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Daniel Berrigan

POET, PRIEST, PROPHET

LUKE HANSEN

EDWARD K. BRAXTON
ON #BLACKLIVESMATTER

OF MANY THINGS

Given my vocational choice, it is perhaps unsurprising that one of my favorite movies depicts an activist priest in pitched battle with the forces of injustice. “On the Waterfront,” Elia Kazan’s 1954 masterpiece starring Marlon Brando and Karl Malden, is based in part on the life of John M. Corridan, a Jesuit priest who took on the mob-controlled labor unions on Manhattan’s West Side docks. The pivotal scene of the movie is when the priest, played by Malden, is standing over the body of Kayo Dugan, the mob’s most recent victim. As Malden finishes his prayers, one of the dockworkers shouts out, “Go back to your church, Father!”

In one of his best performances in a cinematic career that spanned five decades, Malden responds: “This is my church! If you don’t think Christ is down here on the waterfront, you’ve got another guess coming.... Christ is always with you. Christ is in the shape-up, in the hatch, in the union hall. He’s kneeling right here beside Dugan, and he’s saying to all of you, ‘If you do it to the least of mine, you do it to me.’”

I thought of this scene when I learned over the weekend that Daniel Berrigan, S.J., had died. Much like Father Corridan, Dan Berrigan gave his life to waging peace, standing up to the privileged and powerful. He opposed the Vietnam War with his body, heart and soul. For many years he was an outlaw, putting his ministry, indeed his very life at risk in order to bear witness to the radical call of the Prince of Peace. “Faith is rarely where your head is at,” he once said. “Nor is it where your heart is at. Faith is where your ass is at!”

I have never been a chain-yourself-to-the-fence kind of activist. More often than not, I’m the guy who is sent in to negotiate, if negotiation is possible. But I fully recognize that every meaningful social movement needs prophets as well as politicians, people who are willing

to break the system and others who are able to subvert it from within. Only in that way, when a social movement breathes fully with both lungs, is change really possible.

I suspect, however, that reversing the great injustices that survive Father Berrigan will require more of his kind of activism than mine. Pope Francis reminds us that we are called to participate in this present *kairos* moment of mercy through action, through deeds, not merely with words. In an increasingly impersonal and depersonalized world, I suspect that our self-gift to God and one another will more and more resemble the radical acts of love and forgiveness to which the Gospel testifies: acts of true discipleship that are subversive of every creaturely notion of power.

Daniel Berrigan knew from his own relationship with Jesus Christ that any true encounter with God will scandalize us, destabilize us. An encounter with the God of mercy will make our lives messier before it makes them better. In other words, if we walk away from an encounter with God in the Gospel with our worldviews affirmed, with our previous ideas intact, then we have seriously missed the mark. Grace is a radicalizing force; it seizes us, transforms us and transports us to heights of head and heart we could previously only imagine.

Grace is the motive force of every true revolution, a revolution that is first and last a conversion of hearts, or it is no real change at all. Above all, an encounter with the risen Lord should open our eyes to the countless crucifixions that surround us. “Some people think the crucifixion only took place on Calvary,” said Malden. “Well, they better wise up!”

R.I.P. Father Berrigan. May you rest now in the eternal peace to which you bore such humble, heroic witness throughout your life.

MATT MALONE, S.J.

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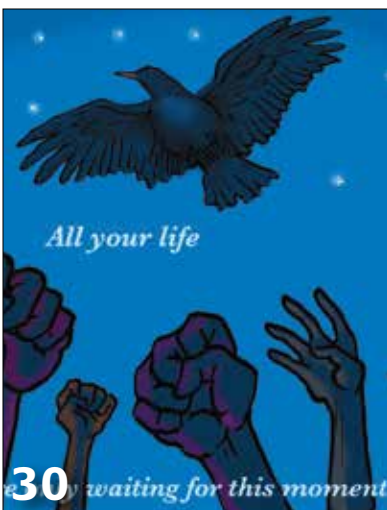
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Cover: Daniel Berrigan, S.J., on Good Friday, April 9, 1982, at the Riverside Research Institute in New York during a protest against nuclear armaments. AP Photo/Marty Lederhandler, File

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ON THE WEB

Reflections on the **life of Daniel Berrigan, S.J.**, from Mairead Maguire, Nathan Schneider, Michael Baxter, Bishop Tom Gumbleton, James W. Douglass and more. Full digital highlights on page 38 and at americamagazine.org/webfeatures.



Daniel Berrigan (1921-2016)

A Jesuit priest, poet, activist, scholar, writer, fugitive and inmate, Daniel J. Berrigan was one of the most influential Catholics of our time. His place in American Catholic history is beside the other two giants of the 20th century: Dorothy Day and Thomas Merton, both of whom were his friends. Father Berrigan inspired generations of men and women in the battle for social justice and put himself on the front lines in the war against war. He was perhaps best known as a member of the Catonsville Nine, a group of Catholic activists who seized piles of draft records in May 1968, during the Vietnam War, and set them on fire. Instead of appearing at his sentencing hearing two years later, Father Berrigan chose to go underground, “a fugitive from injustice,” as he put it with his dry wit. He was captured three months later by agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and jailed, one of a series of incarcerations over the years. A widely circulated photo showed him handcuffed, with a wide grin, flashing a peace sign.

Saints are often people who live out their Christianity in a way that seems ridiculous or even scandalous. As Father Berrigan wrote about Dorothy Day, he lived the Gospel as if it were true. But his actions rarely won him acclaim from the hierarchy, and he faced fierce opposition from Cardinal Francis Spellman, the powerful archbishop of New York. Even within the Jesuits there were grumblings about his “way of proceeding,” though Pedro Arrupe, S.J., then superior general, visited him in his cell in a federal prison during a trip to the United States, signaling his support.

Father Berrigan did not mellow in old age. He continued to agitate for change until the end. “Start with the impossible,” he wrote. “Proceed calmly towards the improbable. No worry, there are at least five exits.”

Fight to Vote

A U.S. district court last month upheld a 2013 North Carolina law that ostensibly targets voter fraud by requiring photo identification at the polls, eliminating same-day registration and reducing early-voting periods. Opponents had argued that the changes disproportionately burdened low-income and minority voters who lacked driver’s licenses, but Judge Thomas Schroeder ruled that in the absence of “official discrimination” the law was valid. Unless a higher court reverses the North Carolina decision, we may see more efforts to make it more difficult and time-consuming to vote.

We should be encouraging citizen participation at

all levels of American government. If photo I.D.’s are required, they should be easy to obtain without a fee that essentially serves as a poll tax. But it is notable that turnout among African-American voters in North Carolina actually increased in 2014, the first election when the voter I.D. law was in effect. This does not justify the law, but it does show that well-publicized efforts to limit turnout can have the opposite effect of making people more determined to vote—at least in the short term.

It is also a reminder that, as is the case with freedom of speech, the best response to bad politics is more politics. With no consensus on the practical meaning of the “right to vote” in the Constitution, we cannot wait for the courts to guarantee equal access to the polls. Voter advocacy groups must propose their own laws to break down barriers to political participation, and they must ensure that any new “anti-fraud” measures do not discourage citizens from making their voices heard.

Ship for the Rich

In literature and cinema, when survivors of a sinking ship or a plane crash huddle in a rubber raft in the ocean surrounded by sharks, a common theme is the interdependence of people who were once strangers. But misfortune is not a prerequisite for solidarity. Indeed, the great reward of foreign travel has long been encounters with strangers not like ourselves who may become lifelong friends.

But travel is changing. For Norwegian Cruise Line’s the Haven, the goal is to identify top-of-the-line customers and, for as much as \$10,000 a week, to pamper them with special amenities like a full-time butler and house them in a posh “city within a city,” a suite with two-story views of sunsets over the waves, a private swimming pool and the guaranteed company of 275 elite “people like themselves.” No danger of rubbing shoulders with the 4,000 people in \$1,000-a-week cabins down below. Enter the auditorium and a red ribbon ropes off the best seats for the elite guests.

The top 1 percent of American households now control 42 percent of the nation’s wealth, while the middle class has struggled to catch up since the end of the Great Recession. But the travel industry has marketed exclusivity: For a price, your group descends the gangway first when you arrive in port. Americans were once proud that “created equal” meant equal treatment and equal opportunity. Today we have slipped back a century to the social stratification that separated the classes on the Titanic—and we know what happened to them.

Colombia's Path to Peace

It has been 52 years since the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, first began its military campaign against the nation's government. This long-running conflict, the longest in the Western world, which has left over 220,000 dead and five million displaced, may finally be coming to an end. Though the two sides missed a self-imposed deadline on March 23 to strike a deal, government and FARC leaders seem confident an agreement is within reach.

In April Juan Manuel Santos, the president of Colombia, announced the creation of a cabinet-level position for peace and post-conflict management in anticipation of a deal with FARC. Meanwhile, Pope Francis has pledged his support for the peace process and said he would visit Colombia when an agreement is signed. (He did not agree to a request to meet with FARC leaders in September in Havana, because of his busy schedule.) The United Nations is also preparing for an eventual settlement; in January all 15 members of the Security Council approved the creation of a commission to monitor the disarmament process following an agreement between the two parties.

There are reasons to be cautious despite these positive signs. FARC has voiced concern that it could be the target of attacks by paramilitary groups if it renounces hostilities and lays down its weapons. Meanwhile, the government is engaged in a second set of peace talks with the National Liberation Army (E.L.N.), the second-largest guerrilla group in Colombia. The talks were announced only in March, and it could be years before any significant progress is made. (Negotiations with FARC began three years ago in Havana.) Maintaining the terms of an agreement with FARC while negotiating with the E.L.N. will be extraordinarily difficult.

Any peace deal will need a wide base of support in order to succeed. Fortunately, Colombia is not alone; several Latin American countries have lent their support to the ongoing negotiations. Ecuador, Venezuela, Brazil, Chile and Cuba have agreed to act as guarantors for the talks with the E.L.N., and the first meeting will take place in Ecuador in May. Meanwhile, the government of Colombia is trying to recruit local business leaders to weigh in on the framework for the negotiations with the E.L.N. Many of Colombia's citizens are understandably wary of the rebel groups, who have used kidnappings and the drug market to fund their operations. Yet E.L.N. leaders are eager to engage with all

segments of Colombian society, not just the government, as they work on an agreement that reflects their hopes for the future of Colombia. This process is in keeping with recommendations from the Colombian bishops' conference, which has argued that any deal must be negotiated and not imposed by the government.

FARC and government leaders have already agreed on several points of contention in their negotiations. The rebels have consented to give up the drug trade, and the government has sketched out a plan for FARC's political inclusion, a key development in a country with a history of marginalizing voices from the left. Meanwhile, the two sides have agreed to a mechanism to locate and exhume the remains of the 77,000 people who were "disappeared" during the generations-long conflict.

Additional issues need to be addressed to maintain long-term stability. Colombia is home to the second largest internally displaced population in the world, behind Syria. The conflict has forced millions of people from their homes, mostly in rural areas. Some of these families have emigrated to neighboring countries, but many remain within Colombia. Catholic Relief Services, in conjunction with the local church, has provided support to these communities for over 50 years, especially for farmers who struggle to make a living in urban areas. That work will have to continue.

A few lessons can be gleaned from the journey thus far. For one, the United States need not always serve as the peacemaker in chief. Though the Obama administration has supported the peace process and appointed a special envoy to Colombia for this purpose in 2015, the peace talks have been largely led and supported by Colombia's Latin American neighbors. Colombia has also worked hard to incorporate rebels into their society. Starting in 2003, Colombia has sponsored a program to disarm rebels and help them make the transition to a new life. At the House of Peace, former rebels are offered food and board and given courses in math and reading. About 49,000 rebels have gone through the program, 25,000 have learned to read and write, and 12,000 now enjoy the rights of citizenship. Finding a home for former rebels in a new Colombia and working to end the economic inequalities that fueled the conflict for so long will be critical to a just and lasting peace.



REPLY ALL

People Before Principles

I found it very interesting to read “Imposing Independence,” by Séamus Murphy, S.J. (4/28), back to back with “The Popular Voice,” by Rafael Luciani and Felix Palazzi. Father Murphy begins with Catholic social teaching and applies it to the Easter Rising of 1916. To my mind, he manipulates the evidence to condemn the Rising. Sweeping general statements that are impossible to prove are the basis of his argument that independence was imposed on the people. Such statements as, “By imposing independence on the Irish without their permission, the Rising’s leaders attacked the good of political participation.”

I believe the leaders of the 1916 Rising awakened the people to just how oppressed they were—the penal laws, the evictions, the plantation movement in the North, the Black and Tans, etc. Otherwise, why engage in a civil war over just how much independence they wanted? The Republicans led by Éamon de Valera wanted total independence, while Michael Collins and his followers accepted more limited independence, a compromise solution that eventually worked.

By contrast, the article on Pope Francis by Professors Luciani and Palazzi that follows is subtitled “Pope Francis’ theology begins with the people’s faith.” If Father Murphy had begun his article in the same way, he might have come to a different conclusion. Pope Francis starts with people; Father Murphy starts with principles and, to my mind, tries to make the people fit them.

