

LENT

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Create in Me a Just Heart

PORNOGRAPHY AS A STRUCTURE OF SIN

MEGAN K. McCABE

OF MANY THINGS

Most readers would agree that reading a magazine is worthwhile if we learn just one new thing from every issue. In the present instance, I will spare you the anticipation by providing it right up front; it is not one new thing, in fact, but two. And these two things, which I'm guessing you don't know, concern some of your favorite people: Jesuits.

The first thing you should know is that Jesuits are not as smart as we think we are. On second thought, maybe that is something you already know; but if that is the case, then in a way my thesis is affirmed.

The second thing you should know is that Jesuits are more devout, even pious, than you would ever suspect. All this merely affirms a joke my brothers and I liked to tell in philosophy studies: If you buy a Jesuit a drink, he'll talk to you about anything. If you buy him two, he'll talk to you about Jesus.

This is true enough, but not because Jesus is in any way an afterthought for us; the Jesuit, after all, is a member of the society that bears his name. That joke contains some element of truth precisely because the Jesuit's relationship with Jesus is the most precious treasure he possesses; God in Jesus Christ is the one who is closest to our hearts.

And as you know, men often struggle to account for the affairs of the heart. Some people think that's because men are unfeeling. In my experience, however, we feel very deeply. What we lack is the cultural permission to acknowledge our feelings.

On the other hand, Jesuits do have a common language of the heart. Every Jesuit, at least twice in his life, must undergo the complete Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola, four weeks of intense, silent reflection and prayer. The Spiritual Exercises are a

method of encounter with Jesus, one that reveals the purposes of the heart; the reason why we humans exist; the reason Christ entered human life; and why he suffered, died and rose again for the one and the many.

I mention this because when people talk about Jesuits, they often mention our training: the almost ridiculous number of classroom hours we log, the countless degrees we accumulate, the books written and articles edited. The training is long and rigorous, and the results are certainly impressive.

Yet that is what we are, not who we are. The most important part of our formation, far and away, is each man's encounter with the Son of the living God in the Spiritual Exercises. There our cherished myths and narcissistic desires encounter the one who is pure giver and pure gift. In the Spiritual Exercises our false selves give way to our true selves under the onslaught of God's overpowering grace.

We are left with nothing but the truth of who we are: sinners who are called by God. This is why, when Pope Francis was asked, "Who are you?" in the interview published in these pages in September 2013, he answered, "I am a sinner."

This Lent we would all do well to remember that grace alone is the source of human freedom in every truly meaningful sense. Yet free to do what exactly? To launch forth into the deep, into the depths of our relationships with God and one another; to go forth and make disciples of all the nations; to raise up the lowly, to empower the powerless; to dream anew in the midst of despair; to live in the hope that while we are not now that which we once were, that which we are now, by the grace of God, is becoming a future of which we never even dared to dream.

MATT MALONE, S.J.

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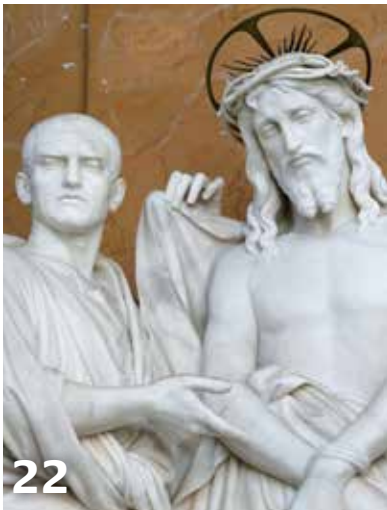
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ON THE WEB

America's editors discuss the direction of the church under Pope Francis, and Rabbi Daniel Polish delivers this year's John Courtney Murray, S.J., Lecture on Catholic-Jewish relations 50 years after "Nostra Aetate." Full digital highlights on page 31 and at americamagazine.org/webfeatures.



Dialing for Dollars

Some members of Congress are getting sick of it. “I don’t think I can spend another day in another call room making another call begging for money,” said Representative Steve Israel, Democrat of New York, explaining his retirement from Congress after eight terms. Last month Mr. Israel also wrote an article for the op-ed page of *The New York Times* in which he recalled “Lesson No. 1” from his congressional orientation sessions: “Raise at least \$10,000 a week,” or kiss good-bye any hope of re-election.

David Jolly, a Republican congressman from Florida who is now campaigning for a U.S. Senate seat, is also tired of being in “a part-time Congress,” where fundraising has a higher priority than legislating. He announced in January that he will no longer personally solicit funds for his campaign, and he will file legislation prohibiting members of Congress from making those dreaded phone calls.

Few would object to members of Congress spending more time on their official duties, but insulating them from the realities of campaign finance will not lessen big money’s corruption of U.S. politics. Mr. Jolly is not pledging to spend less money on his campaign; he is simply relying on his staff to make the fundraising calls. He also acknowledges that “super PACs,” which are exempt from limits on personal contributions but are prohibited from directly coordinating with campaigns, can still spend on his behalf. The rise of super PACs and “dark money” groups—which spend millions on political ads but can keep their donors secret because they claim nonprofit status—is even more worrisome than members of Congress missing subcommittee hearings to chase down \$1,000 donations. We need a more comprehensive solution to the soaring costs of running for public office.

Celebrating Crispr

Late last year scientists announced they had successfully used a recently developed gene-editing technique, called Crispr-Cas9, to treat Duchenne muscular dystrophy in mice, significantly offsetting the effects of the disease. The success of the treatment in a mammalian model provides hope that it can be used to treat humans as well.

This research is at the very cutting edge of genetic science, and the technique it leverages has already occasioned both excitement and significant debate. Crispr refers to a system of enzymes and guide RNA codes that allows scientists to target and edit sequences of DNA with very high specificity. Because of the power and simplicity of the technique, an enormous range of genetic manipulations

are suddenly within our grasp. This of course raises a whole variety of moral questions. But this news reminds us that it also has some applications that can be celebrated without reservation.

The successful treatment in question targets existing muscle cells and edits their DNA to allow them to properly express the protein dystrophin, necessary for muscles to function. It was successful for both human and mouse muscle cells in culture, for two-day-old mice and for adult mice. In other words, it did not require the manipulation or sacrifice of embryos, nor is it “germ line therapy,” in which genetic edits will be inherited by future generations. Rather, it is a genetic therapy that directly benefits the organism being treated. Ample funding should be provided to determine whether this treatment can be pursued successfully in humans and to examine what other diseases might benefit from a similar approach.

Viral Solidarity

An outbreak of the mosquito-borne Zika virus has led to travel warnings for U.S. women who are or may become pregnant. Zika has been linked to major birth defects and has already had a devastating impact in Brazil. On Jan. 16, the first U.S. case of a baby infected in the womb with Zika was reported in Hawaii. The baby’s mother had traveled to Brazil while pregnant. The Centers for Disease Control is now advising pregnant women to avoid travel to 14 countries and territories in Latin America and the Caribbean, including Puerto Rico, Mexico and Haiti.

Zika joins an unhappy collection of diseases making the jump from tropical regions, where some of the world’s poorest people reside, to temperate zones of affluence. Global warming may be making previously hostile geography more amenable to the major vector for these illnesses, the humble mosquito.

Like the Ebola panic of 2014, Zika reminds the complacent of the affluent world of a kind of enforced solidarity with folks in poorer regions, an impoverished and sometimes cruel imposter of the true solidarity we are called to embrace. There is no such thing as an isolated illness in the era of continent-hopping travel—no problem of “theirs” that cannot quickly become one of “ours.” In the age of the jet-setting virus, how much wiser would it be to make proactive investments that ensure adequate health care and infrastructure for all. A good start might be to adequately fund efforts like the U.N.’s Special Program for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases, recognizing its lifesaving contributions to responding to and reducing threats from the world’s neglected diseases.

The Pope in Mexico

When a leading candidate for the U.S. presidency refers to Mexican immigrants as rapists and criminals and rises in the polls; when his competitors joust over who will build a bigger wall and expel more undocumented persons; when the outgoing administration steps up deportation raids to deter future migrants, it is time to reframe the conversation in the United States about our southern neighbor.

Pope Francis' upcoming visit to Mexico (Feb. 12 to 18) provides an opportunity to do just that. Sharing a 2,000-mile border and over 200 years of history, the people of Mexico and the United States are deeply interconnected in ways that are often lost in our intractable and shortsighted debates over immigration.

Migration. The pope's Mass in Juárez is sure to draw the attention of many in the United States, not least residents of El Paso, Tex., which is separated from the Mexican border city by just a chain-link fence. Significantly, though, this is where the pope's journey ends. Pope Francis will first visit San Cristóbal de Las Casas in the southern border state of Chiapas. From there, like so many before him, he will make his way north.

When, in the summer of 2014, tens of thousands of unaccompanied minors crossed the U.S. border, President Obama requested \$1 billion to address the factors in Central America that drive emigration. Since then, however, the sense of urgency has waned as border crossings slowed, though not because people have stopped attempting the dangerous trek north. Rather, with U.S. encouragement and support, Mexican authorities have stepped up enforcement. After the launch of Mexico's Southern Border Plan in July 2014, apprehensions about unaccompanied minors nearly doubled, according to the advocacy group Washington Office on Latin America. The effect of this stepped-up enforcement upstream has not been to deter desperate migrants but to force them to take alternative routes, where they are more vulnerable to abuse at the hands of smugglers and officials.

In a speech to the Vatican diplomatic corps in January, Pope Francis said, "There is no place for autonomous solutions pursued by individual states" when dealing with the mass movement of people. The United States must recommit itself to: 1) work with Mexico to address the root causes of the exodus—namely, poverty and violence in Central America; 2) build up Mexico's capacity to screen and provide legal assistance to asylum seekers and 3) ensure a culture of lawfulness among security and judicial institutions

operating at the border.

Trafficking. From Chiapas the pope will travel to Morelia, the capital of Michoacán State and a hot spot in the continent's drug conflict. For decades ruthless cartels south of the border have been locked in a deadly competition to feed American addictions. In the United States deaths by heroin overdose have quadrupled since 2002, rising to 8,260 in 2013, while U.S.-manufactured guns trafficked south have fueled crime-related violence in Mexico that analysts estimate has killed over 100,000 people since December 2006.

There are no easy answers when it comes to combating the cartels that have ravaged every level of Mexican society—from the bought-off village priest to corrupt leaders of the ruling P.R.I. party. The joint U.S.-Mexican strategy of targeting drug kingpins does little good as long as there are foot soldiers ready to work their way up the ranks and extend their influence beyond the drug trade to industry theft, extortion and local politics. The only sustainable solution in the long run is an economy strong enough to attract the young men who now see gangs as the only path out of poverty and an independent justice system willing and able to root out corruption at every level of governance. The United States must do more to ensure that its \$300 million in annual drug-war aid does not undermine these objectives by propping up police and government officials with links to organized crime.

Our Lady. Of course, the United States and Mexico are connected not only by shared security concerns; our people are tied together by deep bonds of faith, family and culture. No figure better embodies this shared heritage than Our Lady of Guadalupe, who is "not just the patroness of Mexico, but the patroness of the Americas," in the words of Pope Francis. While the Mexican people are known for their love of Guadalupe (even non-Catholics consider themselves "guadalupanos"), devotion to Our Lady in the United States is growing—a beautiful gift to the U.S. church from immigrant communities.

The pope, who will celebrate Mass at the Basilica of Guadalupe on Feb. 13, has asked the church to look to Mary during this jubilee year: "Let us implore her to guide the footsteps of the American people, a pilgrim people looking for the Mother of mercy." As Mexico prepares to welcome Pope Francis, we, like Our Lady, are called to show compassion on her people, starting with the poor and marginalized. Our brothers and sisters across the border are Americans, too.



REPLY ALL

Moral Maturity

I think Bill McGarvey is being generous in “Credo...” (1/18), when he says the faith of many has not been thoughtfully engaged since their early teen years; I am not even sure how engaged it was in those years.

I have found the writings of Ron Rolheiser, O.M.I., very illuminating. He uses language concerning the “deep moral structure to the universe” that people who are tone deaf to “God language” might hear, which I’ll summarize like this: “God has a loving plan for your life, but it requires you to do God’s will and not your own will; and please discern between the two and do not assume because an idea pops into your head it is the right decision. God’s will might involve pain and suffering and sacrifice, but in the end you will be saving yourself from far worse pain and suffering.”

f STATUS UPDATE

“*Life on Another Level*” (1/4), poses the question: *Can the ancient tradition of monasticism be part of the new evangelization? Readers respond.*

Those who live a cloistered life provide a beautiful example. In a world that is so caught up with things, they show that things aren’t necessary. They show that joy comes from the simplicity of prayer and work. I think this is especially appealing for my generation (millennials), because many are quickly learning that you can try to fill yourself up with worldly things, but they will never satisfy. Christ is the only thing that can do that.

KIRSTIE FREDRICH

I am not part of a new generation (being 68 years old), but just this past year, I have been attending Mass at a Benedictine abbey as frequently as I can. There is a beautiful minimalism

This is how I talk to my adult children, and while some may roll their eyes at me, I am hoping they will remember this long after I am gone and they are faced with the challenges in life everyone has to face.

MONICA QUIGLEY DOYLE
Online Comment

Open Questions

It is interesting that Bill McGarvey focuses so much on sharing his own faith journey, describes some of the obstacles to maturing spiritually, and then, oddly, closes with, “don’t talk to me about your God.... I don’t believe in him either.” This has to be the least effective way to help another in their journey. As a chaplain, I would never shut down another’s view of God... including atheists. It is the height of spiritual arrogance. We all have much to learn from one another. Opening a pastoral dialogue to encourage sharing

that attracts me, time for quiet private prayer as well as un-gussied-up communal prayer. As beautiful as all the majestic cathedrals of Europe are, nothing beats the pine trees showing through the clear glass windows of the abbey. And meeting the monks in their home is a lesson in hospitality.

JAN O’HARA

I have to disagree. Monasticism makes no sense in today’s world. Why would you want to take pious, God-fearing human beings and remove them from society? What purpose does that serve? Go out into the world and teach. Do something that benefits humanity. In the end, monks may have a strong connection to God, and may provide some example to others as to how to live a simple life in service to God, but unfortunately they do not contribute to the advancement of mankind in any substantial way.

CHRISTOPHER GADBOIS

and finding any common ground, especially in pointing out where love is the sign of God’s presence, can open the path for growth for both.

SUSAN DELONGIS
Online Comment

Neglecting Older Singles

While I am happy to read “A Vibrant Vocation,” by Karl A. Schultz (1/4), the author still does not understand the problem. Our Catholic Church continues to pay homage to couples intending to marry but apparently doesn’t realize that it takes singles to create couples. And while some dioceses have young adult events, there is no ministry for older adults who are still single. Fifty years ago, the church was a hub of society, so it was a lot easier for Catholic singles to connect.

If one pays attention long enough, you can hear mutterings by folks wondering about the “man problem” in church (as many do not come any more). But as a single man, I can say there are few single women out there in church, and I think that many singles do not come because we sense a deep lack of community. We are forced to try to find it wherever we can—while preferring to have some of it in church!

