

# America

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## Praised Be Creation

LOOKING AT A LIFE-GIVING ENCYCLICAL

THE EDITORS ON THE  
OBERGEFELL CASE

**L**ike a lot of folks in the Catholic media, I spent the days following the release of “Laudato Si” talking to the secular press. The most frequently asked question, both on-camera and off, was some version of “What is Pope Francis really doing?” Now this is a perfectly reasonable question, especially during a time when people are generally distrustful of public figures and their motivations.

Yet in the case of Pope Francis, the question isn’t really necessary, mainly because the pope tends to tell us exactly why he is doing something. When he moved out of the Apostolic Palace, for example, there was a lot of speculation about his motives. But he told us exactly why he made the move: He found the palace too isolated. But even when the pope doesn’t tell us explicitly why he is doing something, we can usually discern his motives through the Rosetta Stone of his Ignatian spirituality. The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius are the madness in the pope’s method, or the method in his madness, depending on one’s point of view. So in order to understand “Laudato Si,” it is important to understand something about Ignatian spirituality. What follows is the best short description that I know of. The author is the eminent spiritual master Howard Gray, S.J.

**MATT MALONE, S.J.**

Following the example of St. Ignatius, Jesuit life centers on the imitation of Jesus—focusing on those priorities which constitute Christ’s mind, heart, values, priorities and loves. What are those values, priorities and loves? Ignatius would encourage us to consider what Jesus said and did. At the foundation of Jesus’ life was prayer, a continuous search for how best to live as an authentic human being before a loving God. Jesus preached forgiveness of sins, healed the sick and possessed, and gave hope to the poor, to those

socially and economically outcast. Jesus spoke of joy, peace, justice and love; he summoned men and women from all classes of society to continue to follow his way to God and his commitment to helping people become whole and holy. Being a companion with Jesus on his mission gave Ignatius of Loyola’s life a sense of purpose and meaning.

It is just such companionship that lies at the heart of Ignatian spirituality. The Society of Jesus attempts to incorporate these same Gospel values into all its works. Jesuits stress the need to take time to reflect and to pray, in order to find out how God wants us to serve in all our ministries. This active commitment to seeking God’s leadership is called discernment. It is at the heart of St. Ignatius’ Spiritual Exercises.

The overriding characteristic we see in Jesus is loving obedience, an open-hearted desire to find and to pursue how God wants other men and women to be forgiven, to be free, to utilize all their talents and opportunities in ways which build up this world as a place where faith, justice, peace and love can flourish. This kind of spirituality is incarnational. It views the world as a place where Christ walked, talked and embraced people. It views the world, therefore, as a place of grace, a place of being able to give life to others.

At the same time, Ignatian spirituality is realistic. The world Christ faced was also a world of cruelty, injustice and the abuse of power and authority. Consequently, Jesuit spirituality affirms our human potential but also is dedicated to the ongoing, day-in-day-out struggle between good and evil. No one apostolic work exhausts how good can be done; therefore, Jesuits do all kinds of work. The Jesuit norm is: to find where God will best be served and where people will best be helped.

106 West 56th Street  
New York, NY 10019-3803  
Ph: (212) 581-4640; Fax: (212) 399-3596  
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**EDITORIAL E-MAIL**  
america@americamedia.org

**PUBLISHER AND CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER** Edward G. Spallone. **DEPUTY PUBLISHER** Rosa M. Del Saz. **VICE PRESIDENT FOR ADVANCEMENT** Daniel Pawlus. **ADVERTISING SALES MANAGER** Chris Keller. **DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR** Kerry Goleski. **BUSINESS OPERATIONS STAFF** Glenda Castro, Katy Zhou, Frankarlos Cruz. **ADVERTISING CONTACT** ads@americamedia.org; (212) 515-0102. **SUBSCRIPTION CONTACT/ADDITIONAL COPIES** subscriptions@americamedia.org; (800) 627-9533

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*Cover:* A Nepalese man celebrates World Environment Day in the forest of Gokarna on the outskirts of Kathmandu, Nepal, in 2014. CNS photo/Narendra Shrestha, EPA

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## ON THE WEB

**Kathleen McChesney** calls for the disclosure of the names of all **clerical abuse offenders**. Plus, **Roy Peterson of the American Bible Society** talks about translating the Bible into the world's languages. Full digital highlights on page 19 and at [americamagazine.org/webfeatures](http://americamagazine.org/webfeatures).



# After Obergefell

The landmark decision of the U.S. Supreme Court in *Obergefell v. Hodges* represents the high-water mark in the culture wars that have afflicted the country and the church for decades. Some view the court's decision to redefine civil marriage in order to accommodate same-sex couples as an egregious instance of judicial overreach, one that must be resisted at all costs. Indeed, there is a serious constitutional principle at stake: We the people must consider whether we want major public policy questions like the definition of civil marriage settled by judicial fiat, rather than by our elected representatives or by direct vote of the people.

Yet prescinding from the constitutional questions prompted by the case, it is clear from most national polls that the court's decision accords with the opinion of a majority of U.S. citizens, as well as a majority of American Catholics. The court's decision also comes on the heels of a recent referendum in Ireland in which a large majority of Catholics across that country voted for the legalization of same-sex civil marriage. Some Catholics have argued that the outcome in Ireland and the dramatic shift in Catholic opinion in the United States are a result of the failure of ecclesial leadership to clearly articulate the position of the church. That is not true. Catholics in the United States and Ireland understand the position of the church on the question of civil marriage; until recently, it was their position as well. Yet large numbers of Catholics in both countries have reconsidered this position and have now rejected it. That is the reality of the situation.

These two events are part of a larger phenomenon—the transition of Western Europe and the United States to a thoroughly secular, postmodern social politics. In the United States, this transition has been underway since the sexual revolution of the 1960s ushered in a series of social and political battles collectively known as the culture wars. With the *Obergefell* decision, it is increasingly clear that those who believe that the civil law ought to reflect and codify traditional Judeo-Christian values have lost not just these most recent battles but the war itself. The *New York Times* columnist David Brooks, a self-described conservative who is sympathetic to religion, recently called on “social conservatives” to “consider putting aside, in the current climate, the culture war oriented around the sexual revolution.”

Catholics in the United States should also ask whether “cultural warfare” is a helpful organizing principle for the

church's public witness. The church is not merely one more faction organized for public action. We are the body of Christ before we are the body politic, evangelists before we are activists. Evangelization and cultural warfare are not simply in tension with each other; they are opposites. Yet that fact does not justify the church's retreat from public life. The church is by its nature a public body. While the separation of church and state is a prudent arrangement, the separation of the church from politics is inconceivable, for the Gospel makes radical demands on every dimension of human living.

In the months and years ahead, however, Catholics should reconsider not whether the church should engage in the public life of this country but how we will do so. The present moment affords an opportunity for Catholics of every political stripe to assume an even more robust public presence, but from a different starting point: that of human encounter rather than of tactical confrontation. As Archbishop Wilton Gregory of Atlanta observed in the wake of *Obergefell*, this moment affords us “an opportunity to continue the vitally important dialogue of human encounter, especially between those of diametrically differing opinions regarding [the ruling's] outcome.”

The same Gospel that Christians seek to announce in the public square requires that we engage in such a “dialogue of human encounter” in a penitential key, with humility, so that we may better discern the signs of the times. This humility is most important, perhaps, when reflecting on matters of human sexuality, which make such dramatic and compelling claims on every human heart. While the church must hold fast to what God has revealed in Scripture and tradition, can we not also acknowledge that the same Spirit that spoke to our forebears speaks to us still? It simply cannot be true that we have learned all there is to know about human sexuality. How can we discern together, then, what the spirit is saying to us now? How can we better discern the good, the true and the beautiful in the signs of the times? As Cardinal Reinhard Marx, Archbishop of Munich, has said, “We cannot say to someone: you are homosexual, you cannot live according to the Gospel. It is unthinkable.... [If] two people in a homosexual relationship have been faithful to one another for 30 years, I cannot call that nothing.” While acknowledging and preserving what is essential, Cardinal Marx adds, “We cannot see everything in black and white, in terms of all or nothing.”

The temptation to see the recent court decision in black and white terms is evident among some of those who de-

scribe *Obergefell v. Hodges* as a second *Roe v. Wade*. *Roe v. Wade* concerns a vital question of life and death. *Obergefell v. Hodges* involves the question of who can contract a civil marriage. While both decisions have far-reaching moral implications, they involve different degrees of moral gravity. This view, moreover, that *Obergefell* is a second *Roe*, may lend itself too easily to the binary culture-war thinking that can impoverish our understanding of events and narrow the horizon of our public choices.

The temptation to see the court decision in black and white terms is also evident among some of those who see the court's action only as one more attempt to marginalize the church and diminish religious freedom. We should resist this temptation as well. The church must vigorously defend its freedom; the state has no natural or constitutional right to compel religious believers to perform actions that compromise our consciences. There will be many more debates and decisions in the years ahead, however, involving contestable questions of religious freedom and the public interest. In engaging in such debates, Catholics must be careful not to develop a "Masada complex" that would reduce our self-understanding to that of a besieged minority. Such a narrow self-perception is contrary to the generous, expansive nature of the good news we seek to share.

The church's public presence, however, is not the most important challenge before us. The church must also carefully discern how to provide better support for Catholic marriages and families. The *Obergefell* decision has no bearing on the church's understanding and practice of the sacrament of matrimony. Nevertheless, it is clear that there is a crisis involving the sacrament. Marriages in the church throughout the Americas declined by 46 percent between 1980 and 2012, according to the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University. There were nearly a million fewer celebrations of such marriages in 2012 than in 1980. It is inaccurate to claim that same-sex civil marriage is the cause of this crisis. Still, the crisis is such that some level of the energy and resources that the church summoned to oppose the redefinition of civil marriage should be redeployed to pastoral programs and community outreach that will strengthen these sacramental unions.

The church must also carefully consider our pastoral approach to gay and lesbian people and to Catholic families headed by same-sex couples. This outreach should extend especially to gay and lesbian people who are also poor and are perhaps the most invisible population in the country.

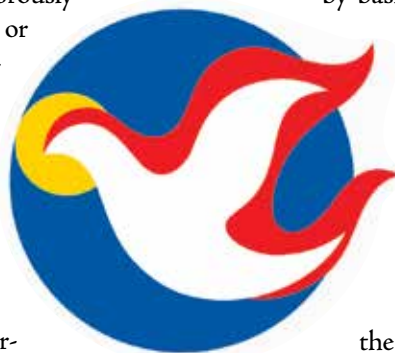
In crafting a new pastoral approach, we should dispense with the facile and dangerous assumption that the "culture war" is in large part a battle between Christians and gay

people. That claim, which is made often by those who should know better, is unfair and empirically false. According to a new report published this year from the Pew Research Center, 48 percent of lesbian, bisexual and gay Americans identify as Christians. Still, one of the reasons why the church's position on civil marriage was rejected by the public is that they rightly perceived that members of the church have often failed to extend to gay and lesbian people the "respect, compassion, and sensitivity" that Catholic teaching requires. Indeed, too many among us have been too slow to recognize the unjust discrimination to which gay and lesbian people have been historically subjected.

A new pastoral approach, therefore, should be marked by basic human respect, which "must be real, not rhetorical," as Archbishop Blase Cupich of Chicago has said, "and ever reflective of the church's commitment to accompanying all people. For this reason, the church must extend support to all families, no matter their circumstances, recognizing that we are all relatives, journeying through life under the careful watch of a loving God."

While the culture wars may be over, the new evangelization continues. The church in the United States must realize anew the true motive force of that evangelization, what Pope Francis has called "the first proclamation, that Jesus Christ has saved you." Whatever else it is, the public witness of the church begins and ends there. For too long the public has wrongly perceived the church as one more political faction aligned almost exclusively with the forces of reaction. It is not surprising that in a country obsessed with all things sexual, the church should be seen as singularly obsessed with such matters. Our task is to change that perception in order to create a more fertile field for the seed of the Gospel. We will not change this perception, however, through the mere assertion that it is not true. A credible public encounter must begin in humility, with our humble admission of the ways in which the perception is at least partly true. Most important, we should begin with the first proclamation, with our compelling witness to God and the person we are saying yes to, rather than the litany of things we are saying no to.

Now, as always, we must heed the word of the Lord: "Be not afraid." The world is not ending; it is changing. It is unsettling for many, surely. Yet it is also hopeful. We are at our best when we encounter any change with the certain hope that everything has within it the power to call forth from us a deeper response to God. The church has the resources to rightly discern the lights from the shadows in the changing signs of our times. Above all, we have the grace of the one who has saved us, the one who now calls us to greater faith, deeper hope and lasting charity for all.



## REPLY ALL

### Wage Tradeoff

In “L.A. Wage Wars” (Current Comment, 6/22), the editors write, “The argument for exempting union workers, however, is a bit more cynical.” The pressures being faced by Homeboy Industries are not isolated. The Congressional Budget Office report issued when President Obama first called for increasing the federal minimum wage notes that gains in income among low-income workers could be offset by smaller businesses being forced to not hire or terminate workers to save costs. The editors should have noted the tradeoffs being faced and acknowledge that these tradeoffs are not limited to an organization with ties to the Jesuits, but are widely faced in the economy.

JOSHUA DECUIR  
*Online Comment*

### Created This Way

Recently I had a visceral reaction to the priest’s homily in which he lumped abortion, assisted suicide, divorce and same-sex marriage in the same sentence. The next day I read “Man and Woman Together” by Helen Alvaré (6/22). She laments that this generation “has a front row seat to the ceaselessly repeated claims that there is nothing uniquely important or special about the alliance of the man and the woman.... These claims, of course, are the very foundation of arguments on behalf of divorce

laws deaf to the existence of minor children, a lively U.S. marketplace for eggs, sperm and wombs, and same-sex marriage.”

There was that conflation again, now putting same-sex marriage in the category of not appreciating the man-woman connection. Ms. Alvaré must appreciate that gay men, lesbian women and transgender people do not deny the special love, marriage and procreation of heterosexual partners. All most of us want is recognition that we are not all heterosexual, and it is not appropriate for us to partner with the opposite sex because this would not be authentic to our true selves as God created us.

JOSEPH P. MERLINO  
*New York, N.Y.*

### The Language of Love

“A Family Embrace,” by Archbishop Diarmuid Martin (6/8), was a welcome overview of the church’s still-in-process Synod on the Family. Archbishop Martin raises a question for me, however. He notes that last year’s session of the synod discussed “how to reach out to and recognize the situation of men and women of same-sex orientation.” Participants stressed “that there is a radical difference between marriage between a man and woman and marriage between people of the same sex.”

