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Serra's Sainthood

EXAMINING THE
CONTROVERSY

JEFFREY M. BURNS • KEVIN STARR

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

OF MANY THINGS

The news last week that former President Jimmy Carter has what is most likely terminal cancer was sad to hear and, strangely enough, caught me off guard. The Man from Plains is close to 91 years old now, but his still-vigorous activism very nearly obscures that fact. Until recently Mr. Carter was still swinging a hammer at Habitat for Humanity sites and teaching Sunday school for something like his 50th consecutive year, a catechetical career he did not allow even his presidency to interrupt.

I suppose Jimmy Carter is one of those folks who seem like they have always been there, a constant, reassuring, sometimes nagging presence in our national life, a symbol of the better angels of our collective nature. For 30 years as our most popular former president, he has functioned as the nation's conscience, mainly because, like Pope Francis, he's the real deal: a leader who says what he does and does what he says.

Americans claim we want that kind of leader, but we rarely reward them on election day. Consider President Carter's most famous oval office address, the so-called malaise speech, which he delivered 36 years ago this summer. In that much-maligned address, the president told it like it was, a far cry from the ethically-impooverished imperial presidency of Richard Nixon or the B-movie Hollywood blockbuster of the Reagan years.

The speech still has much to say to us. The president addressed that night what he called "a fundamental threat to American democracy.... It is a crisis of confidence.... Our people are losing that faith, not only in government itself but in the ability as citizens to serve as the ultimate rulers and shapers of our democracy...." Sounds about right, doesn't it? Does not a similar sentiment help explain the state of our politics now, the rise of the Tea Party, the insurgency of Occupy Wall Street, the entry of pseudo-populist demagogues

onto the national stage?

Mr. Carter continued: "In a nation that was proud of hard work, strong families, close-knit communities, and our faith in God, too many of us now tend to worship self-indulgence and consumption. Human identity is no longer defined by what one does, but by what one owns. But we've discovered that owning things and consuming things does not satisfy our longing for meaning. We've learned that piling up material goods cannot fill the emptiness of lives which have no confidence or purpose...." If I had told you that that last quote was from "Laudato Si," you all would have believed me.

Then, before speaking about the specifics of his energy and economic plan, the president told his viewers: "For the first time in the history of our country, a majority of our people believe that the next five years will be worse than the past five years. Two-thirds of our people do not even vote." Is today any different? In a Washington Post exit poll conducted for the 2014 midterm election—an election in which voter turnout was the worst in 72 years, "almost half of all Americans—48 percent—said they expected life for 'future generations' to be 'worse than life today,' while 22 percent said it would be better. Another 27 percent said life would be about the same."

Much to ponder here. The speech should be remembered for more than malaise. Mr. Carter told truths that were hard to hear, but they are only truer today. Was he rewarded for his candor? In a word, no. He was trounced just a year later in the first Reagan landslide. Yet the speech was as hopeful as it was realistic. "All the traditions of our past, all the lessons of our heritage, all the promises of our future point to another path, the path of common purpose and the restoration of American values. That path leads to true freedom for our nation and ourselves." Well said, Mr. President.

MATT MALONE, S.J.

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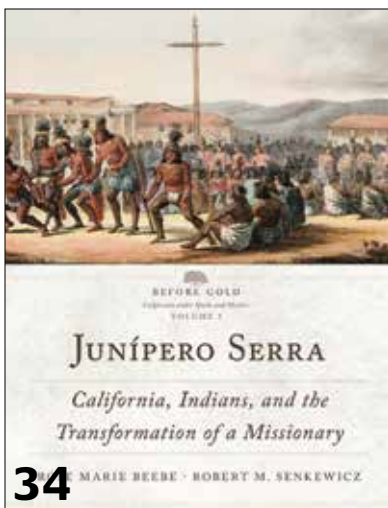
Cover: First holy Communion during Mass at San Carlos Borromeo de Carmelo Mission in Carmel, Calif., on May 17. A portrait of Blessed Junipero Serra sits above his tomb before the altar. CNS photo/Nancy Wiechec

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ON THE WEB

Former **Senator George Mitchell**, right, talks about his career in Congress, and **Sister Carol Perry** offers a video reflection on the timeless power of the psalms. Full digital highlights on page 13 and at americamagazine.org/webfeatures.