PATRICK MURRAY
Online Comment

Alone, Not Single

Thank you for this article. I appreciate the commitment to avoid generalizations about single life. Attention and sensitivity should also be given to people who are not single, but may appear that way because their partner is not active in the church. Not every “single” person in a parish is eager to join the dating pool!

REBECCA KRIER
Online Comment

Beyond Good Intentions

Re “Rights of Refugees,” by David Hollenbach, S.J. (1/4): People have been moving around the planet for thousands of years. The current

situation in the Middle East is a horror. Furthermore—the refugee flow into Europe, Canada and the United States offers terrorists a certain method of infiltrating and causing death, destruction and havoc. We should cooperate with the Russians, Turks, Saudis, Jordanians and the United Nations to set up a good quality safe zone in the Middle East.

We should support the Middle Eastern refugees by helping them survive and thrive in or near their homelands. It is not true charity to do what makes us feel good—when there are better alternatives for those whom we would serve.

TOM FIELDS
Online Comment

Next-Generation Americans

What, in real-world, practical terms, can be done to set up a “good quality safe zone” for Middle East refugees? Where would it be? Would you create a new country, taking land from existing countries (as the United Nations did to create Israel, with longlasting problems)?

How can we help them “survive and thrive” in their homelands? Most Middle Eastern refugees would much prefer to stay in their homelands rather than give up everything to move and live in refugee camps. The reason they are refugees is that their homelands are extremely dangerous, where war is totally destroying the economic base as well as infrastructure, and where the lives of thousands and thousands of people are at high risk.

Most refugees and immigrants to the United States were rejected when they first came, including Catholics from Ireland, Italy, Poland and elsewhere in Europe. Yet eventually they integrated into American society. For most, it took a generation or two to become economically comfortable, but eventually they did. Why are the Middle Eastern refugees different?

SANDI SINOR
Online Comment

Case by Case

Re “Restoring the Right to Vote” (Current Comment, 12/21/15): If you are not willing to follow the law yourself, then you cannot demand a role in making the law for everyone else, which is what you do when you vote. The right to vote can be restored to felons, but it should be done carefully, on a case-by-case basis after a person has shown that he or she has really turned over a new leaf—not automatically on the day someone walks out of prison. After all, the unfortunate truth is that many people who walk out of prison will be walking back in.

ROGER CLEGG
Online Comment

His Will Be Done

Jesus told someone, “And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well.” As much as I hate the idea of felons getting to vote, I think his will, not mine, should govern—and I think I should not attach so much importance to what I want.

ROBERT O’CONNELL
Online Comment

A Needed Reckoning

Re “Reconciliation at Georgetown” (Current Comment, 12/7/15): Thank you for this, Georgetown students, faculty and Jesuits. This is the work of knowing who we are. Slavery was the bedrock of our economic survival and flourishing for more than 200 years. Questioning or challenging this system then was like asking everyone to empty their bank accounts today. Now, a mere 150 years after the abolition of slavery in this country, maybe we are finally ready to honestly look at this terrible cruelty and injustice. It can only

bring us to a place of better understanding of who we are as a nation and as a people. We may even realize that we need to formally ask for forgiveness.

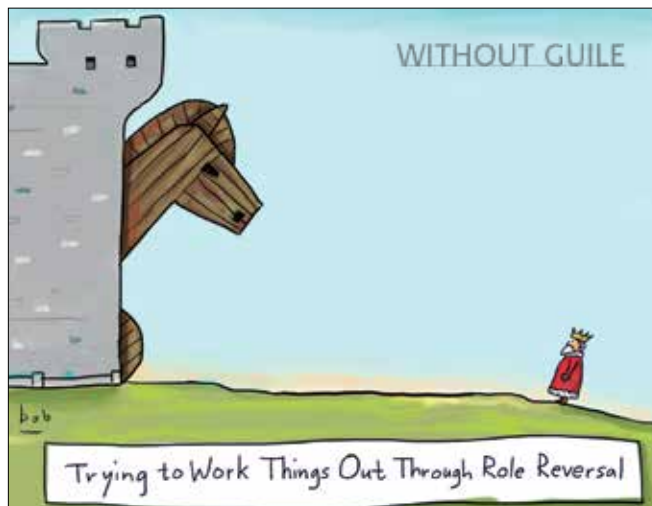
BETH CIOFFOLETTI
Online Comment

The Poetry of Survival

Maurice Timothy Reidy’s review of “Spotlight” (“Big Dig,” 11/16/15) encourages Catholics to take responsibility for the church. I want to invite Catholics to listen to the voices of those who have suffered at the hands of perpetrator priests, nuns and lay employees. Few American Catholic priests, religious or laity moved from anguish to action. It takes courage and inner strength for survivors to process and to articulate their childhood trauma into meaningful words.

Norbert Krapf is a poet survivor who has crafted his trauma into meaningful expressions to share the depths of his hurts and betrayal at the hands of the pastor in a small German Catholic community in Southern Indiana. His collection of poems, *Catholic Boy Blues*, is subtitled “A Poet’s Journal of Healing.” His poems are the real story that The Globe’s investigative reporters were trying to uncover. *Catholic Boy Blues* gives first-person witness to the true nature of what children experienced at the hands of their perpetrators.

PATRICK MURPHY
Indianapolis, Ind.



CARTOON: BOB ECKSTEIN

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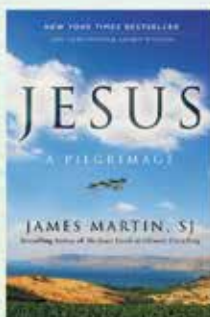
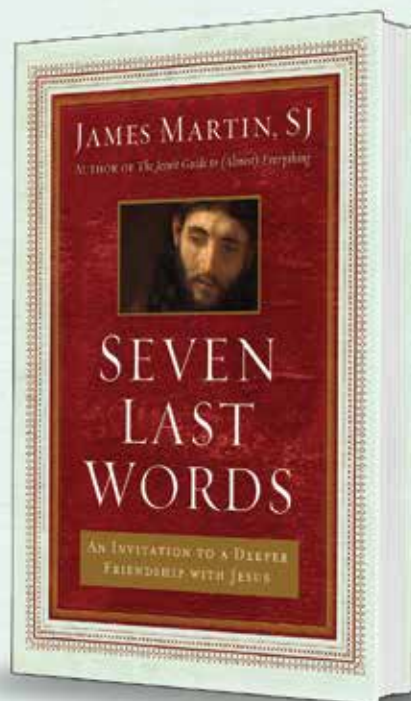
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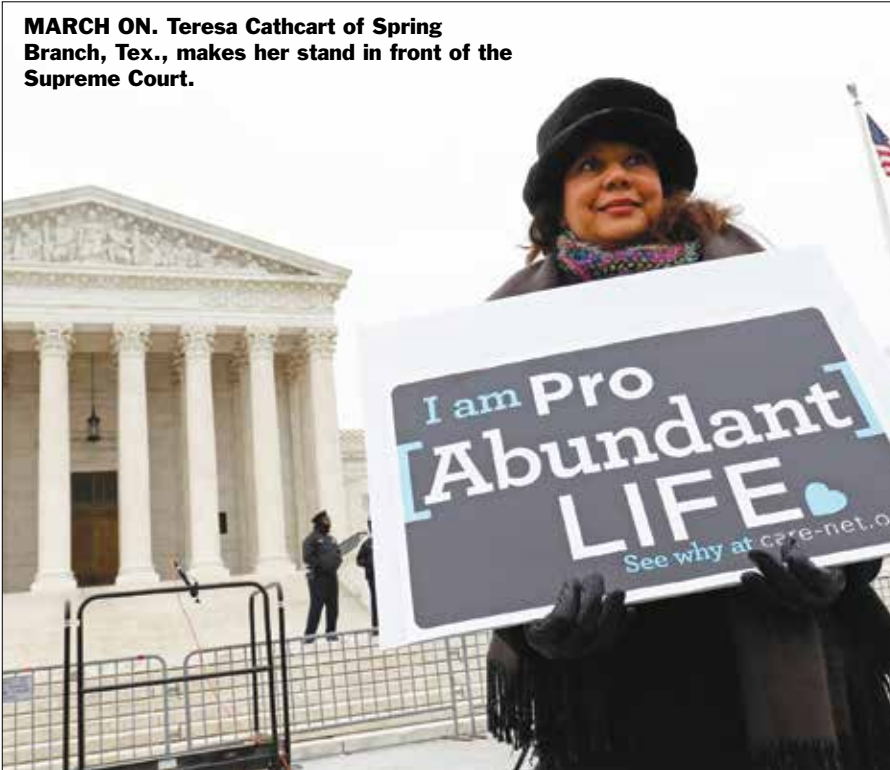
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SIGNS OF THE TIMES

MARCH FOR LIFE

Lori: Roe Anniversary Notable For New Threats to Human Dignity

MARCH ON. Teresa Cathcart of Spring Branch, Tex., makes her stand in front of the Supreme Court.



A record snowfall that blanketed Washington and much of the East Coast prevented many from making it to Washington for the annual March for Life on Jan. 23. The snow also caused the cancellation of many of the events scheduled to mark the 43rd anniversary of the Roe decision that legalized abortion. Some hardy souls carried on despite the weather.

A group of students from Notre Dame switched to Amtrak after the bus service they originally planned to use canceled the trip before the impending storm. “I marched because I feel very strongly about this cause and I think it’s really important that as many people as possible show up,” one student told *America*. “It’s a huge statement, and it spreads awareness.”

On Jan. 22, at a Jesuit-sponsored Mass for life at St. Aloysius Gonzaga Church in Washington, Paddy Gilger, S.J., reminded students that because Jesus made an effort to be inclusive when he chose his disciples, they, too, should be respectful of others’ opinions. “As we join in the fight against the scourge of abortion, our differences remain, and that’s O.K.,” he said. Father Gilger also told the students to combine prayer and penance to create a culture of life. “Our efforts are to be able to create the same amount of space for people to change their hearts.”

Elaborating on his emphasis on listening and respectfulness in disagreement, Father Gilger later told *America*, “The bottom line for me—and this is also Pope Francis’ example—no one ever changes from being yelled at; they change from

being loved. This is what Jesus did to people, the rich young man, his disciples.”

In an opinion piece published on the *America* website, Archbishop William Lori of Baltimore said that in the decades since the Supreme Court “[narrowed] the definition of a human person” and “eliminated legal protections for the most vulnerable...over 55 million unborn children have lost their lives to abortion.”

Now, he argues, new threats to human dignity have emerged since *Roe v. Wade*, most recently “as conscience protections for people with moral or religious objections to abortion are being taken away.”

According to Archbishop Lori, chair of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty, “powerful individuals and institutions in our society seek to force people to be part of the abortion business.”

He recounted the experience in 2009 of Cathy DeCarlo, a nurse and “woman of faith,” who was forced to participate in an abortion at 22 weeks of pregnancy. “Despite her protests, her supervisors required that she assist at an abortion involving the dismemberment of an unborn child, leading her to suffer long-term psychological trauma, including graphic nightmares and insomnia.”

On a larger scale, Archbishop Lori charged that the State of California illegally requires almost all insurers, even those providing coverage to churches and faith-based organizations, to include abortion coverage in their health plans. “Churches, pastors and charities that recognize abortion as a grave sin are being compelled by state regulations to participate in the funding of abortions,” he wrote.

The Abortion Non-Discrimination Act would have mitigated these con-

science threats at the institutional and individual levels. “ANDA simply allows people who believe all human life is sacred to serve others in freedom,” Archbishop Lori wrote. “Unfortunately, ANDA failed to be enacted into law late last year, so the threats to conscience remain.”

He adds, “Today, we recall that the right to life and to religious freedom are

both rooted in the inherent dignity of the human person.... Forcing people to do what they believe is wrong—especially when it involves the killing of another innocent human being—degrades people. Laws and institutions that force people to participate in abortion attack the conscience.

“They attack human dignity,” the archbishop concluded.

es her clients have been facing.

Frustration with the behavior of city and state leaders is palpable across Flint, she says. The people of Flint have been receiving contradictory information and erroneous assurance for months now.

“It’s been disappointing; it’s been frustrating,” she says. “These are people with children; people trying to put life back together here. It’s been hard in a place where things have been hard for a long time.”

What she finds encouraging has been the response of members of the surrounding community, who have turned her office into a veritable warehouse of bottled water in recent days. “We have water coming in from all over the country,” she says. “People here are grateful for the help.... It’s nice to know we are not alone in the struggle.”

Her clients, many of whom walk to the center, have been carrying home cases of water. The heavy lifting and the walk in the dead of winter is a major challenge for some. The tap-water crisis has made even the most mundane tasks a challenge, from brushing teeth to cleaning a table. Everyone is learning how to be creatively conservative with drinking water. Stevenson makes sure that mothers going home with baby formula take gallons of water with them to use for their babies. Indeed the most worrisome aspect of the crisis is the still unknown repercussions for the city’s children.

“You can’t tell looking at a child today what impact the water has had or will have on their future,” she says. “It will just crush you thinking about what might happen.”

In his statement on the crisis,

U.S. CITIES

Flint Water Crisis Draws National Response as Donations Pour in

In Flint, Mich., jobs have been scarce for years, but crime and foreclosures have been on the rise. Domestic violence and depression are household scourges, and a steady population decline has made the running of the city and even its long-term viability increasingly tenuous. As if these and many more problems were not enough, the city now confronts a crisis of water contamination of mind-numbing dimensions.

As an interim step to cheaper water service, in April 2015 the city began using the murky Flint River as its municipal water supply. The more corrosive river water was not properly treated, and its use has compromised lead piping all over the city. Residents have for months—by cooking, cleaning, eating and bathing—exposed themselves and, more catastrophically, their children to lead, a well-known neurotoxin. Even low levels of lead exposure can have developmental and neurological effects on children that last a lifetime. Compounding the initial error

has been a failure at all levels of government to understand and respond to the crisis, in spite of efforts among a few individuals in government and health services to bring attention to the community’s unfolding unnatural disaster.

In a statement released on Jan. 20, Bishop Earl Boyea of Lansing called



WATER WORKS. Vicky Schultz, president and C.E.O. of Catholic Charities of Shiawassee and Genesee Counties, displays some of the bottled water donated.

the suspected exposure of thousands of Flint children to lead “heartbreaking.”

Mary Stevenson is the director of Catholic Charities’ Center for Hope in Flint, one of the sites Catholic Charities is using to distribute bottled water in response to the crisis. This latest setback joins the list of challeng-

Bishop Boyea writes: "The City of Flint has undergone many trials in recent years. Often, its people have faced the temptation to lose hope, to surrender to despair. The water crisis again presents that temptation, but again the answer must be to find strength in the love of God and the support of men and women of good will."