(REV.) BRENDAN FREEMAN
Huntsville, Utah

The Rising in Context

I find the article by Father Murphy to be rather naïve, written as if the Rising happened in a vacuum. Where were the social teachings of the church during

the 1913 lockouts when people were hungry? Where was the hierarchy on the issue of Dublin having the worst slums in Europe in 1916? I have huge questions about our Irish love of martyrdom, as does the author. But I find it odd that he does not acknowledge that most of that love was taught by the church: die for Ireland, die for Christ, offer it up, vale of tears, it’ll be better in the next life. There are some lovely publications here in Ireland this year on spirituality and the Rising, but none are claiming the church’s social teaching was offering a better alternative at the time.

NOIRIN LYNCH
Kilshanny, Ireland

Jolt to the Heart

Richard Ford’s beautifully written article, “Words Count” (4/18), defined the short story genre a number of ways: “I like stories that understand that they are husbanding my precious attention and need therefore to give me back something important. And I like stories that are up to telling me directly something important about life, something that I did not know and in language I can understand and that gives me pleasure when I learn it.” I am glad that he mentioned James Joyce, Alice Munro, John Cheever and William Trevor, among stellar practitioners of the form, but I wish he had also included Flannery O’Connor, Raymond Carver, D. H. Lawrence and Alice Walker among the best. Novels are wonderful in their scope and thus have a lingering impact, but short stories have a sharper focus and thus administer “a jolt” (as poet Séamus Heaney said) “to the fibrillating heart.”

DON FORAN
Olympia, Wash.

Necessary Disturbance

In “Examining Conscience” (4/4), James Keenan, S.J., gives a lesson in clarity of thought as he distills the insights found in the Bible and in church

tradition with regard to conscience. Much has been clouded over in the name of conscience as the ultimate arbiter of good decision-making. We do not like words like judgment and guilt, and we have on occasion ignored the “fruit of the examined conscience” in reflecting on our own decisions. What are we teaching about conscience formation and what situations are we throwing in the path of our students in Catholic schools to assist them in this sacred task?

The well-formed conscience disturbs as it judges, and in our formative approach to teaching young people, we can hope to disturb as much as possible. Pope Francis talks about descending without getting lost in our ministry to others. Where could that be more true than with those whose consciences are in an embryonic state? I think of a young man who shared his personal objection to abortion—unless, of course, such a situation confronted him and his girlfriend. There is much need for disturbance there. Among the rights bestowed on us with our conscience is the right to hear that word, whispered deep inside us, telling us, “This is the way; walk it.”

BARRY FITZPATRICK
Online Comment

Our Poisoned Political Well

In “Facing the Front Runners” (4/4), Margot Patterson writes about one presidential candidate who looks to her less like Hitler and more like Italy’s Berlusconi. Be that as it may, for far too long conservative politicians and pundits on TV, radio and elsewhere have been poisoning the well, providing Donald J. Trump with the opportunity to tap the well and spew its poison. Our present political discourse has become crude and vile from that poisoned source. May our better angels lead us toward a healthier discussion of critical issues facing our nation and world.

(REV.) JAMES E. FLYNN
Louisville, Ky.

Gas Tax Cons

In “Oil Tax Benefits” (Current Comment, 3/28), the editors fail to consider two elements. First, the burden of a gas tax falls largely on middle- and lower-class people, since oil companies will pass it on to their customers. Many of these people have no alternative method of transportation and cannot escape this burden. This tax hike would limit their disposable income, leaving them with less money to spend on food and housing. Second, part of the rationale for this tax is that oil prices are low. Oil is a commodity subject to large price swings. If oil prices increase dramatically, one can be quite certain that this tax will not be eliminated.

KEN BALASKOVITS
Park Ridge, Ill.

Scalia and Subjectivism

In “Scalia vs. Aquinas” (3/21), Anthony Giambrone, O.P., presents a model of jurisprudence that reflects an epistemology and metaphysics that relies on the moderate realism of Thomas Aquinas, which for the most part no longer reflects a contemporary worldview. Justice Scalia, aware that existentialism and postmodernism promote a subjective reading of the law, used “originalism” to safeguard the will of the legislators. Any other approach enables a rule of judges that is incompatible with the Constitution.

(REV.) MICHAEL P. ORSI
Naples, Fla.

Political Priests

In *Of Many Things* (3/14), Matt Malone, S.J., writes he no longer recognizes his country. And I no longer recognize my own church. As our bishops retreat into silence and political correctness, the pastors and clergy in our parishes knowingly participate in the “gutter politics” that Father Malone bemoans. Though the pulpit remains for the most part neutral ground, a place from which to remind us to keep our

hands above the blankets and to visit the confessional more often, the social media posts of priests are filled with comments and discussions that are certainly unworthy of the intellectual descendants of Augustine, Aquinas and Ambrose.

RAY SHANAHAN
Online Comment

A Tired Narrative

In “It’s Been a Privilege” (3/14), Daniel P. Horan, O.F.M., writes, “White privilege means that people who look like me can go about the world with a sense of entitlement and belonging.” Let me assure the author that as a white male from a broken home, who spent time on public assistance as a youth, I had to earn my way up the socioeconomic ladder. No sense of entitlement. What I have I earned. Go to the poor hamlets in Appalachia that lack economic opportunity and have been ravaged by meth, broken families and unending family poverty and tell me how being white has benefited them. No doubt racism is still very real, but the white privilege narrative is tired and offensive.

BRIAN PIGOTT
Fishers, Ind.

Wall Street Won’t Pay

In “College Free for All?” (Editorial, 3/7), the editors present an interest-

ing discussion of the various plans for free or more heavily subsidized college tuition. One statement, though, needs attention: “This would be paid for by a tax on Wall Street.”

The Financial Transaction Tax, sometimes known as the “Robin Hood Tax,” would impose a small tax on each trade of a share of stock, bond or certain other financial instruments. There has been considerable analysis of this novel scheme, but one point is widely agreed on: “Wall Street” would not bear the cost of this tax. Just as other costs of trading these securities are passed through to the buyers and sellers, so, too, would this tax. These traders are not all millionaires and billionaires; 47 percent of American households own shares of stock. The tax applies to every share of stock or bond bought or sold by a mutual fund manager, 401(k) plan administrator, pension fund manager, endowment manager, etc. So middle-class savers, nonprofit colleges and private schools, future retirees, even parents and grandparents using a 529 Plan to save for college will pay the tax and, in many cases, will not even be aware of it. Who is least likely to be affected? The billionaires, like Warren Buffet, who tend to buy their stocks and bonds and hold them for many years or decades.

JOSEPH J. DUNN
Online Comment



MAY 9, 1921—APRIL 30, 2016

Daniel Berrigan Poet, Priest, Prophet

Daniel Berrigan, the Jesuit priest and acclaimed poet who for decades famously challenged U.S. Catholics to reject war and nuclear weapons, died on April 30. He was 94. He was a Jesuit for 76 years and a priest for 63 years. Father Berrigan passed away at Murray-Weigel Hall, a Jesuit residence on the campus of Fordham University in the Bronx, N.Y., surrounded by family and friends.

His niece, Frida Berrigan, daughter of his late brother Philip, wrote in announcing his passing: “We reflect back on his long life and we are in awe of the depth and breadth of his commitment to peace and justice.

“We are aware that no one person can pick up this heavy burden,” Ms. Berrigan wrote, but “there is enough work for each and every one of us. We can all move forward Dan Berrigan’s work for humanity.”

Her uncle was at peace, she said. “He was ready to relinquish his body. His spirit is free, it is alive in the world and it is waiting for you.”

Daniel Berrigan undoubtedly stands among the most influential American Jesuits of the past century, joining the likes of John Courtney Murray and Avery Dulles. Priest, poet, retreat master, teacher, peace activist, friend and mentor, he is the author of more than 50 books on Scripture, spirituality and resistance to war. Berrigan received the Champion Award from *America* in 1988.

A literary giant in his own right, he was best known for his dramatic acts of civil disobedience against the Vietnam War and nuclear weapons. He burned draft files with homemade napalm and later hammered on nuclear weapons to enact the prophecy of Isaiah that “they shall beat their swords into plowshares” (2:4). His actions challenged Catholics and all Americans to re-examine their relationship with the state and reject militarism. He constantly asked himself and others: What does the Gospel demand of us?

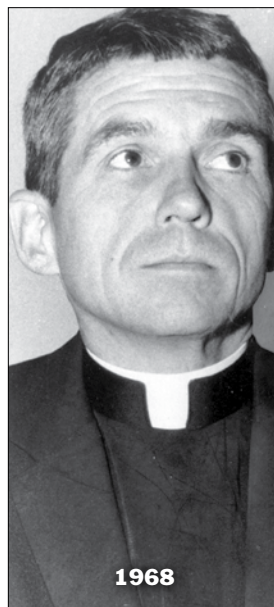
Daniel J. Berrigan was born on May 9, 1921, in Virginia, Minn., the fifth of six boys, and grew up on a farm near Syracuse, N.Y.

At age 18, Berrigan entered the New York Province of the Society of Jesus. During his first teaching assignment, at St. Peter’s Prep in Jersey City, N.J., in the late 1940s, Berrigan brought students across the Hudson to introduce them to the Catholic Worker. They often attended the “clarification of thought” meetings on Friday evenings, when speakers addressed topics of importance to the young Catholic movement. There he met Dorothy Day.

“Dorothy Day taught me more than all the theologians,” Berrigan told *The Nation* in 2008. “She awakened me to connections I had not thought of or been instructed in—the equation of human misery and poverty with warmaking. She had a basic

hope that God created the world with enough for everyone, but there was not enough for everyone and warmaking.”

After being ordained a priest on June 19, 1952, Berrigan went to France for a year of studies and ministry, the final stage of Jesuit formation, and was influenced by the Worker Priest movement. He professed final vows on the feast of the Assumption in 1956. Berrigan taught French and philosophy at Brooklyn Preparatory School from 1954 to 1957, won the prestigious Lamont Poetry Prize in 1957 for his first book of poetry, *Time Without Number*, and then taught New Testament at Le Moyne College in Syracuse, N.Y.



In 1963, he embarked on a year of travel, spending time in France, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Italy, South Africa and the Soviet Union. He encountered despair among French Jesuits over the situation of Indochina, as the United States ramped up military involvement in Vietnam.

Berrigan returned home in 1964 convinced that the war in Vietnam “could only grow worse.” So he began, he later wrote, “as loudly as I could, to say ‘no’ to the war.... There would be simply no turning back.”

He co-founded the Catholic Peace Fellowship and the interfaith group Clergy and Laity Concerned About Vietnam, whose leaders included Martin Luther King Jr., Richard John Neuhaus and Abraham Joshua Heschel.

Berrigan regularly corresponded with Thomas Merton, Dorothy Day and William Stringfellow, among oth-

ers. He also made annual trips to the Abbey of Gethsemani, Merton's home, to give talks to the Trappist novices.

In *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* (1966), Merton described Berrigan as "an altogether winning and warm intelligence and a man who, I think, has more than anyone I have ever met the true wide-ranging and simple heart of the Jesuit: zeal, compassion, understanding, and uninhibited religious freedom. Just seeing him restores one's hope in the Church."

The year 1968, a dramatic period of assassinations and protests that shook the conscience of the United States, proved to be a watershed year for Berrigan. In February he flew to Hanoi, North Vietnam, with the historian Howard Zinn and assisted in the release of three captured U.S. pilots. On their first night in Hanoi, they awoke to an air-raid siren and U.S. bombs and had to find shelter.

As the United States continued to escalate the war, Berrigan worried that conventional protests had little chance of influencing government policy. His brother, Philip, then a Josephite priest, had already taken a much greater risk: In October 1967, he broke into a draft board office in Baltimore and poured blood on the draft files.

Undeterred by the looming legal consequences, Philip planned another draft board action and invited his younger brother to join him. Daniel agreed.

On May 17, 1968, the Berrigan brothers joined seven other Catholic peace activists in Catonsville, Md., where they took several hundred files from the local draft board and set them on fire in a nearby parking lot, using homemade napalm. (Napalm is a flam-

mable liquid that was being used extensively by the U.S. military in Vietnam.)

He said in a statement, "Our apologies, good friends, for the fracture



A FAMILIAR POSE. Daniel Berrigan speaks at the Staten Island Freedom & Peace Festival in October 2006.

of good order, the burning of paper instead of children, the angering of the orderlies in the front parlor of the charnel house. We could not, so help us God, do otherwise."

Berrigan was tried and convicted for the action. When it came time for sentencing, however, he went underground and evaded the Federal Bureau of Investigation for four months.

"I knew I would be apprehended eventually," he told *America* in an interview in 2009, "but I wanted to draw attention for as long as possible to the Vietnam War and to Nixon's ordering military action in Cambodia."

The F.B.I. finally apprehended him

on Block Island, R.I., at the home of the theologian William Stringfellow, in August 1970. He spent 18 months in the federal prison in Danbury, Conn. He and Philip appeared on the cover of *Time* magazine on Jan. 29, 1971.

But the brothers, lifelong recidivists, were far from finished.

On Sept. 9, 1980, Daniel and Philip joined seven others in breaking into the General Electric missile plant in King of Prussia, Pa., where they hammered on an unarmed nuclear weapon—the first Plowshares action.

Berrigan's later years were devoted to Scripture study, writing, giving retreats, correspondence with friends and admirers, mentorship of young Jesuits and peace activists and being an uncle to two generations of Berrigans. He published several biblical commentaries that blended scholarship with pastoral reflection and poetic wit.