The Summer Surge

After years of steady declines in major U.S. cities, homicide rates are once again on the rise—up an average of 19 percent. Some cities are enduring even steeper increases. Houston is up 36 percent, according to the Major Cities Chiefs Association. New Orleans saw a 22 percent increase. More alarming have been a 60 percent spike in Baltimore and a leap of 117 percent in Milwaukee.

Some criminologists suggest 2015 may turn out to be the year when a two-decade-long decline in homicides finally reaches its end as state law enforcement budgets tighten and the flow of guns into U.S. cities continues unabated. Another possible contributor to the rise is a so-called Ferguson effect. Are police, demoralized by a brutal year of public opprobrium, too worried about making the wrong call to do their jobs effectively?

Other procedural shifts may also be having an impact. New York's notorious stop-and-frisk policy was abandoned in 2014 in begrudging compliance with the Fourth Amendment. So far this year homicides are up 11 percent in New York, and the number of illegal guns pulled from the streets is down about 50 percent.

These outcomes suggest stark and ultimately fraudulent choices. Do citizens really have to trade personal liberty for public safety? Or worse, tolerate a criminal justice system awash with inequities?

Quick fixes will be tempting, but finally self-defeating. Long-term strategies aimed at reviving urban communities—targeted investments that put community members back to work as well as jobs and recreation programs for urban youth—should be prioritized over reversals of policies that remain constitutionally and morally dubious. Tighter gun control and gun trafficking policies that might do the most to reduce homicides—as well as the number of life-and-death decisions police have to make—are unfortunately the least likely measures to be implemented.

Creation Connections

In “Laudato Si” Pope Francis reminded the world that everything is connected. In his recent decision to mark Sept. 1 as a World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, he further emphasized that fact. Observance of the day, already celebrated by the Orthodox Church, unites the Roman Catholic Church with our brothers and sisters in Christ in asking for assistance in caring for creation as well as for forgiveness “for sins committed against the world in which we live.” In his recent encyclical, Pope

Francis praised Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, leader of the Orthodox Christians, for asking people to “replace consumption with sacrifice, greed with generosity, wastefulness with a spirit of sharing.”

The World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation reminds Catholics to consistently renew our commitment to these values as well. By adding this day to the church calendar, Francis asks us to make care for creation a part of our daily lives and to recognize that much remains to be done to protect what God has given us. It reminds all people that the encyclical was not meant to inspire us for one news cycle but to encourage us to truly connect with others, with God and with creation throughout our lives. It is fitting then that Francis also announced recently that the theme for the 2016 World Peace Day will be “Overcome indifference and win peace.” It is a theme that suggests a way forward in our efforts to live out the call of “Laudato Si” and the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation. Indeed, everything is connected.

Small but Loved

“It is a small college. And yet there are those who love it.” These words, spoken by Senator Daniel Webster in defense of Dartmouth College in 1818, remain relevant today not just to the 1,600 private, nonprofit four-year colleges in the United States but to many colleges that not only prepare students for a job but challenge students with a liberal arts curriculum. For those students, as life goes on, the college takes on the role of another self. Stab the college and the graduates bleed.

Sweet Briar, a 114-year-old women's liberal arts college on an old plantation in the foothills of Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains, known for its close student-faculty relationships, equestrian program, boat house, 21 buildings on the National Register of Historic Places, junior year in Paris and \$85 million endowment, found itself last spring with only 532 students (plus 170 studying abroad), when they needed 800 to survive. It announced it was closing.

But its alumnae love it. They fought back, raised \$12 million, set up a new board with a new president, reactivated the Paris year, formed an equestrian partnership with nearby Lynchburg College and hustled to retrieve 300 students who had transferred out in anticipation of the closing. Over the past 50 years the number of women's colleges in the United States has decreased to 46 from 230. If it survives, Sweet Briar will be under pressure, as other women-only schools have been, to admit men. Meanwhile, it is back in business, and those who love it rejoice.

Our Segregated Schools

At the end of the five-mile march to mark the first anniversary of Michael Brown's death, a drumline led a spirited crowd onto the football field of Normandy High School. It was the school from which Mr. Brown graduated nine days before the African-American teenager was fatally shot by a white police officer in Ferguson, Mo., on Aug. 9, 2014.