KEVIN CLARKE

Holy Thursday Decree

Pope Francis has reformed the ceremony of the washing of the feet during Mass on Holy Thursday by decreeing that henceforth it will be open to women too or, as he put it in a year-old decree that was published on Jan. 21, "to all the members of the People of God." The relevant part of the decree reads: "In order that the full meaning of this rite might be expressed to those who participate, it seemed good to the Supreme Pontiff Pope Francis to vary the norm which is found in the rubrics of the Roman Missal...so that pastors may select a small group of the faithful to represent the variety and the unity of each part of the people of God. Such small groups can be made up of men and women, and it is appropriate that they consist of people young and old, healthy and sick, clerics, consecrated men and women and laity."

Push for Peace

Bishop Oscar Cantú of Las Cruces, N.M., urged Secretary of State John Kerry and National Security Advisor Susan Rice to take renewed action to build on steps toward peace in the Middle East in separate letters on Jan 20. Bishop Cantú, who chairs the Committee on International Justice and Peace of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, wrote to Secretary Kerry: "If peace talks are successful, the United States and the interna-

NEWS BRIEFS

Pope Francis is increasingly turning his attention to the stars of Silicon Valley, meeting **Apple's C.E.O., Tim Cook**, for a 15-minute conversation on Jan. 22 just days after shaking hands with Eric Schmidt from Google. • Israel's appropriation of 380 acres of Palestinian agricultural land in the Jordan Valley was described as **another setback for a two-state solution** by Raffoul Rofa, a lawyer for a Catholic legal aid group. • Ruling on Jan. 14 that a Catholic hospital in California could not be forced to **conduct a tubal ligation**, Superior Court Judge Ernest Goldsmith said, "Religious-based hospitals have an enshrined place in American history...and the religious beliefs reflected in their operation are not to be interfered with by courts." • Pope Francis advanced the saint-hood causes of 10 men and women, including **Argentina's "gaucho priest,"** Blessed José Gabriel del Rosario Brochero, on Jan. 21. • The 51st International Eucharistic Congress kicked off in Cebu, the Philippines, on Jan. 24 with Pope Francis' representative, Cardinal Charles Bo of Yangon, Myanmar, declaring that "the Eucharist calls for...a **third world war against poverty.**"



Apple CEO Tim Cook with Pope Francis

tional community will need to provide robust assistance to help rebuild Syria so that refugees can return and the social fabric can be repaired.... Post-war desperation will only fuel renewed conflict and extremism." In his letter to Rice, Bishop Cantú noted that his recent visit to Israel, Palestine and Jordan showed him that the status quo is "dangerous for both Israelis and Palestinians." He also noted that the conflict has been harmful to the church in the Holy Land and that the situations in Gaza and the Cremisan Valley required urgent attention.

Speaking With Mercy

Use the power of communication to build bridges and heal wounds, not generate hatred or misunderstanding, Pope Francis said in his message for World Communications Day on Jan. 22. The Catholic Church must pro-

claim the truth and denounce injustice without alienating everyone in need of God's help, he said. "We can and we must judge situations of sin—such as violence, corruption and exploitation—but we may not judge individuals, since only God can see into the depths of their hearts." What people say, how they say it and what actions they take must all "express God's compassion, tenderness and forgiveness for all." Only by giving witness to and preaching with Jesus' warmth and mercy can the words of faith come alive to touch people's hearts and sustain them on the journey toward fullness of life, he said. The church and her ministers need to communicate in a way that never implies "a prideful and triumphant superiority over an enemy, or demean those whom the world considers lost and easily discarded."

From CNS, RNS and other sources.

DISPATCH | BEIJING

China's Unhappy New Year

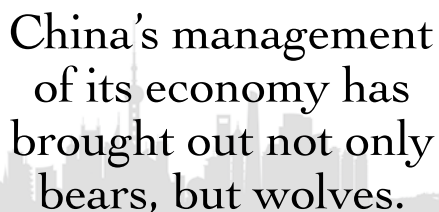
The beginning of the year is always a slightly strange time in China. Although China uses the Gregorian calendar, the phrase “Happy New Year” is generally reserved for the beginning of its traditional lunar new year observance, anywhere from three to as many as six weeks later.

That was fitting this year, as no one was much in the mood to wish anyone a happy new year in Beijing in January. The Gregorian arrival of 2016 could not have been less festive in the world's second-largest economy. On Jan. 15, the Shanghai Stock Exchange reached bear market status, closing down 20 percent from a recent high on Dec. 22.

While Beijing usually prepares for international events by deploying a bag of meteorological tricks to ensure blue skies over its urban murk, now it is a deep economic gloom that China's leadership wish they could blow away. The day after the bear roared in Shanghai, President Xi Jinping was set to welcome members of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank for its first official business meeting. The A.I.I.B. was created to rival the World Bank, which China considers a tool of the United States. The \$100 billion financing institution is seen as a thumb in the eye of two nations that chose not to join as founding members—the United States and Japan—but the banks' meeting in Beijing was

overshadowed by concern for China's economy.

Although domestic growth has slowed over the past two years, it was not diminishing manufacturing output that brought a chill to the mainland in early January. It was Shanghai's volatile stock market and the government's response to it. A shock in September saw trillions trimmed from the market's value in a matter of days. The



China's management of its economy has brought out not only bears, but wolves.

government made billions available to local brokerages, instructing them to buy back shares. Its interventions did not go unnoticed by investors overseas.

On two separate days in January, trading on the Shanghai Exchange was halted, with declines of 7 percent tripping a loss-reducing circuit breaker implemented after the September drop. Chinese regulators removed the circuit breaker, deciding it was doing more harm than good, and the market seemed to calm before declines continued into Jan. 15's bear market level.

Even as its political system and handling of religious affairs drew consistent criticism, for almost 40 years China's management of its economy has drawn rapturous praise from the West. But the latest news, which has had a choppy ripple effect on bourses all over the world, brought out not only the bears but also the wolves. An unsigned opinion piece in *The Wall Street Journal* on Jan. 7 said: “Have China's leaders lost

the plot? With stock-market gyrations, a weakening currency and mixed signals on reform, Beijing's reputation for technocratic competence is depreciating faster than the yuan. This has global markets on edge, to say the least, as the likelihood of a ‘hard landing’ for the Chinese economy grows.”

A reality check may be in order. Despite the market roil and currency devaluation, China finished 2015 with an economic growth rate of about 7 percent; growth is expected to continue in 2016 at higher than 6 percent. Its growing middle class is having its first experience with anything approaching disposable wealth. China still has the world's largest population, which, while demographically unbalanced, has just been given permission to become somewhat larger with the termination of the one-child policy in 2015. A resulting baby boom and all the spending that accompanies one are anticipated over the next few years.

While domestic infrastructure investment has slowed and both local government and state-owned enterprise debt has soared into the trillions of dollars, China seems in little danger of losing its high perch among states of global economic importance. No other nation can approach the size or value of its markets for goods and services, which even after more than three decades of investment and development still has potential to grow.

When a shower of firecrackers and pyrotechnics mark the next lunar new year on Feb. 8, this Year of the Monkey will make an entirely appropriate arrival—a year characterized by intelligence and aggression, but also mischief and recklessness. China's leadership will need to model the former and prevent the economy from behaving like the latter.

STEVEN SCHWANKERT

STEVEN SCHWANKERT, author of *Poseidon: China's Secret Salvage of Britain's Lost Submarine* (Hong Kong University Press), is *America's Beijing correspondent*. Twitter: @greatwriteshark.

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Words from the Footprints in the Sand poem appear courtesy of Margaret Fishback Powers, author of the book Footprints: The True Story Behind the Poem that Inspired Millions

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Resetting Interest on Usury

The doings of Pope Francis have tended to be popular by default, but his Jubilee Year of Mercy is off to an unusually slow start. Pilgrims aren't pouring into Rome as expected; media reports have been little better than dutiful. Fears of terrorism might have something to do with the pilgrim count, together with the jubilee's purposeful avoidance of Rome-centrism. But I wonder if there's another problem—that we are forgetting what *jubilee* means in the first place.

The ancient Hebrew jubilee was a periodic Sabbath year in which debts would be cleared away, slaves would be freed, and lands lost in the course of commerce would be returned. Jesus declared a jubilee as he began preaching the forgiveness of sins. But the forgiveness he preached began with repentance. Likewise, any jubilee must begin with the recognition that there are wrongs to be righted. Clearing away debts does not make sense if we consider debt an immovable reality, an amoral fact of life. To celebrate a jubilee, we need to recognize the usury in our midst.

In centuries past, Judaism, Christianity and Islam all shared an anxious opposition to usury. Sometimes "usury" meant any kind of interest-charging on loans, sometimes just lending under especially unjust terms. But in any case, these traditions regarded finance as an activity of supreme moral concern, one rife with opportunities for the abuse of power and unjust accumulations of wealth. Imagine bishops worrying about ad-

justable-rate mortgages the way they worry about abortion. That is the kind of concern we're talking about.

Jacques le Goff's pithy book *Your Money or Your Life* reconstructs the tenor of medieval attitudes. "Usurious profit from money," Pope Leo I (d. 461) held, "is the death of the soul." The French theologian Jacques de Vitry warned lenders that "the amount of money they receive from usury corresponds to the amount of wood sent to hell to burn them." In some cases the vitriol was a form of anti-Judaism, since Jews often held a monopoly on lending to Christians. But Jews themselves denounced usury just as strenuously in dealings with one another.

St. Thomas Aquinas, representing the scholarly consensus of the 13th century, argued on the one hand that usury "leads to inequality which is contrary to justice." Charging interest on money, further, is contrary to nature; "This is to sell what does not exist." Interest-charging severs the economy from actual production or people's actual needs.

Centuries of clerical coziness with financiers made such denunciations less and less convenient. As the modern period progressed, concern about usury faded, then all but disappeared. Some tried to justify interest theologically, but mainly the shift was a matter of omission. The influential economist Msgr. John Ryan began his pamphlet *The Church and Interest-Taking* (1910) by stressing, "The Church has never admitted the justice of interest whether on money or on capital, but has merely tolerated the institution."

We now regard lending as princi-

pally a technocratic province of economics, computerized markets and swashbuckling self-interest. Even government regulators tend to be once-and-future bankers, as if no one else could or should be concerned with the matter. The result is a financial system whose most serious risks are borne by the most vulnerable. Foreclosure, eviction and eventual homelessness are part of a tolerable business model. Through international debt, lenders

Any jubilee must begin with recognition that there are wrongs to be righted.

dictate policy to debtor governments with little oversight from the people who will be expected to obey. And, as Aquinas warned, financiers lavish on themselves money from out of thin air. These are moral problems, but without a concept of usury it can be hard to see that. It is hard to

imagine a jubilee.

Pope Francis, for his part, spoke of usury against poorer countries when he addressed the U.N. General Assembly last year. And in Rome, at a general audience in 2014, he said: "When a family doesn't have enough to eat because it has to pay off loans to usurers, this isn't Christian. It's not human." As he began the Jubilee Year in Advent, he called for world leaders to forgive crippling debts or renegotiate them under more humane terms. For him, the meaning of jubilee remains rooted in its most ancient, tangible form.

Forgiveness goes unnoticed without repentance. A jubilee, similarly, is an empty celebration unless we notice the usury from which it frees us. We need to lose our tolerance for usury again.

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LOOK BEYOND
SURFACE TO FIND
AUTHENTIC JOY



The Glamour of Evil

BY GERALD W. SCHLABACH

In the Roman Catholic rite for the baptism of adults, as well as in the ritual for the renewal of baptismal promises, a striking question confronts us: “Do you reject the glamour of evil?”

The question, in a parallel with the rejection of Satan, has ancient roots in early baptismal practices. It is a rare case in which even the most staid and proper of modern Christians participates in what we might call an exorcism. It is a rare case in which the church expects even comfortable, bourgeois Christians to renounce the culture that continues to clothe them, even though their original baptism already proclaimed the stripping of old ways. Indeed, it is a rare case in which the church takes up the topic of glamour at all.

Yet few seem to notice the phrase. A search of the most exhaustive electronic database of journals dedicated to religion and theology yields scarcely a dozen hits in which the ex-

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pression “glamour of evil” appears. Nearly all the articles that reflect at length on the phrase’s import come from publications in Africa. These explore how the church on that continent might adapt the renunciation section of the baptismal rituals in order to “inculturate” Roman liturgies more fully in an African context, which includes lively belief in a very real spirit world. In Africa, Christian salvation can hardly be complete if it does not liberate new believers from evil spirits.

I wonder, though, whether Christians in America, Europe and the urban metropolises of rapidly globalizing capitalism do not need liberation from the glamour of evil just as much, if not more.

The Attraction of Evil

Do not get me wrong. I do not believe that glamour *per se* is evil, nor that everything glamorous is evil. Suspect, maybe, but not necessarily—not automatically—evil. The problem with glamour is that it is surface. It is the shiny patina, the thin veneer that makes something appear good and beautiful, whether or not it actually is. Yes, that which truly is good may shimmer with a glamorous sheen. Beauty of skin can go deeper than skin deep, continuing down to the marrow. But here is the catch: That which is truly good or authentically beautiful does not need the shimmer of glamour to attract. Evil does.

The deeply and truly good can project its beauty in earthy tones or bold ones. Its surface can be glossy but can also be matte. Its light may occasionally reach our eyes in the pure color of neon, but more often in subtle chiaroscuro. Or it can continue long without attracting notice at all. For the good is self-confident. It is intrinsic. Like the grain of solid hardwood, and unlike veneer, its pattern runs with infinite variability yet utter consistency all the way down. It is authentic. And so, quietly, without fanfare and without pretense, the good is capable of drawing us into relationship.

If we peered into the heart of evil and falsehood, we would be repulsed. Seeing it for what it is, we would naturally, instinctively, move away. The desire it evokes is, in fact, an anti-desire, a desire for distance rather than union—unless it distracts or deceives. That is why evil needs glamour in a way that the good does not.

So often, after all, evil does seem attractive. Literature about good people leading virtuous lives is hard to write. Some people joke—or perhaps they are serious—that they would prefer to go to hell and hang out with the interesting

characters of history rather than to experience the infinite boredom of heaven.

If these people are reacting to the self-righteousness of those who are smugly and boringly pious, then it is hard to disagree. They are in fact seeing through another veneer of glamour—religious glamour—now worn thin. This is the falsehood of believers who try to project goodness while avoiding the hard interior work of allowing God’s goodness to purge and forgive them in secret. Along with Dante and C. S. Lewis and, I presume, Jesus, I suspect that the greater population of hell will be boring and petty in just this way. Whether its inhabitants are the many self-righteous or the few horrific criminals, their punishment will, I suspect, be to have their innards revealed as dull to the core because of a lifetime of willful neglect.

Of course I am drawing a stark contrast in order to make a point. A properly Christian and orthodox worldview sees evil as a nothing, not a something. Evil, according to Augustine and Aquinas, is wholly parasitic on the good. I thus speak starkly of “the good” and “the evil” here but do not draw a stark contrast between “good people” and “evil people.” Evil people must still enjoy dignity and goodness in some way in order to exist and function at all. And good people, in order to solidify their virtue, must be ever

**Fame is not known
as a condition that
makes it easier for people
to be better, kinder or
more compassionate
human beings.**

keen to ferret out their remaining dark corners of self-deception—ever quick to cry out for God’s grace. To name these complexities simply fills out further our picture of why evil needs glamour in a way that good never does.