If there is “a radical difference” between the union of a man and woman and the union of people of the same

sex, why use the same term, “marriage,” to describe them? Each type of union may involve love, but something significant, something “radical,” according to Archbishop Martin, is different in the relationship traditionally known as marriage. What are we avoiding by not naming these different pairings differently today?

The Iowa Supreme Court faced this question and blinked when it decided *Varnum v. Brien* in 2009. The court simply accepted the appellants’ claim that a different name for their unions, such as domestic partnership or civil union, was unjust discrimination. In legal terms, they wanted equal rights in law, but one aspect of their drive for equality was sameness in name.

Is it unjust to name different things differently? It has been unjust to deny homosexual people public acceptance and honoring of their honest stumblings toward love. It is not progress, though, to play language games that leave everyone feeling slightly dishonest.

FRANK WESSLING  
*Davenport, Iowa*

### Loving God’s Creatures

Re “Animals 2.0,” by Susan Kopp and Charles C. Camosy (5/25): As a Catholic and a vegan, my mind has been reeling since I read this article. It is upsetting to learn about the current state of animal manipulation. I wholeheartedly agree that we have a responsibility to take care of all God’s creatures, and although we would like to cure all diseases, this experimentation on animals creates a moral dilemma. How far do we go? It took me a lifetime to understand that animals are not only sentient beings but also that our treatment of animals carries over to how we treat one another. I understand animal testing results in beneficial medical outcomes; nevertheless, this should not be used to justify animal abuse. No matter how you slice it, it comes back to a might-makes-right

OMG!



“Father, I didn’t read anything in ‘Laudato Si’ about recycling homilies!”

attitude, and it becomes a slippery slope. Cardinal John Henry Newman said, "Cruelty to animals is as if man did not love God.... There is something so dreadful, so satanic, in tormenting those who have never harmed us, and who cannot defend themselves, who are utterly in our power."

JOYCE MENNONA, D.R.E.  
*Queens, N.Y.*

## Union Vote

Daniel Healy's complaint about "coercive unionism" (Reply All, 5/18) would be valid except for one simple fact—unions are democratic organizations. So if Mr. Healy were forced to join a union, he could advocate for changing the closed-shop provision of his union contract. He could vote for union officers sympathetic to his viewpoint. He could run for office in his local and national union. He could even organize a decertification vote. If worse comes to worst and none of those avenues work, Mr. Healy could quit his union job and be happy making on average \$10.62 an hour less in wages and benefits at a non-union employer, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

MARK HAYWARD  
*Manchester, N.H.*

## Sex and Sacrifice

I sympathize with the difficulties described in "Relying on Each Other," by Rachel Espinoza and Tawny Horner (5/18). As someone who uses natural family planning and has been on the online forums, I can say there isn't anything false in this article. The authors say they simply want to be heard and do not intend to call for a change in church teaching. I'll extend them the benefit of the doubt, but the general tone of the article implies otherwise. Being heard and supported by church leaders would absolutely help. Another helpful component would be accepting that marriage, like anything worth doing well, requires sacrifice and the willingness to do hard things. Yes, when couples

are abstaining, they can't participate in illicit sexual acts outside of intercourse. Yes, when you practice periodic abstinence, you may have to abstain on your birthday. And yes, when you decide it isn't time to have a baby, you have to "sacrifice the unitive" when you can't "take on the procreative," even when you are married. That is simply the nature of sex.

MELANIE SHANIUK  
*Cleveland, Ohio*

## Losing Jesuits

Re "Company Men," by William J. Byron, S.J. (5/11): At an alumni dinner for Gonzaga University, I spoke with a doctor who had recently retired. He had graduated from Gonzaga in 1933. He told me that he was in freshman year when the Great Depression hit and by that spring his father told him they could not afford to send him to Gonzaga anymore. He confided in his Jesuit professor, and a plan was worked out so he could work during school and pay back whatever he owed to Gonzaga

in the years following college. He then handed me an envelope, which I gave to the vice president of Gonzaga. In it were two substantial checks—one for Gonzaga and one for the Jesuit community.

At another Jesuit college a freshman came up to me after class and said his financial aid package for his sophomore year has been slashed by 75 percent. I went and talked to Jesuits, and they told me that in the old days they could work something out but now everything is through the financial aid department, and they have no influence anymore over there. The young man did not return for his sophomore year.

I am not claiming to understand the financial intricacies of running a college or the legal problems if the Jesuits still owned a college lock, stock and barrel—but something has been lost. There are now too few Jesuits, with too little influence in helping students with all their possible needs.

HENRY GEORGE  
*Online Comment*

## STATUS UPDATE

*Readers weigh in on "Laudato Si," Pope Francis' encyclical on the environment.*

For me this is one of the greatest moments in church history, and I am thankful to be alive while it happens. I am a scientist, and it has always troubled me that my church is often on the wrong side of science. For the first time in centuries, maybe for the first time ever, the church has weighed in on science at a time when it is still relevant to do so and, in doing this, establishes that there is a role for faith in the scientific understanding of creation. This is a huge deal, and I don't think even we ardent Francis fans realize how monumental it could be.

MICHAEL HEBERT

All very nice, but I want to see him change the way the clergy operate. Turn bishops' "palaces" into homeless

centers; turn each and every parish into a center of sustainable living using alternative energy, community gardens, adult education programs, day care and so on. If this happens, then the encyclical won't just be another lecture from someone who thinks he knows best.

MIKE WRIGHT

By use of past papal documents, Pope Francis demonstrates that what he is saying is in line with the traditional teaching of the church. By use of current episcopal documents and reference to Patriarch Bartholomew's teaching, he demonstrates the unity of the church in the world today. By reference to the Sufi mystic, he affirms the biblical truth that even non-Christians can find God in the natural world (Rom 1:20). It really is a beautiful document.

JAMIE SMITH

# SIGNS OF THE TIMES

THE SUPREME COURT

## Close Calls Announced on Same-Sex Marriage and Death Penalty

President Obama's signature legislation, the Affordable Care Act, survived a Supreme Court challenge on June 25 in a 6-to-3 decision. "Congress passed the Affordable Care Act to improve health insurance markets, not to destroy them," Chief Justice John Roberts argued for the majority in *King v. Burwell*, ruling that the federal government may provide tax subsidies to help people buy health insurance even in states that refuse to set up insurance exchanges under the law. "We must respect the role of the Legislature, and take care not to undo what it has done," Roberts wrote.

This was just one of a number of significant decisions in recent weeks on matters of concern to U.S. Catholics. On June 26, the court ruled 5 to 4 that same-sex couples are entitled to the same marital rights as heterosexual couples. Justice Anthony Kennedy's sweeping decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges* invalidates all state constitutional and statutory defense of marriage provisions and requires marriage licenses to be issued without regard to sexual identity.

That ruling was deplored by Catholic bishops around the country, beginning with the president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Archbishop Joseph Kurtz of Louisville, Ky., who called the decision a "tragic error."

Citing the *Dred Scott* and *Roe v. Wade* decisions, Archbishop Thomas Wenski of Miami said, "Bad decisions lead to bad consequences and do not 'settle' anything." He added, "This decision redefining marriage will also bring bad consequences."

Analyzing the practical ramifications for the church at the national, state and local levels will take time, said Archbishop William E. Lori of Baltimore. It has implications for "hundreds, if not thousands" of laws at all levels. There is "a difficult road ahead for people of faith," he said.

A few bishops' statements attempted to accompany disappointment at the court's decision on same-sex marriage with deference to the sensibilities of the nation's gay and lesbian community. Archbishop John Wester of Santa Fe wrote, "As Catholics, we seek to uphold our traditional belief in marriage as a sacrament, a well established and divinely revealed covenant between one man and one woman, a permanent and exclusive bond meant to provide

a nurturing environment for children and the fundamental building block to a just society."

He added, "At the same time, we respect the dignity of all persons, not wishing to undermine their pursuit of happiness but only to preserve and defend the gift of marriage as divinely revealed in Scripture and in natural law."

Archbishop Blase Cupich of Chicago said, "It is important to note that the Catholic Church has an abiding concern for the dignity of gay persons," citing the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, which instructs that gay and lesbian people "must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity" (No. 2358).

"This respect must be real, not rhetorical," said Archbishop Cupich, "and ever reflective of the church's commitment to accompanying all people. For this reason, the church must extend support to all families, no matter their



circumstances, recognizing that we are all relatives, journeying through life under the careful watch of a loving God."

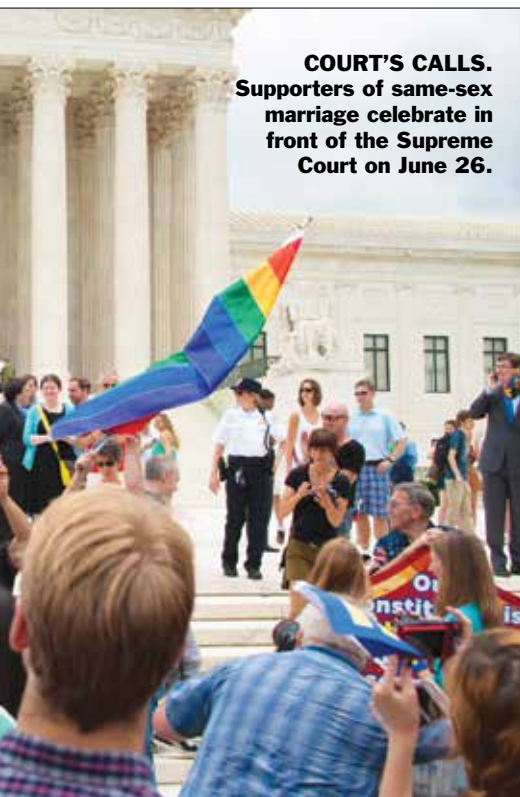
In *Glossip v. Gross*, another bitterly divided end-of-term case, the Supreme Court on June 29 upheld the execution protocol used by Oklahoma and several other states. In a 5-to-4 ruling, Justice Samuel Alito upheld lower courts that said the use of the drug midazolam in lethal injection does not violate Eighth Amendment protections against cruel and unusual punishment.

The majority opinion noted that the constitutionality of the death penalty has been previously established and only delved into whether the claims by Oklahoma death-row inmates that the effects of the drugs used in lethal injection were unnecessarily painful.

In a dissenting opinion, Justices Stephen Breyer and Ruth Bader Ginsburg called for briefings on whether the death penalty itself ought to be



**COURT'S CALLS.**  
Supporters of same-sex  
marriage celebrate in  
front of the Supreme  
Court on June 26.



ruled unconstitutional. “I believe it highly likely that the death penalty violates the Eighth Amendment,” Breyer wrote. “At the very least, the court should call for full briefing on the basic question.”

## LAUDATO SI'

### 'Green Encyclical' Goes to U.N.

Cardinal Peter Turkson, president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, took “Laudato Si” on the road, presenting the “green encyclical” from Pope Francis to a packed audience during a special conference at the United Nations on June 30. Cardinal Turkson told his U.N. audience that “Laudato Si” was not ultimately about climate

change, “not just about the environment or treating it in isolation,” but a call to “prayerful contemplation of the natural and human ecology.” The encyclical asks us to consider “what kind of world do we want to leave to our children?”

He thinks this a challenge that the current generation is up to meeting, arguing that despite the difficulty of responding to climate change and other ecological threats it is not too late to “change course and change hearts.” But a process of global dialogue must begin, he said, one that can overcome entrenched ideologies and that remains driven toward concrete solutions and firm international commitments.

Cardinal Turkson emphasized the pope’s belief that the problems of poverty and ecological degradation represent an integral global challenge. “Pope Francis recalls how inseparable is the bond between care for nature and justice for the poor.... When we speak of the environment what we really mean is a relationship between nature and the societies which live in it,” he said. “We are part of nature.”

That means humankind confronts “not two separate crises—one environmental, one social—but one complex crisis that is both environmental and social.” Responding to that crisis must therefore address both components.

The cardinal added that critics who have already charged that the encyclical is antibusiness or antitechnology have misunderstood it. He explained that “Laudato Si” represents a critique of a new paradigm of power arising from contemporary technological and economic realities. But, “business is a noble voca-

tion,” he said, which can “continue the work of God” in cooperation with creation. Pope Francis, he said, challenges business people to “use their vocation to benefit and lift up the poor,” the same challenge he issues to people at the forefront of technological change. “Like all things, technology can be abused,” Cardinal Turkson said.

“Laudato Si” is a call for global dialogue to find concrete solutions to the world’s economic and ecological problems, but it is also a call for dialogue between faith and reason, according to the cardinal—one that can be mutually beneficial. “Faith can expose the blind side of reason,” he said, “and reason challenges faith to be concrete and relevant in life.”

Christiana Figueres, executive secretary of the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change, welcoming Cardinal Turkson on behalf of U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, expressed her personal gratitude for the “magnificent encyclical that His Holiness Pope Francis has blessed us with.” Figueres pointed out this generation’s unique capacity and responsibility to respond to the twofold crisis of global poverty and climate change.

“We are the very first generation that has all the tools, all the science, all the capital,” she said, “everything it takes



**CLIMATE CHECK.** A banner waving from the U.N. General Assembly building in New York on June 30 defines the nature of the debate inside.

to eradicate poverty.” She added, at the same time this generation may be the last one capable of mitigating the worst effects of climate change before the process develops an ecological momentum that will become unstoppable.

KEVIN CLARKE

## Francis in America

The Vatican on June 30 released details of Pope Francis’ itinerary for his visit to the United States from Sept. 22 to 27. The pope is making his first-ever visit to the United States to attend the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia. During his five-day East Coast whirlwind visit, Pope Francis will reach out to the powerful in Washington, D.C., and New York—meeting with President Obama and speaking before both the U.S. Congress and the U.N. General Assembly. But organizers have added side visits that will include some places on the periphery of U.S. life. The pope will visit a Catholic Charities food program in downtown Washington, a Catholic school in Harlem that serves largely Latino immigrant children and a prison in Philadelphia to meet with inmates and some of their families. The papal itinerary also makes clear that the Argentine-born pontiff, the first pope from Latin America, will make Latino Catholicism a centerpiece of this visit.