From 1976 to 2012, Berrigan was a member of the West Side Jesuit Community, later the Thompson Street Jesuit Community, in New York City. During those years, he helped lead the Kairos Community, a group of friends and activists dedicated to Scripture study and nonviolent direct action.

Even as an octogenarian, Berrigan continued to protest, turning his attention to the U.S. wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the prison in Guantánamo Bay and the Occupy Wall Street movement. Friends remember Daniel Berrigan, S.J., as courageous and creative in love, a person of integrity who was willing to pay the price, a beacon of hope and a sensitive and caring friend.

LUKE HANSEN, S.J., is a former associate editor of *America*.

REFUGEE CRISIS

A Family's Flight From Lebanon

A young Syrian couple and their three young children, including a 2-month-old baby suffering from hydrocephalus and spina-bifida, are among 101 vulnerable refugees scheduled to take an Alitalia plane from Beirut to Rome in the early morning hours of May 3 to begin a new life in Italy.

Mouhammad Amin El Oujali, 35, and his wife Zafira El Aquad, 34, managed to join the group at the very last moment thanks to the insistence of Zafira, who pleaded for her baby son, Layah, who needs immediate surgery. He will now get this treatment in Turin, Italy, a few days after this Sunni Muslim family from Homs arrives.

Zafira and Mouhammad's family are among the 38 lucky families who will board the flight to Rome. Thirty-eight of the 101 refugees are Christian, and 30 percent are under the age of 12. They are able to take this safe route to freedom instead of risking their lives in a boat crossing the Mediterranean thanks to the Humanitarian Corridors project organized by the Sant'Egidio Community, a Catholic lay organization; the Federation of Protestant Churches; and the Waldensian Table in Italy, with the cooperation of the Italian government. The project, the first of its kind in Europe, has begun at a time when several European countries are closing their doors to refugees from Syria, Iraq, Libya and elsewhere in Africa and Asia.

Conceived as an ecumenical re-

sponse to the biggest humanitarian crisis Europe has experienced since the end of the Second World War, it has three main objectives: to ensure that refugees avoid having to risk their lives crossing the Mediterranean; to prevent refugees from being exploited by human traffickers; and to enable refugees in vulnerable situations to gain entry into Italy with a humanitarian visa.



FAMILY PORTRAIT. Mouhammad Amin El Oujali with his wife, Zafira El Aquad, and their three children.

The story of Mouhammad and Zafira is emblematic of the refugee experience. Until 2012, they had lived in the city of Homs in western Syria. Mouhammad worked as a plumber; Zafira was a clothes designer. They were not rich, but they had a comfortable life.

"We never thought of leaving our home, we were happy," she said. Their tranquil life was shattered when the

civil war broke out. The people of Homs were caught in the cross-fire. Zafira and her family were afraid to go out even to get water. Then Shiite fighters carried out a massacre, killing 38 people, including a pregnant woman whose body they cut open with a knife, tearing out the fetus, Zafira said.

Many people they knew were arrested and never seen again. They and their neighbors were terrified. One day many decided to abandon their homes and flee the city that had become like hell.

Zafira was five months pregnant when they left home. Her husband was reluctant to leave, but she convinced him, saying: "If we stay we die; if we travel, we risk death. So it's better to travel."

Zafira is a very strong character, full of hope. She spoke of her happiness at being able to go to Italy. Her family's situation had become unsustainable in Lebanon, she said. Their documents had expired; they had no money. She and her husband could not get work.

She had sold her gold bracelets to get into Lebanon; she had nothing else to sell. "If nobody had helped me, then I would have tried taking a boat to Europe," she added.

Now she dreams of better things. "I hope that there I can cure my child, and my children can go to school and my husband find a job," she said. She never wants to return to Syria, where she has seen such horrors. "We have nothing there," Zafira says. "We have lost everything."

GERARD O'CONNELL, *America's Vatican correspondent, traveled to Lebanon in April with members of the Sant'Egidio community.*

From America Media, CNS, RNS, AP and other sources.

Obama Queues Up for 'Brexit' Debate

Visits by foreign heads of state do not turn heads on the streets of London as they once did, probably because we are so media-saturated, security is tight and because few leaders, in this technocratic age, are endowed with all that much charisma. But President Obama just visited town, and he certainly turned heads.

He and the first lady, Michelle Obama, breezed in on Air Force One, landing at an out-of-the-way Essex airport, then continued on the Marine One helicopter straight to a large public-housing project on the other side of London, there to take tea with an elderly woman, who was marking her 90th birthday, and her eccentric, Greek-born husband. This was a kind gesture on the part of the U.S. first couple; after all, their hosts have had to live in public housing all their lives, have endured much suffering from their dysfunctional family and, totally reliant on tax-funded state handouts, were never able to hold down proper employment at any time in their lives.

Some of us here like Barack Obama quite a lot, but then again a great many people in the United States, despite having figuratively hurled her predecessor into Massachusetts Bay a couple of centuries back, oddly appear to like our unelected monarch Queen Elizabeth and her family.

The Windsor Castle niceties were soon over, having softened up any Brits watching on the tellie for what was to come. The fireworks duly kicked off

when the president waded into to the "Brexit" debate in such a way that it was hard to imagine that he was keeping anything back. It was a remarkable intervention on the part of the American president in the national discussion of whether or not the United Kingdom should withdraw from the European Union. Even-handedness was not on the agenda; this was a crystal-clear statement of support for "Bremin"

This was a
crystal-clear statement
of support for
'Bremin.'

that surpassed pro-E.U. activists' most optimistic hopes.

The president did not have much to say about the keynote concerns of the Brexit camp—sovereignty, national identity, international influence (real or imagined) or even immigration; Obama focused on the economy, international trade and how dimly the United States would view any post-Brexit attempt by the United Kingdom to fashion a bilateral trade deal with Washington. He could not have been more blunt. He argued that the United Kingdom would be "at the back of the queue" when it came to working out new agreements. The United States, he asserted, is not now and will not be interested in individual deals but will want to collaborate with big trading blocs.

Many on the Brexit side here have been avowing that the United States would be delighted, in virtue of the so-called "special relationship," to negotiate

future deals just with Britain. President Obama crushed that fiction. "In the 21st century the nations who make their presence felt on the world stage aren't those who go it alone," Obama said.

The president's speech came just a few days after the official launch of the E.U. referendum campaign. Reactions from the Brexiters were predictable, and furious. It is a referendum, not an election, but the strategists are not shying from personality politics. The "Vote Leave" side chose to lead with the figure they clearly have identified as their main vote-winner—the mayor of London and Tory leadership hopeful Boris Johnson. It is not just the improbable hair-styling of the mayor that reminds one of U.S. presidential candidate Donald Trump; Johnson's camp has clearly decided to engage in areas of language and reference ordinarily beyond the acceptable.

Johnson turns to racist-dog whistling in a response published in a British tabloid. He suggests Obama's intervention could be traced to a "part Kenyan" ancestry that left him with "an ancestral dislike of the British Empire."

Obama's use of the word *queue* rather than the American English *line* was seen by some furious Brexiters as proof that Obama's entire intervention had been scripted by Downing Street, although one respected BBC political commentator insisted he had seen a White House aide's expression change to horror when Obama said this. There were rumors that the president had been advised beforehand not to go this far.

Hillary Clinton has also just advised Brits not to leave. We have until June 23, when the referendum is conducted, to enjoy more of this. Obama has assuredly turned heads; he may just have turned the entire debate.

DAVID STEWART



The Compromise That Binds

My family attended Mass recently in the annex of a Lutheran church on the outskirts of a Colorado town near where we live. We entered through the side door, as if entering an underground. It read, “Light of Christ.”

“As Catholics,” the homily there began, “we are a sacramental people.” After that, and a bit more of a preface, the preaching took the form of a tender letter to a young woman who was receiving confirmation that day. For the most part the liturgy was familiar, though without the bishops’ 2011 translation adjustments; “only say the word and my soul shall be healed,” the congregation still said. Deftly, also, they avoided referring to God with feudal honorifics or gendered pronouns (though the Holy Spirit got a “she”). Communion included a gluten-free option. And after the liturgy was over, bewilderingly, nearly everybody stayed for an organizational meeting.

The priest was among the most skilled presiders I’ve ever had the chance to witness; the words of the liturgy came across with both the experience of years and the freshness of the moment. The priest was also a woman.

Light of Christ belongs to the Ecumenical Catholic Communion, an “independent Catholic” network with its own parishes, priests and bishops around the United States and Europe—Catholic in name and style but not formally in communion with Rome Communities like this are more widespread than many Roman Catholics realize. Julie Byrne,

a Hofstra University professor and the author of the landmark new book *The Other Catholics: Remaking America’s Largest Religion*, estimates that there are as many as a million independent Catholics active in the United States. Their predecessors go back centuries. Some believe the Second Vatican Council went too far and cleave to Latin Masses; for others, the modern Roman church hasn’t jettisoned enough old prejudices.

For Byrne, a friend and occasional collaborator of mine, her decade-long sojourn in independent Catholicism has been personal as well as academic—“partly an attempt,” she told me, “to see a broader range of answers to questions about what it means to be Catholic.” She has come to recognize these non-Roman Catholic communities less as outliers than as integral parts of American Catholic culture as a whole. They are labs for experimentation and preservation, places of refuge for the adrift. They offer Communion and marriage to people Roman canon law has turned away. In many places, Byrne has found, Roman and independent pastors maintain good working relationships—albeit quiet ones.

Any Romish reader of *The Other Catholics* is sure to have moments of envy. Some might appreciate, for example, the gender balance of the Church of Antioch’s onetime husband-and-wife leadership team—the “conjugal episcopate”—or its capacious understanding of Catholic universality. Others might miss the inward posture of the Tridentine Mass. Parts of

me want each of these things. And if I have not said so clearly enough already, I liked what I experienced at Light of Christ. The traditional *him’s* and *Lord’s* sometimes distract me from my prayers, while seeing a woman as an officiant didn’t. Even the best Roman priests I’ve known could learn a thing or two from her.

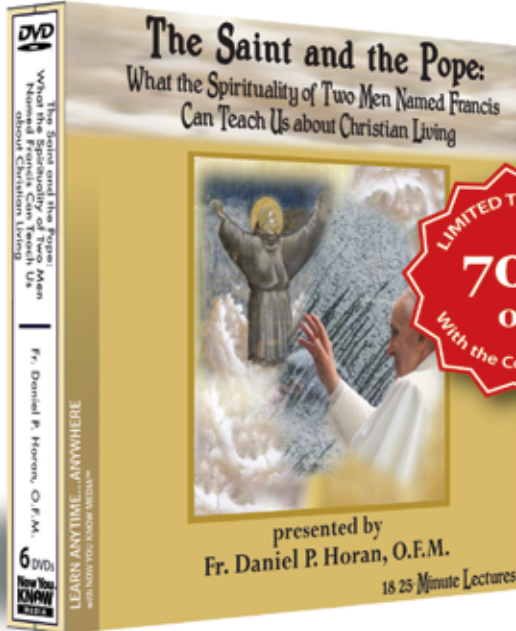
Byrne’s account of the independents, however, reminded me of a poster a Quaker friend of mine had on his wall, depicting the tangle of sectarian roots and branches that make up the Quaker tree. The Church of Antioch, for instance, underwent a schism during Byrne’s research. What these communities gain in flexibility and self-determination, they lose in continuity and expanse.

To be a Roman Catholic is to accept certain compromises—to live by rules that might change too quickly or too slowly for one’s taste, to worship alongside people one may disagree with, to tolerate a manifestly flawed institution rather than jumping ship. We can’t always have what we want from the church, or even what we feel we need. Yet through these compromises we bind ourselves to 2,000 years of meditation on the Gospel, together with a billion compromising people at once.

The independents remind us, at least, to nurture within our fold a spirit of exploration and experiment—in liturgies, in cultures, in governance, in orders. But they also remind us that, to remain whole, there must be the humility of limits.

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always have
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need.

NATHAN SCHNEIDER is the author of *Thank You, Anarchy and God in Proof*. Website: TheRowBoat.com; Twitter: @nathanairplane.



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Bridging a Racial Divide

The Catholic Church and the Black Lives Matter movement

BY EDWARD K. BRAXTON

When I was a senior at Quigley Preparatory Seminary studying to be a priest for the Archdiocese of Chicago, I was the only person of color in my class of several hundred seminarians. A group of us saw the film version of Harper Lee's brilliant novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*. It is the story of Tom Robinson, set in Maycomb, Ala., during the Great Depression. Tom, an upright and honest, innocent black man is falsely accused of sexually assaulting a white woman. He is defended by an equally upright and honest white attorney, Atticus Finch. Predictably, the all-white jury finds Tom "guilty," though he is, in fact, innocent; and he is killed while "attempting to run from the police" during the appeal process.

In our discussion after this extraordinary film, one of my classmates said his father had taught him that "all you need to know about the relationship between people of different races is this: 'Birds of a feather flock together.' This is simply the law of nature. This is why the Archdiocese of Chicago has Polish parishes, Irish parishes, German parishes, Italian Parishes and black parishes. People of similar backgrounds want to live, work and worship with their own kind!" He said nothing about the death of Tom Robinson, as if his life did not matter. I have never forgotten that conversation.