"Do you know how hard it was for me to get him to stay in school and graduate?" his shocked and grieving mother asked reporters just hours after the shooting. "You know how many black men graduate? Not many." This mother's anguish stuck with Nikole Hannah-Jones, a staff writer for *The New York Times Magazine*, and prompted her to investigate conditions at Mr. Brown's alma mater, which she described on the radio program "This American Life" (7/31).

The student body at Normandy is 98 percent African-American, 74 percent low-income and has a four-year graduation rate of 53 percent (the state-wide graduation rate is 86 percent). The school was stripped of its accreditation in 2012 after failing to meet minimum state standards for over a decade. Across St. Louis County, according to Ms. Hannah-Jones, 44 percent of black children attend schools that lack full accreditation, compared with just 4 percent of whites. These statistics are damning, but hardly unique. Nearly any metropolitan area in the United States shows the same pattern: racially stratified housing, pockets of concentrated poverty and substandard public schools.

Each year billions of dollars are spent on efforts to turn around these failing schools. Well-intentioned disagreements over the merits of No Child Left Behind and Common Core and debates about magnet and charter schools show no signs of abating. And yet the one solution that has been proven to help minority students is not even on the table: integration.

Starting in the late 1960s, court-mandated desegregation efforts began to chip away at the achievement gap between black and white students, cutting it in half in just 17 years. Black students who attended integrated schools graduated from high school and college at higher rates and would go on to earn 25 percent more than peers who attended racially isolated schools.

Integration reached its peak in 1988, at which time 44 percent of black students in the South attended majority-white schools, according to the report "Brown at 60," by U.C.L.A.'s Civil Rights Project. But a string of Supreme Court decisions since 1991 that rolled back federal desegregation orders, as

well as a surge in the Hispanic student population, have given rise to a new wave of educational sorting. A report in 2012 found that 74 percent of black students and 80 percent of Latino students attend schools where the majority of the students are not white, schools where course offerings are slim, teachers are inexperienced and most students qualify for a free lunch. There are no quick solutions to this; segregation in schools cannot be understood or addressed without also tackling segregation in housing and concentrated poverty.

Those disturbed by the current state of affairs are tempted to do no more than call for a strong government response and then decry the political gridlock that makes such a response all but unimaginable. But Christians are called not just to condemn injustice but to share the burden with those who bear its weight. Catholic schools are rightly proud of their strong record of serving minority students in inner cities. What if these schools also reflected the diversity of their communities? In addition to taking full advantage of existing voucher programs (and supporting their expansion) to bring in low-income students, Catholic schools can do more to reach out to families who would otherwise be happy to send their kids to a high-quality public school.

Families have a role to play as well. Though at an earlier time busing was effective in some regions, it was largely a political and economic failure. That means where we choose to live matters. Segregation often results not from overt racism but from the millions of individual decisions of those who, quite understandably, "shop" for a good school district. What if more families crossed the lines of color and economic status in the belief that their children can be richer for their encounter with the other? What if parents with options looked beyond high test scores and demanded the classroom diversity that studies show equips students to succeed in college and beyond?

This fall, millions of children already disadvantaged by the burdens of poverty will return to failing schools. Only when the fate of black and brown and white students is intertwined can our country go beyond interminable reform battles and move on to build an education system that our children deserve and our democracy demands.



REPLY ALL

The Price of Power

Re “Of Many Things,” by Matt Malone, S.J. (8/3): Canon law as well as civil law in most jurisdictions makes the ordinary/diocesan bishop the actual owner or at least the principal trustee of all the property of the church, so that in many and varied actions that affect the faithful, e.g., the closing of parishes, the bishop must act, and be perceived, as a landlord rather than as a religious leader who is trying to follow Jesus Christ. Every consultative council or committee at the bishop’s side is there by his appointment, and any advice forthcoming is just that, advice. It is only to be expected that the bishop would tend to use his power as landlord to enforce his rulings as to what programs or opinions may be expressed in parish or diocesan settings.

The bishop’s role in the church has unfortunately been translated into one of exercising jurisdiction, not of service. Even the most fair-minded and virtuous bishop has to be ruefully restricted by the concentration of power placed in him. With Father Malone, we can all cite experiences with generous and caring bishops, but some obvious reforms would help to lift the bishop’s office in the church out of its present distress.

(REV.) JOHN ROWAN
Southold, N.Y.