## Churches Burning

Although arson is blamed for at least three fires in June at several predominantly black churches in Southern states, investigators say a blaze that destroyed Mount Zion African Methodist Episcopal church in South Carolina was not deliberately set. Churchgoers had feared the worst because the church in Greeleyville, S.C., was burned to the ground by the Ku Klux Klan in 1995. The latest fire broke out on June 29 during a night of frequent storms and

## NEWS BRIEFS

A prayer service on June 29 at Holy Family Church in New York City not only recalled the **sacrifices of African martyrs** in church history but also paid tribute to those who have died recently for their faith in Nigeria, Kenya and other African states. • After the U.S. Episcopal Church voted on July 1 to **allow gay couples to marry** in church ceremonies, Justin Welby, the archbishop of Canterbury, expressed deep concern about the stress that decision might cause within the 80 million-member worldwide Anglican Communion. • Noting his concern for average people caught up in the **Greek economic crisis**, Pope Francis said on July 1, “the dignity of the human person must remain at the center of any political and technical debate” aimed at ending the crisis. • As debate over the display of the **Confederate battle flag** in the aftermath of the Charleston shooting continued, vandals targeted monuments dedicated to the Confederacy, painting the slogan “Black lives matter” on memorials in a half-dozen states. • Louis Martin and Marie Zélie Guérin Martin, the **parents of St. Thérèse of Lisieux**, will be canonized at the Vatican on Oct. 18 during the Synod of Bishops’ assembly on the family.



Intercession for Africa

lightning strikes. Federal investigators are looking into some of the cases as possible hate crimes. The timing of recent fires in Florida, Tennessee, North Carolina and South Carolina, coming in the wake of the shooting at the Emanuel A.M.E. Church in Charleston on June 17, could be a cause for concern, said Mark Potok of the Southern Poverty Law Center. They may be retaliation for the backlash against the Confederate flag that followed the shootings, he said.

## A ‘Measured’ Critique

Harsh criticisms meted out by Pope Francis on free market capitalism have sparked backlash from some fiscal conservatives and have led some people to call him “anti-capitalist” or even a Marxist. In anticipation of his apostolic visit to the United States in September, some are bracing for more

criticisms from the pope, this time directed specifically at the culture and economy of the United States. Joseph Kaboski, a professor of economics at the University of Notre Dame and president of Credo, an international organization of Catholic economists, said, “As an individual, the pope probably views redistribution programs as a more effective way of tackling poverty than economic growth.” Kaboski said he views the pope “as neither pro- nor anti-capitalist, but instead a measured critic.” Kaboski said he is “confident Pope Francis finds much to commend” in U.S. economic life. At the same time, the pope “would also criticize the vast disparities in income and wealth...point to the poor in the inner cities, and argue that they are not fully participating in society,” Kaboski said.

From CNS, RNS and other sources.

## The Marikana Massacre Report

South Africa's President Jacob Zuma has finally gone public with the 600-page report of the Farlam Commission of Inquiry into the police killing of 34 striking mineworkers at Marikana, North West Province, on Aug. 16, 2012. The report is comprehensive and generally even-handed. Many hope it will contribute to a change in the way labor disputes in South Africa will be handled in the future. On the latter point, however, I am less certain.

The three main culprits in the report—the police, the unions and the Lonmin mining company—come in for fairly equal criticism. Police resorted to excessive and uncontrolled force that resulted in the massacre of the mine workers. Though the strikers were armed, aggressive and did not abandon their weapons and disperse when called upon, the police fired upon them with assault rifles on full automatic. Though one might argue current and prior provocation by the striking workers—there had been violent clashes in the days before the 16th—the police response was excessive and deadly. The tactic of encircling the strikers to disperse them nonviolently was an ill-conceived contribution to the chaos.

Similarly the strikers, as the Farlam Commission (the investigation was led by a retired judge, Ian Farlam) notes, acted without discipline. In a manner all too common in South African strikes, the strikers were armed, destroyed property, and some even killed a few company security officials in the days before the massacre. Though the lead-

er of the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union had—to his credit—tried to defuse the situation, there was a general failure of leadership, exacerbated by A.M.C.U.'s bitter rivalry with the National Union of Mineworkers over who exercised leadership at Marikana.

Lonmin was also criticized for not doing its best to address the strikers' concerns. Proper avenues for negotia-

Historians may see it as  
an accurate reflection  
of South Africa's  
turbulent present.

tion were not sufficiently explored. By insisting that nonstrikers should come to work, Lonmin failed to consider their safety in an environment where, as often happens in South African labor disputes, intimidation of those going to work could be presumed.

Significantly, Farlam exonerated a number of government ministers—notably Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa (who allegedly holds shares in Lonmin)—of direct responsibility. This is controversial. During both the Marikana crisis and the inquiry, the involvement of government officials, often to end the strike apparently in Lonmin's favor, was noted.

What ethical lessons can be learned from Marikana? First, South Africans need to rethink how police action during strikes and protests is conducted. Applying "justified use of force" principles, it is clear that police need retraining, not only in containment and crowd-dispersal strategies but in man-

aging situations of provocation. At the very least the firing of weapons on full automatic must be prohibited in almost all circumstances.

Second, laws against carrying weapons, violence, destruction of property and intimidation of non-strikers must be firmly enforced, and unions should sign onto a commitment to abide by these rules or face criminal proceedings. Though Catholic social teaching embraces the right to organize, negotiate and strike, it has never endorsed criminal behavior during job actions.

Third, businesses must be held to the principle of negotiation and dialogue during labor disputes. This is particularly pertinent in a society where wealth gaps between workers and management are so acute. While Catholic social teaching supports the rights of capital and private property, this has never been to the exclusion of the duty to negotiate with workers. And certainly not in cases of extreme inequality.

I suspect the Farlam Report will satisfy few in South Africa. My sense, however, is that with notable exceptions, it is as good a report on the massacre as we are likely to get. Decades from now historians may see it as an all too accurate reflection of South Africa's turbulent present, typified by poverty, inequality and the rapid escalation of social disputes into violence. Unless these questions are properly addressed, the future will be a lot like the present—just intensified.

Will this report be recounted someday as the turning point at which South African society, in the spirit of "never again," developed a new consensus about labor and more broadly about trying to create a less unequal society? I'd like to think so, but my historian's sense suggests otherwise.

ANTHONY EGAN

ANTHONY EGAN, S.J., is *America's Johannesburg, South Africa, correspondent.*



# Blue Skies Ahead

One of my fondest childhood memories is of Game One of the 1988 World Series. Featuring the Oakland A's against my beloved Los Angeles Dodgers, the game included perhaps the most famous moment in baseball history, when the injured Dodger hero Kirk Gibson came on as a pinch hitter in the bottom of the ninth inning and homered to give the Dodgers the win. Because I was there (yes, I know, every Angeleno claims this), I missed Vin Scully's justly famous call of Gibson's homer: "In a year that has been so improbable, the impossible has happened!"

Thanks to the Internet, however, I can watch it whenever I want; the entire NBC broadcast is available on YouTube. On a recent viewing, I was shocked by something that I clearly never noticed as a 14-year-old.

Dodger Stadium sits in a ravine in the center of Los Angeles, so while it appears to be isolated from the city, it is actually situated in its heart. In the establishing shots of the broadcast, the Goodyear blimp turns its cameras on downtown Los Angeles. The iconic Library Tower (now the U.S. Bank Tower) was under construction at the time, and the rest of the skyline was a bit lower than today. But you wouldn't know the difference. It's almost impossible to see the buildings.

The smog is so thick and viscous that the city seems to exist at the bottom of a bowl of broth. Everything is some shade of brown. The image would not be out of place in a shock-

doc about China's callous disregard for the environment and for human health or in a dystopian film about a future when we all wear masks.

The sight reminded me that Los Angeles used to be a national joke when it came to air quality; what fog was to San Francisco, smog was to Los Angeles. My Catholic grammar school regularly instituted "smog days" during the Septembers of my youth, when the air quality was so poor we were not allowed outside for recess. Health professionals already knew by then that smog is linked to asthma, cancer and cardio-respiratory diseases. Our air was killing us. It had been worse for the generation before.

Los Angeles, still not exactly pristine, doesn't suffer "smog days" anymore. Air pollution is now 40 percent of what it was when I was a kid in the '70s and '80s—and that's with twice as many cars on the road. A recent study by W. James Gauderman of the University of Southern California's Keck School of Medicine shows that cleaner air over the last 30 years in Southern California has resulted in "significant improvement in lung function and lung growth among children." While my hometown still suffers from severe ozone pollution, all one has to do is look out the window on a summer's day to notice the difference.

So what changed?

Did industry—car manufacturers, oil companies, manufacturing plants, the massive ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach—feel guilty that the children of Los Angeles could not play

outside? Did the city's voters enact local legislation to fight the pollution that was making them sick? Did we voluntarily start taking the bus to work? Did a mayor say it's time to put an end to this scourge?

None of the above. In fact, the answer began with an unlikely alliance: the Republican President Richard Nixon and the Democrat Edward Muskie. The senator from Maine was behind the 1970 Environmental Protection Act as well as the 1970 Clean Air Act, both of which Nixon signed into law. These federal laws spurred state and local politicians to draft their own laws requiring cleaner cars and reducing industry's emissions of what we now call greenhouse gases. These became increasingly re-

strictive as the years went by, so that Los Angeles was cleaner in 1988 than in 1970 and is cleaner still in 2015. In fact, California now has a law on the books that requires the state to reduce such emissions to 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050.

In short, Los Angeles enjoys cleaner skies because of federal legislation. Remember that the next time someone tells you that when it comes to ecological concerns, industry should be allowed to police itself, or that the economy is strangled by nuisance pollution laws, or that "we can't do anything to affect climate change," or that the pope's new encyclical is naïve. We who pollute the planet can also help to heal it, incrementally but effectively. Improbable? Yes. Impossible? No.

Los Angeles  
used to be  
a national  
joke when  
it came  
to air  
quality.

JAMES T. KEANE is an editor at Orbis Books in Ossining, N.Y., and a former associate editor of *America*. Twitter: @jamestkeane.



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# Praised Be Creation

## Looking at a life-giving encyclical

On June 18, Pope Francis published his much-anticipated encyclical on the environment, “*Laudato Si*,” which begins with a line from St. Francis of Assisi’s “*Canticle of Creatures*.” *America* asked several experts to respond to this historic document. Excerpts from their responses are below. Their full responses, along with additional coverage, can be found at [americamagazine.org](http://americamagazine.org).

### Follow the Footnotes

BY KEVIN AHERN

In addition to the use of gender-inclusive language, a first in official Catholic social encyclicals, one of the most amazing aspects of “*Laudato Si*” is the footnotes. Francis departs from the tradition of Catholic social encyclicals by citing national bishops’ conferences and several sources that are not official Catholic sources, including U.N. documents and, most surprisingly, a Sufi mystic!

Now, while this may seem somewhat pedantic to most readers, footnotes in papal teaching have functioned as a way to alert the reader to the text’s continuation of a tradition. The footnotes in “*Caritas in Veritate*” (2009), for example, the social encyclical of Pope Benedict XVI, refer mostly to the official social teachings of other popes. This tradition reflects a specific theology of the papacy that understands the pope to be the primary teacher of Catholic doctrine, with a strict division of roles between teacher and student. As such, the pope would never need to learn from sources “below” him, not even from statements by national conferences of Catholic bishops. Under the pontificates of Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI, the social statements of national bishops’ conferences and synods were perceived to be lacking the competency for authoritative (magisterial) teaching. In “*Evangelii Gaudium*,” Pope Francis addressed this point as he called for the development of the “juridical status of episcopal conferences” with “genuine doctrinal authority” to better serve the mission of the church (No. 32).

While not welcomed by everyone, “*Laudato Si*” affirms the authority of these regional structures, with 20 citations of statements from 18 national and regional bishops’ conferences. The selection of statements from multiple regions of the world appears to make a point about the concerns expressed by bishops about the problems at hand. Indeed, it constructively shows how the fostering of an integral ecology is not simply the concern of Pope Francis. Although subtle, this is also a nod to an inductive and more decentralized vision of church, where the statements

of bishops’ conferences have value in the formation of universal Catholic social teaching.

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KEVIN AHERN is a theological ethicist and an assistant professor of religious studies at Manhattan College, Bronx, N.Y.

### A Cosmic Family

BY DREW CHRISTIANSEN

The encyclical offers both ethical and policy solutions to the environmental evils and injustices the pope has described. But I would like to note two religious remedies he offers that address social isolation as a source of environmental injustice. One is theological, the other spiritual.

The theological vision is of a cosmic family of creatures of the one God. “All of us are linked,” writes Pope Francis, “by unseen bonds and together form a kind of universal family, a sublime communion which fills us with a sacred, affectionate and humble respect” (No. 89). It is in that lived vision, as in St. Francis’ fraternity of God’s creatures (Brother Sun, Sister Moon), that we can overcome alienation from one another, especially alienation of the advantaged from the poor, and the estrangement of humanity from our earthly home.

Finally, the avenue to environmental and social harmony is found through the cultivation of peace: inner peace and peace with creation. The encyclical sees environmental degradation and social injustice as the results of imbalances within ourselves, among humans and between humans and the natural world.

Inner peace, Pope Francis writes, “is reflected in a balanced lifestyle together with a capacity for wonder which takes us to a deeper understanding of life. Nature is filled with words of love, but how can we listen to them amid constant noise, interminable and nerve-wracking distractions, or the cult of appearances?” (No. 225).

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DREW CHRISTIANSEN, S.J., a former editor in chief of *America*, holds the title Distinguished Professor of Ethics and Global Human Development at Georgetown University. He advised the U.S. bishops in the drafting of their 1991 pastoral statement on the environment, “*Renewing the Earth*,” and later designed and oversaw the bishops’ environmental justice program.



**TREE HUGGER.** Celebrating World Environment Day at the forest of Gokarna, outside of Kathmandu, Nepal, in 2014

## The Communion of Creation

BY DANIEL P. SCHEID

In many ways, Pope Francis' long-awaited "Laudato Si'" continues and develops the tradition that St. John Paul II and Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI established, yet in significant ways it also marks a bold and fresh direction for Catholic social teaching on ecology. As we have seen from this pope in other areas, there is also a shift in tone and a movement toward a vision that many Catholic eco-theologians have been articulating for several years. More than previous papal documents, "Laudato Si'" fervently rejects anthropocentrism (No. 67), stresses "a sense of deep communion with the rest of nature" (No. 91) and celebrates rapturously the goodness of creation and of each creature, loved in its own right by God.