I did not write about the Black Lives Matter movement in my pastoral letter, "The Racial Divide in the United States: A Reflection for the World Day of Peace 2015." At that time, the movement had not yet attained the high visibility and considerable influence that it has today. During this past year, the racial conflicts addressed in "The Racial Divide" seem to have been exacerbated. We have seen additional violent, often fatal, altercations between white law enforcement agents and African-American men and an alarming number of young people of color who die at the hands of other African-Americans. As a result, in different settings around the country, I have been frequently asked, "What do you think of the Black Lives Matter movement?" "Why are Catholic leaders silent about such an important, albeit controversial, social development?"

MOST REV. EDWARD K. BRAXTON is the bishop of Belleville, Ill. This essay is adapted from his pastoral letter "The Catholic Church and the Black Lives Matter Movement: The Racial Divide in the United States Revisited."

In spite of the profound differences and seeming incompatibility between the teachings of the church and the Black Lives Matter movement, there may be ways in which the church and the movement might benefit from a conversation. Because each group speaks from a unique perspective and with a unique tone of voice, a genuine conversation may be very difficult. Still, we do well to recall the words of Blessed Paul VI's first encyclical, "Ecclesiam Suam": "Dialogue in such conditions is very difficult...we have no preconceived intention of excluding the persons who profess these systems [those that are contrary to Catholic doctrine]. For the lover of truth, dialogue is always possible" (No. 102).

All Lives Matter

All human beings feel strongly that their individual lives matter. Ideally, all of our lives should also matter to every other human being. But every morning's newspaper cries out that in today's world not everyone embraces this truth. Certainly, the teachings of Scripture and Jesus himself make it clear that for a Christian, for a Catholic and for the Catholic Church, all lives should matter. Many Americans believe this should be the end of the question. Obviously, if all lives matter, then black lives matter! Yet, this seemingly obvious truth has not been a sufficient answer to those whose voices are raised in protest in the Black Lives Matter movement. Several supporters of the movement have cited George Orwell's *Animal Farm*. They remind us that the mantra of the totalitarian world of the novel is "All animals are equal." But, eventually, the mantra is changed to "All animals are equal. BUT, some animals are more equal than others."

The protest expression "black lives matter" became a dramatic way of calling attention to a reality largely ignored by the larger society—namely, that there are many circumstances in which society seems to operate as if it does not believe that the lives of young men of color really do matter as much as the lives of young white men. The true intent of Black Lives Matter is a plea to all Americans to work to refashion our country so that the lives of people of color actually do matter as much as the lives of white people. It is a call to help us all live in communities in which everyone enjoys equal safety, education and employment opportunities, as well as equal political power and equal treatment by the criminal justice system. The movement also conscious-

ly embraces those who often seem to be at the margins of the black community, like African-Americans who are disabled, undocumented, homosexual, lesbian or transgender.

There are about 70 million Catholics in the United States. At most, about three million of these are African-Americans. There are many dioceses where there are no black Catholics at all and many others where there are very few. This means that many white Catholics in certain states and in rural communities have virtually no contact with African-American Catholics. Many of them experience the Black Lives Matter movement only indirectly.

During this past year, however, I have made a conscious effort to establish contact with individuals who, while not in leadership positions, have varying degrees of association with the Black Lives Matter movement. By means of emails, phone conversations and face-to-face meetings, I have gained (in an admittedly limited way) a partial knowledge of what some of these activists think about the Catholic Church, church teachings and the degree to which Catholics have demonstrated by their deeds that black lives matter to them.



The Church and Black Catholics

There are no reliable statistics concerning how many African-Americans are actively involved in Black Lives Matter. It is generally believed that the number is rather small and that the key voices of the movement are people in their 20s and 30s, many of them women. There is also no reliable way of determining how many black Catholics are supportive of the movement. But I know for a fact that some young black Catholics are sympathetic to some of the issues raised by movement members.

My main impression is that the movement does not give much thought to the Catholic Church. Movement supporters assume the church does not give much thought to them either. While there is a degree of awareness of the church's various social, educational and health care ministries that make a positive contribution to black communities, the primary impression some movement supporters have of the church is that it is a large, white, conservative (mainly Republican) institution that stands aloof from confrontational movements like Black Lives Matter. (As a matter

of fact, many Catholics are Democrats.) Some movement members think the church is more a part of the problem than of the solution because it has a necessary allegiance to "white privilege." The movement sees an incompatibility between itself and the church's "out of touch with the times" moral teachings on marriage, contraception and abortion, and homosexual activity.

Members of the Black Lives Matter movement see the church as a complex bureaucracy tied to the status quo and unwilling and unable to "speak truth to power." One activist told me, "When the church does speak about social justice it is always in measured, balanced, reserved and qualified language." When I asked which church documents they had actually read, they said they had only read excerpts online. I explained that the church's social doctrine may be more forceful than they think. I also pointed out that Catholic beliefs about the nature of marriage, the meaning of human sexuality and the dignity of human life from conception to natural death are not mere cultural norms or social issues.

The church cannot and will not change these moral doctrines. However, does this necessarily mean that a representative of the church cannot have a meaningful conversation with representatives of the movement about these and other issues where there may be greater accord?

In my conversations, I learned that the traditionally black Protestant churches do not play the same role in the Black Lives Matter movement that they played during the civil rights era. While there is an appreciation of the presence of ministers and priests on the streets during urban disturbances, this movement does not embrace traditional Christian theological ideas about praying to keep the peace and change hearts. One person wrote, “turning the other cheek is not in our playbook.” They are not interested in a “passive respectability” type of Christianity. They embrace a radical theology of inclusion inspired by a revolutionary Jesus.

I was present in the gallery on Sept. 24, 2015, when Pope Francis became the first pontiff in history to address both chambers of Congress, with remarks that, to the surprise of his listeners, focused on four influential Americans: President Abraham Lincoln, Dorothy Day, the Trappist mystic Thomas Merton and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Each of them affirmed, in different ways, that black lives mattered. While President Lincoln’s pragmatic, political motives for opposing human bondage have been idealized and romanticized, his efforts to bring an end to slavery and his “Emancipation Proclamation” demonstrated an atypical regard for black lives even though he did not equate them with white lives. Dorothy Day, founder of the Catholic Worker movement, was consistently outspoken in her opposition to racist attitudes in the United States. Her movement was prophetic in its concern for the poor, many of whom were people of color. In *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* and *Letters to a White Liberal*, the Cistercian monk Thomas Merton wrote searing condemnations of racial prejudice and provided the spiritual and theological foundation for his unambiguous affirmation that black lives matter, if not in those words. Dr. King sacrificed his life for the cause of racial justice and the still deferred dream that African-Americans would be judged by the content of their character and not by the color of their skin.

By calling to mind the legacies of these four remarkable Americans, the bishop of Rome clearly wanted to associate himself with their beliefs that black lives do indeed matter. By word and deed (especially during his pastoral visit to Kenya, Uganda and the Central African Republic on Nov. 25 to 30, 2015), Pope Francis has demonstrated that the lives of the people of African descent matter very much to the

church. Nevertheless, the Catholic Church has not always demonstrated that black lives matter. The church was not a major force in the opposition to human slavery. Historically, the church has been actively engaged in conversations with African-American communities at the level of ideas, major movements and the emergence of black consciousness. Sadly, I personally know black Catholics whose personal experience has led them to believe that their black lives do not really matter to the church.

Pro-Life Questions

Because the Catholic Church believes that all lives matter, from conception to natural death, the Catholic community has been deeply involved in efforts to argue forcefully in the public square in defense of developing human life in the womb and in increasing its opposition to the death penalty. The Black

Lives Matter movement would generally agree with the church’s concerns about the death penalty, which is imposed disproportionately on offenders who are poor people of color and lack adequate legal representation. However, the movement is outspoken in its defense of what it calls “reproductive justice” and “reproductive rights” and in its embrace of the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision of the Supreme Court. Like many Americans, includ-

ing, sadly, some who consider themselves Catholics, the Black Lives Matter movement rejects the arguments of those who speak in defense of human life in the mother’s womb.

Like many defenders of abortion “rights” in the larger secular society, many in the movement express a strong acceptance of the position that the fetal organism does not have the legal status of a human person at any stage of gestation. As a result, that life can be ended at any time. The position that fetal life is not human—or, at the very least, becoming human—is asserted without serious biological, philosophical or theological argument. The spiritual dimension of a human being is ignored or rejected.

Black Lives Matter advocates, along with most others who favor abortion, place their focus not on the ethical question of what is being done to the life in the womb but on the legal question of a mother’s “rights” to control her own body and determine when, or if, she will have children. Movement spokespersons are generally opposed to any federal or state law that would place limits on a mother’s “right” to have an abortion. They reject any assertion that black women are killing their own children. This position has led some African-Americans to protest against “black genocide” and declare that the most dangerous place for an African-American is in the womb. According to the Centers for Disease Control,

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in 2010, the most recent year for which statistics are available, 765,651 abortions were performed in the United States. Black women continue to have the highest abortion rate of any racial or ethnic group.

Meanwhile, the Black Lives Matter movement argues that traditional Christianity is selectively “pro-life.” Where are the tens of thousands of white Christians marching in “pro-life” rallies when black children are gunned down in the street by white police? Don’t those lives matter as much as the lives of those yet to be born? African-American women and men who disagree with Black Lives Matter concerning abortion firmly stand their ground: “If you genuinely believe that black lives

A Painful Reality, a Reason for Hope

Black Lives Matter is painfully aware of this reality. Supporters argue that the high homicide rates in impoverished black neighborhoods is fed, in part, by the structural racism that has been in place for generations since the Great Migration, maintaining segregated neighborhoods, inadequate housing, dreadful public schools and bleak employment opportunities. Young people with nothing to do and no hope are easily ensnared in the world of gangs and selling drugs, which leads to internecine murders. The movement believes that these factors do not excuse violent crime in black communities. However, they do help to explain a tragic pattern seen in many cities from Baltimore to Chicago to Los Angeles. If those who have political power really cared about black lives, they would address these issues and, by doing so, help to reduce urban violence.

The church as an institution is only as committed to living Christ’s law of “loving our neighbors as we love ourselves” as the individuals who make up the institution. The Gospel, as Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz wrote recently, requires “ongoing personal and social transformation.” This transformation takes place in the hearts of individuals, and those individuals can change institutions. Even though they would be unlikely to use the expression “black lives matter,” perhaps because of certain ideas associated with it, I do believe that many people at every level of the church have a desire to purify the church of bias, prejudice and discrimination. Nevertheless, we have a very long way to go. Otherwise, Pope Francis would not have called us to a holy year of mercy,

forgiveness and reconciliation. Nor would he have asked us to envision the church as a hospital on the field of battle tending the spiritual wounds of the injured, including those injured by prejudice in the church.

Nevertheless, I remain optimistic because of the encouraging signs I see around the country. And, of course, as Christians, who affirm the redemptive truth of the incarnation of the Word of God in Jesus Christ, the transformative power of the amazing grace poured out by the Holy Spirit and the powerful nourishment that we receive when we are fed by the bread of life in the Eucharist, we must never grow weary of grace-filled efforts. The church has a grave responsibility to contribute to the ongoing conversion and spiritual transformation of us all. Working tirelessly day by day, we are co-workers with Christ.

We must pray that the Holy Spirit, who comes upon us at Pentecost, will give us the strength not to maintain the “appalling silence of good people” that Dr. King once warned about. Instead, we must pray, listen, learn, think and act in such a way that all people everywhere will know that we truly believe that “black lives matter” precisely because all lives matter. **A**



HEALING PRAYER. The Rev. John O’Brien, pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Ferguson, Mo., and Archbishop Robert J. Carlson of St. Louis lead a candlelight procession following a peace gathering at the church on Aug. 5.

matter, you should be working to see that every black infant is accorded the very first civil right, the right to life.”

Some voices, black and white, have condemned the Black Lives Matter movement as a violent ideology urging attacks on police officers, encouraging the disruption of the daily lives of innocent citizens by blocking traffic on major thoroughfares, closing down places of business, interrupting gatherings of political candidates and, perhaps unwittingly, participating in black genocide by its strong support for the “right” of women to terminate their pregnancies.

Many of the Christian faithful who serve in urban communities around the country raise the same burning question. Why does a movement that is rightly calling attention to violent, deadly conflicts between white police officers and young African-American men seem to almost ignore the obvious reality that most young black men who die violent deaths do so not at the hands of racist white police but at the hands of other young black men? Ninety-three percent of black murder victims are murdered by other black people. (Eighty-four percent of white murder victims are killed by other white people.)

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Blaming the Stranger

Parishes must resist the myth of the 'Latino threat.'

BY BRETT C. HOOVER

Americans appreciate order. We stand in tidy lines as children at school; exits along the interstate highways have sequential numbers; people stop for red lights in the middle of nowhere or in the middle of the night. Perhaps, to be more accurate, we fear and resent disorder. I remember hiking through a shopping mall in Guadalajara with a priest from the United States who was flustered by how difficult it was to find the movie theater. Where were the mall maps so common in the United States? At the Jesuit university where I teach, I remind students that, faced with cultural differences, human beings frequently make moral judgments. Nothing provokes such judgments among Americans like perceived disorder. My priest friend did not wonder about the logic of a Mexican mall but declared dismissively that Mexico itself was a disorganized mess. Unfortunately, our moral disdain for disorder often appears in concert with broader expressions of bias or prejudice.