Safe Speech

I must confess to approaching Maryann Cusimano Love’s “Building a Better Peace” (8/3) in a wary frame of mind. The idea of “peace building” is to move beyond the fusty old issues of whether a particular war is just or unjust and the morality of nuclear deterrence and instead, as Professor Love puts it, to “dialogue, dialogue, dialogue.”

The problem with these fusty old issues is that taking too bold a stand on them would inevitably put you on a collision course with the government

of the United States. Call the invasion of Iraq an unjust war in which it would be sinful for any Catholic to participate, which neither the Vatican nor the American bishops did, or declare nuclear deterrence immoral, which Francis’ letter to the Vienna conference did not do despite Professor Love’s implication to the contrary, and see what happens. But “dialogue, dialogue, dialogue,” and you’ll be rewarded with a condescending pat on the head from the Pentagon and the White House. And while you’re dialoguing, we’re all living in sin and drawing closer to the abyss.

MICHAEL GALLAGHER
Shaker Heights, Ohio

Missing Treasure

In “Eugene Kennedy’s Gift” (Current Comment, 7/6) the editors speak of Gene Kennedy’s diverse roles. He was indeed a priest, then a member of the laity; and during both he was a teacher, writer, columnist and friend to many. We assume it was an oversight that no mention was made of his 33-year marriage to Sara Charles, a distinguished psychiatrist. This relationship was a loving, caring one that modeled for many the blessings of married life. This partnership carried into their professional lives as they co-authored several books. In addition, family was one of their highest priorities and joys sharing their lives with brothers and sisters and over 50 nieces and nephews. We hope he will be remembered for all he was and all he accomplished, including his treasured marriage.

JACK AND ANN McINTYRE
Rochester, N.Y.

Community Crisis

During the time of unrest following the tragic death of Michael Brown, countless members of the media and many others, looking for ways to enhance their public profiles, descended on Ferguson and St. Louis. In his letter, “Church in the Street” (“Reply All,” 7/6), David Kappesser seems to im-

ply that Archbishop Robert Carlson had not responded well to the crisis in Ferguson because he did not personally walk in the streets of the troubled community. Instead, Mr. Kappesser points out, the archbishop offered a special Mass and called the community to pray for peace. In choosing this approach, I believe Archbishop Carlson offered a sincere response to the crisis at hand.

JAMES E. BUNDSCHUH
Saint Louis, Mo.

Empty Progress

In “A Post-Traumatic Church” (6/22), Jeffrey Von Arx, S.J., argues that the use of “modern means of communication” after Vatican I “revolutionized almost every aspect of the church’s life.” While agreeing that the increased speed of communication made it possible for the Vatican to keep closer tabs on what was going on in the universal church, I would say the changes in the church over the “long century” were less systematic, absolute and upsetting to your average Catholic than the changes of Vatican II. If you looked at a typical Catholic Church or liturgy in 1760 and again 1960, what differences would you notice? If you looked at a typical Catholic Church or liturgy in 1960 and then again in 1970, what changes would you not notice? Sadly, the churches that were filled in my childhood are largely empty today.

HENRY GEORGE
Online Comment

The Blood of Christians

Re “The Persecuted Church,” by Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz (6/22): I give my sincere thanks to Archbishop Kurtz for his call to action. In his conclusion, he wrote, “There are seven Latin and Eastern rite Catholic churches and several Orthodox churches still in the land where Jesus walked.” I would add that there are a number of historical Protestant and evangelical Christian churches there as well. As Pope Francis has said, “Today,

f STATUS UPDATE

Readers discuss the undercover videos released by the Center for Medical Progress, in which Planned Parenthood executives discuss the sale of fetal organs and tissue derived from abortions.

I hope these videos will open the eyes of the public and our politicians to the reality of abortion. When human beings are considered something less than human because of age, disability or illness, such perversions are the eventual result. Ironically, Planned Parenthood has long assuaged the guilt of the pregnant woman by

claiming the fetus is little more than a “blob,” not a human being that is killed but akin to a wart being removed. By eagerly approaching the reimbursement for specific human body parts, the group shows its true objectives (making money) and the reality that they know exactly what is being done during an abortion: the killing of a human being.

LISA ANDERSON

I don't know all the facts yet, so I won't comment on the abortion issue. What I can say is that when I was in my 20s, I didn't have health insur-

ance. Planned Parenthood provided me with yearly exams that otherwise I could not have afforded. I went there once for an exam, to be screamed at by protesters as a “baby killer.” I gently explained that I was there for my annual exam and that I'm fairly certain that Jesus would be for that. The protesters tried to shame me and made me feel very small. To all the people who are saying that Planned Parenthood as an entire organization is bad, remember that the majority of their services are not abortions but care that women could otherwise not afford.