The text begins with St. Francis of Assisi, whose name the pope has taken, and his famous "Canticle of the Creatures," in which Earth, "our common home," is not simply a resource but "a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us" (No. 1). Every creature, Francis insists, is "the object of the Father's tenderness," and even if a creature has only "a few seconds of existence, God enfolds it with his affection" (No. 77). Human beings are called to mirror this love, to "love and accept the wind, the sun and the clouds, even though we cannot control them." Indeed, Francis even says that "we can speak of a uni-

versal brother- and sister-hood" (No. 228).

While St. John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI affirmed the intrinsic value of nonhuman creatures and exhorted us to respect the grammar of creation, Pope Francis incorporates the goodness of the cosmos into the core of a Catholic approach to ecology (No. 236). Reverence for creation allows awe and wonder (No. 11) to penetrate into our hearts and calls us to a "universal communion" (No. 76), to kinship with all creatures, to a sense of belonging and rootedness (No. 151) and to joy in the cosmos. After all, the final aim of an encyclical on ecology is not just sustainable economies and immediate international action on climate change but also the praise and worship of the Creator (No. 87).

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**DANIEL P. SCHEID** is an assistant professor of theology at Duquesne University. His forthcoming book, *The Cosmic Common Good: Religious Grounds for Ecological Ethics* (Oxford), explores ecologically oriented principles of Catholic social thought in dialogue with other religious traditions.

## The View From the Global South

BY AGNES M. BRAZAL

Coming from a fragile archipelago where the rise in sea level is the highest in the world, and extreme weather events are predicted to further increase this century, I worry for our future and fervently hope that the call of Pope Francis will be heeded. The encyclical underlines that every-



**CALL TO ACTION.** Journalists attend a news conference for the presentation of Pope Francis' new encyclical, "Laudato Si'," at the Vatican on June 18, 2015.

one can do something for our common home. In response to this call, each diocese of the church in the Philippines, in collaboration with other faiths and civil society organizations, can plan to educate and mobilize communities to protect the environment and the threatened resources and species in the area. This without doubt would leave a trail of ecological martyrs. The Global Witness reports that almost 1,000 environmental activists opposing mining, deforestation, etc., around the world were killed between 2002 and 2013, with the number jumping 20 percent in 2014, a sign that we are in the midst of a global environmental crisis.

To sustain this commitment as "ecological citizens" therefore necessitates a spirituality that inspires, nurtures and provides ultimate meaning to our personal and communal acts. Though "Laudato Si" explicitly speaks of spirituality only in the last chapter, the whole encyclical is distinctively about an integrative eco-spirituality based on an integral ecology that links labor and technological and social development with care for creation and the diversity of life forms and cultures, and with a special concern for the poor and the vulnerable. The pope elaborates that in the Christian tradition this spirituality finds its deep source in the gospel of creation, the Trinitarian communion and the world as sacrament of this communion.

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**AGNES M. BRAZAL** teaches at the St. Vincent School of Theology-Adamson University in the Philippines.

## The Franciscan Character of 'Laudato Si'

BY DANIEL P. HORAN

Pope Francis clearly "gets" both the letter and the spirit of the Franciscan theological and spiritual tradition. One of the most striking and apparently controversial dimensions of "Laudato Si" is the explicit connection the pope makes between abject poverty and environmental degradation. The truth is that this is not a new idea but goes back as far as Francis of Assisi, if not earlier. Pope Francis writes early on that "the poverty and austerity of Saint Francis were no mere veneer of asceticism, but something much more radical: a refusal to turn reality into an object simply to be used and controlled" (No. 11). This statement points to the heart of St. Francis' embrace of evangelical poverty as a means toward deepening solidarity. What the saint from Assisi recognized in his time was how not just things but also women and men were coming to be valued in financial terms. One's worth came to be determined by how much money one had rather than by the inherent value that comes with being lovingly created by God.

Pope Francis draws our attention to the interrelationship between the reality of global climate change (largely caused by the affluent and powerful of our time) and the poor, who suffer the devastating effects disproportionately. The category

REUTERS/MAX ROSSI



of “the marginalized” extends beyond the human species to include our very planet. As the pope says, “The earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor” (No. 2). For Francis of Assisi, radical lifestyle change was required to authentically follow the Gospel. Embracing evangelical poverty as a means of protest against social injustices and a means toward closer solidarity led him among the poor and outcast of his day.

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**DANIEL P. HORAN, O.F.M.**, is the author of several books, including *The Franciscan Heart of Thomas Merton*. He is currently writing a doctoral dissertation titled *“Imagining Planetarity: Toward a Postcolonial Franciscan Theology of Creation.”*

## The Diversity of Creaturely Life

BY ELIZABETH PYNE

While “Laudato Si” affirms Catholic teaching against artificial birth control and abortion, the only specific comment on gender or sexual identity is brief and somewhat oddly positioned at the close of a section on the “ecology of daily life.” Following a more substantial treatment of urban planning and the realities faced by the poor comes a reflection on bodily interaction with one’s environment as a facet of “human ecology.” Then this: “Also, valuing one’s own body in its femininity or masculinity

is necessary if I am going to be able to recognize myself in an encounter with someone who is different. In this way we can joyfully accept the specific gifts of another man or woman, the work of God the creator, and find mutual enrichment” (No. 155).

How should we read this rather broad claim about gendered identity and interaction? Francis ends the paragraph with a clue, citing his general audience on April 15 of this year: “It is not a healthy attitude which would seek ‘to cancel out sexual difference because it no longer knows how to confront it’” (No. 155). In that address, Francis criticized gender theory when laying out “the difference and complementarity between men and women” as a basis for reflecting on the sacrament of marriage within “the beauty of the Creator’s plan.” It would therefore be a mistake to see the seeds of any radical departure from magisterial teaching on gender and sexuality in Francis’ text. A general, natural law-based statement in favor of gender essentialism is unsurprising. Nevertheless, interpretation must attend to specific silences or, in this instance, relative quiet on sexuality against the resounding demand for economic and ecological justice, cultivated at both personal and political levels. In a sense, then, the cards are drawn but the hand is not played. Within the development of papal teaching on “integral ecology” this may be a notable move.

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**ELIZABETH PYNE** is a doctoral candidate in theology at Fordham University, Bronx, N.Y.



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# Alarm Fatigue

**F**ox News host Bill O'Reilly said it on his show in May: "There is no question the country is changing for the worse. And that's why the upcoming election is, perhaps, the most important presidential vote in our lifetime."

The talk show host Steve Deace was way ahead of him, writing in *The Washington Times* in March that next year will bring "the most important election of our lifetimes. While I am normally skeptical of such talk due to its abuse nearly every election cycle, this time it's actually true." If we don't make the right choice, he warns, "We could be fundamentally transformed into the spitting image of Europe's socialist, culturally rotting democracies."

On the other side of the political spectrum, the progressive website *Electablog* also announced in March: "Every election gets called 'the most important of our lifetime.' You now have permission to explain why this is actually true in 2016." The reason? "The next election will decide if [Republicans] get to start undoing the progress that's just begun."

We will hear more of this as the campaign begins in earnest with this summer's presidential debates. Four years ago, Conor Fridersdorf of *The Atlantic* wearily tried to put a stop to the "most important" cliché, calling out serial offenders and asking, "Are they so lacking in perspective that they really believe the present moment is more important than most of American history?"

Two years ago, the data maven Nate Silver added to the backlash when he

crunched the numbers, decided that not much would change as a result of the midterms and told readers, "Just be skeptical if you hear that 2014 is the most important election of your lifetime, as parties, pundits and politicians almost always claim sooner or later. This election isn't so special."

But it's human nature to see a point of no return just ahead. Elections always make me think of "The World Is Falling Down," written by the jazz singer Abbey Lincoln. ("Summer's gone and winter's here/ We had a lot of rain this year/ The news is really very sad/ The time is late, the fruit is bad.") Sad news—or, more accurately, anger-inducing news—can help motivate people to vote. More important these days, is the idea that we're one election away from economic or moral collapse can motivate people to give money to candidates and political groups.

"The stakes for protecting our country's core values have never been higher," says the homepage of *Priorities USA*, a political action committee raising money to help elect Democrat Hillary Clinton. "We've lost our way morally," Republican Mike Huckabee said of the United States in his announcement speech, telling his audience, "I ask you to join with me today, not just so I can be president, so that we can preserve this great Republic." It's not surprising that the website *Real Clear Politics* reported in late June that its average of recent polls found 62 percent of Americans believing that the country is on "the wrong track" (versus 29 percent believing that the U.S. is heading

in "the right direction"). The question is whether this pessimism is leading to, or is caused by, campaign rhetoric.

It would be ironic if Americans become so jaded by the "most important election" cliché, and so desensitized to fear-mongering, that they tune out the specific challenges the presidential candidates should be talking about. "Alarm fatigue" is the term used by many hospital workers, who must get through their day deciding how much attention to give to the bells and sirens constantly going off around them.

None  
of these  
problems  
are going to  
be resolved  
by a single  
election.

Pope Francis may encounter this fatigue when he visits the United States this fall, and in particular when he speaks about climate change—something that really could harm the earth in an irreversible way. He may address other current challenges in the United States, including racism, an often brutal and capricious criminal-justice system, the pressures of raising children when day care and early education are unavailable to many and widening income inequality. None of these problems are going to be resolved by a single election. They require many years of attention and many policy ideas—some of which, inevitably, won't work.

References to "the most important election of our lifetime" are like alarms that lose their effectiveness, merely irritating us instead of rousing us to action. Better to accept that we're always going to face challenges, and to be realistic about what we can do in a single year, even a presidential one.

**ROBERT DAVID SULLIVAN**

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**ROBERT DAVID SULLIVAN** is a freelance writer and editor living in the Boston area. Twitter: @RobertDSullivan.

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#### SYNOD ON THE FAMILY

Commentary on the working document or "instrumentum laboris" for the second session of the synod.



#### PODCAST

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—CAROLYN DISCO, *Disclose the Names of Clergy Abusers*

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Daniel P. Horan, O.F.M.

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# Family Gathering

Rediscovering the role of the Synod of Bishops

BY JOHN W. O'MALLEY



**COLLEGIAL GREETING.** Left to right, Cardinals Roger M. Mahony, retired archbishop of Los Angeles; Carlos Amigo Vallejo, retired archbishop of Seville, Spain; Giuseppe Betori of Florence; and Walter Kasper of Germany before a meeting with Pope Francis in the synod hall at the Vatican on Feb. 21.

Unlike the other synods held since the Second Vatican Council, the Extraordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops to discuss the family, held in Rome last October, sparked widespread interest. It did so for two reasons. First, the open and lively debate in the synod contrasted starkly with the muted interventions characteristic of its predecessors, which tended to be little more than rubber stamps. The lively debate was not an accident. Pope Francis, in his opening greeting to the synod, had stipulated that “speaking honestly” was the prerequisite for the synod’s success. Second, it was in this tell-us-what-you-think atmosphere that the synod addressed sensitive, controversial and real-life issues like divorce, annulments, same-sex unions and cohabitation before marriage. The world took notice.

But there is a third reason the synod should have aroused interest, and it is perhaps the most important reason of all.

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**JOHN W. O'MALLEY, S.J.**, holder of the title *University Professor in the theology department of Georgetown University*, is the author of *What Happened at Vatican II*.

It is “synodality.” The pope used the word three times in his greeting. The word’s very strangeness (a neologism, at least in English) and the pope’s repeated use of it in such a short speech should alert us that something significant might be at stake. What could that possibly be?

Let us speculate. But to do so we need some background. First of all, a definition: What is a synod? If we look at the history of the church from its very earliest days until 1965, the answer is simple. A synod is a church council. In church-speak the two words are synonymous and are used interchangeably. The Council of Trent, for instance, referred to itself as “this holy synod”—*haec sancta synodus*. The 53 volumes of official background material on the Second Vatican Council are called “the proceedings of the synod”—*acta synodalia*.

But the definition raises a further question: What, then, is a council? A council is a meeting, principally (but not exclusively) of bishops, gathered in Christ’s name, to make decisions binding on the church. That definition covers both the 21 councils/synods Catholics count as ecumenical, that

is churchwide, and the hundreds upon hundreds of local councils/synods that have taken place since the very earliest days of the church.

Hundreds upon hundreds! If we take those numbers seriously, we soon come to the conclusion that the traditional organ of church governance until the late 19th century was not the papacy but the synod. Of course, as St. Thomas

When Francis, on the night of his election, styled himself ‘bishop of Rome,’ he signaled the importance and dignity of the local church.

Aquinas said so well, in important matters of controversy, the papacy is the arbiter, *finaliter determinare*, but up to that point decisions rested on the local or regional level.

### Good Council

Probably taking their cue from the so-called Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15:1-30), at least 50 councils/synods were held in Palestine, North Africa, Rome, Gaul and elsewhere as early as the second century. After the recognition of Christianity by Constantine, the numbers continued to grow across the Christian world. In Spain alone from the fourth until the early eighth century there were at least 50.

The decisions of these synods might be doctrinal or disciplinary, but of course they were binding only on the local level. Nonetheless, they were sometimes taken as normative for the church at large, as were those of the synods against Pelagianism held in North Africa and elsewhere in the fifth and sixth centuries.

In the 16th century, the Council of Trent ordered bishops to hold synods annually and archbishops to hold provincial

synods every three years. The synods were to be the instruments for interpreting and implementing Trent on the local level. John Carroll, accordingly, had hardly been appointed bishop of Baltimore before he held his first diocesan synod in 1791—with his 22 priests. Over the next three-quarters of a century, there followed in Baltimore 21 diocesan, provincial and plenary synods as the church spread across the country.

The Third Plenary Council (1884) produced the landmark *Baltimore Catechism*, from which for almost 100 years every Catholic girl and boy in the country learned the basics of the faith.

As was happening elsewhere at about the same time, the series of synods in Baltimore ended in 1886. The definitions in 1870 of papal primacy and infallibility by the First Vatican Council wittingly or unwittingly put a damper on the synodal phenomenon. Synods continued to be held here and there, now and again, but the persuasion grew that they were no longer necessary or appropriate because “Rome” could and would make all decisions that were needed.