Perhaps the association was inevitable, since both a love of order and various forms of prejudice have deep roots in U.S. history. Regarding the former, the cultural legacies of both the Reformation and the Enlightenment played a part. Because the Reformers saw the human being as totally depraved without faith in Christ, Puritan settlers in New England went to extraordinary lengths to preserve their theocratic order. While the thinkers of the American Enlightenment had a much more optimistic view of human nature, they saw the social order as the outcome of a contract between governed and governors, a contract marked by law. Without law, there would be social chaos. Such a view of the political order (and the economic order of free-market capitalism) has traditionally depended on an individualistic view of the human person. Autonomous individuals naturally seek their own interests. Laws create boundaries for individual behavior, and the resulting political order makes space for the free and orderly operation of the market. Almost no one in our society challenges the orthodoxy of a



MAKING ALL WELCOME. A woman prays during a Spanish-language Mass at St. John-Visitation Church in the Bronx, N.Y., on Sept. 13.

social order rooted in laws that keep chaos at bay.

Yet perceptions of chaos in American history have often coincided with racial, ethnic and religious prejudice. The definitions of civilization and order have skewed white and Protestant. American Indians were called "pagans" and "savages," and their destruction was rationalized by such terminology. Antebellum Americans worried about the chaos unleashed by freed slaves who, they assumed, would not

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CNS PHOTO/GREGORY A. SHEWITZ

know how to conduct themselves properly in society. Even Abraham Lincoln once assumed that no real order could come from blacks and whites sharing a country. By law in many states, even one drop of African blood made a person “unfit” for white civilization.

Through much of the 19th century, Irish Catholic immigrants were seen as drunken barbarians living in urban squalor, and Chinese immigrants were perceived as inscrutable aliens unworthy of trust or citizenship. Mormons were crazed pagan extremists. Southern and eastern European Catholics and Jews were people of inferior intelligence whose entry had to be restricted lest American civilization be “diluted.”

Even today, the association between disorder and certain races, ethnicities or religions persists. While both President Obama and his Republican predecessor, George W. Bush, clearly distinguished the violent and chaotic radicalism of ISIS or Al Qaeda from the faith of the majority of Muslims, other politicians and pundits have cast aspersions on Muslims as a whole and have even proposed a complete curb on Muslim migration to the United States. This sounds very much like the tirades against Catholics of a century ago.

The anthropologist Leo R. Chavez has written about a “Latino Threat Narrative” that appears in various forms of public discourse, from Internet comment sections to talk radio to bestselling books. Characterizing Latino immigrants as purveyors of chaos, it calls them invaders and criminals, disordered people who take advantage of the social safety net and produce “anchor babies.” Transparent expressions of racial, ethnic and religious stereotyping persist because they are cloaked in the language of obeying the law or preserving the social order. Many Americans find it easy to accept Donald J. Trump’s stereotyping of Mexican immigrants as criminals and rapists because it hides behind a rhetorical desire to defend the homeland from immigrant and Islamist chaos.

Prejudice in the Pews

I worry that this pairing of disorder and prejudice may play out even in our faith communities. Many Catholic parishes in the United States are an uneasy yoking of Anglo and Hispanic communities that I call *shared parishes*, with distinct Masses and distinct ministries in English and Spanish. Most Catholics find the arrangement practical. People can worship in the language of their hearts; immigrants have time

and space to adjust to life in the United States; and longtime residents can adjust to changes in their communities. But the demographic transitions that produce such parishes also create what the Rev. Stephen S. Dudek of the Diocese of Grand Rapids calls “crucibles of grief.” Immigrants mourn the families and homelands they left behind, and they some-

times experience little welcome in the communities they enter, leaving them feeling isolated and lonely. Longtime residents watch helplessly as the cities and towns they have known all their lives change forever. They smell food they cannot identify, hear music they do not appreciate and see signs in languages they cannot decipher.

Having researched a number of these parishes, my concern is that this grief—and the anger and nostalgia that come with it—induces too many Euro-American Catholics to think and speak of their immigrant brothers and sisters in a negative way

and to join the refrains of the “Latino Threat Narrative” in settings where Christian faith should take precedence. The Pew Research Center reported last fall that 41 percent of all Americans see immigrants as a “burden” on our society, but 55 percent of white (i.e., non-Hispanic) Catholics do. More than a third of white Catholics do not think undocumented immigrants should be permitted to stay, even when the strict conditions included in immigration reform proposals are met.

Some years back, I spent a year studying a shared Latino-Anglo parish in an area only recently touched by immigration. Some longtime Anglo parishioners openly admired Mexican culture, but there were also overt expressions of prejudice—expressions of disgust while pronouncing the word *Mexican*, or a school volunteer remonstrating with a child for speaking Spanish at recess to his frightened and newly arrived classmate. The most consistent negative comments were about those who had come to the country illegally and stayed on without authorization. Even white parishioners who criticized their nativist friends and relatives still saw unauthorized status as transparently immoral. Almost no white Catholics seemed to recognize that many of the upstanding parishioners they knew, people with families and houses and leadership roles, were themselves undocumented.

Another common complaint in the English-speaking community at the parish was that Mexican immigrant parishioners were disorderly. They left parish doors open, did not know how to park properly, disrupted the order of

Transparent expressions of racial, ethnic and religious stereotyping persist because they are cloaked in the language of obeying the law or preserving the social order.

books in the school library and left meeting rooms in disarray. (In other parishes, I have heard people speak of Latino communities as “noisy” and complain that their children are always wandering about.) One Latino catechist found it expedient to buy new pencils for the parish rather than track down every reported theft of one. Each time a complaint about disorder surfaced, Anglo parishioners mostly assumed Hispanics were responsible. The pastor and staff would try to avoid specific blame and instead instituted new parish rules, in a tribute to that peculiarly American faith that more and better rules can prevent any problem. Pastoral leaders in the Mexican community often exhorted Spanish-speaking parishioners to observe these rules carefully, though not because they assumed such rules were fair and uniformly applied (they did not) but because they did not want trouble. A Mexican priest explicitly explained to visiting Latinos from other parishes how to park so as not to invoke the anger of Anglos in the parish.

I do not mean to suggest that every Anglo complaint amounts to racial prejudice. Father Dudek has written about how complaining can serve as a catharsis as distinct groups deal with the tensions of working together. But the earlier warning about cultural differences producing unwarranted moral judgments still holds. Human beings are all, at some basic level, ethnocentric. Everyone sees his or her own approach to order as the right one, and this is just as likely to emerge within marriages and families as it is between cultural groups in faith communities. Youth ministers report that teenagers also get blamed for disorder in parish rooms, and as children in Catholic school we routinely blamed the public school kids who used our rooms for religious education for any movement of desks or disappeared pens or pencils.

Nevertheless, the long association of fear of disorder with racial, ethnic or religious prejudice should give us pause. I wonder if new rules meant to resolve tensions in shared parishes really just stoke the fires of stereotypes about immigrants—that they are messy, irresponsible and inattentive to the effects of their actions. I also wonder if this is less a commentary on immigrant groups themselves and more a photo-negative image of how Euro-Americans would like to imagine ourselves: as well-organized, responsible stewards of our faith communities. (The hordes of latecomers and the gum under the pews in my mostly white parish suggest the flaws in this image.) Like all human beings, I suspect we overestimate the consistency of our own good behavior and misunderstand the choices others make.

Pastoral leaders and ordinary parishioners alike would do well to avoid debates over good order (or people “being legal”) within the parish. Like the political discussion on building walls, the search for parochial order seems unrealistic about how tidy life can really be and, as Pope Francis noted, un-Christian in its focus on keeping the alleged chaos

of “the other” at bay. As Christians, we are to be about building bridges, seeking solidarity rather than trying to keep our brothers and sisters in Christ “under control.” I once asked a mixed-culture group of pastoral leaders who knew each other well to share their families’ immigration stories. Some hardly knew what to say; others produced tales of great suffering. Many did not know that some of their friends and colleagues had walked hundreds of miles to escape oppression; some had borne unrelenting loneliness; and still others had suffered rejection and discrimination because of the way they spoke or the color of their skin. What moved me most as a facilitator was not just the testimonies of suffering but the empathy in the room. The common, vulnerable humanity of everyone was made manifest. It was transformative.

This is the kind of outcome we want in our local faith communities and in our society as a whole. We need human testimonies in which people recognize the “other” not as a nuisance but as a fellow pilgrim on the journey. This side of the reign of God, we all struggle, yet we are all called by Christ and loved by God. The person who prays to God in a language I cannot comprehend, whose habits may seem foreign to me—this person is the very image of God standing before me, my own sister or brother with worries and anguish I feel myself. If stereotypes or borders or political tropes prevent us from recognizing that image, the real moral disorder is not theirs but our own. ▲

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Just a Mother?

Recovering the unsung life of Zebedee's wife

BY TANYA RYBARCZYK

I recently reconnected with a friend I had not seen in over a decade, since our oldest children were toddlers. When I asked what she was doing, she replied, "I'm just at home." It turns out she is "just at home" raising three children, volunteering for multiple organizations and taking care of an ailing and widowed mother in a city four hours away. Her answer is surprisingly common.

Often these days, if you ask someone what they do, and if they are not at the pinnacle of a revered profession, they preface their answer as my friend did: "I just work at..." or "I'm just a..." This is especially likely if you ask a mother, or any "at home" person, regardless of circumstance.

When we are judged based on degrees and titles, on the number of Facebook friends and Twitter followers we have, it is easy to become uncertain of the choices we have made, the paths we have or have not taken. So quickly we seem to lose track of who we are and to whom we belong. So easily we forget that we were made to be holy and live holy lives, and that this has nothing to do with our résumé. We forget that we



are truly beloved. We become "just."

In this world that so often beckons us toward status and self-centered absorption, I sometimes think of Zebedee's wife, mother of the apostles James and John. Matthew tells how Jesus saw "two other brothers, James, son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. He called them, and immediately they left their boat and their father and followed him" (4:21-22). Zebedee's wife is not mentioned here; in fact, she is never named in Matthew's Gospel. Still, after reading this passage, I am haunted by a vision of her stunned and uncomprehending expression when Zebedee returns that evening without her sons. I picture the wooden table laid with bowls and bread, and her savoring a moment of peace before her "sons of thunder" arrive home, while simultaneously looking forward to their boisterous presence. The fire is old but burn-

ing, and as she hears the door creak open, a smile breaks, then falls. She sees Zebedee gaze at her and beyond her at the same time. He looks older than he did that morning. Old, and so, so tired. She tries looking around him, then over his shoulder, to catch a glimpse of her sons, but they are not there.

What words, I wonder, did Zebedee use to explain his sons' opening their hands,

dropping their nets and leaving without saying goodbye, all because of just a few brief words from some passing Galilean? Could any suffice? I imagine her, after a moment of stunned silence, walking right past him to flee the house, lest she take her anger out on her husband. Her hands press her hips as she looks up at the night sky; the wind brushes her cheek and she hates it for its futile attempt to comfort. She tries to breathe. Just breathe. It is unfathomable. All those years she sacrificed and loved and hurt, and now they are gone—just gone, and her future most likely gone with them. I picture Zebedee sitting inside, his face leath-ered from sun and wind, staring down at his dirty, calloused hands, suddenly weary.

Hidden, Holy Works

When we see her next, circumstances have changed. She is on her knees be-

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ART: MEGAN HALSEY

fore Christ, asking him to grant her boys seats to his left and to his right in his kingdom (Mt 20:20). The other disciples call her and her sons arrogant, no doubt whispering in corners, discord arising in the midst of God's presence on earth. Now she is the mother who wants the best for her sons and is bold enough to fight for it. Perhaps, too, she wishes for reward, and who can blame her? But that she is bold enough to make this request points to a deep relationship with Christ. How did this happen? Did her confusion and curiosity, anger and desire, cause her to cover her head, take a bit of bread and leave her home to seek out this man who stole her sons away? What then did she witness? Did she know him instantly as her sons did?

It must say something about her and her faith that she raised sons who might be chosen by Christ, sons capable of recognizing God when they saw him, letting nothing deter them from

following him. So many men might have paused—would have worried about their mother and father, about their own livelihood. What did their mother do right, that these men were open to the call of God? And how many mothers do the same today: quietly, imperceptibly preparing their sons and daughters to hear God's word in their heart and then letting them go?

Her story does not end with her sons. For as the disciples hide in despair, as Peter, the rock of our church, denies Jesus, this woman stays true. According to Matthew, this woman believes enough to follow Jesus to the cross, "ministering to him" (Mt 27:55). This woman loves enough to mother Christ's body before burial. This woman most likely stands by Mary's side at her darkest hour and beyond. Perhaps she is Mary's friend in the deep way that women sometimes are to one another, standing together in the sea of life's pain and holding fast.

It is hard in our day to accept that traveling though this world unsung is enough. That the holy acts of praying to our God, raising our children and standing by one another in times of suffering are enough. That the mundane tasks of our day-to-day existence are, in fact, our cross, and that by bearing them with grace we create holiness in our homes and communities.