RACHEL ANN

there's the ecumenism of blood. In some countries they kill Christians because they wear a cross or have a Bible, and before killing them they don't ask if they're Anglicans, Lutherans, Catholic or Orthodox. The blood is mixed. For those who kill, we're Christians.”

LAWRENCE HANSEN
Online Comment

Immigrant Church

Re “The Gospel According to the ‘Nones,’” by Elizabeth Drescher (6/8): The distinction between Golden Rule and good Samaritan values is interesting, especially the contrast regarding a communitarian versus cosmopolitan outlook. I imagine the distinction is not 100 percent definitive. In my own life as a first-generation Catholic Asian immigrant, I hear this analysis of religiosity akin to the “model minority” ethos that pervaded my own post-Vatican II, pre-millennial generation acculturation and assimilation. My experience of church and being Catholic has always been about difference as well as a communitarian and often minority ethos, of moving from church to Church or catholic to Catholic.

JAY CUASAY
Online Comment

Ecology Is Local

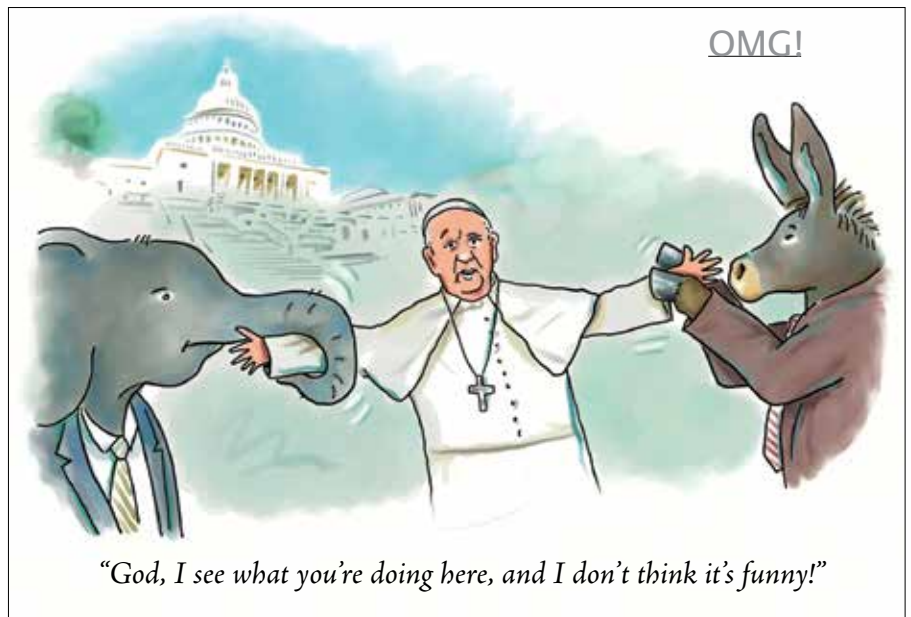
Re “A Planetary Pope,” by Christiana

Z. Peppard (5/25): This discussion about Pope Francis' encyclical on the environment will probably get twisted by the global warmers and anti-global warmers. There's plenty of room for debate as to the effects of increased carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. But the pope's likely emphasis on “human ecology” is where something more local, not global, transpires.

Borrowing from the wisdom of former Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill, who said “all politics is local,” we might do well to speak more of local ecology and less of global ecology. I'm not so naïve as to think that one doesn't affect

the other, but the immediate needs are for more ethical and moral use and care for the natural world as the place and space of human activity. A California drought may be due in part to global shifts in weather patterns, but it is also due to a poorly conceived economy and lifestyle on the part of millions of Californians and those of us who happily eat and drink of their produce. I hope we can all discuss this with an eye to having the “dominion” over nature that the Creator envisaged and not a powerlessness that is the result of our abuse or ignorance.