Consider the celebrities who catch our eye on magazine covers as we go through the checkout lanes in grocery stores. None could rise to such prominence without exercising real God-given talents. Their acting abilities, their athleticism, their musicality, their business acumen—even the marketing finesse that accentuates their glamour in order to catch our eyes—these are goods. And often the best of celebrities are truly generous and caring people.

But would we really want to hang out with most of those on magazine covers as close friends? Be careful: this is a trick question. “Hang out,” probably, because we would like to bask in their celebrity glamour for a while, perhaps taking in the perks of a stimulating party life and then carrying home an autograph or memento. But all that is the continuing allure of glamour.

My question is whether we would want to spend time as close friends with those concerned first with maintaining their image. Close friendship implies something deeper: the

reliable intimacy of abiding, trustworthy relationship, with the promise that our friends will hold our best secrets with confidence and meet our worst faults with compassion. If we actually buy one of those magazines, delve deeper into the pages and reflect on the stories, we may not be so sure about the answer. So often we will find stories of betrayal, pettiness, infidelity, jealousy or a loneliness or insecurity from which fame and wealth were supposed to insulate. Would these really be the intimate friends upon whom we would want to rely?

I would never want to deny that underneath some glamour lies authentic good. But I do think we may confidently say this: The more a person (or a culture) pursues surface beauty, shimmering glamour or magazine-cover prominence as ends in themselves, the less reliable will be that person's hidden qualities.

Fame is not known as a condition that makes it easier for people to be better, kinder, more compassionate or deeper human beings. Ah, but does it make someone happier? That, I suspect, is the rub. That is the temptation. It is why so many pursue glamour. Who needs to be a deeper person if fame and wealth and attention are bringing the pleasures we assume will come with them? Who needs to be kind when fawned over by everyone? All things being equal, sure, I guess I would like to be a "better" person, but all things are not equal. Becoming better takes work. It might even require suffering. The people Christians hold up as the best—the saints—sometimes got there through martyrdom. "No thanks!" we say.

One could pursue a parallel line of inquiry about the difference between superficial pleasures and deep happiness or authentic joy. The confusion of happiness with pleasure surely reinforces our culture's confused infatuation with glamour as the key to happiness. But I actually do want to defend pleasure—at least the exquisite though subtle and subdued pleasures that one can discover only by rejecting the glamour of evil.

Appearance Over Substance

If a social diatribe were a sufficient response to the glamour of evil, one could lament many more examples of our culture's preference for appearance over substance. Increasingly, it seems that advertising has come to evoke ephemeral style over the actual qualities of products; politicians fast-track their candidacies through grandstanding rather than through accomplishments at actually governing; recreation is indoors, two-dimensional and virtual rather than three-dimensional and engaged with the real world of woods and neighborhood; the tenuous commitment of cohabitation replaces the lifelong covenant of marriage; "hooking up" takes the place of courtships, and pornography displaces even the slightest intimacy; and young people face incessant pressure



to succeed by branding themselves as though they too were products.

Simply to tell a story of cultural decline is itself superficial, however. Nostalgia for the past also tempts us to, yes, glamorize the past. If something is truly new and different about our current situation, it is not that glamour now tempts us but rather that new technologies of media and marketing are perfecting the capacity to project allure and apply patina.

The test of whether cultural critique has integrity is its willingness to scrutinize its own social location. And for me, that location is the academy—or the education-industrial complex, which has a vast capacity to lure. If we are actually to quiet the allure of the glamorous, it can only be by projecting a vision of the authentic good, as well as the deeper but subtler pleasures that attend to the truly good life. But just here, as an educator, I am haunted and somewhat puzzled. How, really, to do this in the classroom?

‘Good Life’ Always Elsewhere

First, the haunting: Of all that I have read over the years about the state of higher education in the United States, nothing has troubled me more than a few sentences in a now 25-year-old essay by Wendell Berry, “The Work of Local Culture.” The essay appears in a book with the slightly jarring title “What Are People Good For?” Anything but technocratic and utilitarian, however, Berry’s implicit answer is that people are supposed to be good for each other.

The work of local culture to which Berry refers is that of storing memories and history and mutual assistance and ongoing patterns of trust, the way soil stores and holds the energy of the past, thus improving the land and making future community sustainable. A living local culture needs a vibrant local economy, though, one in which members across generations offer each other an exchange of useful skills.

For decades, Berry argues, our educational system has been doing the opposite: “The child is not educated to be of use to the place and community; he or she is educated to *leave* home and earn money in a provisional future that has nothing to do with place or community.”

The “good life,” in other words, is always someplace else. This is the meta-message of American higher education. It is a message of glamour. More than that, it is the systemization of glamour. If I live in Stearns County, Minn., the good life will be in Minneapolis. If I live in Minneapolis, it will be in Denver or Seattle. If I live in Chicago, then New York. And if I begin to tire of bright lights and a dehumanizing pace in one of those place, I might dream of returning to rural life, but it too often will be a glamorized rural life. Unless...

Finding Authentic Pleasures

In any of these locales, at any turn of hypermodern mobility, joyous authenticity is possible. But this means the farmer

must find pleasure not just in crop profits but in the work itself: the smell of the land, the sweat and the tiredness. It means that the urbanite must find pleasure not just in the theater or bar scene but in community organizing, social entrepreneurship and parish life. It means that the community organizer finds pleasure not just in social justice ideals but also in meeting with stubborn neighbors. It means the social entrepreneur finds pleasure in seeing resources and projects fit together for the good of real people. It means parishioners see Christ in each other even when they sing off-key or the homily falls a little flat or the woman or man in the next row is probably voting wrong.

And it means taking time. Taking time does more for resisting the glamour of evil than finding just the right place to do so. As Pope Francis insists, “Time is greater than space.” Instant gratification and quick results are the enemy, whatever one’s locale. Impatience is the wily demon that tempts us to look for a better life elsewhere before we have invested in our towns and neighborhoods. Impatience is the demon who prods young people to hook up rather than court, or young adults to cohabit rather than marry. Impatience distracts married folks even in healthy marriages before they have discovered the subtly exquisite joys that can come only when spouses see each other through inevitable hard times. Impatience values quick profits over quality, turns financial investment into a game of speculation divorced from actual productivity and produces goods without thought of sustainability or environmental costs. Impatience strip-mines.

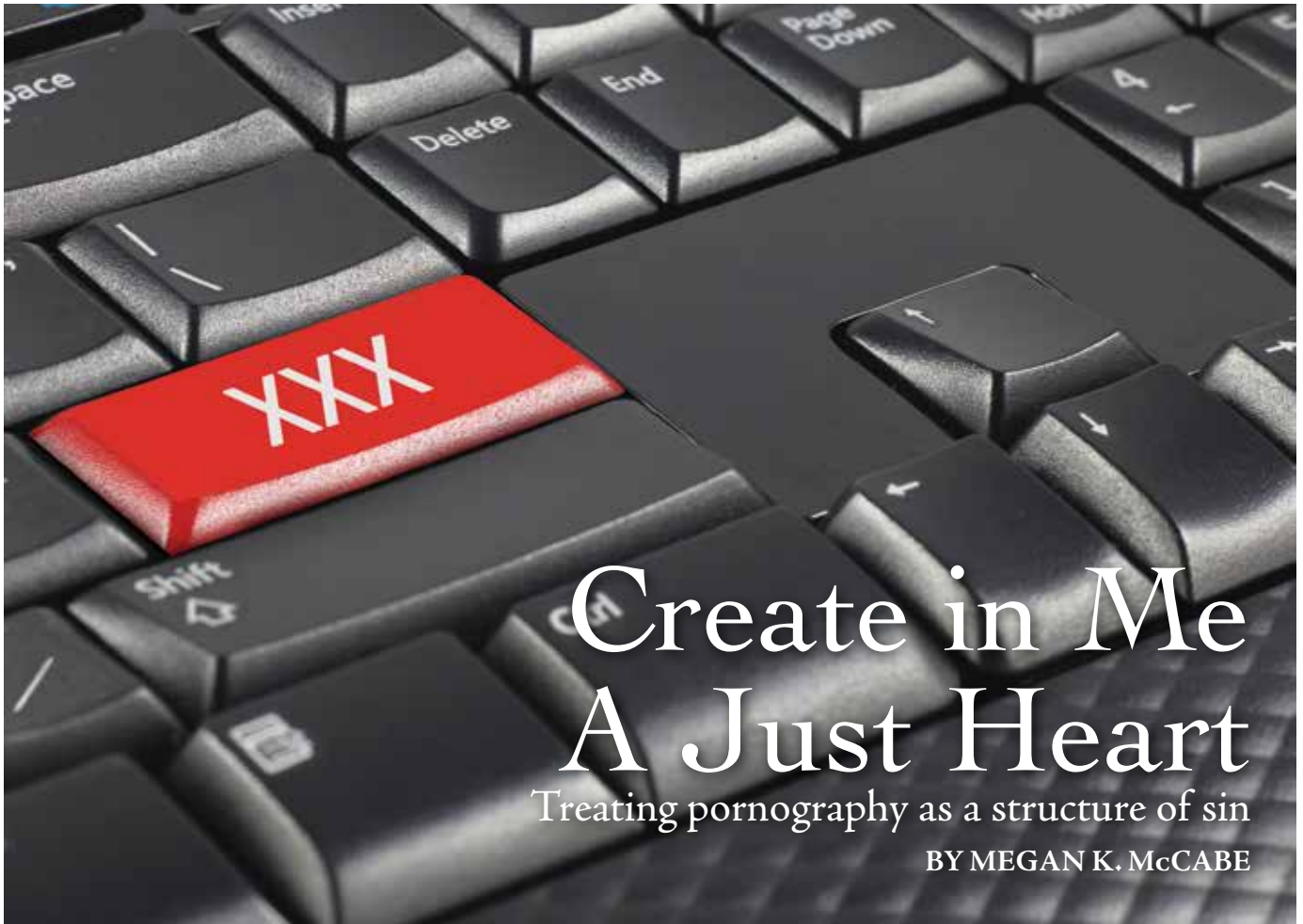
Ah, but I’m doing it again—critiquing more than envisioning, naming the temptation of fleeting glamorous pleasures rather than portraying the beauty of enduring authentic pleasures. That is the puzzle that follows from Wendell Berry’s haunting warning about our task as educators. Before they leave real places to explore any place, people young and old need time to really know their land and their people and the virtues embedded in their foibles. They need to relish stories of tragedy and comedy that explain how virtue and foible can coexist in ordinary ways that are not so boring after all.

But how do I convey this in the classroom to 19-year-olds itching for adventure or eager to find a career-building job? How do I convey this amid sterile desks using the PowerPoints I need to glamorize my lesson plans enough to compete for my students’ shortened attention spans? How do I convey in an entertaining way—as I am pressured to do—that the constantly entertained life is a ruse?

If the puzzle haunts me, my consolation is that the challenge should be no surprise. That joyous authenticity that is the opposite of the glamour of evil must be comfortably indifferent to its entertainment value. Indeed, it must often be outright self-effacing. So of course: That which is self-effacing is the most difficult and elusive to teach.

Except by living it out, unglamourously.





Create in Me A Just Heart

Treating pornography as a structure of sin

BY MEGAN K. McCABE

Last November, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops released its pastoral statement on pornography, “Create in Me a Clean Heart.” Drawing on pastoral experience and a variety of current literature on the rise of Internet pornography and its usage, the bishops express concern for the negative influence of pornography on individuals, married couples and society as a whole. As they argue, pornography is both harmful and sinful. It is counter to the dignity of the human person and to the teaching of the church on the true purpose of sexuality as a bodily expression of relational love in marriage, which ought to be personal and private. Pornography harms those who participate in its production as performers, as these individuals are reduced to objects for others’ pleasure and profit. As such, pornography is a perversion of chastity and an expression of sinful lust.

This pastoral response makes a further significant contribution by beginning to frame ethical concerns over pornography in relation to the common good. It harms the

common good by leading others to sin and damaging the community in the forms of adultery, domestic violence, child pornography and abuse, and sex trafficking. For this reason, the bishops powerfully identify pornography as a structure of sin: “It is so pervasive in sectors of our society that it is difficult to avoid, challenging to remove, and has negative effects that go beyond any one person’s actions.” This structure of sin results in “collateral effects,” which shape the way individual users engage those around them and participate in our culture. Unfortunately, the bishops’ analysis is only a brief overview of the social problems associated with pornography. Several points deserve deeper investigation if this structure of sin is to be adequately understood and resisted.

Pornography as a Structure of Sin

First, the bishops note that mainstream culture in America has been dramatically shaped by pornography. As a result, hypersexualization is regarded as normal. In her book *Pornland: How Porn Has Hijacked Our Sexuality*, Gail Dines argues that the Internet has allowed for the rise of pornography and access to it, while pop culture has become infused with elements of pornography, resulting in what she calls a “porn culture.” This culture affects the way that we, as a so-

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ciety and as individuals, view sexuality. Specifically, we come to know ourselves and interpret our experiences through messages we receive from our culture, leading to further ethical challenges posed by pornography.

Second, the bishops identify the danger that viewers of pornography will fail to see the full humanity of those around them, reducing others to sexual objects. Further, as the bishops rightly observe, this kind of objectification can lead to particularly pernicious results for women, who may begin to reduce their worth as a human being to their status as a sexual object. When pornographic material depicts women not as sexual agents but as mere objects for the use of others, we are more likely to see women in our society as objects for sexual use.

This problem is especially evident in campus “hookup culture,” in which college students engage in a range of sexual activities without expectation of any form of commitment. In *The End of Sex: How Hookup Culture Is Leaving a Generation Unhappy, Sexually Unfulfilled, and Confused about Intimacy*, Donna Freitas details the social and sexual culture of college students, noting the heavy influence of pornography. In this context, while male sexual pleasure is taken for granted, female pleasure is ignored as women are seen as sexually desirable objects. Further, it is typical for women to describe their pursuit of hookups as a way to affirm their desirability. This desirability is then considered a kind of social capital that marks their value as persons.

The party culture of many campuses also takes a cue from pornography. Many popular parties have designated themes and come with corresponding costumes. Theme names follow a formula: some profession for men and “ho” for women, such as “CEOs and Secretary Hos.” As Freitas argues, such themes are not only highly sexualized but replicate patterns of pornography in the real world by presenting men in positions of power while women are encouraged to dress as porn stars to communicate their sexual availability. These examples provide further evidence for the bishops’ concerns about the objectification of human beings through the porn industry. But they do not describe in adequate detail the gendered imbalance of power that shapes sexual objectification to the disadvantage of women.

Pornography and Violence

Third, the U.S.C.C.B. highlights the connection between pornography and violence against women. As the bishops’ document notes, there is a great deal of violence depicted in pornography, which can lead to an increased likelihood that a man will abuse his partner. As Dines corroborates, the proliferation of pornography has led to the mainstreaming of increasingly violent material. Depictions of physical violence occur in 88 percent of the scenes in the top 50 most rented pornographic films. Additionally, 48 percent of the

scenes in these films depict verbal aggression. Dines makes the case that much pornography is focused not only on sexual arousal but largely on the debasement of women. But because this violence is presented as sexual material, it often goes unnamed. In this way, sexual violence can begin to be seen as a normal expression of sexuality.