Zebedee's wife lives unnamed in the pages of Scripture, raising her children, asking for a blessing from Jesus, standing by Mary at the crucifixion and caring for Jesus' body in death. She loved Christ and she stands with Christ's mother; hers was a holy, holy life. We don't know her name, but Christ does. And when this promise alone, "He calls each of us by name," becomes enough for us, then we are set free from the false gods and promises that tempt us. We are set free to be loved by our God and to love in return, just to live unsung, holy lives. ▲



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Protest and Serve

Cause for hope in Cleveland

BY DANIEL McCARTHY

On Nov. 30, 2012, fresh out of high school and ready for college, I read *The Plain Dealer's* reports on the deaths of Timothy Russell and Malissa Williams. Mr. Russell and Ms. Williams were two unarmed and periodically homeless individuals who were shot 137 times by Cleveland police officers.

aside in the 137 Shots case and again, more recently, in the grand jury proceedings for 12-year-old Tamir Rice's death.

In the last two years, additional victims, like Tanisha Anderson and Brandon Jones, have become household names here. Anti-police and pro-police demonstrations began to receive more press coverage as public consciousness of the issue of police violence grew.

And somewhere along the way, Police Chief Calvin Williams of Cleveland and I took an evening course together titled "Methods of Research" on Tuesdays and Thursdays during the fall semester of 2014 at Cleveland State University.

This power was also made evident following the shooting death of an infant, Aavielle Wakefield, in October of last year. During a press conference, Mr. Williams tearfully mourned the state of gun violence in his city and the subsequent deaths of our children, adding that it "shouldn't be happening." Mr. Williams's grief in this moment was very real: his own brother was killed with a handgun. The chief, who is African-American, shows how gun violence particularly devastates African-American communities in Ohio.

The report of the Department of Justice in the aftermath of the 137 Shots tragedy found systemic failures in the police department's use of force against city residents. It also found the department's relationship with the city's African-Americans broken—a dire situation that, sadly, many people already recognized.

Since then, according to some members of the force, Cleveland police morale is nearing an all-time low. The evidence for this is anecdotal, but it is not hard to understand why it might be true. Many have blamed law enforcement for all the violence in the city. Police officers became the target of protesters' rage and anxiety.

Most recently, on Dec. 28, 2015, Cuyahoga County Prosecutor Timothy J. McGinty announced that no criminal charges would be brought against Timothy Loehmann, the police officer who shot and killed 12-year-old Tamir Rice. Following the grand jury decision, crowds of protesters marched on Cleveland's streets.

Mr. Williams ordered his depart-



During this time, I was introduced to the city's protest culture. Demonstrators met every Friday in Cleveland's Public Square. They circulated a list of demands calling for the removal of Cuyahoga County Prosecutor Timothy J. McGinty from the "137 Shots" investigation and for a Department of Justice investigation into the Cleveland Police Department.

The latter demand was met, and the federal government investigated the police department's use of force. Mr. McGinty, for his part, refused to step

DANIEL McCARTHY is a senior at Cleveland State University, where he studies transportation planning and Arabic in addition to reporting for the school paper, *The Cauldron*.

A Leader Who Inspires

Following the 137 Shots tragedy, the bulk of the protesters' ire was directed at Mike McGrath, who at that time was the chief of police. After a promotion, Mr. McGrath became the city's safety director and Calvin Williams became the chief. But echoes of "McGrath Must Go!" in the city council's chamber during the recent winter months draw a neat line charting the continued course of protesters' criticisms.

So even though it was clear to me that Mr. Williams, my classmate, was a city employee when he arrived to class from work wearing his City of Cleveland lapel pin on his sport coat, it wasn't until the death of 12-year-old Tamir Rice in November 2014 and the subsequent televised press conferences that I learned just how much power my quiet classmate commands.

PUBLIC SQUARE IN CLEVELAND NOV. 25, 2014. AP PHOTO/TONY DEJAK. FILE. PORTRAIT COURTESY OF CLEVELAND POLICE DEPARTMENT.

ment to use restraint, and the daily protests remained peaceful. No one was arrested. "This is what happens in a democracy," the police chief said.

Throughout all these moments of anger, protest and tragedy, Mr. Williams has projected remarkable humility, despite being called to handle crisis after crisis. While supporting the demands for change within his department, I also felt some small comfort knowing that Calvin Williams was ultimately in charge of the Cleveland Division of Police.

Cuyahoga County, which includes Cleveland, is among the most segregated regions in the United States, comparable to Cook County in Illinois and Milwaukee County in Wisconsin. In 2014, African-Americans accounted for 81 out of the 96 homicide victims in Cuyahoga County. I continue to ask myself, "How, when the kingdom of God is at hand, is this the reality we face?"

When we hear the Gospel, we should find something that puts the world into perspective. Our Catholic framework shows us the world as it is: brutal yet beautiful.

The message of the Gospel is that good will triumph over evil. More than anything else, Christ urges us, "Do not be afraid." Fear, however, has become so entrenched in the city's psyche that it has become difficult to see the alternative: love.

What I do know, though, is this: It is a blessing to have a police chief like Calvin Williams, who comes from the city and who sees his vocation as a police officer to be a self-giving service and sacrifice for his neighbors, who believes policing starts at the subsidiary level in the community. We are afraid, but people like Chief Williams help us to trust in God's plan.

He helps us to believe something often heard from protesters on Ohio streets quoting Kendrick Lamar's lyric: "If God got us, then we gon' be alright." **A**

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IDEAS | ERIC T. STYLES

BLACK LIVES SOAR

The prophetic call of a Beatles classic

*Blackbird singing in the dead of night
Take these broken wings and learn
to fly
All your life
You were only waiting for this mo-
ment to arise.*

The Beatles' song "Blackbird" is either a civil rights anthem or a response to transcendental meditation in India, depending on whose story you believe. Paul McCartney claims to have written it in honor of the 1960s movement for black equality; other members of the band have their own recollection of the song's origins. Perhaps both explanations are true.

I found myself reconsidering the song earlier this year when Jon Batiste performed his own moving rendition of "Blackbird," just voice and piano, on "The Late Show with Stephen Colbert." I was not familiar with Batiste before he was brought on as the new "Late Show" band leader, but I quickly learned that this Juilliard-trained jazz pianist from a musical New Orleans family is a burgeoning force on the New York music scene. Still, my first impressions were lukewarm; the show seems to highlight his frenetic and jovial personality more than his actual musicianship.

So when I finally heard his performance of "Blackbird," I posted the video on my Facebook page with the caption, "Finally the talent is revealed." A friend commented that it was the first time he had "felt like 'Blackbird' was the gentlest, most spiritually-based black pow-

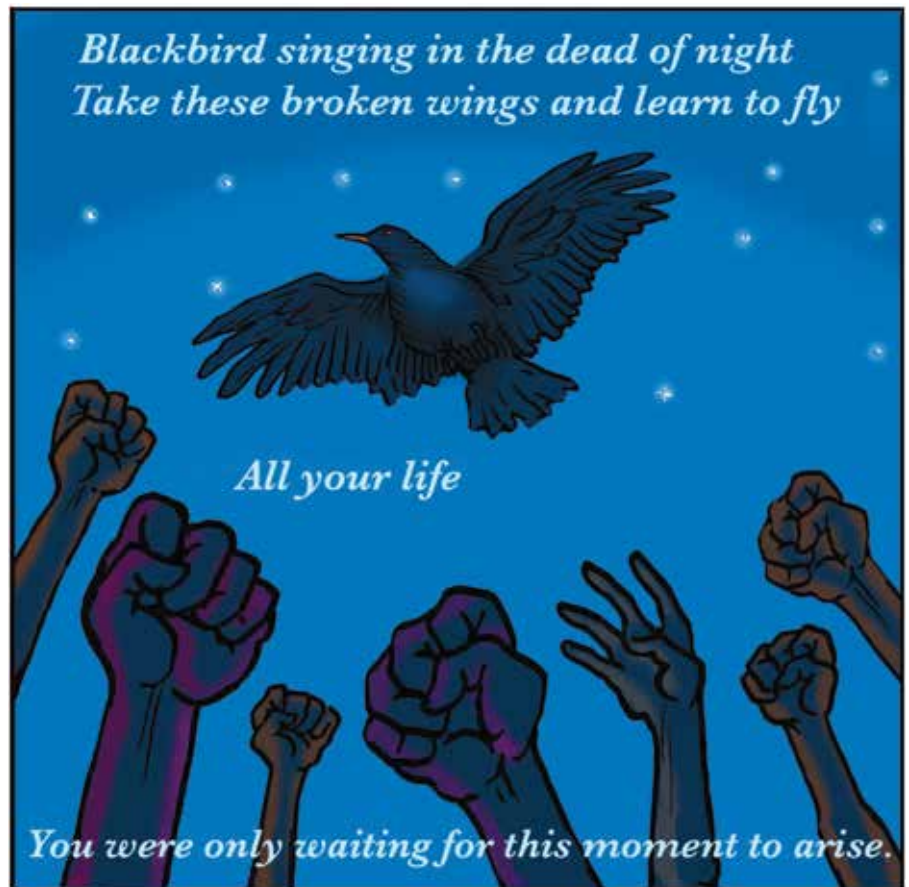
er song in the world." Of course, that got me thinking. Certainly the idea of "Blackbird" being about *being* black had crossed my mind. But what was it actually saying to me today?

*Take these sunken eyes and learn
to see
All your life
You were only waiting for this mo-
ment to be free.*

Whether McCartney was actually invoking an image of black struggle when he wrote "Blackbird" in 1968 is

less important to us interpreters and listeners who are dark. The Catholic theologian David Tracy defines "the classic" as a text or other human creation with an "excess of meaning" that "demands constant interpretation and bears a certain kind of timelessness—namely the timelessness of a classic expression radically rooted in its own historical time, yet calling [out the interpreter's] own historicity." Today, it would be nearly impossible for African-Americans not to interpret the "excess of meaning" in this Beatles classic through our contemporary experience of struggle and liberation.

The subject is a blackbird singing, flying and seeing light in the dark, black night. Her wings may be broken, but the poet bids her, learn to fly. Her eyes may be sunken and tired, but the poet



ART: RICK PARKER

bids her, learn to see. Arise and be free: there is light in the dark, black night.

McCartney's song is not the only art to use a blackbird to evoke freedom. In the early 1970s, Father Clarence Joseph Rivers, the pioneering African-American liturgist, commissioned his designer and collaborator David Camele to create an image of the Holy Spirit. Instead of a white dove, the Spirit of God is depicted as a blackbird. The image became a hallmark of



not only Rivers's work but also the ongoing inculturation of African-American culture into Catholic worship and theology. Rivers and Camele even used the image in a series of red, black and green pectoral crosses for the country's black Catholic bishops.

So when I listen to "Blackbird" in 2016, given the most recent campaigns advocating on behalf of the dignity of black human bodies, it is not surprising that I, or any one of us, hear this classic with fresh perspective. When Alicia Keyes covers the song she makes the connection more explicit, singing some of the lyrics in the first person: "I was always waiting for this moment to be free."

Being black in the United States poses a risk of a very particular form of socially conditioned despair. Certainly everyone's experience is different; and yet most black people are at least somehow aware of this gnawing, nagging existential problem. In our country's social mythos, blackness has for so long been connected with deep-seated racial fear, sexual menace and predatory violence. It is not just white Americans whose unexamined racism reflects this attitude. To be black in the United States means having to wrestle with this toxic legacy. Across the country a new generation of young African-Americans and their allies are joining a long line of activists who have

fought to reclaim black identity. But as important as community organizing and political protests are, nothing can transform one's self-image, indeed the whole trajectory of one's life, like poetry, music and religion.

This year during Holy Week I found myself praying the Liturgy of the Hours with "Blackbird" still on my mind. The texts of night prayer reached down and grabbed me in the gut:

The night shall be no more. They will need no light from the lamps or the sun, for the Lord God shall give them light, and they shall reign forever (Rev 22:4b-5).

Night holds no terror for me sleeping under God's wings (Good Friday Antiphon).

Through Christ, our very relationship to night is transformed. Perhaps the night is not eradicated, but instead the light of Christ illuminates its beautiful and glorious opacity. I cannot sufficiently communicate the depth of my experience here in prose. The words of the Beatles' song are far more effective: blackbird fly, blackbird fly. Not only do black lives matter, black bodies soar on wings once broken, and see with eyes once sunken. Even in the midst of a bleak social crisis, we can sing our way into freedom.

Not only is "Blackbird" a classic; in the hands and voice of a gifted black artist, it can be prophetic. Music is a symbolic language of sound and poetry. And symbols, unlike mere flat signs, can participate in the reality to which they point; the best art reaches toward sacramentality, communicating God's grace. And if, as I believe, the human body is a privileged sacramental bearer of God's word and grace, the very act of a black artist singing into the dark, black night can move the listener toward a deeper experience of the truth.

That Facebook friend, who happened to be white, told me Jon Batist's

rendition of "Blackbird" brought him to tears. Concern for the flourishing of black life is not and should not be the exclusive purview of black folks. The particularity of this moment in our country, along with my friend's patient trust in the slow work of God in his own heart, disposed him to receiving God's grace. God will reveal God's self in the stuff of life, using human experience, and in this case human artistry, to gift us with revelation. This is the sacred potential of art, too: its ability to move our minds and hearts toward the living God, to use symbol and metaphor—always imbedded in the murky particularity of human experience—to move us toward the transcendent.