By the time of Vatican II, many bishops, partly in reaction to such centralization, promoted the doctrine of episcopal collegiality, that is, the teaching that bishops have a responsibility not only for their own dioceses but a responsibility, with and under the pope, for the whole church. An aggressive minority at the council fought the doctrine as untraditional, dangerous and contrary to Vatican I, and it tried to weaken it even after it was approved by an overwhelming majority.

But once approved, the question arose as to how the teaching was to be made operative in the church. What would be its institutional form? As the council entered its final stages, it began to wrestle with that problem. But before it was able properly to address it, Pope Paul VI intervened in September 1965 by creating the Synod of Bishops. Faced with the papal intervention, the council incorporated the Synod of Bishops into its document “On the Pastoral Office of Bishops,” as if it were an expression of collegiality.

But of course it was not. As defined by Paul VI, the Synod of Bishops was strictly an advisory body, with no authority beyond what the pope conceded to it. As Paul’s document repeatedly stated, the synod was subject “immediately and directly to the authority” of the pope. Probably without realizing it, Paul VI radically redefined what the word synod had meant since the church’s earliest days. A synod was no longer a decision-making body. It was now an instrument not of the bishops but of the Holy See, to use or not use at it saw fit.

### What to Expect

The synods since Vatican II have functioned precisely according to the model Pope Paul VI set down, with even their advisory function often seemingly inoperative. But the extraordinary meeting of the synod last year did not in the

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least follow that pattern, nor are there grounds for thinking that the follow-up this October will be any different. What is going on? We need to lift our eyes above the specific problems the synod addressed and focus them instead on the way Pope Francis dealt with the synod. We need to pay attention to his insistent use of the curious word *synodality*.

We cannot read the pope's mind, but we can examine his record. While still archbishop of Buenos Aires, for instance, Francis was the key player in the revival of the Conference of Bishops of Latin America, known as CELAM, an institution that had languished for several decades. In some countries before Vatican II, episcopal conferences had begun to play a role somewhat analogous to that of synods, and CELAM then and immediately after the council was an important instance of the phenomenon. Vatican II encouraged such conferences, but by the early 1980s the Holy See had begun ever more to limit their authority. The revival of CELAM in 2007 was a reaction against that development.

When Francis, on the night of his election, styled himself "bishop of Rome," he signaled the importance and dignity of the local church. In his greeting to the synod last October, he said the meeting was an expression of "collegiality and synodality." He told those assembled that they "bring the voice of the particular churches, assembled at the level of local churches through bishops' conferences." These innocent-sounding expressions seem to point in one direction: a revival in some form of the ancient synodal tradition of the church.

No revival in history has been able to bring back the past "as it really was." If we are headed for a revival of the synodal tradition, it will be conditioned by our present realities, especially the communication networks of today, which instantaneously make local decisions global news. Nonetheless, Pope Francis seems to want somehow to move the church in that direction. If so, take note. It's important. 

# Souls at War

An interview with the Iraq veteran and writer Phil Klay

BY KEVIN SPINALE

**P**hil Klay won the National Book Award for fiction in 2014 for his collection of short stories, *Redeployment*. Writing in *The New York Times*, Dexter Filkins called it “the best thing written so far on what the war did to people’s souls.” A veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps, Mr. Klay served in Anbar Province, Iraq, from January 2007 to February 2008 as a public affairs officer. He is a graduate of Regis High School in New York and Dartmouth College. Kevin Spinale, S.J., interviewed Mr. Klay by e-mail.

*Why did you choose the title *Redeployment*? Many of your stories take place after combat, either in the United States or in Iraq, with soldiers recalling bursts of violence in which they were involved. Is there a sense of re-resentment or re-feeling in the term “redeployment”? It seems that soldiers, even those only marginally involved in combat, cannot but live in a state of redeployment—a state in which they continuously recall trauma or the consequences of trauma.*

“Redeployment” is a military term. It means to transfer a unit from one area to another. So the main character of the title story is literally redeploying. He’s leaving a combat zone with his unit and heading back to Camp Lejeune. But of course, I wanted all those additional connotations as well—the sense of deploying multiple times (as the main character anticipates he will), of entering a new challenge, of returning in your mind to the past deployment. And the return is not simply about trauma, I think.

Oftentimes discussion of war gets flattened to a discussion of trauma. But most of the narrators are not traumatized. They’re grappling with various issues related to their service, but it’s not simply a psychological battle, and it’s not one that could be cured with a more robust response to issues of mental health. There are the moral choices they make, the communal and personal allegiances they have, the ways in which their sense of themselves is wrapped up in their service in a morally complex war and in morally complex decisions whose ultimate costs



Phil Klay

will naturally be murky. There is the way their service changes their relationship to their own citizenship and the choices they make as Americans. And yes, tracing the emotional contours of their experience, or searching for what the emotional reaction ought to have been (which is essentially what the narrator of [my story] “Ten Klinks South” tries to do), is a part of that process.

*Many of the characters you portray are marginally involved in combat: These men were in Iraq, but they were not infantry-*

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KEVIN SPINALE, S.J., is a student of theology at Boston College and the moderator of America Media’s Catholic Book Club.

PHOTO: HANNAH DUNPHY

men. They work in the State Department, PsyOps, Mortuary Affairs, as engineers, chaplains. One is an adjutant. They did not experience firefights, but they were transformed by an experience of mortality or futility in Iraq. When they return home, they experience all the effusive praise and gratitude that is extended to the grunt and the officer. But they remain marginal; they cannot quite fit into civilian life. Why do you take on the perspective of these figures?

For many reasons. Because war is a much broader subject than the individual experience of an infantryman alone. Because exploring different roles offered me new angles to explore issues central to war (death, heroism, masculinity, etc.). Because I wanted a group of narrators who might complicate each other's stories. The experience of killing is radically different for the infantryman who sees his enemy, for the psychological operations specialist who tries to manipulate his enemy into Marine machine-gun fire and for the artilleryman who isn't sure whether he fired the fatal bullet at someone who has just been killed.

One of your stories is called "Prayer in the Furnace." In the Old Testament Book of Daniel, three Jews resist Nebuchadnezzar, the Chaldean king, and remain faithful to the God of Israel. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refuse to worship the Babylonian gods, and they are thrown into a furnace. They pray amid the flames and survive their attempted execution

with the help of angels. Fidelity toward the God of Israel protected them.

I have been thinking of this notion of prayer in the furnace quite a bit, and two passages come to mind. The first is from the story "After Action Report." A chaplain encounters a soldier distraught about a combat action. The chaplain counsels the soldier to pray. The soldier rejects such advice as being as trite and superstitious as keeping a rabbit's foot. The chaplain responds:

"That's not what prayer is for."

"What?"

"It will not protect you."

I did not know what to say about that. "Oh," I said.

"It's about your relationship with God."

I looked at the dirt. "Oh," I said again.

"It will not protect you. It will help your soul. It's for while you are alive." He paused. "It's for while you're dead, too, I guess."

You also depict another chaplain's own thoughts about prayer in that same story. The thoughts come just after he reads a canticle from Daniel in his breviary: "I stopped reading and tried to pray with my own words. I asked God to protect the battalion from further harm. I knew he would not. I asked Him to bring abuses to light. I knew he would not. I asked him finally for grace." Could you talk about these passages? How does one pray in the middle of combat? What grace does a combat chaplain or a soldier need aside from protection from harm? Does prayer help at all in healing—perhaps in surviving the furnace of redeployment and the memories of deployment?

I think it really depends on what you think you're doing when you pray. Augustine writes: "For in prayer there occurs a turning of the heart to him who is always ready to give if we will but take what he gives, and in that turning is the purification of the inner eye when the things we crave in the temporal world are shut out."

I think that shutting out of "the things we crave in the temporal world" is very important. The situation the men are in makes almost anything seem permissible. The staff sergeant Hauptert, in "Prayer in the Furnace," angrily denies that anybody has a right to judge his unit, given how crazy things were. I remember reading about a Vietnam veteran who noted that for some of the men in his unit, the fact that they could die at any moment made them feel like it didn't matter what they did, no matter how terrible. But the longer he was in country the more he got to feeling that it was the other way around—because they could die at any moment, what they did mattered even more.

So prayer in a combat zone serves exactly the same purpose as it does in peacetime. In war the stakes are life and

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death, true; but if you believe in God and in the notion of a human soul, then we are always making decisions of tremendous significance. The intensity and violence of war can obscure this just as much as complacency and distance from suffering.

*Courage seems to be the greatest Marine Corps virtue—especially courage manifested in aid of one’s fellow marines. But there is something related to and almost as compelling as courage: toughness. Toughness clearly aids in the exercise of leadership. It arises from combat time and wounds and kills. Yet toughness is indiscriminate and can become brutal or cruel. Toughness almost seems like an untreated illness—perhaps treated by booze or Ambien or further violence. How much does toughness wear down marines? How difficult is it to survive as a marine without demonstrable toughness?*

Well, what do we mean when we say “toughness”? Because there’s resilience and there’s a lack of empathy, and I think they’re two very different things that often get confused. In Phil Zabriskie’s “The Kill Switch,” Col. Patrick Malay claims, “The warrior ethos is not to kill. The true warrior ethos is to protect.” In popular culture, military hero worship often focuses on body counts, but the quintessential military hero is the guy who saves his comrades by jumping on a grenade. It’s about what you’re willing to endure for a cause, not what you’re willing to inflict.

So resilience is, of course, necessary for a warrior. But a lack of empathy isn’t. In fact, it’s harmful (and probably particularly harmful in a counter-insurgency). In “Prayer in the Furnace” the “tough guy” talk of some of the leaders in the battalion is often a mask for incompetence. I thought of this when I saw the accusation of one faction within the C.I.A. that the other was “running a ‘sissified’ interrogation program” because they were unwilling to use waterboarding. The torture program may have been a moral and legal disaster; it may have seriously undermined our credibility as a nation and provided propaganda for our enemies; but at least we weren’t sissies, right?

Tough-guy posturing is the opposite of what Marines need in a leader. They need moral courage, they need empathy, and at the very least they need competence.

*Why is it so important for a marine to articulate his or her experience? In many of your stories, this is exactly what the characters hope to do. They ache to share their experience, but in most cases they are unable to. They are even unable to share the experience with their spouses or parents or those with whom they are most intimate. Does this need to communicate the experience of violence and fear that was service in Iraq relate to your beautiful passage in “Prayer in the Furnace”?*

Sin is a lonely thing, a worm wrapped around the soul, shielding it from love, from joy, from communion with fel-



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low men and with God. The sense that I am alone, that none can hear me, none can understand, that no one answers my cries—it is a sickness over which, to borrow from Bernanos, “the vast tide of divine love, that sea of living, roaring flame which gave birth to all things, passes vainly.”

*Your job, it seems, would be to find a crack through which some sort of communication can be made, one soul to another.*

Yes, absolutely. I think it’s deeply important for soldiers to feel as though they can share their experiences and be understood, but it’s complicated by a variety of factors. There’s a kind of mysticism about war experience that both soldiers and civilians often buy into. There is a lot of political weight put on how the experience ought be interpreted and expectations about what that experience is supposed to mean. Sometimes it’s painful to discuss. And oftentimes there’s an unwillingness among veterans to expose oneself to judgment, which goes hand in hand with a civilian unwillingness to accept complicity in war. In order for real communication to happen there needs to be openness on both sides, a willingness to empathetically engage and to forgive the other for any misunderstandings that arise because both sides are more interested in the conversation continuing than in withdrawing due to real or imagined slights. So some of the characters in *Redeployment* feel it’s easier to withdraw into silence, or to only use their war stories in a way in which they

know exactly what type of effect they will achieve. But that’s never sufficient. I think of Psalm 139:

*LORD, you have probed me, you know me:  
you know when I sit and stand;  
you understand my thoughts from afar.*

*You sift through my travels and my rest;  
with all my ways you are familiar.*

*Even before a word is on my tongue,  
LORD, you know it all.*

*Behind and before you encircle me  
and rest your hand upon me.*

*Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,  
far too lofty for me to reach.*

*Where can I go from your spirit?  
From your presence, where can I flee?*

There is something both beautiful and terrifying in the idea of being truly known. Beautiful because it draws us out of our isolation, makes us feel understood and connected to the rest of the world. Terrifying because none of us are ever fully justified. ▲

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# Francis Pushes Collegiality

Ever since he became pope, Francis has sought to encourage greater collegiality in the Catholic Church, together with synodality. He wants to implement and develop the teaching of the Second Vatican Council in this area, which is highly important not only for the internal life of the church but also in the search for unity with other Christian churches, and in the first place with the Orthodox.

The publication of the encyclical “Laudato Si’” revealed two small but significant ways in which the Argentine pope has sought to develop collegiality. First, he drew on input from at least 16 bishops’ conferences when writing the encyclical. Second, he sent a copy of the text to every diocesan bishop two days before its publication, accompanied by a personal handwritten note. He hoped they would rise to the occasion by participating in his universal magisterium.

That handwritten note in Italian, accompanied by a translation in the relevant languages, was particularly significant since it contained an explicit reference to No. 22 of Vatican II’s “Dogmatic Constitution on the Church,” which speaks about collegiality. The note read:

JHS. The Vatican, 16 June 2015.  
Dear brother, In the bond of unity, charity and peace (LG 22) in which we live as bishops, I send you my letter “Laudato Si’ on Care of our Common Home,”

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

accompanied by my blessing. United in the Lord, and please do not forget to pray for me.

Franciscus

To understand Pope Francis’ determination to foster and develop collegiality in the church, it is necessary to remember that he served as a diocesan bishop for 21 years (1992–2013) before his election to the See of Peter, first as an auxiliary bishop, then as coadjutor and finally archbishop of Buenos Aires.

Several popes have been diocesan bishops, but Francis is the first pope ever to have served as president of a national bishops’ conference. He was elected to head the Argentine bishops’ conference for two terms (2006–12). He is also the first pope to have played a key role in a plenary assembly of a continental conference of bishops, the Conference of Latin American Bishops (CELAM). In that capacity he was elected at its plenary assembly in Aparecida, Brazil, in 2007—almost unanimously—to chair the all-important committee assigned to draft its final document. In addition to all this, he participated in several synods of bishops and was appointed to the key role of rapporteur (*relator*) at the September 2001 synod, replacing Cardinal Edward Egan of New York, who had to return home suddenly after the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center. His skillful performance at that global event caused many cardinals to view him as a potential successor to St. John Paul II.