Depictions of violence in pornography are of particular concern because of their influence on our society’s understanding of rape. As Dines helpfully notes, the relevant question is not whether use of pornography leads directly to the perpetration of rape. Pornography does not cause an otherwise nonviolent man to become a rapist. This line of reasoning would be oversimplified. Rather, the necessary line of investigation is into the effect of the interplay of violence, coercion and sexuality on our culture’s understanding of rape.

While the psychological effects of pornography remain debated, there is evidence that viewing pornography with sexual violence and coercion does, in fact, have a negative effect on individuals. Neil M. Malamuth has shown the influence of depictions of rape in pornography. In one study, he discovered that exposure to rape scenes in pornography increases the likelihood that a male viewer will believe rape myths. Rape myths are stereotypes or false beliefs about rape, rapists and rape victims that are used to justify instances of sexual violence. For example, a common rape myth is that sexually flirtatious women are “asking for it.”

Malamuth specifically tested for agreement with rape myths that women find pleasure in being forced to have sex or being raped. Consequently, he found that men who watch violent pornography that depicts rapes are likely to believe that women sexually enjoy rape. This finding is reinforced by another study in which Malamuth found that male viewers of rape depictions involving a victim’s involuntary orgasm experienced comparable levels of arousal to those resulting from depictions of mutually consenting sex. Together, these studies suggest that the influence of pornography encourages male viewers to see sexual violence as an erotic expression of sexuality, not as violence. Such views have real consequences. A recent study of college men found that as many as 31 percent would force a woman to have sexual intercourse, as long as such actions were not named “rape.”

At the same time, pornography can be used not for explicitly sexual purposes but rather for the sake of embracing violence against women. Once again, campus social life, as analyzed in Michael Kimmel’s *Guyland: The Perilous World Where Boys Become Men*, provides a particularly sharp example. He explains that our culture often makes demands on young men to prove their masculinity through expressions of aggressive sexuality. In the face of rejection, college men may use pornography as a way to channel their anger and resentment. They may watch pornography in groups,

not in pursuit of arousal but in order to see women debased and abused.

One popular genre is known as “BangBus.” In these videos a woman who is simply going about her daily business is picked up by a group of men in a minivan who persuade her to take off her clothes in exchange for money. The stakes continue to be raised until she is shown having sex with a group of men. The final humiliation occurs when, after dropping her off, the van speeds off as she is reaching for the money offered. As Kimmel argues, college men who engage in such behavior are finding their enjoyment specifically in the portrayal of women’s humiliation. Kimmel writes that some men watch BangBus as a group activity, yelling degrading things like “Bang that b----!” as they watch.

Pornography and Desensitization

Finally, the bishops are concerned that exposure to pornography can lead to desensitization. This is a concern that Dines shares. In her view, it is critical to keep in mind that pornography is first and foremost a business. Consequently, it is in the interest of producers to keep viewers coming back again and again. In the face of boredom with the same kind of material, desensitized viewers require increasingly elaborate and violent depictions of sex to remain customers. This process of desensitization and subsequent search for a new thrill is one way that male viewers find themselves aroused by acts of violence and degradation that they previously would have found horrifying.

Through “Create in Me a Clean Heart,” the U.S.C.C.B. attempts to address these social concerns. But the statement mentions them only briefly and without much explanation. Despite addressing issues of violence, the overall framing of the document remains focused on lust and chastity. To take pornography seriously as a structure of sin would require moving violence to the fore, allowing it to frame how we ought to understand the ethical challenges posed by pornography. Through further exploration of the negative social effects of pornography, it becomes clear that the primary concern ought not be lustfulness. Rather, use of pornography entails complicity in a social structure that makes violence against women seem normal, even erotic. It is a matter of social injustice.

Such an approach would lead us to see that the primary necessary response ought to be oriented toward justice and social transformation. It would require solidarity with those who are victimized by sexual violence. Avoiding such material is good not only because it promotes moral purity but also because it challenges the cultural underpinning of unjust, gendered power and sexual violence. The key moral issue is not one’s own “clean heart” but one’s participation in upholding and passing on cultural forms that promote violence against women. ■



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What Pilate Knew

Lessons from one of the Gospel's most misunderstood figures

BY STEVEN P. MILLIES

A central figure of the Passion narratives and one of the best historically established figures of the Christian Testament, Pontius Pilate rarely escapes caricature in portrayals of him. In the Passion narratives themselves, Pilate veers between being amazed by Jesus and being fearful of him. In film and literature, we have seen Pilate as a legalistic bureaucrat (“King of Kings”; 1961), as a haughty nihilist (*The Last Temptation of Christ*; novel, 1955) and as wearily exasperated to the point of boredom (“The Last Temptation of Christ”; film, 1988). Year after year throughout countless Holy Week observances, those portrayals have conspired to make Pilate himself, and what his presence in the Gospels can teach us, remain opaque. Yet this underappreciated character has something to tell us, and a careful reflection on his place in the Gospels sheds some light on the confrontation between church and state brought to life in his encounter with Jesus.

Pilate in History

Pilate's historicity cuts both ways as we consider his role in the earliest moments of Christian history. We are very sure of some things about him, yet we do not even know his *praenomen*, the name he was called by his family and most intimate friends. Important details were confirmed by the excavation of a stone fragment in Caesarea in 1961 inscribed with his name and identifying him as the prefect of Judea. This finding confirmed the accounts of contemporary Roman historians Tacitus and Josephus that Pilate governed Judea from 26 to 37.

Jewish and Christian historians offer a more complete picture, though it is worth considering their probable biases against a Roman governor. Philo of Alexandria describes a Pilate who flamboyantly provoked Jewish uprisings by mounting emblems in honor of Emperor Tiberius on his palace. Tertullian imagined Pilate later so overcome by guilt that he was “himself in his secret heart already a Christian.”

In the sixth century, the Coptic Church proclaimed Pilate a saint and a martyr, perhaps persuaded by an apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus and its “Acts of Pilate” dated to the mid-fourth century. There we find Pontius Pilate bullied by

the crowd, the priests and the Levites into executing Jesus—even assenting to their desire that Jesus should be crucified though Jewish law demanded stoning. Though it is more richly and colorfully detailed than the accounts of the canonical Gospels (and even more adamant in its assignment of blame to the Jewish people), the Acts of Pilate tracks with the familiar accounts in the most vitally important detail:

Thy nation has charged thee with being a king. On this account I sentence thee: first to be scourged, according to the enactment of venerable kings, and then to be fastened on the cross in the garden whence thou wast seized (*Acta Pil.* 10).

This fantastic account's ending finds a peevishly regretful Pilate and his wife distracted for the rest of the day, awed by a miraculous eclipse. It also depicts an earlier, Palm Sunday encounter between Jesus and a Pilate incredulous that the high priests would have him condemned for healing the sick.

The temptations throughout Christian history to canonize Pilate or to depict him as a hostage to Jewish villainy have the same unsavory history. The Gospel of Nicodemus underscores the most difficult portion of the canonical Passion narrative from a perspective of Jewish-Christian dialogue, one so historically prolific that the Catholic Church spent most of the 20th century disclaiming it—“His blood be upon us, and upon our children.”

This is yet another way that history imposes itself on how we see Pilate—as a Gentile among the Jewish priesthood and before a Jewish mob both bent on bloodletting. The effect is to produce both Pilates with whom we are familiar—the imperious Roman governor coaxed toward the sought-after crucifixion and the weak Pilate frightened by the crowd and cornered into doing something he later would regret.

Once we cast Pilate in either of those roles, we indulge that unsavory history. For all we do know about him, the Pilate of history becomes as lost to us as the real faces in that crowd. In both cases, our limited knowledge yields to narratives driven by political or theological agendas. The historical persons—Pilate and those in the crowd—quickly become lost. We have a duty to try to recover them, and the church has done much already in the name of Jewish-Catholic dialogue to rectify how we see that crowd. Pilate still awaits recovery.

The Pilate who can be real to us today is one documented

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“Christ in Front of Pilate,” by Mihály Munkácsy, 1881



PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS / DÉRI MUSEUM

in the historical record and who speaks to us in the way the Christian tradition has presented him canonically through the Gospels for centuries. Rather happily, that Pilate can tell us something.

Pilate, Church and State

The Passion narratives invite a reflection on the nature of the relationship between the Roman prefect and a religious community in Judea. Roman conquerors were known for a relative magnanimity, frequently treating conquered peoples more like allies and inviting them to be contributors to the empire. In most cases, all that Rome demanded from a conquered people was the payment of taxes and at least some deference to the Roman gods. It was that last condition that created an unusual situation in Judea.

Zealously devoted to the God of Abraham, the Jewish people of course refused homage to the Roman gods and, indeed, won an accommodation from Caesar Augustus. But the relationship of Rome to the conquered people of Judea would remain testy, prone to outbreaks of sporadic violence and outright revolt even as they were permitted to worship YHWH in a temple unadorned by Roman idols.

In these circumstances we meet Pontius Pilate in his Passion narrative interview with Jesus. The narrative details of the proceeding are important: Jesus has been arrested by the Jewish authorities. John is somewhat vague about Jesus'

questioning before Caiaphas and the high priests. The synoptic accounts are more specific to find the chief priests, elders and scribes accusing Jesus of having threatened to destroy the temple (Mk 14:58; Mt 26:61) and of having announced himself to be the Christ (Lk 22:67). All four canonical accounts make it clear that Jesus' crime is a religious crime, a Jewish crime and not a matter of Roman law. He is brought before Pilate as a criminal by the priests (Jn 18:30), and Pilate's bewildered reply sets the tone for the episode: "Take him yourselves, and try him by your own Law."

In the Gospel of John, we await the crowd at 19:8 to offer the clearest legal justification for Jesus' execution ("We have a Law, and according to that Law he ought to be put to death because he has claimed to be Son of God"). The synoptic accounts give that credit to the priests: "We found this man misleading our people; he opposes the payment of taxes to Caesar and maintains that he is the Messiah, a king" (Lk 23:2). In either event, this is a thin pretext to engage the personal attention of the Roman prefect. In every account, Pilate's reluctance is palpable.

Pilate may come across as opportunistic, fearful, vacillating or reluctant, depending on which account we read or what the reader hopes to find. But it is worth considering that we should find Pilate to be a good Roman in all of these accounts, a model governor whose treatment of the questions raised by Jesus' arrest even to the point of washing his

hands can teach us about the limits of politics. Pilate was a Roman, unmolded by Jewish cultural or religious experiences, roused on a Friday to meet with Jewish leaders and a criminal whose crimes against Judaism held no interest for him. Pontius Pilate never, so far as we know, heard Jesus teach or experienced a miracle. Arguably, Pilate is the most neutral, disinterested person we meet in the Gospel. He has little interest, no stake in this Jewish matter. He enters a cultural or religious dispute as a secular official with a sort of neutrality it would take a Christian world nearly two millennia to achieve. Pilate seems to hold an almost Jeffersonian position that Jesus “neither picks Rome’s pocket nor breaks Rome’s leg.” To gain Pilate’s assent to crucifixion, the high priests must find a different argument.

Jesus “opposes the payment of taxes to Caesar,” as Luke tells it. That is a good start. But John’s account engages more prickly issues. Pilate asks Jesus almost casually, “Are you the King of the Jews?” Even this prospect of kingship little engages Pilate, and his response to Jesus confirms it: “Am I a Jew? Your nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me; what have you done?” Pilate still sees no role here for a Roman official, and once Jesus tells him that “my kingship is not from this world,” Pilate reaches a conclusion: “I find no crime in him.”

Indeed, the Johannine account offers us no one moment when it becomes clear that Pilate sees Jesus as a threat to Rome. None of the accounts does. In every account, it is the crowd whose denial of the spiritual substance of what is happening transforms the event, determines its outcome. The crowd’s cry, “We have no king but Caesar!” flattens, collapses Jesus’ trial within the secular horizon of Pilate’s authority. Pilate’s path now is clear, perhaps because he remembered Cicero’s advice for Roman governors: a governor’s “highest object” is “the greatest happiness of the governed.” Hardly a modern idea, this was a thoroughly Roman principle.

Had Pilate found in Jesus a threat to Rome, Jesus surely would have been crucified. Had the crowd pleaded for Jesus’ release, the accounts make it plain that Pilate would have been happy to release him. Even after he has condemned Jesus, Pilate seems perturbed enough by the crowd to provoke and enflame them with his inscription, “the King of the Jews,” refusing to change it (“What I have written I have written”) probably because he knew it would upset them. This is the Pilate we recognize from Philo.

For whatever else Christians may have wanted or may want to say about the man who condemned Jesus to the cross,

Pilate offers an exemplary model of a Roman governor.

A Liturgical Pilate

Ann Wroe’s *Pontius Pilate* (2001) described him as, “in a way, the first priest of the Eucharist.” For Wroe, Pilate took [Christ], showed him to the people, proclaimed him and broke him.” Pilate enacts the action of the Eucharist before the crowd. Wroe’s account is as poetic as it is provocative, but she offers an even more intriguing thought about how we may learn something about politics from this brief episode in Pilate’s life: “This is how ordinary men must deal with a God who is close enough to touch.” Pilate reminds us of our insufficiency, our powerlessness next to God.

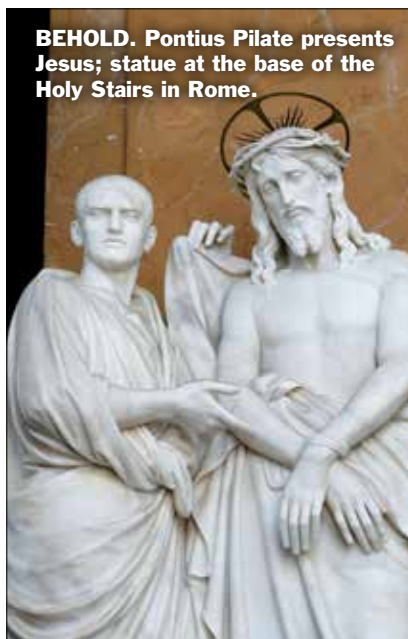
There is another sense in which Pilate’s actions were “liturgical,” a word in fact derived from ancient Greek word that may be translated as “public work.” Pilate conducted himself in public business aloof from the religious dispute before him. He sought neither to stoke nor to placate the crowd for his own benefit. He pursued “the greatest happiness of the governed.”

The episode reminds us how the Catholic political tradition regards politics as a realm of prudence, not perfection. Jesus reminded Pilate that he shares insignificantly in the power of divine government (Jn 19:11). The ruler’s function is to govern imperfectly the imperfect

people who are governed. Pilate’s authority is contingent. Even his power to do something so mundane as to condemn a criminal depends on a source of law and authority that lies beyond the reach of the mere brute force that could scourge and crucify a man. So also his authority to free an innocent man is contingent on the possibilities of a sinful world.