*Blackbird fly,
Blackbird fly, into the light of the
dark black night.*

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MISINFORMATION AGE

Living in New York City in the 1990s, it was easy to know what the cardinal archbishop was thinking regarding current events. A distinct memory from that pre-Internet age was that it seemed as if The New York Post and The Daily News had regular features screaming out, “Card Sez...” followed by a provocative quote from Cardinal John O’Connor in bold letters on the tabloids’ front pages.

Over the past few years, I’ve been reminded of one quotation in particular. In response to the murder of an abortion doctor in Florida by an anti-abortion extremist in 1944, Cardinal O’Connor commented: “If anyone has an urge to kill an abortionist, let him kill me instead. That’s about as clearly as I can renounce such madness.”

I remember being impressed by how deft and unequivocal the reaction was. He wasted no time condemning an abominable crime committed by another self-professed, pro-life Christian.

I’ve found myself referencing that quotation in conversations over the past year with Muslims and others about acts of terror by Islamic extremists. Where are those unequivocal voices in the Muslim world condemning these attacks? I’ve confessed frustration and confusion that the first reports of a Muslim response after the Paris attacks dealt with a protest against xenophobia instead of a call to communal mourning among Parisians of all ethnic and religious backgrounds.

In many of these discussions, I’ve heard numerous thoughtful and well-educated Catholics, Christians

and Jews quietly express a similar dismay. “The enlightenment has yet to reach Islam” some have said. “It needs to go through its own Reformation moment akin to Christianity.” Others fear that Islam is incompatible with religious freedom and pluralistic democracy.

With these concerns as a backdrop, the Syrian refugee crisis can become a source of great anxiety for people of good will who are trying to reconcile their desire to welcome the stranger with their fear that this stranger might only want to destroy them.

“You can’t have a conversation without context,” Anthony Cernera, president of the Center for Interreligious Understanding, told me regarding our encounter with Islam. But the sad truth is that we have desperately little context for understanding Islam in the West. Even the most superficial Google search yields an overwhelming amount of evidence showing how vocal countless Muslim individuals and institutions have in fact been and continue to be in denouncing terrorism. Why aren’t we hearing it, then?

John Esposito, founding director of Georgetown’s Alwaleed Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, cites astonishing research on the media that helps explain “why people of good faith don’t know” the reality about Islam. One study of nearly a million stories from U.S. and European media outlets between 2001 and 2011 found that in 2001, 2 percent of all those

stories presented images of Muslim militants, while just over 0.5 percent presented stories of ordinary Muslims. By 2011, 25 percent of the stories dealt with militancy, while images of ordinary Muslims remained at 0.5 percent. The negative coverage has only increased since then.

Lopsided coverage does not serve our Muslim neighbors or us, well at all.



If Muslim terrorists represent only a fraction of a fraction of 1 percent of the world’s 1.6 billion Muslims, this lopsided coverage looks like a type of hysterical fixation on the part of the media that ultimately does not serve our Muslim neighbors, or us, well at all.

Dr. Hussein Rashid, a Muslim American

who teaches religious studies and consults on religious literacy, has also experienced a form of selective inattention even when the message is constructive. After the bombing attempt in Times Square in 2010, Dr. Rashid—who was born and raised in New York—and two Muslim colleagues were on every major network and cable TV outlet all day condemning the action. That night he gave a talk to 200 people and asked how many had seen the coverage. “Of the 190 people who claimed to be watching TV that day, how many of them remembered seeing us? Zero,” he said. “The narrative had already been set.”

The narrative in general regarding Islam in the United States and Europe has been set for quite a while. For all of our sakes, it is time to begin writing a more nuanced story.

BILL MCGARVEY, a musician and writer, is the author of *The Freshman Survival Guide*, owner of *CathNewsUSA.com* and was the longtime editor in chief of *BustedHalo.com*. Twitter: @billmcgarvey.

ADVOCACY AWRY

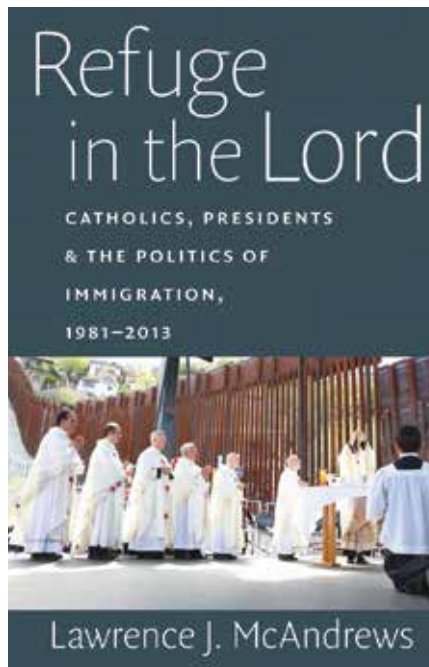
REFUGE IN THE LORD Catholics, Presidents, and the Politics of Immigration, 1981– 2013

By Lawrence J. McAndrews
The Catholic University of America Press.
304p \$34.95

Reinhold Niebuhr, with his usual gift of mixing irony with political insight, once observed that he avoided reading political history because of the strained Manichean nature of the scholarship produced by the likes of presidential historians. Who would have guessed, he dryly observed, that President Warren G. Harding (of Teapot Dome fame) had actually fought with the Armies of the Lamb, as opposed to the Armies of the Beast? Who knew? But of course Niebuhr's throw-off line about political history was itself richly ironic, as Niebuhr himself helped to construct one of the most powerful—and scary—Manichean scenarios of the last millennium with his “nuclear umbrella” arguments at the beginning of the Cold War.

Niebuhr would have changed his mind about both political history and its Manichean impulses had he the opportunity to read the scholarship of the presidential historian Lawrence McAndrews. One of the many strengths of McAndrews's scholarly career to date has been his keen understanding that Catholic bishops and U.S. presidents defy easy categorization into lambs and beasts, sheep and goats or any other theological (or barnyard) set of tropes. While conservative Republicans (many of them Catholics) laud the Catholic hierarchy for their efforts on behalf of federal aid for Catholic schools and their firm opposition to federal funding for abortions, liberal Democrats (many of them also Catholics) praise those very same bishops for their opposition

to large defense budgets and for their fervent advocacy of generous federal expenditures for social programs for the poor, undocumented workers and single parent families. And all the while, the Catholic faithful—that 99 percent of the church without whom, as Cardinal



Newman once wryly observed, the institution would look pretty silly—seem to function as a theological swing vote, oftentimes (depending on one's viewpoint) voting like sheep and goats simultaneously. Yet again, who knew?

Refuge in the Lord—an excellent and deft account of the policy debates about immigration reform between the American Catholic hierarchy and U.S. presidents between 1981 and 2013—stands in a line of fine studies produced by McAndrews. Previous works include excellent studies of the interaction of U.S. bishops and presidents on American education policy and on issues of social justice. It was the very complexity of the narratives in

these previous works—their avoidance of easy answers and set formulae—that gained the readers' attention (and then their trust).

McAndrews has produced yet another important work here. His thesis is simple: On issues of immigration between 1981 and 2013, American presidents and Catholic leaders often found important areas of agreement and cooperation. But the rigidity and inability to understand how to play the political game on the part of Catholics on both the left and the right during those 32 years led to missed opportunities for those on the margins of U.S. society. It was, then, the very religious passion on the part of Catholic leaders across the ideological spectrum that allowed important immigration problems to fester, or even to get worse.

From McAndrews's standpoint, American bishops and other Catholic immigration advocates, in pressing for a religiously fueled set of solutions to the problems of current U.S. immigration law, have regularly impeded sensible accommodations in the political realm. As the author baldly puts it, significant immigration reform between 1981 and 2013 failed at least as much because of the naïve advocacy strategies on the part of American Catholics as because of the political machinations of U.S. presidents and Congressional leaders.

A classic instance of this conundrum might be found in a debate between the U.S. bishops and members of the Reagan administration during the second half of 1983. In a meeting with representatives of the Chicago Religious Task Force on Central America in April 1983, Cardinal Joseph Bernardin of Chicago (then president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops) informed the task force that he wholeheartedly condemned the Reagan administration's Central American policies and had urged an end to the then-current practice of deporting all Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees from the United States. That Chicago

task force was a prominent link in the “sanctuary” movement—a nationwide network of interdenominational and interreligious groups that offered shelter, food and clothing to undocumented refugees in defiance of Immigration and Naturalization Service guidelines on immigration. But while denouncing the Reagan administration’s deportation policies, Bernardin also repudiated the sanctuary movement itself, both because it put Catholic pastors in a very difficult situation (urging them to break federal laws about harboring illegal persons on Catholic church property) and because the movement in fact further endangered the very refugees it purported to help, making any “regularization” of their legal status in the United States even more remote by making them into criminals in the eyes of the I.N.S.

However internally consistent Bernardin’s position was (and there is much to praise in his morally complex position on the role of the sanctuary movement), it genuinely confused the Chicago task force. They responded to Bernardin’s visit with a long (and quite heated) letter: “In our April meeting you agreed that there have been and are circumstances that not only justify but necessitate that we disobey an unjust law in order to remain faithful to God.... The slaughter of about 100,000 human beings and uprooting of more than a million others from their homes by U.S.-supported regimes in Central America in the past five years” appeared to them, at least, as fulfilling precisely the circumstances that Bernardin had outlined as both necessitating and justifying civil disobedience to federal authorities.

Bernardin’s complex moral position took another turn (this time confusing the Reagan administration) in December of the same year during which Bernardin had confused the Chicago Religious Task Force. At a Mass commemorating the third anniversary of the murder of four American Catholic church women in El Salvador, Bernardin strongly denounced the Reagan administration’s military support of what he considered a corrupt political regime in power there. This support of military violence was deeply immoral and illogical. The administration’s flawed policy, he announced, “will

not end the violence; it will not restore order and peace.” The American bishops, he announced, deplored this foreign policy as morally repugnant and deeply flawed. Reagan himself considered the Chicago archbishop’s speech at the anniversary Mass so vitriolic that he dispatched his Catholic associate director for public liaison (Robert Reilly) to lecture the cardinal on the administration’s objectives in Central America. As McAndrews dryly observes: “Cardinal Bernardin was not a receptive student.”

McAndrews does a fine job recounting the complex nature of the conversation between Catholic bishops like Bernardin and American presidents like Ronald Reagan. The levels of complexity involved in these conversations about immigration (and the sheer variety of conversation partners involved) makes McAndrews’s clear narrative all the more impressive and compelling. But whatever the levels of complexity that inform the story, the author’s thesis is actually quite simple: However grounded in the Catholic social tradition the responses of Catholic bishops might have been (and there is much to praise in positions like that articulated in Cardinal Bernardin’s stance vis-à-vis the sanctuary movement and the Reagan administration’s policy in Central America), much of the Catholic side of the conversation in these important debates made for extremely bad strategy. Indeed, McAndrews argues that there was an absence of a coherent Catholic political strategy in many of these conversations that affected the lives of hundreds of thousands of people. As Niebuhr himself put it so well, “Seek simplicity, and distrust it.”

MARK MASSA, S.J., is dean of the School of Theology and Ministry at Boston College.

Renewal

The rain in the woods where the fire erupted
 months ago is abundance too soon, or too late,
 the blaze causing harm long after.
 The promise is fulfilled,
 but not mercifully, the watercourses
 deepening underfoot, charcoal and slurry and soil.
 The water has no color. It is the empty place
 before the first word. When the downpour stops
 the body balances, stone by stone.
 Whatever the deer want
 it is not here in the blanched eucalyptus,
 the carbon dirt. There is fire,
 and the other fire, a season of bad silence.
 But each dawn is the first morning,
 the names of the animals
 before the animals themselves,
 and then afterward the first afternoon,
 a surprise, the stubborn
 new grass among the ash leaves.

MICHAEL CADNUM

MICHAEL CADNUM's 35th book, Seize the Storm, was published by Farrar, Strauss and Giroux. He also writes haiku on Twitter: @MichaelCadnum.

HOW FAR THE STARS?

SETTING ASIDE ALL AUTHORITY

Giovanni Battista Riccioli and the Science Against Copernicus in the Age of Galileo

By Christopher M. Graney
University of Notre Dame Press. 280p
\$29

Is there something to be gained by assessing the merits of the losing side of a long-settled scientific argument? Christopher Graney's answer in *Setting Aside All Authority* is an unequivocal yes, and he takes one of the most celebrated cases of scientific advance—the victory of heliocentrism over geocentrism—to show us. The work contributes to an effort among historians of science to demonstrate how much more genuinely scientific the entire dispute was than is suggested in the conventional story of it as a titanic struggle between the scientifically rational and the religiously superstitious.

Setting Aside All Authority focuses on the 17th-century status of a modified form of geocentrism developed by the Danish astronomer Tycho Brahe (1546–1601). Renowned to this day for his studies of the heavens with the unaided eye, Brahe was troubled by several problems in Copernicus's heliocentric model: the mathematics was sometimes inaccurate in predicting the movement and placement of celestial bodies, and there was no physics that could explain, for example, why the Earth did not fall into the fiery sun at the center of a heliocentric cosmos. So he wove together his own abundant observational data, the strengths of the Copernican astronomical mathematics and time-tested principles of Aristotelian physics to develop a third model of the cosmos, a helio-geocentric hybrid: The planets revolve around the sun; and that “solar system,” plus

the Moon and the stars, rotates around the Earth.