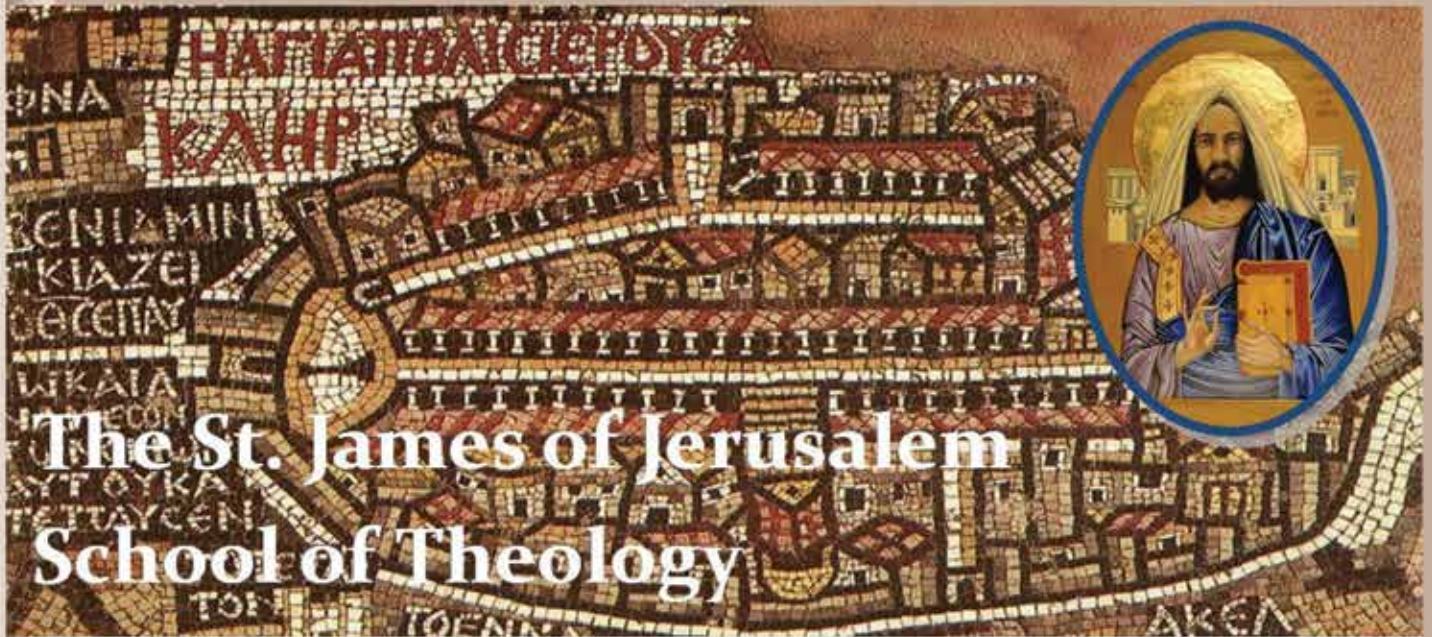
JACK HUNT
Online Comment



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IRAQ

After Escaping ISIS Terror, Christians and Yazidis Fear Long Exile in Kurdistan



PHOTO BY KIM POZNIAK/CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES

THE NEW NORMAL. Displaced children in northern Iraq at a support center run by Catholic Relief Services with Caritas Iraq. Activities here are meant to introduce some routine and normalcy back into their lives.

In the early days of August 2014, as the summer heat scorched the plains of Nineveh, Islamic State militants began ethnic cleansing around the city of Sinjar, driving thousands among the province's Yazidi, Christian and other religious and ethnic minority communities from their homes in just a handful of days. A year later survivors remain in northern Iraq, protected by Kurdish peshmerga forces, subsisting in often haphazard shelters around the cities of Erbil, Dohuk and Kirkuk and wondering when—wondering if—they will ever be able to return home.

Hani El-Mahdi is the country representative for Catholic Relief Services in Dohuk. "These are people who escaped from genocide," he notes matter-of-factly. "The Christian population has been completely uprooted from Mosul, and they've ended up here in Kurdistan." The Christians, El-Mahdi says, are the second largest group of displaced people after the Yazidis. Many families have left loved ones behind whose fate remains uncertain; many have had children, especially young girls, taken from them by ISIS. Some are being held for ransom; many are experiencing a far worse fate, being sold into sexual slavery.

The Chaldean Catholic archbishop of Erbil, Iraq, Bashar Matti Warda, C.Ss.R., notes the persisting failure of the Iraqi government to assist these dislocated communities. He says he is deeply grateful for the support the local church has received from C.R.S., Caritas Internationalis, the Catholic Near East Welfare Association and other agencies. The Knights of Columbus has delivered \$3 million in aid. "With this help we've been able to at least meet some of the needs," he says, "but this

is a huge task, and the church has not been trained for such a huge task."