Perhaps not a saint, still Pontius Pilate is an icon of the Christian political tradition. He offers a caution against our most dangerous hopes for what we might achieve through politics. The best political leader hardly could have done better than Pilate managed to do with the angry crowd, and a worse political leader would have tried to force his point of view on them.

Pontius Pilate almost certainly died without knowing that his judgment of Jesus was the most important thing he ever did or that he would become a historic figure. Whether he would have or could have wanted it, his role in this most important event in Christian history offers a surprising but durable reminder that his earthly position was not so powerful as the truths about political life that he can represent for us.



BEHOLD. Pontius Pilate presents Jesus; statue at the base of the Holy Stairs in Rome.



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What's Catholic About It?

Universities must teach faith across disciplines.

BY J. MICHAEL BYRON

Since the onset of the Francis papacy it has been broadly observed that the current pontiff has a strong distaste for ecclesiastical culture warfare. This represents a significant shift in tone from previous decades of Vatican leadership, and it already is having substantive effects. Not least among these is the growing intuition among Catholic pastoral theologians that it is safe to come out from under their desks. It seems possible again publicly to investigate important dimensions of the ecclesial landscape without thereby incurring suspicion or official censure. The pent-up breezes of pastoral spirits are stirring, and there is these days an apparent tempering of approaches to doctrinal study that have been undertaken from an unapologetically ideological perspective.

Constructive theologies seem to be rediscovering their integrity and their nerve, and the art of posing the legitimately open question is in process of being retrieved as a worthy moment in religious thinking. Both scholars and ministers are being invited to shout less and listen more. This is to be celebrated. But many of the uncritically accepted structural accretions from the decades since the Second Vatican Council remain to be examined, explained and perhaps legitimated. Among the most important of these is, I believe, the Catholic studies department in the 21st-century Catholic college.

The Academic Environment

Until recently I taught for many years in the graduate school and seminary of a large Catholic university. For most of that time it felt to me to be a quite wintry season in church polity. It was not safe in my institution to question the liturgical preferences or the theological dispositions of St. John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI or the Roman Curia without putting one's personal reputation and professional career at risk. The rolls of more renowned and scholarly theologians who were castigated publicly in Europe and North America and Latin America during this period suffice to demonstrate precisely this environment. I began my academic career more than a generation ago because I found the richness of the Catholic intellectual tradition to be a source of liberation and excitement, permitting thoughtful persons to explore the deep mys-

teries of both God and this world. Gradually the pursuit of such mysteries in any public and systematically rigorous way became a recipe for career instability. The nascent culture was not one in which theologians ought to have taken much solace, nor one of which any custodians of a truly Catholic tradition ought to have been proud.

This is the horizon against which I wish to raise the question of the emergence since Vatican II in Catholic colleges and universities of Catholic studies departments. Specifically, what does it mean to maintain such a department within an institution that is already, ostensibly, Catholic? Wouldn't there be something odd about a law school within which could be found a subgroup of students undertaking a "legal studies" concentration? Or a business school wherein some enroll in the "business studies" program? Formally, I am unable to distinguish the difference between those seemingly absurd propositions and that of a Catholic studies department on a Catholic campus. Yet such departments have proliferated during the past generation, and they are often hailed as the bastions of religious vitality for a school. I believe that this matter has both a conceptual and a political aspect, and that both of these need serious and overt reflection and discussion.

The Conceptual Problem

To be Catholic is to be alert to the expectation that God's grace is abundantly poured forth into our world, and that benevolence may be lurking almost anywhere. This view is part of the traditional genius of the Catholic incarnational and sacramental imagination. Unlike some other theological dispositions, Catholics don't necessarily feel the need to seek for God "over, above, around or behind" the mediations of mundane things. Rather, Catholics are inclined, at least in their theology, to attempt the discovery of the holy precisely in and through such things. Such disclosures of grace are never without ambiguity, of course, but they are there to be found nonetheless.

A Catholic college or university already appreciates that a student of science is not merely an observer of physical phenomena but is also a witness to an astonishing cosmic order that has been gifted to us by our Creator. A Catholic institution of learning understands that literature mediates God, as do music, the humanities, art, education, history, sports and so forth. Which raises the question: What is the "Catholic studies" part of the perspective at a Catholic college that cor-

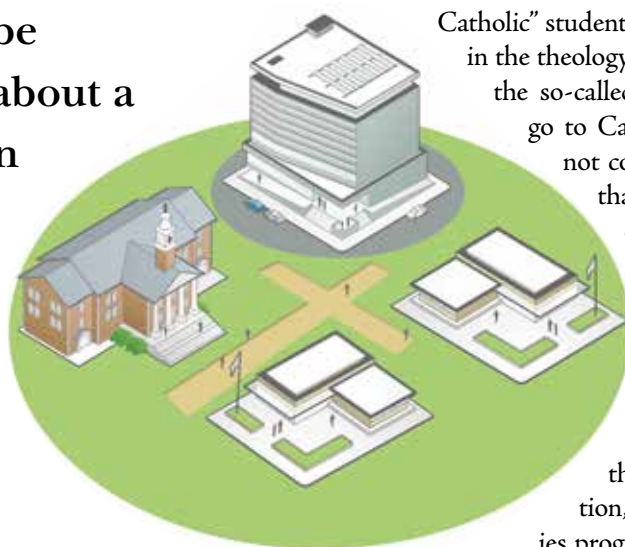
REV. J. MICHAEL BYRON is pastor of St. Pascal Baylon parish in St. Paul, Minn., and adjunct associate professor of systematic theology at St. John's School of Theology and Seminary, Collegeville, Minn.

rects for or supplements what is otherwise seen to be lacking or absent from the rest of the enterprise? Might not the very perceived need for such a discrete substudy be cause for a Catholic school to rediscover its mission? What is the difference, for example, between reading great books in the English department of a Catholic university and reading great books in the Catholic studies department? Although I did not teach in the Catholic studies department at my institution, my colleagues who did so seemed unable to answer that question when asked.

A greater conceptual question is at issue too. While it is true that Catholic studies recruitment literature does not claim that the department is in the specific business of teaching and learning theology, this is in fact exactly what students believe is the case, both when they enroll and while they study—at least that was so at the school where I worked. My cursory survey of various other Catholic studies promotional litera-

ture from American colleges did little to clear away the fog. Purpose statements and course offerings speak of everything from a curious intentional focus on medieval Catholicism to a concentration on “careers in religion” to “knowledge of the Catholic faith” and to the “church’s contribution” to fundamental doctrine. At least one school grounds Catholic studies in *fides quaerens intellectum*.

Wouldn’t there be something odd about a law school within which could be found a subgroup of students undertaking a ‘legal studies’ concentration?



The Political Problem

The designation “Catholic studies department” is, at least in my experience, code for a quite particular theological take on Catholicism, one that stands in some tension with the general ethos of the theology department and thus functions in practice as a foil to it. And while I am loath to use such loaded terms to name the two sides of this tension, it is apparent to me that the so-called “Vatican II (and now Francis) Catholic” students who want to study religion enroll in the theology department degree program, while the so-called “John Paul II Catholic” students go to Catholic studies. Perhaps that would not constitute a problem but for the fact that the students and faculty of both departments understand themselves to be engaged in the study of theology, but with very different credentials and assumptions about what that word means. And rather than pressing for an honest exchange of opinion as to which is the relatively more adequate definition, the blossoming of Catholic studies programs instead has given us a way for the more “John Paul II” students to do “theology” without having to confront the question at all. Is it the purpose of theology to subject the claims of traditional faith to rigorous systematic hermeneutical evaluation? Or is it the purpose of theology to explain why the articulations of certain popes and bishops, and those scholars who agree with them, are already optimally correct? Again, merely to raise this question—which did not seem to be at issue prior to the 1980s—is to wade into treacherous territory. And that is lamentable.

It was clear to me during my days on campus that the Catholic studies program was, relative to the theology department, the greater philanthropic revenue generator for the institution as well as the magnet for conspicuous official ecclesiastical approbation. (After all, every Catholic loves Catholicism, but not all love academic theology.) That seemed to render it unlikely that serious scrutiny would occur, and indeed it did not. Nor would the question about the

It was not uncommon for me to have students in my theology classroom, undergraduate or graduate, who were formally attached to the Catholic studies department as degree candidates. While they were always welcome and positively enriched the exchange of ideas and perspectives in the class, many of them were not skilled at rigorous theological thinking for their having been engaged in a curriculum of Catholic studies. That ought not to have been a surprise. The problem

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appropriateness of the very existence of the Catholic studies department be entertained anytime soon.

But perhaps, as reflective communities of thinkers, the administrative leadership in Catholic colleges and universities could endeavor to ask themselves and their boards of overseers just what exactly this is about. To me it seems a self-degrading admission for any Catholic liberal arts institution to have to acknowledge the need for, let alone the advantage of, a Catholic studies degree program to complement that which is otherwise being accomplished. Catholicism is not subject to being compartmentalized or identified with any singular curriculum, at least not in relatively healthy Catholic places of learning. Unless, that is, we are speaking instead of a sectarian or ideological notion of Catholicism, which is a contradiction in terms but which has become quite popular over the course of the past few decades. I hope that the moment is passing away when it is dangerous for a Catholic theologian to speak of it. **A**

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Will the Church Lose China?

On the eve of his 84th birthday, Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-kun wrote an article in AsiaNews in which he spoke about the ongoing Sino-Vatican dialogue and expressed concern that the agreement being envisaged may be one he could not share.

After highlighting his many concerns, he concluded with these words: “On the day that an agreement is signed with China there will be peace and joy, but do not expect me to participate in the celebrations of the beginning of this new church. I will disappear. I will start a monastic life to pray and do penance. I will ask the forgiveness of Pope Benedict for not being able to do what he was hoping that I could do. I will ask Pope Francis to forgive this old cardinal from the peripheries for disturbing him with so many inappropriate letters.”

He wrote the Jan. 9 article “out of desperation,” he told me. He fears the church will lose out in the negotiations, though he admits he does not yet know the terms of the possible accord. “As an old cardinal out in the peripheries, I have no way of knowing, let alone guessing.” He is not privy to the negotiations.

The fact is that the cardinal does not trust the Chinese Communist administration. He had hoped the situation might improve when President Xi Jinping came to power, but he no longer harbors such hopes for several reasons that can only be summarized here.

In Hong Kong, where he lives, he has seen a progressive reduction of civil liberties as a result of Beijing’s pressure on the judiciary and the media: the Catholic Church lost its battle to maintain control of its schools; press freedom is being increasingly curtailed; and the principle of universal elections has not been honored.

In mainland China, Cardinal Zen observes an ever greater control of religion under Xi’s regime. More than 1,000 crosses have been forcibly removed from churches; several seminaries have been closed; students of the national seminary in Beijing were forced to sign a declaration of loyalty to the Independent Church, promising also to concelebrate with illegitimate bishops; the clergy are subject to threats or enticements.

Born in Shanghai in 1932, Zen knows well what happened to the Catholic Church there after Mao Zedong came to power. The story is well documented by Paul P. Mariani in *Church Militant* (Harvard University Press, 2011).

As a Salesian priest, Zen was once a pioneer in the church’s dialogue with China after Deng Xiaoping opened the country to the outside world in 1978. He knows China well, having taught in the seminaries of the “open” church for seven years beginning in 1989, after the Tiananmen Square massacre. He taught there until 1996, when St. John Paul II appointed him coadjutor bishop of Hong Kong. After taking over as bishop in 2002, he took a strong, sometimes confrontational, stance in defense of civil liberties in Hong Kong and be-

came a point of reference for civil society there, for many church leaders on the mainland and for the underground church. In 2006 Benedict XVI made him cardinal “for the church in China,” and he was his close advisor on China matters until the pope’s resignation.

Since Francis became pope, Cardinal Zen has spoken with him in private on several occasions and has sent him many letters. In public, most recently in AsiaNews, and in private he has voiced concern that the Holy See, under Secretary of State Cardinal Parolin, is pursuing a kind of Ostpolitik, as it did when the Communists ruled Eastern Europe. He considers this a path of appeasement and fears the church could lose out, particularly regarding the nomination of bishops, but also with the underground faithful.


Not surprisingly, these public utterances have not gone down well in the Vatican. Nevertheless, Cardinal Zen professes loyalty to the pope and says that if a Sino-Vatican agreement is reached that he cannot share, he will not challenge it but instead will retire to a monastery “to pray and do penance.”

Cardinal John Tong Hon, his successor as bishop of Hong Kong, reads the situation differently, as he made clear in an interview with Vatican Insider published on Jan. 15, following Zen’s AsiaNews article. He said: “I am very happy to see the fruits that the Holy See and China are bringing to maturity by reopening the dialogue.”

Cardinal Zen does not trust the Chinese Communist administration.

GERARD O’CONNELL

GERARD O’CONNELL is *America’s Rome correspondent*. *America’s Vatican coverage is sponsored in part by the Jesuit communities of the United States*. Twitter: @gerryrome.



A FAMILY TRADITION. The Reagan family at Sunday dinner in "Blue Bloods."

BOOKS & CULTURE

TELEVISION | NICHOLAS D. SAWICKI

WADING INTO THE DEEP BLUE

Faith and family in 'Blue Bloods'

The New York Police Department, the largest police force in the United States, is also one of the most mythologized. It is a favorite of writers and audiences alike when it comes to television, books and film. Of the many shows featuring the N.Y.P.D., few have been so pertinent and striking as the hit series **Blue Bloods**. Now in its sixth season, the show revolves around Frank Reagan (portrayed by Tom Selleck), a Vietnam veteran, 9/11 first responder and the current police commissioner of the N.Y.P.D. For the Reagan family, police work and the law is the family business.

Frank Reagan's father, Henry (Len

Cariou), is the former police commissioner; Danny Reagan (Donnie Wahlberg) is a hot-headed and often unorthodox detective who more often than not solves the toughest serious crimes; Erin Reagan (Bridget Moynahan) is a rising assistant district attorney in Manhattan whose letter-of-the-law style often comes into direct conflict with her brother Danny's unorthodoxy; and Jamie Reagan (Will Estes), the youngest of the Reagan clan, a Harvard-educated lawyer turned cop, who often provides a balance to the arguments of his other two siblings. A third brother, Joe, was a police officer who was killed in the line of duty.

The world of "Blue Bloods" is a morally complex and provocative one that regularly raises questions about justice and fairness, right and wrong, professionalism and humanity. There is clear conflict, for example, in family conversations surrounding police tactics, with one arguing that a cop-killer may not make it to the jail alive and another arguing that all individuals have rights, regardless of their actions.

It is most often the explosive episodes involving Danny, the family member most willing to cross certain lines to ensure justice, and Erin, who seeks to have the most by-the-book prosecutions possible to ensure fairness, that bring up the harshest dilemmas. In the first season, for example, Danny forces a child-abductor to tell him where the missing girl is by beating the information out of him. While he manages to find the little girl in time, the abductor may walk free be-

cause his confession was coerced.

