriptions only. Offer expires Jan. 31, 2012.

Yes! Please start a one-year print gift subscription at the special rate of \$36 for:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail (optional) _____

BILLING INFORMATION

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail (optional) _____

Yes! Please start a one-year Web-only gift subscription at the special rate of \$18 for:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail (optional) _____

CHECK ENCLOSED BILL ME
 PLEASE BILL MY CREDIT CARD

Name on card _____

Card No. _____

Exp. Date _____ / _____ Security code* _____

* last three digits on back of card