It should also be remembered that in these various roles, especially as president of the Argentine bishops’ conference, Bergoglio experienced first hand and on several occasions tensions and incomprehension between the center and the periphery. He came to understand that there could be a better way of doing things if collegiality and synodality were allowed to flourish.

Since becoming pope, he has sought to make this happen in several ways, and in his programmatic document “The Joy of the Gospel” he identified the development of collegiality and synodality as one of the goals of his pontificate (No. 32). He has reaffirmed that aim on a number of occasions since then.

In pursuit of that objective, he has established the Council of Cardinal Advisors, increased the number of cardinals and bishops on the boards of the different Vatican congregations and offices, pioneered a new way of conducting the synod of bishops and participated actively in the work of the synod’s council. Furthermore, he has sought to internationalize even more the College of Cardinals by appointing members from the peripheries. And he has decentralized the presentation of the pallium to new archbishops so as to involve the local church.

Moving away from a monarchical style of papacy, he has made clear that national bishops’ conferences should be the ones to comment on major issues in their countries, and not the pope. This explains his silence when civil authorities in various countries, including the United States, approved same-sex marriage.

GERARD O’CONNELL

Francis wants to implement and develop the teaching of Vatican II on collegiality.

FILM | JOHN ANDERSON

## MORE THAN A FEELING

*Two emotionally honest summer films*

Joy is the dominant emotion of **Inside Out**—that’s Joy with a capital J, the first-among-supposed-equals struggling for the heart, and soul, of the lovely little heroine at the center of Pixar’s latest masterpiece of animation. Proving once more that their best work is a mix of the dark and the wondrous, the Pixar people—among them director Pete Docter (“Up,” “Monsters, Inc.”) and co-director Ronaldo Del Carmen—go inside the head of a young girl named Riley (voice of Kaitlyn Dias), who has been uprooted from her beloved Minnesota and deposited in San Francisco by understanding parents who would like to know what she’s thinking. (No, they don’t.) Besides:

Thinking, as we see while traveling inside Riley’s mind, is secondary to feeling, and the daily operation of what Riley’s feeling is being run by a crew of mixed (up) emotions.

In addition to Joy (Amy Poehler), there is Anger (Lewis Black), who is usually fuming, literally; Disgust (Mindy Kaling), who is, perhaps not so ironically, the most socially adept of all the emotions; Fear (Bill Hader), who frets and cringes and wears a Chanel-patterned sweater vest (what’s he afraid of?) and Sadness (Phyllis Smith), Joy’s most direct competition for Riley’s destiny, a rather sweet, unassuming agent-saboteur who keeps turning Riley’s fondest memories blue (like her) and sending the girl’s de-

meanor into a downward spiral.

It is pretty sophisticated stuff. Who among the great filmmakers has put the workings of the human psyche front and center and made it so intellectually engrossing? Hitchcock? Bergman? Maybe, but I really can’t remember laughing very much at “Vertigo” or “Persona.” But with “Inside Out” the laughs are regular and pointed—and likely to be way over the head of the tots who will be taken to see this pastel-palettred marvel. Perhaps, like an amusement park ride, there should be a height requirement before one gets aboard. No, that wouldn’t matter. The taller people will actually be more disturbed than the kids.

What, after all, is free will about, or human intellect for that matter, absent a balanced emotional life? When Joy and Sadness get separated from the control tower—and video-game console—by which the emotions maintain the equilibrium of the usually cheerful



**ANIMATED CHARACTERS.** Fear, Joy and Disgust appear in the movie “Inside Out.”

ONS PHOTO/COURTESY DISNEY-PIXAR

Riley, what results is a kind of spiritual death spiral. Even kids who have not gone through what Riley is going through will recognize the barely contained anguish she feels after she and her Midwestern parents (Diane Lane, Kyle MacLachlan) arrive in oh-so-foreign San Francisco, their furniture gets stuck on a moving van in Texas, they find a dead mouse in the living room and her first day at school turns into a debacle. As she is introducing herself to her class, Sadness is turning her memories of Minnesota blue. Riley's composure collapses along with various Core Memories, which are shaped like marbles (as in, don't lose 'em...).

It's a little agonizing. Much of "Inside Out" resembles one of those dreams where you can't quite get where you have to be. But what it also implies, as Riley's various Islands of Personality (Friends, Family, Hockey, Goofball, etc.) are seen to be shutting down and going out of business, is that pulling oneself out of a similar depression would require a rallying of emotions that might simply be impossible, especially if your personal Joy and Sadness are getting lost amid the data banks of Longtime Memory, trying to catch the Train of Thought and wandering into a realm of dormant nightmares (where broccoli and Jangles the Party Clown are lurking).

On the up side, they also run into Riley's old invisible friend, the hot-pink Bing Bong (Richard Kind), who shows them around the place ("Look, there's Critical Thinking...and Déjà Vu...and Language Processing...and Déjà Vu..."). One of the funnier sequences—because it's so absolutely on the money—involves a couple of

maintenance workers vacuuming up and discarding no-longer useful memories. Like phone numbers ("She's got 'em on her cell..."). And piano lessons ("Keep 'Chop-Sticks' and 'Heart and Soul' and dump the rest...").

Pixar's feature films—the best of them—have had an almost mor-



**Olivia Cooke and Thomas Mann in "Me and Earl and the Dying Girl"**

bid subtext: The downsizing single-mother of the "Toy Story" films (not to mention the eternal-damnation theme of "TS3"); director Brad Bird's Objectivist philosophizing in "Ratatouille" and "The Incredibles"; the eco-apocalypse predicted by "WALL-E." The latest skirts the territory of mental illness. Riley, left unmoored by an AWOL Joy and Sadness (who are, the movie wisely concludes, complementary) decides to run away back to Minnesota, steals a credit card from her mother to do so and walks the scaffolded streets of San Francisco like an outpatient. All of this is totally uncharacteristic of a girl who was the picture of happiness until she got her life uprooted to a place where they put broccoli on pizza ("You ruined pizza!" rants Anger; "Nice going San Francisco! First the Hawaiians, now you!"). Where will Riley end up, should her emotions fail to get it together and save her life? We shudder to imagine.

A film about which this reviewer has no mixed emotions at all is **Me and Earl and the Dying Girl**, directed by Alfonso Gomez-Rejon and written by Jesse Andrews from his best-selling young adult novel. Despite coming out of the Sundance Film Festival on a tsunami of positive hype (not always a good sign) it is likely to be one of the better movies of the year when 2015 is through.

An intelligent, emotionally honest and satisfying film, "Me and Earl" has something of a foolproof emotional centerpiece—a beautiful dying teenage girl. But while the fate of Rachel (Olivia Cooke) is certainly the core issue of the movie, the story belongs to Greg (Thomas Mann), a teenager who purposely avoids emotional or political commitment (avoiding alliances with any and all cliques at his high school, for instance) until he is coerced by his mother (Connie Britton) into spending time with Rachel. What develops is an utterly convincing relationship between Greg and Rachel, and Greg and himself. Much of Mr. Gomez-Rejon's previous work as a director ("American Horror Story," "The Town that Dreaded Sundown") has been in a totally different genre, but he has worked for and with, among others, Martin Scorsese, Nora Ephron and Alejandro González Iñárritu. He brings to "Earl" something rare at the movies these days, an ability to convey emotion through image. His visual sense, rooted in cinema history, elevates a film that likely would have been first-rate anyway, but a talent like his is what separates mere film from film art.

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**JOHN ANDERSON** is a film critic for *Variety* and *The Wall Street Journal* and a regular contributor to the Arts & Leisure section of *The New York Times*.

## WILLIAM ZINSSER'S GHOST

The teacher's main task, I think, is to introduce students to men and women of every generation from whom they can learn. If it works, the author will come alive, join the discussion and make students and teachers friends.

At least that's what happened with William Zinsser, author of *On Writing Well*, who died May 12 at 92, and who kept teaching until the end, even after glaucoma had stolen his sight. As soon as his obituary hit the pages, I received emails from two former students from my days at Loyola University New Orleans, to tell me that Zinsser was dead. They had not read him since the 1990s, but they wanted to express their sorrow.

Born in Manhattan in 1922, "intoxicated" by the scent of printer's ink, Zinsser edited the student newspaper at Deerfield Academy in Massachusetts, left Princeton University to fight in World War II, studied art in Florence after the war and then worked at The New York Herald Tribune—at that time the best-written New York City paper—until it closed in 1966. When he taught a workshop on nonfiction at Yale in 1970, when the so-called new journalism, which employed the characteristic style of fiction, was breaking out, 170 students signed up for his class that held 20.

My basic writing class at Loyola used three books: Strunk and White's *The Elements of Style*, long considered the writer's bible; William Smart's edited *Eight Modern Essayists*, classic selections that included my favorites: Virginia Woolf's "The Death of A Moth," George Orwell's "Why I Write," E. B. White's "Once More to the Lake," James Baldwin's "Notes of A Native

Son" and Joan Didion's "Goodbye to All That." Since good writing is based on great writing, I also used Zinsser's *On Writing Well*, which sold over 1.5 million copies over six editions, as a guide through the genres—writing about people, travel, sports, the arts and criticism, and the memoir—on how to do it, as we drank in how Orwell and Didion did it well.

I found myself a learner in my own course, drinking in Orwell's rationale (ego, aesthetic enthusiasm, historical impulse and political purpose) as if it were John's Gospel and matching Orwell's critique of stale imagery and dying metaphors (toe the line, grist for the mill) with Zinsser's criticism of clutter ("at this point in time" instead of "now," "facilitate" rather than "ease," "due to the fact that" over "because").

Above all, he nails "impacted with the ground prematurely," used to describe an Air Force missile crash, and he warms my determination to prevent the verbification of nouns. If I could recall Zinsser's ghost for a special mission, it would be to head off the virus of "incredible" coming to mean very good, rather than something that cannot be believed.

Zinsser's basic beliefs were the following. Writing is hard and lonely work. Rewriting is the essence of writing. (This essay draft will be 1,200 words, which I must chop down to 730.) The writer's job is to sell who he or she is, with an emphasis on hu-

manity and warmth. Say "I." Write to please yourself. Read your work aloud and listen. Good prose writers must be part poet.

The chapter on travel writing goaded me to introduce a course on it and to travel alone to places like Peru, Gabon, Indonesia, Vietnam and Iraq right after the first Gulf War and

write about it all, to prove that I could do it. Whether that enhanced my credibility with my students, they never told me.

The chapter on the arts makes the vital distinction between the review, which is more a news story, and criticism, which is a "serious intellectual act" that evaluates a performance in context. Consider Virgil Thompson's fearless report on Toscanini, who "shamelessly whips up the tempo and sacrifices clarity and ignores

the basic rhythm" if "he finds the audience's attention beginning to wander."

And of course the most challenging chapter is on the memoir, writing about oneself. It has its perils. "Ego is healthy, no writer can go far without it. Egotism, however, is a drag." The memoir, he says, takes us back to some corner of our life framed by war or some other upheaval. It is a story of growing up. A handwritten notebook journal of my Fordham junior year in Paris in 1953-54 lies in my foot locker, unread for 60 years. Do I dare to turn it into a memoir? Zinsser concludes: "The best gift you have to offer when you write personal history is the gift of yourself."

The writer's job is to sell who he or she is, with an emphasis on humanity and warmth.



## FOLLOW THE MONEY

### GOD'S BANKERS

#### A History of Money and Power at the Vatican

By Gerald Posner  
Simon and Schuster. 752p \$32

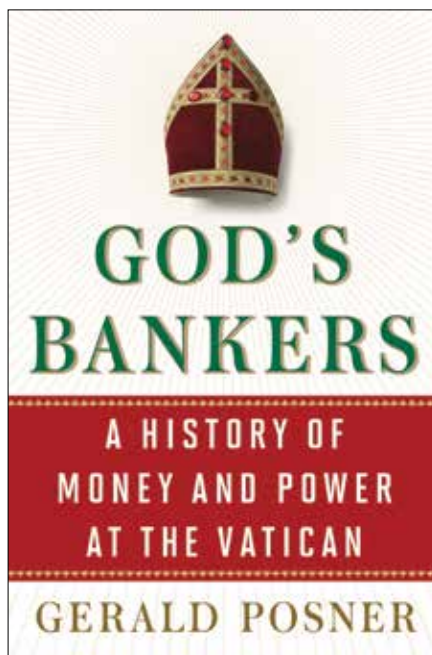
*God's Bankers* is not so much about the history of money in the church as it is about the skullduggery surrounding it. When the pope was the absolute ruler of central Italy, there weren't many money problems, because, like any king, he got his money from taxing his subjects. But after Italian nationalists took away the pope's kingdom by 1870, leaving him only the miniature Vatican City, the money troubles began.

The source of the Vatican's wealth today, according to Posner, is the \$92 million dollar payment that Pius XI accepted from Mussolini in 1929 in compensation for the church's property that had been seized during the unification of Italy and the subsequent investment of those millions by skilled financiers working for the Holy See. We learn in detail about these financiers, starting with Bernardino Nogara, who was called on to invest the original payment from Mussolini.

In 1942, with the creation of the Vatican bank—formally called the Institute for the Works of Religion, or I.O.R., its Italian initials—Nogara had a way to move money around wartime Europe in what the Federal Bureau of Investigation called “in the black—off the radar of Western investigators.” Nogara, through various shell entities, invested heavily in insurance companies in eastern Europe. Here is Posner's most serious charge: that through I.O.R.'s takeover of Generali, a formerly Jewish-controlled insurance company whose owners and directors had been deposed by the racial laws, the Vatican profited from the “escheat”

of insurance policies of Holocaust victims. This, at least, is Posner's surmise. As he states, “Generali's paperwork on this matter is missing.”

Nogara served the popes until 1956, having made another fortune for the Vatican by carefully investing in Italy's postwar real estate and construction boom. He was succeeded by



the troika of Massimo Spada, Henri di Maillardoz and Luigi Mennini, which lasted until the infamous criminal Michele (Michael) Sindona wormed his way into Vatican finances through his friendship with Cardinal Giovanni Battista Montini, soon to be Pope Paul VI. The financial chicaneries of Michele Sindona, his protégé Roberto Calvi and their dupe, Archbishop Paul Marcinkus, president of the I.O.R., is the meaty center of Posner's book.

Marcinkus was a Chicago priest who had studied at the Vatican diplomatic academy. He gained papal favor first by serving as an English translator for important visitors and then by

organizing international papal trips. In 1971, Paul VI made him the head of the I.O.R., a post for which he was uniquely unqualified and where his on-the-job philosophy was, “You can't run the church on Hail Marys.”