Recent episodes are refreshing in their timeliness. They tackle contemporary, real-world issues that viewers can immediately relate to, like the use of body cameras on patrol officers, sexual assault on college campuses, protest movements, human trafficking, drug addiction, terrorism—the list is long. But it is the setting in which many of these discussions play out that is most appealing: the Sunday dinner table. The Reagans, a practicing Catholic family whose faith plays a significant role in their lives and thus the series, gather every Sunday after Mass for a family dinner. It is across the long, food-laden table that the various generations of the Reagan family reveal their perspectives and moral understandings, gained through experience, time, education or some combination of the three.

Compared with the unpredictable nature of their jobs, the family dinner table scenes provide a stable and nurturing setting for the questions raised

by each episode to play out. The family dinner, which some may consider a throwback to another era in America, provides an integral service in that it allows for the Reagans to have the same laughs, the same fights, the same in-depth discussions that so many Americans remember and still have today. It welcomes the viewer as part of the family.

One of the biggest criticisms of the show is that it tends to be too archetypal in the way it portrays the Reagan family: An Irish-Catholic American family dedicates itself to the public good through police work in order to support their families, with the three oldest men in the Reagan family being veterans of the U.S. Marine Corps, each of whom served overseas in three different wars. While this all-American family is certainly relatable, it sometimes strikes the viewer as clichéd. Similar clichés strike when it comes to the relationship between Commissioner Frank Reagan and the Catholic Church. For

example, when the commissioner and the fictional archbishop of New York disagree over issues of gay and lesbian rights, both sides lack the real-life nuance often given to such issues. But it is in the quieter moments that their Catholic faith shines. Danny goes to his priest for counseling; Frank has lunch with a boyhood friend who is now a Monsignor. So while there are larger overtones that are false stereotypes, there are also genuinely beautiful displays of faith and sacrament throughout the series.

“Blue Bloods” makes us examine our own motives, relationships and faith. Not only can viewers join in as the Reagans work out the typical whodunit scenario, but we are welcome to accompany the Reagans on their quest to discern right from wrong and how and when one crosses that line.

NICHOLAS D. SAWICKI is a senior at Fordham University, Bronx, N.Y., focusing his studies on theology and history.

DIGITAL HIGHLIGHTS

America

THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC REVIEW

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VIDEO
On Jan. 14, **America** hosted “Where is the Church Going?” a panel discussion with Matt Malone, S.J., and James Martin, S.J., moderated by Kerry Weber.



WEB ONLY
“Nostra Aetate’: A Lever That Moved the World,” this year’s John Courtney Murrary, S.J., lecture, delivered by Rabbi Daniel Polish, is available online.



RADIO
Robert David Sullivan, associate editor and author of **America**’s Unconventional Wisdom blog, discusses President Obama’s final State of the Union address.

WHAT YOU’RE TALKING ABOUT:

“Jesuit education and the Society need to focus on producing mystics or they will, I think, become nothing at all in the not-distant future.”
—ED STEINMANN, “TEACHER, HEAL THYSELF”

FROM OUR BLOGS

Catholic Hospitals Win an Important Decision in California
Jim McDermott, S.J.

Sexual Assaults Challenge Cologne
Andreas R. Batlogg, S.J.

Pope in Rome Synagogue Calls on Jews and Catholics to Work Together for Peace and Justice
Gerard O’Connell

WHAT YOU’RE READING

Credo..., Bill McGarvey

Bioethics and the Catholic Church: 21 Questions for Janet E. Smith
Sean Salai, S.J.

From Churches to Church
Thomas P. Rausch, S.J.

Making Mercy a Verb, Pope Francis

Where Is the Church Going?
The Editors

America THIS WEEK 
Wednesdays at 1 p.m. on The Catholic Channel 129

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MY IDENTITY, COMPLEX

Art is most stirring for me when it represents aspects of my identity. With its fusion of New York City and the Dominican Republic, M. Tony Peralta's art does just that.

Peralta was born in the Washington Heights neighborhood of New York to Dominican immigrants. His mother, Alsacia Ramirez, raised him. Peralta describes her as a true "Dominican Catholic": she was religious, had an altar and knew every saint's name. (Peralta himself was named after St. Anthony.) Peralta also grew up during the golden age of hip-hop in New York, a time often described as hip-hop's zenith. The influence of both his upbringing and the hip-hop culture that surrounded him is most evident in the Peralta Project, a lifestyle brand created by the artist in 2005. Products at the Project range from black-and-white T-shirts with common Dominican phrases, like "Dimelo!" or "primo," to colorful, 16-inch screens featuring cans of Café Bustelo or Goya Beans.

Along with the Project, Peralta has debuted other exhibits, including 2011's "Complejo" series (Spanish for "complex"). The exhibit focuses on the anti-blackness in many Hispanic and Latino communities. Within Dominican culture, for example, certain characteristics—fairer skin, straighter hair and lighter eyes—are often hailed as superior. When an individual does not embody these features, she often feels conflicted because she does not embody the "norm," which therefore leads to the development of a *complejo*. Peralta captures this perfectly in the "Barbie" print. It features two Barbie dolls, one white, labeled "Barbie

linda" (pretty Barbie), the other black, labelled "Barbie fea" (ugly Barbie).

Growing up, Peralta faced his own insecurities because of his dark skin and curly hair, insecurities that led to low self-esteem. While his own experiences were the influence for "Complejo," he realized that whatever self-doubt he felt as a Hispanic or Latino man, "women deal with a lot more than I do." This led to Peralta's latest exhibit: "Rolos & Icons." I visited Mr. Peralta during this showcase and spoke with him about the inspiration behind his work.

"Rolos" presents iconic Latinas like Celia Cruz, Lynda Carter, Frida Kahlo and even Dora the Explorer wearing *rolos*, or rollers. In Dominican culture—and other communities of color—rollers are part of a traditional beauty regimen. Many Dominican women with curly hair or Afros use *rolos* and dryers as part of a straightening procedure. Despite being an ingrained part of various cultures, *rolos* are often seen as a way to perpetuate racist standards of beauty. Many add that this need to conform further exacerbates the *complejo* experienced by many women. For others, however, *rolos* are not about conformity but about choice and independence. This contradiction is part of the power of "Rolos & Icons."

Whether oppressive or empowering, *rolos* are symbols that represent women. In Peralta's exhibit, we see famous Latinas using a traditional

practice familiar to many of us. We see Celia Cruz against a purple canvas; Doña Florinda in her iconic stance, hands against her face, smiling; La Lupe wearing a red dress against a red backdrop; and Dora the Explorer with her iconic backpack in tow—all in *rolos*. All these women are, even if only for a moment on canvas, just like us.

All these women are, even if only for a moment on canvas, just like us.



I asked the artist what he would like audiences to take away from his work. He said, "I want people to be inspired. I want [my art] to be a place where if you're Latin or black, you see my work and it's like you see yourself." He concluded, "It's for people of color."

It has taken me almost 26 years to realize that my curly hair does not mean I am less professional, less respectable or less intelligent than my peers. It has taken me almost 26 years to get over my own *complejo*. As I stood in the audience at the "Rolos & Icons" exhibit, I realized just how deeply ingrained this mentality is in my culture and my people. And I realized that we were all there for the very reason Peralta wanted us there: We saw ourselves in his art. As people of color, we often feel strikingly thrown against a white-washed world, and that is what we saw in Peralta's work. We saw ourselves in the bright, Andy Warhol-esque pictures of Selena Quintanilla-Pérez or Celia Cruz on the whitewashed gallery walls. Most important, we saw ourselves, our experiences, insecurities and *complejos* in Peralta.

OLGA SEGURA is an associate editor of *America*.



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CASUALTIES OF RESISTANCE

THE COST OF COURAGE

By Charles Kaiser

Other Press. 304p \$26.95

Paris lay inert, her breathing scarcely audible, her limbs relaxed, and the blood flowed remorsefully from her manifold veins. Paris was dying, like a beautiful woman in coma, not knowing or asking why.

The voice is that of Eric Sevareid, a CBS News foreign correspondent, who has sent his wife and twin infant sons back to the United States while he and a team of reporters remain to risk their lives and make journalism history recording the worst war in modern times.

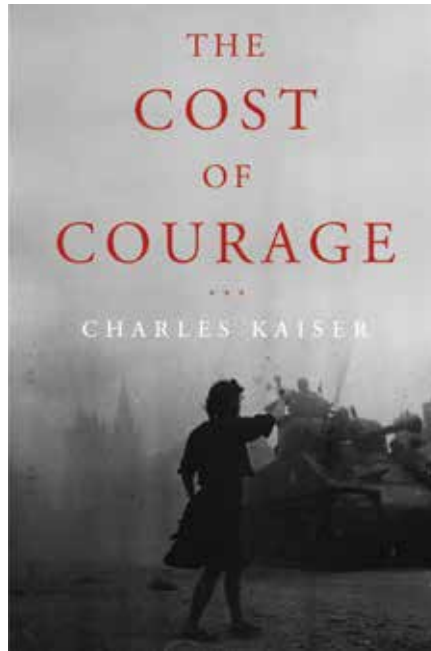
It is June 1940. On June 3 more than 100 German bombers bombed the city. On June 13 The New York Times reports that “the German guns are battering at the hearts and minds of all of us who think of Paris when we try to define what it means by civilization....Of all cities it expresses best the aspirations of the human spirit.” The next day, Paris falls.

Jacques Boulloche, director of the French Bureau of Highways, out of town, writes to his wife, two sons, André and Robert, and two daughters, Jacqueline and Christiane. They are a distinguished nonpracticing Catholic family about to have their faith in one another and their country tested. He writes to his wife, “Stay calm, courageous and proud”; to his children, “I love you with all my heart.”

Charles Kaiser’s *The Cost of Courage* is both a history and a morality tale, the story on one level of the Boulloche family and the risks they both took and did not take to preserve their lives and their integrity. It is also a key chapter in the history of France under German occupation, when some citi-

zens, fired by patriotism, risked all to resist the Nazis—as the nation split between occupied and Vichy, southern France—while others survived by sitting on their hands. Both, in tragic ways, paid the cost of their decisions.

Charles de Gaulle, wounded three times in World War I, with almost three years in German prison camps, escapes to England where Winston



Churchill allows him to use the BBC to rally the French population with: “Whatever happens, the flame of French Resistance must not die.” Young André, 24, who helped blow up a bridge to slow the German advance, for a time retreats to Africa. The same day, Hitler sneaks into Paris and visits Napoleon’s tomb, perhaps wondering whether his own invasion of Russia will improve on Napoleon. André, convinced that France “can only be saved by a complete moral resurrection,” returns to Paris, where his brother Robert introduces him to the dashing André Postel-Vinay, who immediately

recruits him for the underground. The two Andrés, both impetuous youths, bond immediately. In a way, writes Kaiser, “Resistance is so instinctive, and so immediate, they barely consider the possible consequences—for themselves, or for anyone else.”

As fate would have it, Postel-Vinay’s brief career will foreshadow that of the four-years-younger André. Meanwhile Hitler scuttles the Hitler-Stalin non-aggression pact and invades Russia, transforming the French Communists into Resistance fighters. At the same time Postel-Vinay has been introduced to an agent to whom he must deliver secret documents on German troop movements; but he suspects him, reminding himself that every relative of a *Résistant* is subject to arrest. Therefore every member must carry cyanide pills and, if arrested, kill himself lest under torture he might identify his brothers and sisters in the movement.

The agent turns out to be a British con man and burglar working with the Nazis, who burst, guns drawn, into their meeting. They grab Postel-Vinay’s gun before he can shoot either them or himself. In prison he feigns insanity and twice attempts suicide; moved to an insane asylum, he escapes, makes his way to Gibraltar, then to a Patriotic School in England where he must prove that he too is not an informer. Proven, he is led to deGaulle, who makes him a director of a bank for Free French colonies.

André Boulloche

Warned in 1942 that he faces arrest, the younger André takes a long route through France to Toulouse, to Spain and to England where he too works with deGaulle, who sends him back to Paris to coordinate the Resistance activity in northern France. The British send him to espionage school where he (now 27) excels in physical training, weapon training, communications and intelligence. Nevertheless he is arrested less than four months after return-

ing to Paris. Shot by the Germans, he decides to not kill himself. At the hospital they operate, but repair him just enough to allow him to talk. Trying to climb out a window, he falls. They sloppily sew up his stomach wounds. His sisters try to rescue him but fail. Tortured, he does not talk.

April 27, 1944, 40 days before the Allied landing in Normandy, André, with 100 prisoners in each of 17 railroad cars, is crammed in and headed for Auschwitz. Fellow prisoners include 39 French railroad employees, two poets, 20 priests and members of 64 Resistance organizations. In four days jammed so tightly they can't sit, many lose their minds, strip nearly naked to escape the heat, scream, open their veins to drink one another's blood, as their corpses are stacked in the corner. At Auschwitz they are tattooed, their bodies shaved of all hair. What remains, at least in some, are the traditional three requirements for survival: determination, dignity and luck.

Following André's arrest Christiane stops studying at the Science Politique and moves out of her parents' apartment in order to live a totally secret life, including her job of moving the Resistance radio equipment from one site to another. She is proud of her self-control. When a comrade, a boy from England, downs cognac to calm his nerves, she tells herself, "At least I am courageous—even though I am a girl."

The War Outside

In April 1943 almost half a million Allied troops invaded Italy. The Americans and the British, to disrupt the transportation system prior to Normandy, launched 9,000 sorties in 69 attacks, losing 198 planes. Again and again Kaiser pauses to remind his readers of the moral dimensions of various issues—particularly the cost paid by innocent civilians for the Allied victories. A line from a poem of Paul Verlaine, "The long sobs of autumn violins," is

code that the invasion to save France is about to begin. Yet Kaiser notes that the "Normandy countryside will be drenched with the blood of thousands of Allied and German soldiers, and at least 15,000 French civilians, most of whom will be victims of Allied bombardments." Like Hitler, "Stalin is responsible for genocides that have killed millions of innocent people"; now he is willing to sacrifice 20 million men and women to defeat Hitler. On D-Day, our landing at Omaha beach cost 2,000 American lives in order for 30,000 to make it ashore.

Yet General Eisenhower reported that the actions of the Resistance behind the lines were as important as the bravery of the men storming the beaches. On the night after the invasion President Roosevelt read a prayer for the men on the radio: "Lead us to the saving of our country, and with our sister nations into a world unity that will spell a sure peace invulnerable to

the schemings of unworthy men." In Germany, Field Marshal Rommel conspires to remove, but not kill Hitler. After the attempt, which fails, Rommel must choose between suicide or a trial. He swallows a cyanide capsule and dies within 15 seconds.

In August 1944, as tanks of the French armored division are but a few weeks from roaring into Paris. Christiane and her extended family celebrate the approach of peace with a dinner. Christiane leaves early; but at 3 a.m. the Gestapo break in to arrest her. Since she is not there they arrest her parents and brother in her place. All three die in prison. But André survives when General George Patton liberates his prison camp. André, 29, returns gaunt, with bulging eyes.

For the rest of his life he blames himself for all that happens, he shaves his head to a crew cut and wears a black tie in memory of the dead. But he was not universally worshipped as a hero.