Graney has long had a scholarly interest in a 17th-century supporter of Brahe's model, the Jesuit astronomer Giovanni Battista Riccioli. *Setting Aside All Authority* elaborates on the succinct praise of the eminent historian of science Edward Grant that Riccioli was the intellectually most formidable 17th-century opponent of Copernicanism. Riccioli's monumental *Almagestum Novum* (1651) was in its day the most up-to-date compendium of astronomical knowledge and the one most widely distributed across Europe. On the question of the new cosmos, its dramatic frontispiece paints an answer worth a thousand words. The original Ptolemaic model of geocentrism lies at the feet of Urania, the muse of astronomy, who holds in a balance hanging from her hand Copernicus's heliocentric model and Brahe's helio-geocentric model. The lower, because weightier, model is Brahe's.

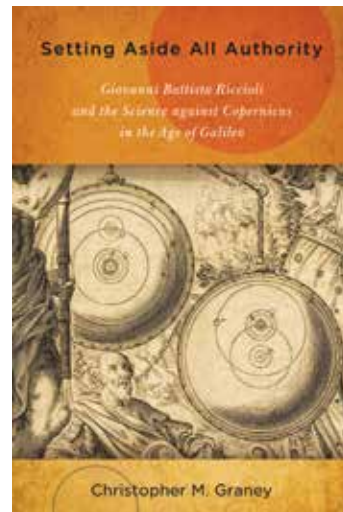
The next 1,500 folio pages argue why. Riccioli included an outline of 126 non-theological arguments for and against heliocentrism. He explained, one by one, why nearly all of them were scientifically unconvincing. Two objections, however, struck him as significant: First, a rotating and revolving Earth should produce specific observable phenomena, such as stellar parallax and indicators of the Coriolis effect. The absence of such observations were indeed serious concerns, not put to rest until the 19th century: Stellar parallax was not observed

until 1838, and Foucault's pendulum demonstrated the Coriolis effect only in 1851.

The second serious challenge had to do with the size of stars and the size of the universe. Measurable stellar parallax and a better understanding of optical problems with telescopic observations of stars as points of light would have made the problem moot. But without those, this second challenge was the more serious, as the heliocentrists acknowledged. The width of stars was measured first in relation to the width of planets. Relative widths suggested the greater distance from the Earth of the stars than the planets. Geocentrists situated the stars on the outermost celestial sphere. By having to take into account a stellar parallax too small to measure and, on account of optical diffraction, the size of stars relative to planets, the stars were computed to have

enormous size and to be put at enormous distance. The telescope exacerbated the problem on account of optical problems in focusing and diffraction patterns that would not be understood adequately until the 19th century. The magnitudes of size and distance were large enough to shock everyone.

Riccioli pursued the problem by checking and cross-checking the telescopically magnified width of stars relative to the diameter of Jupiter. How could the existence of stars of such size be explained? The Copernicans developed an answer, but not exactly the sort that scholars today would guess as possible for them. The heliocentrists used theology to explain what their science could not: God creates the way he wants. Riccioli's cool response was, “That



cannot satisfy more prudent men.” Graney effectively turns the conventional story on its head: Geocentrism, though hardly without its mathematical and physical problems, had been convincing for reasons that had much to do with observation and mathematics, and nothing to do with new 16th-century biblical sensibilities. Aristotle and Ptolemy had, after all, no truck with Christianity.

Graney underscores Riccioli’s scientific integrity by looking at his testing of gravity. An explanation for gravity and momentum adequate for the newest cosmology needed to wait for Newton. In the meantime, Riccioli and others worked on the hypothesis that falling bodies accelerated. Riccioli was initially skeptical. Graney isolates a set of experiments involving the count of pendulum swings as weights fell from towers and the measurement of the sound at impact. The noise at impact increased with the height, Riccioli noted, thus suggesting acceleration. Riccioli changed his mind accordingly.

Graney’s book is a fascinating read. By outlining the strength of the opposing arguments at the time of gravity problem’s emergence and the scientific limitations of all sides, Graney makes the victory of heliocentrism far more scientifically interesting than the conventional history suggests. The *Almagestum Novum*, printed almost a century and a half after the circulation of Copernicus’s first, celebrated outline of heliocentrism in the *Commentariolus* (ca. 1514) and 15 years after Galileo’s second set of hearings before the Inquisition, was not one more contribution to a shouting match between the ill-informed and the hardheaded. It was a scrupulous assessment of the *status questionis orbium coelestium* and the fruit of careful and ingenious experimentation.

Graney’s book reminds us that science is a messy venture. Tidying it up into neat stories with serious scientists always winning, even if only by a

hair’s breadth, and the bad scientists ultimately collapsing under the weight of their own stubbornness, distorts the real history and leaves us with no helpful lesson for negotiating the true and false scientific hypotheses of our own day. In science, no less than in

politics, after all, few things are more dangerous than creating a caricature of one’s opponent and refusing to admit his strengths.

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DIANE SCHARPER

ALTERNATE REALITIES

WHAT IS NOT YOURS IS NOT YOURS Stories

By Helen Oyeyemi
Riverhead Books. 336p \$27

To Montse, the Virgin Mary is not so much the mother of God as she is a type of goddess, one who is sorrowful and carefree all at once. She doesn’t guide or shield people but goes with them and adds her tangible presence when required. She’s more of a sister than a mother.

It’s possible that Montse feels this way about the Virgin because she was abandoned as an infant and left in a monastery chapel. But readers won’t know for sure because Helen Oyeyemi offers little in the way of motivation for her characters in her latest book of fiction, *What Is Not Yours Is Not Yours*.

A collection of nine interlocking stories, the book reads like a prose poem. It contains stunning figures of speech like “...time was more of a fog that rose inexorably over all their words and deeds so that they were either forgotten or misremembered.” Set in cities like London, Prague and Barcelona, the stories have an allegor-

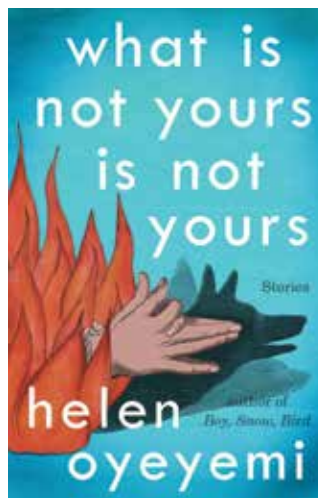
ical quality and often allude to fairy tales.

Born in Nigeria in 1984 and raised in England, Oyeyemi is the author of five bestselling novels. Something of a child prodigy, she published her first novel, *The Icarus Girl*, in 2005, to rave reviews. As with this collection of stories, the action in *The Icarus Girl* moves between the physical world and a menacing spiritual one, with a protagonist befriending what seems to be a ghost.

Oyeyemi endows her difficult fiction with a dreamlike (sometimes nightmarish) quality reminiscent of Jorge Luis Borges and Harold Pinter. As in a dream, the characters slip into alternate realities, and in the best of Oyeyemi’s writing, those characters take readers along with them.

“Books and Roses,” the most successful story here and one of the most traditional, has an

exposition, a somewhat recognizable plot line and a main character capable of eliciting sympathy from readers. It concerns Montse, the foundling who, as a young woman, is trying to find her mother as well as (in a sense) herself. Oyeyemi, who is Roman Catholic, has imbued this story with a spiritual sense. (She has said that she stays with



her religion because she is drawn to its mysticism.)

Raised by monks, Montse was found in a basket placed beside the wooden statue of the Black Madonna, also known as the Virgin of Montserrat. There was a note with her as well as a key, which Montse later wore around her neck. Montse, who is black, thinks of herself as the daughter of the Virgin, although she doesn't seem to notice the implied contradiction in terms. Nor does she notice other ironies that occur in her life.

These ironies are integral to the stories in this collection and drive them. Characters like the Virgin appear. They are not necessarily holy or people with Roman Catholic credentials, but they do have a tangible presence even if they are ghosts, witches, devils or otherwise supernatural beings, and they do come to aid others.

The stories generally begin in *medias res* with readers wondering about the identity of the characters and the logic of a plot that until the very end seems to make no sense. The world of the stories seems ordinary at first. Someone works in an office and notices a colleague's diary, or someone house-sits for a neighbor and feeds his tropical fish, or a husband wants to talk to his wife about their son.

Gradually the circumstances turn mysterious, as in the diary that when unlocked has the power to consume its readers; or the house-sitter who notices previously locked doors opened and a spectral woman who may be imagined; or the son who was never born but has a ghostlike presence in the lives of his parents. There seems to be no obvious explanation for the goings-on.

There are puppets who were once human (Pinocchio in reverse), puppeteers who are puppets, puppets who are take-offs on the devil. There is even one named after the rowan tree that was popular in mythology and was believed to protect people from witches. There are witches in the collection—

Hecate, for example, punishes a rock star who preys on young women.

There are also many keys. Keys open a library door that holds the secret of one's identity, and they open the door of a prison cell. They open a wooden chest as well as the door to a fraternity house. And finally, in the last story, a key belonging to somebody's

"dark" grandmother, one who escaped from communist Russia, opens a book that in a sense is this book.

This key, surprisingly enough, is actually a locket holding (even more surprising) a painting of St. John Ogilvie, a Jesuit martyr, and of St. John Nepomuk, also a martyr, supposedly carried by angels to eternal rest on the



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riverbed where his halo awaited him.

Often worn like a charm on a necklace, the key holds these stories together and, in a sense, opens them out to the next story, while the characters knowingly and unknowingly follow a path determined by the key. When the story ends, good conquers evil—or tries to.

Ultimately, these stories turn on

ideas as opposed to character development, and they contain little plot. People act symbolically; things happen; the action moves by metaphor more than anything else. The narrative path is labyrinthine as the plot interweaves myth and fairy tale motifs with contemporary life. Characters send text messages to each other while encountering puppets who bear an un-

canny resemblance to the devil. They even encounter a wolf who is not exactly the big bad wolf because he's not that big. But he talks to someone wearing a red hooded jacket, and he eats people nonetheless.

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Inseparable Operations

HOLY TRINITY (C), MAY 22, 2016

Readings: Prv 8:22-31; Ps 8:4-9; Rom 5:1-5; Jn 16:12-15

“All that the Father has is mine” (Jn 16:15)

Even careful readers of the Bible who are attentive to the church’s tradition can read the biblical texts that informed the doctrine of the Trinity and see three persons, each acting separately from the others. In the Gospel of John, Jesus says, “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth.” Later in the same passage, though, Jesus declares that the Father “will take what is mine and declare it to you.” Each person of the Trinity seems to function separately.

St. Augustine reflects this seeming separation when he describes Jesus’ baptism in the Jordan River:

I dare to say...that the Trinity seems to be separable. For Jesus has come to the river, from one place to another place; the dove has descended from heaven to the earth, from one place to another place; the voice of the Father has resounded neither from the earth, nor from the water, but from heaven. These three seem separated by place, separated by function, and separated by activity.

Sermon 52, 2

For Augustine, though, in all these activities of the three persons of the

Trinity, it is always the one God who is acting. Mark DelCogliano, in his introduction to Augustine’s Sermon 52 (forthcoming in *The Cambridge Edition of Early Christian Writings, Vol. 1: God*), writes that “while certain divine activities belong to one person only, all three are active in that activity. For example, while only the Son was incarnated, the incarnation is the work of the Father, Son, and Spirit.” While each person of the Trinity has distinctive works, church fathers after Nicea began to speak of the doctrine of “inseparable operations,” which acknowledged that in all of the activities of the persons of the Trinity all three persons of the Trinity are at work, for “these three things are pronounced separately but act inseparably” (Sermon 52, 19).

But Augustine admits he is in a “tight spot”: How does he prove the inseparable operations of the Trinity, when the Father is not the Son, the Son not the Father and the Holy Spirit not Father or Son (Sermon 52, 3)? Augustine claims that even though only Jesus was born of the virgin, or suffered on the cross, or rose from the dead, the Father and Son were active in all of these events, as was the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit descends on Jesus at his baptism, or on the apostles at Pentecost, but the Father and the Son were active in all of these events. The Father is the creator of all, yet both the Son and the Holy Spirit were active in the creation. As a result, Augustine says, “you have the differentiation of the persons

and the inseparability of their activity” (Sermon 52, 14).

Still, it is hard not to think in terms of three individual beings who act separately. But this is not the Trinity; the Trinity is three persons in the one God. Part of the problem is the human limitation to understand the fullness of divinity revealed to us, for God “transcends corporeal location. Let no one seek it out as if it were in a place. It is present everywhere, invisible and inseparable” (Sermon 52, 15). God’s presence as Trinity is not



PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Ponder the mystery of the Trinity. How do the activities of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit help us to comprehend God more fully? How might the nature of the Trinity aid us in understanding the path of salvation?

ART: TAD DUNNE

intended as a mystery to confuse, however, but as a means to lead us to the truth—however difficult it is to comprehend conceptually.

For another church father, Basil of Caesarea, speaking of the Trinity, wrote, “Through the holy names, he gave the knowledge of the faith that leads to salvation” (“On the Holy Spirit,” 18, 44). For it was through the inseparable operations of the Trinity, mysterious in deed and understanding, that God’s activities were revealed, through the work of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, intended clearly and simply to guide us to salvation.

JOHN W. MARTENS

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