Michele Sindona owned a number of private banks in Italy, which he used to launder illegal funds. Marcinkus invested I.O.R. funds in these banks and allowed Sindona to use the I.O.R. for foreign currency transactions, thus avoiding Italian currency laws. When Sindona's banks failed, according to Massimo Spada, who had left I.O.R. to work for Sindona, the Vatican lost \$56 million dollars. Roberto Calvi's bank, the Banco Ambrosiano, in which Marcinkus bought a 10 percent interest for I.O.R., was another criminal front. When it failed, I.O.R. had to come up with \$244 million to pay the Ambrosiano's creditors.

Marcinkus was indicted in Italy for his role in the Ambrosian fraud. For years Italian policemen watched every gate of the Vatican, so that they could arrest Marcinkus if he came out. But Marcinkus did not leave the Vatican's walls during the two years it took the Vatican to challenge Italy's jurisdiction. When Marcinkus did depart in 1990 to return to the United States, it was in disgrace, but at least not in handcuffs.

Throughout his time at the Vatican Bank, and despite these scandals, Marcinkus had retained the support of Paul VI and John Paul II. One reason for John Paul's support may have been Marcinkus's reliability in shuffling money from the Vatican to Poland's Solidarity movement through the I.O.R. Posner reports that at one point Marcinkus, using I.O.R. funds, purchased \$3.5 million in pure gold ingots from Switzerland that were then smuggled into Poland by a priest in the false bottom of his sport utility vehicle.

Things did not improve much at I.O.R. after Marcinkus's departure.

Throughout the 1990s, I.O.R. served as an “off-shore” bank for rich and influential Italians. Seven-time Italian prime minister, Giulio Andreotti, used it to hide a \$60 million slush fund, oddly called the Cardinal Spellman Foundation. In December 2012, the secretary of state at the time, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, instructed I.O.R. to make a loan of \$20 million to a film studio whose owners were his friends. The loan has since been written off as a complete loss to the Vatican. Even now, a Vatican Monsignor, Nunzio Scarano, is under arrest in Italy and awaiting trial for attempting to use I.O.R. to smuggle 23 million untaxed euros into Italy for his wealthy friends. In March 2014, Italy indicted Paolo Cipriani and

Massimo Tulli, former director general and vice director of I.O.R., for money laundering. This past October, a Vatican prosecutor froze I.O.R. accounts of the former president and another vice director of the I.O.R., Angelo Caloia and Lelio Scaletti, on suspicion of embezzling money from the sale of I.O.R. real estate.

The Vatican bank obviously needs the complete housecleaning and restructuring that Pope Francis has decided to give it, which Posner describes in the book’s last chapters. *God’s Bankers* is an effective brief on why such drastic measures are long, long overdue.

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**NICHOLAS P. CAFARDI** is a law professor at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh.

during meetings or protests. Activist groups plan and protest without the benefit of music.

Scholars are beginning to investigate and evaluate this recent phenomenon. The first volume of Robert Darden’s timely and readable book, *Nothing but Love in God’s Water*, offers a well-researched, notated and indexed lens through which to focus an evaluation of protest music based on African-American sacred song.

*Go Down Moses, way down in  
Egypt land  
Tell ol’ Pharaoh to Let my people go!*

Darden describes singing during backbreaking work as the first nonviolent protest of newly enslaved people. He appreciates the somewhat clumsy attempts at notating African-American spirituals by European-American musicians, educators, soldiers and missionaries, noting, however, their respect for the people and their songs, a “legitimate sacred musical expression.” Darden also recounts the enslaved peoples’ transformation of received oppres-

sive theologies from the slave masters’ faith communities into the liberative theology and secret codes that supported individual escapes and well publicized revolts by charismatic leaders like Denmark Vesey (1822, South Carolina) and Nat Turner (1831, Virginia).

Darden quotes the lyrics of the music he describes. Readers may find themselves humming and

singing along as they read:

*Didn’t my Lord deliver Daniel,  
D’liver Daniel, d’liver Daniel.  
Didn’t my Lord deliver Daniel,  
And why not every man?*

Unfortunately, with no forewarn-

KIM R. HARRIS

## LET FREEDOM SING

### **NOTHING BUT LOVE IN GOD’S WATER** Volume 1, **Black Sacred Music from the Civil War to the Civil Rights Movement**

By Robert Darden  
Penn State University Press. 224p  
\$34.95

“Hands up don’t shoot!” “Black lives matter!” “I can’t breathe!” Chants like these, accompanied by gestures of marching with hands in the air, accentuate the protests of present day multiracial activists as they decry the killing of unarmed black men, women and children by police officers in communities across the country.

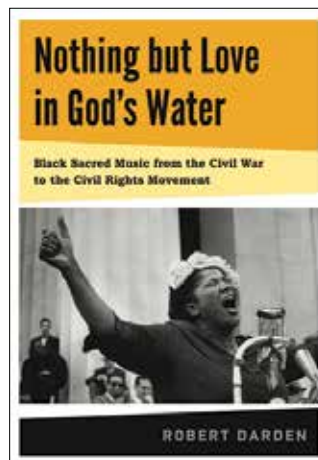
*Oh freedom, O freedom, O freedom  
over me.*

*And before I’d be a slave, I’d be buried  
in my grave, and I’ll fight for my right to  
be free!*

Singing, older activists marched over

the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Ala., to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Bloody Sunday (March 7, 1965).

Veterans of the civil rights movement wondered aloud on that bridge and asked young marchers in their midst why protests since the killing of Michael Brown and Tanisha Anderson appear generally devoid of the inspiring song leaders and community singing. Does protest song still offer release of justified anger, give expression to lament, encourage nonviolence during arrests and reverberate with demands for change? In answer, young protesters spoke of organizing on social media. Popular recording artists champion causes of freedom without acting as song leaders





ing, Darden begins to abbreviate the quoted lyrics:

*John Brown died that the slave  
might be free,  
But his soul's marching on.  
Now has come the glorious jubilee,  
When all mankind (sic) are free*

Readers unfamiliar with the songs or with no sense of the song form will not understand that these words represent two separate verses, with repetition within each verse.

Singers and students of American labor union movement music will appreciate Darden's detailed chapter on union songs. Darden focuses on ways in which original and transformed spirituals and emerging black gospel music supported union workers in recruiting new members and sustaining labor strikes.

Amid stories of segregated labor unions, Darden offers the surprising musical observation of "Negro and White Unity" in protests for workers rights among the singing union workers of Birmingham, Ala., in 1939. He quotes a "protest-oriented rewrite" of the spiritual "Joshua Fit [Fought] the Battle of Jericho:"

*Black and white together, we'll win  
the vote, win the vote, win the  
vote  
(Black and white together, we'll win  
the vote)  
Going to build our promised land.*

In this first volume, Darden's treatment of civil rights movement music is limited to the experience before and during the Montgomery bus boycott (1955–56). He includes details of musical collaborations and protest trainings at locations including the Highlander College/ Folk School and the passage of unionized spirituals into the music of civil rights. Darden concludes the present text with an account of the use of hymns familiar to the

black community in the Montgomery, Ala., bus boycott.

Participating in the first mass meeting at the Holt Street Baptist Church, Montgomery, an oppressed community made dangerous choices inspired by familiar songs, instantly repurposed into freedom songs, anthems that carried the community through 13 difficult months.

*Onward, Christian soldiers,  
marching as to war  
With the cross of Jesus going on  
before.*

In placing the history gathered by Darden in conversation with the present protest experiences one could ask from where new protest songs might emerge. Will black sacred music continue to provide music for freedom movements? Will young protesters eventually embrace singing as inspiration for activism?

At a mass meeting in Tabernacle Baptist Church in Selma, Ala., during recent commemorations, veteran

members of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. Freedom Singers sang historic songs. Older members of the crowd sang with great energy. The young choir of the church then offered their musical contribution. They chose a contemporary gospel "praise and worship" song, "You're Amazing," as recorded by Ricky Dillard and New G.

*You're amazing, you're amazing, you're  
amazing, so amazing!*

Younger members at the meeting stood and sang with gusto. Might young people march while praising the God who inspires them and praising each other for courage to join the movement? Based on Darden's descriptions of freedom anthem creation in Montgomery, could this indeed be an emergence of a new form of freedom song?

---

**KIM R. HARRIS** is co-composer of *Welcome Table: A Mass of Spirituals* and specializes in performing and promoting the liturgical, historical and popular understanding of Negro spirituals and civil rights freedom songs.

## No. VIII, from Nine Evocations

*"The bird lies still while the light goes on flying."  
From "Unknown Age," by W. S. Merwin*

Those with strapped-on wings  
for ages dreamt of flying like the birds

and fell from cliffs broke limbs or died.  
But when I ask for the wind's help

getting beyond the mind's bent roads  
and its dead ends it sighs and says

(with a whoosh) I'll take you there  
just as soon as all your words are ash.

**Richard Becker**

*Richard Becker's poetry has been published in America, Columbia, The Literary Review, Cold Mountain and elsewhere. The author is an associate professor of music at the University of Richmond.*

# A ROMANTIC IN AMERICA

## AMERICA'S HERO The Marquis Lafayette Reconsidered

By Laura Auricchio  
Knopf. 432p \$30

Few foreigners have captured the American imagination quite like the Marquis de Lafayette, the French-born aristocrat who became a hero of the American Revolution and protégé of General George Washington. Across America, his fame is immortalized in the more than 600 cities, towns, villages, counties, squares, parks, ships and submarines named after him. In homage to him, even American pilots volunteering to fly for France in World War I proudly called themselves the Lafayette Flying Corps. Yet few Americans realize the paradoxes of Lafayette's life and legacy and how tarnished his efforts to lead his own nation's revolution turned out to be. In France there is little memorialization of Lafayette, despite the leading role he played in the initial phase of the French Revolution. This striking discrepancy in American and French historical memory is the springboard for Laura Auricchio's superb new biography, *The Marquis: Lafayette Reconsidered*. She contrasts his dual experiences in the American and French revolutions and offers fresh insight into how Lafayette came to be hailed in America as a true patriot, but in France escaped the guillotine by being imprisoned by the Austrians until 1797.

Auricchio first examines the motivations and circumstances that led Lafayette to join with the American colonists in their fight against the British. As she shows, it was a bold and defiant action. He was only 19 when he chose to outfit a ship at his own expense and sail across the Atlantic, leaving

behind his newly-wed wife, Adrienne de Noailles, whose family had brought him wealth and high connections, and defying a last-minute royal directive for him to turn back. Auricchio sees Lafayette as a romantic driven by idealism and determined to achieve the glory that seemed to elude him in France, where he felt out of place, particularly at the capricious court of Versailles. Though enormously wealthy and raised in a world of noble privilege, Lafayette found American society, with its direct and frank manner, more appealing.

To explain his success in the American context, Auricchio points to a combination of factors: youth, luck, some degree of military and political acumen, his wounding at the Battle of Brandywine and of course the significant sums of money that he was willing to invest in the American cause. His actions earned him both popular acclaim and access to Washington, Franklin, Jefferson and Adams.

After his return to France, he continued to work for the American cause, and helped to sustain the flow of French financial and military support all the way through the final battle of Yorktown. At its end, Lafayette had won the lasting devotion of the American public, and he likewise never lost his enthusiasm for all things American. The love affair was mutual: Lafayette had gained the distinction he craved, and Americans had found a dashing affirmation of all they stood for, an Old World aristocrat who val-

ued their liberty.

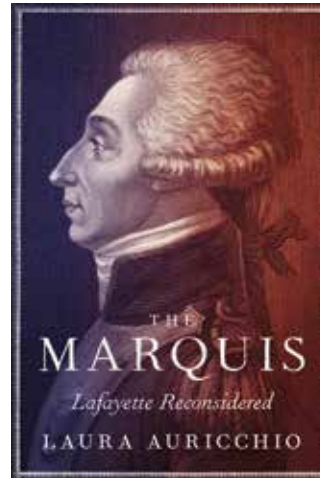
Why then was Lafayette not able to become a hero of his own revolution? Auricchio looks for the answer in both the volatility of politics in France and in the character of Lafayette. She sees him as one who welcomed revolution, but only in order to reform the monarchy, not abolish it. Events, though, moved more quickly than he could

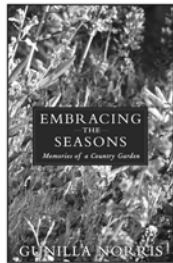
keep pace with, and the mood in France did not long favor that stance. He played a prominent role early on and as a member of the National Assembly helped write the famous *Declaration of the Rights of Man*. His popularity among the Parisian masses led to his appointment to head the new National Guard. He helped calm the mob that marched in October of 1789 to Versailles to force King

Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette to return to Paris.

But Lafayette soon found himself under fire from all sides. Auricchio reveals the tragic irony of Lafayette's situation. He defended the king, but neither Louis XVI nor his entourage trusted him. Neither did the radicals, who despised Lafayette's monarchism and feared his ambitions. Lafayette, so devoted to the ideal of democracy in America, refused to advocate the same for France; he felt that monarchy was too deeply entrenched in French tradition and that the French were not ready for a republic. His role in the revolution came to an ignominious end when he was forced to flee the country and was seized by the Austrians after crossing their border.

He spent five miserable years as a prisoner, until finally the French government bowed to international pressure and negotiated for his release. Following the restoration of the monarchy, Lafayette was able to revive his





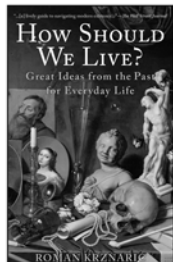
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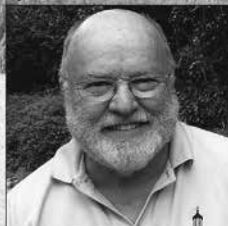
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Rev. Matthew Malone, S.J.

political life and served in the legislature. But he never regained national prominence. Only in America, where he toured in 1824 to huge crowds and national acclaim, did he continue to enjoy heroic status.

Auricchio's portrait of Lafayette will appeal to lovers of biography and history alike. She artfully weaves Lafayette's story into a rich account of the inter-

connections between 18th-century France and America, recreating in vivid detail the worlds he occupied, from the salons of the Enlightenment to the battlefield and public squares of the New World. This is a book of remarkable historical depth, yet is very accessible to a general reader. Her analysis is grounded firmly in prodigious research, and she includes numerous

quotations, pictures and commentaries from Lafayette's personal papers and from the correspondence of prominent individuals like Washington, Franklin, Adams and Jefferson.