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For some relatives, by opposing the Nazis he was responsible for the deaths of his parents and brother. On Aug. 5, 1946, he wrote in his diary: "When the war came, I had, with great effort, offered the complete sacrifice of my life—mine and mine alone.... Why didn't I have the courage to remain absolutely alone when I returned to Paris? Why did I have to add the possibility of the sacrifice of my own family members to the near certainty of my own sacrifice?"

As a politician his main goal was to accomplish reconciliation between France and Germany. He became a local mayor, a deputy in the National Assembly and rising star of the Socialist Party; but his marriage broke up and his children described him later as a "tyrant" who wildly drove his car. He died in a plane crash in the Black Forest.

Three thousand people attended the funeral hall and thousands more gathered outside to listen. In his eu-

logy, future prime minister Francois Mitterrand said, "When he turned toward the Germans, he was the first among us who knew how to say, 'My friends.'" As this review is written (Nov. 14, 2015), Paris mourns over 100 bloody corpses, slain in a theater, restaurant and soccer stadium, as the Muslim terrorists yelled, "Allah be praised."

Today, Paris does not lie inert. She is not dying like a beautiful woman in a coma. She is again what we think of when we try to define the meaning of civilization. But again she faces a problem which is international in scope, in which all the countries affected must come together, welded as one by a common understanding of what it means to be a free person, and show courage in commitment to that vision.

RAYMOND A. SCHROTH, S.J., is *America's* literary editor.

written in the last three years of her life, from 1940 to 1943, a feverishly productive and intensely experimental time for Weil. She was living for the most part in Marseilles, where she had gone to work in the resistance after fleeing Paris, just as the Germans descended. The texts Springsted selected for inclusion offer much to English-speaking readers, novices and scholars alike. Three of the essays are published in English translation for the first time, and several others are dusted off from older volumes now out of print, presented here in fresh new translation. *Simone Weil: Late Philosophical Writings* makes a perfect companion to the best-known and most accessible of Weil's writing today, *Waiting for God*, which focuses more on her spirituality than on her philosophy. (Both volumes are slim, affordable paperbacks with excellent essays and great introductions, but Springsted's offers a little more intellectual heft.)

Two essays in particular have lingered with me for days after reading them. In the first, "Essay on the Concept of Reading," Weil concerns herself with how we come to understand the world in the ways we do. (Rather than "thinking" or "perceiving," Weil calls this process "reading" the world.) The world forces itself on us as from without, but we also have active powers of interpretation and creativity. Decades before Michel Foucault's formation of the subject and Alasdair MacIntyler's revitalization of virtue ethics, Weil claimed that it is possible to change how we "read" the world, but it "requires work" on our bodies, feelings, sensibilities that can enable us to "read" it differently (hence her radical experiments with her own body, habits and labor). All of this shapes how we think, not just ideas.

The second is Springsted's excellent

BRENNA MOORE

THE GENIUS OF COMPASSION

SIMONE WEIL Late Philosophical Writings

By Simone Weil

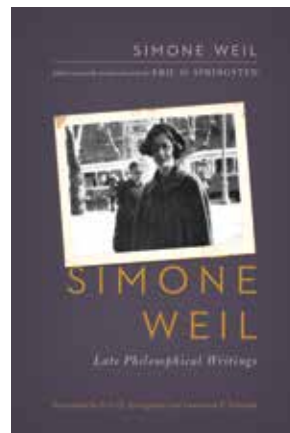
Edited by Eric O. Springsted
University of Notre Dame Press. 216p
\$20

By reputation, Simone Weil is a writer about whom we cannot think apart from her body: the starvation that ushered in Weil's tragic demise at age 34; her refusal to indulge in sugar as a young child during wartime privations; the horrible outfits; "her homeliness, her physical clumsiness, her migraines, her tuberculosis" (to draw from Susan Sontag's famous litany). "By the age of fourteen," Mona Ouzouf wrote, "she had achieved beyond her wildest dreams her plan not to be attractive."

Despite the fascination Weil's physicality exerts on our imagination, she

was above all a *thinker*, and Eric O. Springsted has gathered a wonderful collection of 10 essays by her on just that. The essays are not merely Weil at her most speculative, but her reflections on the process of thinking itself. Taken together, they "take up what she thought thinking is and ought to be and hence what she thought she was doing in writing all that she did." In that alone, the book casts aside our habitual ways of remembering Weil and clears entirely fresh ground.

Each of the 10 essays is relatively short but packs a punch, as Weil's writing tends to do. They were all



translation of an older essay, presented here as “What Is Sacred in Every Human Being?” written in London in 1943, just months before Weil’s death. It was a direct critique of Jacques Maritain’s *The Rights of Man and Natural Law* (1942). At the time, personalism and human rights language was rapidly gaining ground among the Catholic and secular leftist circles Weil frequented. Counterculturally, Weil was adamantly against this. She held little hope that a notion of the person or human rights would do much to stem the tide of cruelty and violence. Weil always brings us back to earth: she drew on her experiences in the factories and in courtrooms watching men and women so on the margins of society—those she calls the “vagabond,” the “afflicted,” “a torn and bloodied thing,” the one who merely “stammers” rather than speaks—that they were virtually absent and inaudible to democratic, professional institutions aimed at protecting rights and liberties. Rights, moreover, she argues, need force to back them up, but what force protects those so afflicted they repulse and cannot even speak?

Weil put her hope instead in the geniuses of compassion who cultivated radical attention to those easiest to ignore: “Putting ourselves in the place of a being whose soul is mutilated by affliction or is in immanent danger of becoming such a being” is a process she describes as “passage into the impersonal.” She had in mind those saints and geniuses whose love was so all-encompassing that it extended to even the most horrifying and marginal—it was “impersonal.” Hence what is sacred in humanity was the “impersonal” rather than the “personal” for Weil.

That was 1943. She was right in predicting that “institutions that are meant to protect rights, persons and democratic liberties” will understandably garner much public support. But hers was a reminder that we need to “invent other ones” too—institutions that might help cultivate selfless practices of listening,

the self-transformation to be attentive to those who speak in ways we are not used to hearing. In what became the most genocidal of centuries, what difference could her ideas have made?

I couldn’t help but think of Weil herself as I read the last line of her 1941 essay “Literature and Morals,” which Springsted included as Chapter 8. Weil claimed that the rare, authentic geniuses of the past “are still with us.” She continued, “Contemplating them is the inexhaustible source of an inspiration

that can legitimately direct us. For this inspiration, for those who know how to receive it, tends, as Plato said, to give wings that can push against gravity.” As long as people inflict harm on another, as long as people wonder what we might do about it, the world needs Simone Weil. This new volume may help give us something of those wings to push against gravity.

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FRANK R. HERRMANN

FORCE BORN OF LOVE

M. K. GANDHI, ATTORNEY AT LAW

The Man Before the Mahatma

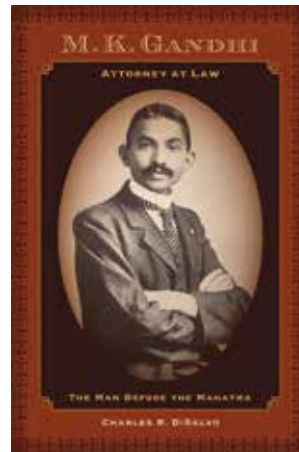
By Charles R. DiSalvo
University of California Press. 392p
\$34.95

On Sept. 29, 1888, 18-year-old Mohandas K. Gandhi, traveling alone from India, disembarked in England to begin his study of law at London’s Inner Temple. The rail-thin young man had only one goal in mind: to support himself and his pregnant young wife back home. Upon completing his legal education three years later, the aspiring barrister returned home, where he struggled to set up his practice. Still so shy he could barely speak in public, he was fortunate to encounter an Indian merchant in need of legal help with a business in South Africa. Gandhi promptly traveled to Natal. Soon he was representing other affluent Indian businessmen in Natal and later in the Transvaal. Inevitably, his practice brought him into conflict with the racist restrictions that

directly affected his clients and pervaded all aspects of society.

Charles DiSalvo’s inspiring *M. K. Gandhi, Attorney at Law: The Man Before the Mahatma* demonstrates that Gandhi’s determined but frustrated efforts to achieve social change through litigation and petitions played a critical role in his eventual embrace of civil disobedience. Drawing on court records, speeches, letters, news accounts and Gandhi’s writings, DiSalvo painstakingly follows the barrister as he agitates for Indian civil rights. Given the racist milieu of Natal and Transvaal, his defeats were many, the successes few and temporary.

Gandhi personally felt the sting of racism. On his first appearance in court, the magistrate ordered him to remove his turban. (Gandhi politely refused.) During one of his evening walks, a police officer pushed and kicked him. An anti-immigrant mob badly beat him. Speaking with a new passion to his fellow Indians, he encouraged them to unite against anti-Indian laws and regulations. He placed his hope primarily



in the courts, with disheartening results. Unsuccessfully he fought against a licensing act designed to put Indians out of business. He petitioned against segregated rickshaws, to no avail. His legal arguments won him nothing when he protested the South African Republic's legislation denying citizenship to "any of the native races of Asia." He fought against a measure designed to keep Indians from immigrating into Natal, mounted an assault against restrictions on Indian property rights, aided in the prosecution of corrupt racist officials and challenged legislation in the Transvaal requiring Asiatics to register and be fingerprinted. His relentless legal battles made him a powerful voice within the Indian community.

But time and again, in courts and legislatures, his voice fell on deaf ears.

In 1904, Gandhi showed signs that he was considering a different path. Writing in the publication *Indian Opinion* regarding a piece of anti-Indian legislation, he suggested for the first time that Indians "must keep themselves absolutely cool and patient, still relying upon justice being ultimately done," but they should "decline to pay any fines, and go to gaol" rather than comply with the offending act. By 1905, DiSalvo finds Gandhi so frustrated in the courts that he was "beginning to hate the very profession of which he was a part."

In 1906, that frustration broke out into action. A Johannesburg regula-

tion barred Indians from using regular tram cars. Gandhi arranged a test case in which an Indian deliberately defied the ordinance. The city authorities, however, sensing Gandhi's tactic, declined to prosecute. This was civil disobedience in its infancy. DiSalvo observes that Gandhi "did not yet fully understand how to use mass disobedience as a point of leverage for engaging larger social, political and legal forces. He would learn soon enough." By 1907, Gandhi was telling his audience that "true victory will be won only when the entire Indian community courageously marches to the gaol—when the time comes—and stays there as if it were a palace." Gandhi himself was arrested, tried and convicted for refusing to carry the registration certificate required of Indians.

DiSalvo shows that Gandhi's philosophy of *satyagraha* (a term Gandhi preferred to "passive resistance") grew in inverse proportion to his disappointment with the power of law to effect social change. If institutional injustice would not yield to litigation, Gandhi became convinced it would succumb to a "Force which is born of Truth and Love or non-violence." "In a country where people suffer injustice and oppression and are denied their... rights, their real duty lies in suffering imprisonment....[T]he outcome of our campaign does not depend upon whether we win or lose in the Supreme Court." In 1911, Gandhi decided to abandon the practice of law entirely. He surrendered the weapons of the courtroom for "the weapons of truth, soul-force, non-injury and courage," as Martin Luther King, Jr. Gandhi's spiritual heir, would describe in his Nobel Lecture of 1964.

M. K. Gandhi, Attorney at Law, offers a detailed and deeply thoughtful study of the ambiguous place of law in the life of a man who led millions of people to freedom.

FRANK R. HERRMANN, S.J., teaches law at Boston College Law School.

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God Alone

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT (C), FEB. 14, 2016

Readings: Dt 26:4-10; Ps 91:1-15; Rom 10:8-13; Lk 4:1-13

“It is written, ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him’”(Lk 4:8)

The Second Vatican Council’s “Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy” outlines the two essential features of Lent. Christians are to recall or to prepare for “the celebration of Christian Initiation,” and they are to participate in penance which “disposes the faithful...to celebrate the Paschal Mystery” (No. 109). In stressing the need for penance, by various spiritual disciplines and ascetic acts, the council fathers understood that the goal of all these acts was to lead to “the detestation of sin as an offense against God.” Penance, however, is not only “internal and individual, but also external and social,” a corporate activity of the gathered people of God (No. 110).

Lent is the time when the church once again looks to the model of Jesus Christ as we turn with renewed vigor from the subtle snares of sin. As the people of Israel recalled their time of redemption, when God freed them through the Passover, and their subsequent wandering in the desert prior to entering the Promised Land, so we recall Christ aligning himself by baptism in solidarity with sinful humanity, his 40-day period of temptation in the wilderness and his conquering of sin in order to bring us to God’s kingdom.

If we are to align ourselves spiritually in solidarity with Jesus, conversion is vital, for conversion is the lifeblood

of repentance and the heartbeat of holiness. This requires our own personal spiritual acts of penance, but also actions with and on behalf of others, in the church and outside of the church, such as prayer for all those in need of conversion from sin. Jesus’ own battle with evil was not just a personal battle but a battle for the salvation of all humankind.

Jesus was tempted by the devil after his baptism, which is why we recall our own baptismal graces during Lent. Luke describes Jesus as “full of the Holy Spirit” when he goes to the desert; indeed, he is led there by the Spirit. So, too, we must enter Lent “full of the Holy Spirit,” prepared to withstand our own temptations and confront our sins filled with spiritual vigor.

The temptation of Jesus is mysterious, but as God made flesh he engaged in a number of spiritual disciplines to aid in his battle against evil that are models for us. In Luke, the temptations of the devil come after Jesus engaged in fasting, when he “ate nothing at all during those days.” Ancient Christian monastics pointed to the period after deep spiritual engagement as a time when the devil would strike. We need to fear the traps of sin and evil not simply when we feel spiritual absence but especially when we feel that we have become spiritually aware and mature.

Jesus thwarts temptation by relying

on the word of God. When the evil one says to Jesus, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread,” Jesus answers by citing Dt 8:3: “One does not live by bread alone.” When the devil offers Jesus all the kingdoms of the world if only he would worship him, Jesus rebuffs him with Dt 6:13: “Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.” Finally, when the devil challenges Jesus to show his dependence upon God by testing his faith that God would save him, Jesus cites Dt 6:16: “Do not put the Lord your God to the test.”

Scripture is a bulwark against evil and essential for spiritual growth and conversion during Lent, but the devil also cites God’s word to Jesus in Luke’s temptation narrative. This is why the corporate ele-



PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Reflect on Jesus’ sojourn in the desert and temptation. Which temptations are troubling you at this time? Which sins do you need to turn away from? How can you help others in their times of temptation? What help do you need as you turn from sin and temptation to true conversion?

ART: TAD DUNNE

ment of Lent is so essential, that we come together as church to support one another in our spiritual practices, like Bible study and fasting, by worshiping together, by praying for one another and by turning our hearts to the perfect model, Jesus Christ. Even the best of spiritual practices can become temptations to support our own desires or needs, or to turn us away from God. For true conversion, we must allow holiness to be a support for us as we turn toward God together.

JOHN W. MARTENS

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