Readers will find particularly fascinating the author's examination of French Revolution pamphlet literature and political cartoons published by Lafayette's opponents that lampooned and criticized him, some bordering on the pornographic. At times her account reads like a thriller, especially when she immerses the reader in the intrigues that ran through both revolutions and that repeatedly ensnared Lafayette. Her engaging style brings Lafayette vividly to life, revealing him as he appeared to contemporaries and as he saw himself.

Anyone who reads this book will come away with a much more nuanced understanding of this complex man and his remarkable encounters with history. Auricchio deftly explores the rather complicated psychology behind his irrepressible enthusiasm for the fledgling American republic and identifies the deficiencies in character and judgment that undermined his efforts in the French Revolution. Yet, to a certain degree the reader is still left wanting a more decisive analysis as to whether Lafayette's character was the ultimate determinant of his fate or whether it was the circumstances he encountered.

Some might question whether the author is completely objective about her subject. She seems decidedly sympathetic to Lafayette and suggests to the reader that his high-minded goals, work ethic and pursuit of public good outweighed the personal mistakes he made. The underlying sentiment of the book is that Lafayette deserves more recognition from his own countrymen for his aspirations and for his attempts, however unsuccessful they were, to steer France away from bloodshed and extremism.

Finally, it would have been inter-

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esting to have learned more about Lafayette's wife, Adrienne, and about the source of the remarkable fortitude she revealed during the darkest days of the French Revolution. Auricchio presents only a limited portrait of this woman, whose family wealth made it possible for Lafayette to support the Americans so generously. She appears

in the book mainly through the letters that Lafayette wrote to her; yet after 1792 it was she who fought relentlessly for Lafayette's freedom, even while her sister and mother fell victim to the guillotine. When her efforts came to naught, she voluntarily joined him in prison, only to suffer a fatal decline in health from the horrendous conditions.

These quibbles pale, though, in the light of the author's achievement as a writer and historian, and this book is a valued addition to our understanding of Lafayette and to the expanding field of Atlantic world studies.

**ELAINE MACKINNON** is a professor of history at the University of West Georgia.

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# No One Should Have Nothing

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (B), JULY 26, 2015

Readings: 2 Kgs 4:42–44; Ps 145:10–18; Eph 4:1–6; Jn 6:1–15

*“Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?” (Jn 6:5)*

A couple of days before the release of Pope Francis’ encyclical “*Laudato Si*,” a neighbor and I were discussing rumors about the encyclical and what it might contain concerning the state of the earth and economic systems. It was an intriguing conversation, because my neighbor does not identify as a Christian, or even a theist, but his concern for the needs of humanity and the earth is evident in how he lives. We were discussing the need for all people to have food, clothing, education, a home and all other basic necessities, when I noted that there would never be genuine equality among people with respect to money and goods because of a variety of factors, including talent, skill and even luck.

It was then that he said, “But no one should have nothing.” That cut to the heart of the matter. All of us as God’s precious creations deserve in this world the basic necessities. And there is enough. In fact, with God in our sights, there is always some left over.

There is a story in the Second Book of Kings, a story that Christopher T. Begg says “is obviously the inspiration for New Testament multiplication miracles” (NJBC, p. 176), in which Elisha is given the first fruits of the harvest as a “man of God.” Most Old Testament traditions see these first fruits as offered to the priests and Levites or to the house of God (e.g., Ex 23:19, Lv 23:10), but all of the first fruits are truly an offering to God through the representatives of

God, which Elisha really is.

Elisha does not keep the first fruits offering for himself, however, but offers it to the people, saying, “Give it to the people and let them eat.” Elisha’s servant complains that the 20 barley loaves will never feed 100 people, but Elisha reiterates that God had said, “They shall eat and have some left.” What Elisha received as a representative of God, he gave back to the people. Everyone ate, as promised, and there was some left over.

Jesus’ teaching on the multiplication of the loaves and fishes starts with human need too, in which the few fish and loaves of a little boy became an outpouring of food for the gathered crowd. Jesus, says the Gospel of John, knew what his plan was, but he asked his apostle Phillip, “Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?” Phillip answered him, “Six months’ wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.” Jesus then took the five barley loaves and two fish and fed 5,000 people, with 12 baskets full left over.

There is no question that Jesus’ actions and the stories that recount them, found in all four Gospels, are modeled on the account of Elisha feeding a hungry crowd. There is also no question that in both stories there is a spiritual meaning that runs deeper than the simple physical act of nourishing the body. Elisha gives the people the food dedicated to God as the first fruits; Jesus will offer himself, the “first fruits

of those who have died” (1 Cor 15:20), as the spiritual bread from heaven. But the spiritual truth does not negate the meaning of the material bread and the necessary sustenance it offers.

It was the miraculous act of multiplication that drew the people to Jesus, says John, that made them want “by force to make him king” and led them to proclaim, “This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world.” But it is the act of giving what is needed physi-



## PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Reflect on the crowds around Jesus. What can you share from your abundance?

cally that allows people to see with the eyes of the soul, to look beyond this world to the world eternal, from the barley bread to the bread of heaven. God’s abundance, poured out over the whole earth, is intended for everyone. All are called to participate in this richness, to be a part of the one body and one Spirit, sharing in the material and the spiritual bread.

This is not Elisha or Jesus teaching lessons in economics but lessons in theology, the nature of God’s ways. If our economics does not make room for feeding everyone, with some left over, it is not because the church’s science is faulty but because of our hardened hearts. There is enough for everyone, and no one should have nothing.

JOHN W. MARTENS is a professor of theology at the University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minn. Twitter: @BibleJunkies.

# Hunger for the Truth

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (B), AUG. 2, 2015

Readings: Ex 16:2-15; Ps 78:3-54; Eph 4:17-24; Jn 6:24-35

*"I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry." (Jn 6:35)*

There is a fine line between having what we need to sustain our physical existence and feeling we just do not have enough. Or is that line the one where we want more and more? Once we cross that line, as individuals and as societies, to where our most notable identification is as a consumer, it can be difficult to cross back. Once this takes place, the most surprising of things begins to happen: Our own sense of worth and value can be tied up in things we own and things we buy. Even sadder, though this is sad enough, we begin to see other people as valuable on the basis of their power to buy things and accumulate "stuff." Poor people themselves become less valuable, and all kinds of ways are concocted to explain how they are responsible for being poor and the architects of their own fate.

For many of us in the West, myself included, food is something we consume too much and waste too often, while many others suffer with too little. Part of having more than enough is being thankful for the abundance and properly stewarding what is left over. The Israelites knew what it was to be bereft and called out to God to supply their needs. God did it, but it was also a test, to see "whether they will follow my instruction or not." God provided for their physical needs; "He rained down on them manna to eat and gave them the grain of heaven. Mortals ate of the bread of angels; he sent them food in abundance." But the test was

a spiritual one, and it is one that each wealthy nation and person must take today: How are we handling our abundance?

Jesus challenged those who followed him after the multiplication of loaves and fishes to take the same test. He asked the crowds, who continued to follow him, if "you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves." Because the human needs are so real and genuine, it can be easy to focus on them when they are met and to see that as the end of life. Jesus asks his followers to look beyond and not to "work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you." It is only the spiritual food that will satisfy our deepest needs.

It is a properly ordered life that assigns to all human needs their right place. The author of Ephesians, traditionally understood to be the Apostle Paul, challenges us to take this test and not to abandon ourselves "to licentiousness (*aselgeia*), greedy to practice every kind of impurity (*akatharsia*).... You were taught to put away your former way of life, your old self, corrupt and deluded by its lusts (*epithymia*), and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds." The prominent concern in this passage is with sexual licentiousness, but sexual lust is not the only desire that can lead us astray. Unbridled passions can consume every area of our lives, corrupting and deluding us.

*Aselgeia*, *akatharsia* and *epithymia* can also reflect other disordered desires, whether for food, bigger houses or more cars. Social sins, of course, can be the hardest to see, because the way a society lives can come to seem the normal, the best, even the only way to live. While we might ask how people lived justifying the evils of slavery, we must ask ourselves how we live justifying the evils of overconsumption. How do we justify overuse of food and other natural resources, throwing away tons of food daily, while others go without basic needs being met?

Ephesians asks us "to be renewed in the spirit of your minds." This is not a renewal of ideological purity, of the right or the left, of this political party or that, but a renewal in the spirit of God's word, the word made flesh. This renewal criticizes every human vanity

## PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Follow Jesus in the crowd. Are your desires ordered to the bread of heaven?

and every form of human impurity; it strips excuses away and leaves us hungry for the truth alone.

This is the hunger that compels us to demand, "Sir, give us this bread always." Jesus tells us: "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty." It is this bread that orders all our appetites and allows us to turn away from the desires of selfishness and indifference so that we can clothe ourselves "with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness."

**JOHN W. MARTENS**

# Fall/Winter 2015-16 Programs

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### SEPTEMBER

#### *Contemporary Insights on Spirituality and Evolution*

Facilitator: Nancy Erts, OP

Tues: 1:00 - 3:00 pm  
or 6:30 - 8:30 pm

Sept 8, Oct 6, Nov 3,  
Dec 1, Jan 5

Fee: \$15 each session or \$65 for the series.

#### *An Evening of Noticing God's Nudges*

Tues, Sept 15; 7:00 - 9:00 pm

Fee: None

#### *Yoga for Relaxation, Rejuvenation and Balance*

Instructor: Chris Glover

Thurs, 6:45 - 8:00 pm;  
Sept 10-Oct 15, Oct 22-  
Dec 3, Jan 7-Feb 11

Fee: \$30 for individual session  
\$120 for any 6-week session

#### *Harvesting the "Fruits" of Pope Francis' Encyclical on the Environment*

Presenter: Nancy Erts, OP

Sat, Sept 19; 10:00 am -  
3:30 pm

Fee: \$45

#### *Autumn Equinox Celebration*

Presenter: Nancy Erts, OP

Wed, Sept 23; 4:00 - 5:30 pm

Fee: Free Will Donation

#### *Contemplative Movement: Bridging Sitting Meditation and Prayer and Daily Life*

Instructor: Allen Bourque

Sat, Sept 26; 10:00 am -  
3:30 pm

Fee: \$70

#### *An Ignatian Approach to Praying with Depression and Anxiety*

Presenters: Rick D'Aversa and Dr. Robert Glugliano

Sat, Sept 26; 10:00 am -  
3:30 pm

Fee: \$50

#### *Group Spiritual Direction: Holy Listening*

Facilitator: Gaynell Cronin

Eight Sessions run from Oct through May on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. See website for details, [www.ophope.org](http://www.ophope.org)

Facilitator: Jack Rathschmidt OFM, Cap

Eight Sessions run from Oct through May on Thursdays. See website for details, [www.ophope.org](http://www.ophope.org)

Fee: \$170

### OCTOBER

#### *Directed Dream Retreat*

Presenter: Don Bisson, FMS

Sun, Oct 4, 6:00 pm -  
Fri, Oct 9, 11:00 am

Fee: \$500

#### *Fall 2015 Guided Retreat: God's Reconciling Love: The Bread and Wine of Life*

Presenter: Michael Laratonda, FMS

Sun, Oct 4, 6:00 pm -  
Fri, Oct 9, 11:00 am

Fee: \$425

#### *Fall Silent Directed Retreat: Autumn Leaves*

Directors: Gaynell Cronin, Martha LaVallee, and Judy Schlavo

Thurs, Oct 15, 6:00 pm -  
Sun, Oct 18, 11:00 am

Fee: \$350

#### *Enneagram for All: Saints and Sinners*

Presenter: Nancy Erts, OP

Sat, Oct 24; 10:00 am -  
3:30 pm

Fee: \$45

#### *Ongoing Contemplative Formation Program: Exploring the Contemplative Life More Deeply*

Presenters: Gaynell Cronin and Jack Rathschmidt, OFM, Cap.

Sat, Oct 24; 9:00 am - 3:30 pm

Fee: \$90

#### *Been There, Done That... Now, Play! Leaping into the Wonder of Your Wise Woman Years*

Presenter: Mary Byrne Hoffman, M. Div.

Wed, Oct 28, 10:00 am -  
Fri, Oct 30, 3:00pm

Fee: \$300

### NOVEMBER

#### *Fall Crafters'/Quilters' Retreat: God Isn't Finished with Us Yet!*

Prayer Facilitator: Nancy Erts, OP  
Quilting and Craft Instructor: Patricia Werner

Fri, Nov 6, 6:00 pm - Sun,  
Nov 8, 1:00 pm

Fee: \$300; Add Thurs, Nov 12 (arrival from 3:00 pm onward) \$60; Commuter: \$225; Add Thurs, \$30.

#### *Knit Together*

Presenter: Martha LaVallee

Sat, Nov 7, 14, 21; 10:00 am - 12:00 noon

Fee: \$10 per session,  
\$25 for all three sessions

#### *Men's Spirituality: Negotiating Life's Great Transitions*

Presenter: Jack Rathschmidt, OFM, Cap.

Fri, Nov 13; 6:00 pm -  
Sun, Nov 15, 1:00 pm

Fee: \$300

#### *A Dominican Perspective on Thanksgiving and Advent*

Presenter: Nancy Erts, OP

Saturday, November 21;  
10:00 am - 3:30pm

Fee: \$45

### DECEMBER

#### *Advent Taize Prayer*

Presiders: Nancy Erts, OP  
and Linda Rivers, OP

Wed, Dec 2, 9, 16;  
7:00 - 8:00 pm

Fee: Free Will Offering

#### *Advent and the Angelic*

Presenter: Don Bisson, FMS

Sat, Dec 12; 10:00 am -  
3:30 pm

Fee: \$95

#### *Mary: Doorway to Advent - A Morning of Prayer & Reflection*

Presenters: Gaynell Cronin,  
Jack Rathschmidt, OFM, Cap.

Sat, Dec 12; 9:00 am -  
12:30 pm

Fee: \$50

#### *The Glory and Blessings of Winter*

Presenter: Nancy Erts, OP

Sun, Dec 20; 4:00 - 5:30 pm

Fee: Free Will Offering

For online information & registration: [www.mariandale.org](http://www.mariandale.org),  
or contact Linda Rivers, OP, (914) 941-4455, [livers@ophope.org](mailto:livers@ophope.org)