Archbishop Warda was in Philadelphia in mid-August to help launch a public awareness and fundraising campaign by the Knights of Columbus on behalf of Middle Eastern Christians. The archbishop is eager to tap into whatever political pressure the U.S. Catholic community can help bring to bear toward ending the crisis in the Middle East altogether. "You stand up for persecuted people all over the world," he says. "Clearly [the Christians of Iraq] are a people being persecuted because of their faith."

The conflict in Syria, he says, is destabilizing the region and drawing in scores of militants who are filling ISIS ranks. Those fighters come from all over the world, including the United States and Europe. "So

ISIS is an international problem and it is an international responsibility to respond."

That effort must not only terminate the threat from ISIS, but find a way to bring peace to the entire region, according to Archbishop Warda, or else Christians cannot have true security and return to their homes with any confidence about their long-term safety.

"Right now we are in a safe area," the archbishop says. "The spirit of the peshmerga is high, and we depend upon them." But Erbil's Christians "are watching what is happening to the [displaced] Christians," he says. He knows many are wondering if the same fate could befall them one day.

"I am afraid that they will leave the country seeking refuge elsewhere," Archbishop Warda says. Losing its

Christians “would be a big loss for the Middle East and Iraq. For many centuries Christians have been active and present for the Iraqi people.”

It is clear to both El-Mahdi and Archbishop Warda that what began as a provincial emergency has transitioned into a long-term humanitarian and political crisis in northern Iraq. C.R.S. staff are increasingly thinking about how to normalize the living conditions for this displaced population, working to regularize systems for water delivery and sanitation, jury-rigging education programs for the

children, many of whom have not been in a classroom since they fled their villages—long-term campaigns perhaps many hoped would not be necessary.

People here, according to El-Mahdi, a year into their expulsion from Nineveh, are beginning to worry that the international community has forgotten them. “There must be an endpoint,” El-Mahdi says. “The whole international community has to step up to find a long term resolution for this situation” and to “make sure it never happens again.”

KEVIN CLARKE

CHINA

Appeal to End Cross Demolitions

Cardinal John Tong Hon of Hong Kong has issued “an urgent appeal” to the Chinese authorities in Beijing to halt the demolition of crosses in the province of Zhejiang in eastern China. “The cross is the sign most representative of the Christian faith,” the cardinal reminded Chinese leaders in his public appeal on Aug. 13. The appeal carries a striking title: “The Sufferings of the Cross.”

“Over the past two years, the crosses erected at over a thousand churches, Christian or Catholic, in Zhejiang Province have been dismantled by force,” the cardinal said. “Those dismantled include many that have been lawfully constructed with permits.

“In some of these incidents,” he said, “members of the clergy and congregation, during their lawful act of defending their faith, have been detained, causing a lot of tension in local parishes.” He added that “these incidents have caused much anxiety among Christians, local and overseas, about the policies of the government in regard to freedom of religion.”

The cross removals have been tak-

ing place over the last 20 months, so it is clear that authorities in Beijing know what is happening in this eastern province. For this reason the Chinese cardinal appealed “with utmost sincerity and urgency” to the central govern-



CROSS TO BEAR.
A Chinese Catholic carries a crucifix during a pilgrimage in the Shaanxi province of China in 2013.

ment and the relevant authorities in Beijing to take action.

In particular, he called on them to “liaise with the provincial authorities

in Zhejiang Province to investigate into what has happened” and to ensure “that all unlawful acts of dismantling crosses be stopped.”

Beijing has long insisted that “freedom of religion” is respected in the People’s Republic of China, but this mass demolition of crosses has led many to question the truthfulness of that statement. The cardinal, who is a very moderate man, is now challenging Chinese leadership to ensure full respect for the constitution and the law of the mainland.

At the same time, as bishop of Hong Kong, Cardinal Tong called on the more than 500,000 faithful of his diocese to take steps to help their fellow Christians in Zhejiang by choosing “some forms of penance, such as fast and abstinence” and “especially [to] pray for religious freedom, the dignity of the faith” and in this way to “share the sufferings of their fellow Christians in Zhejiang.”

It is estimated that there are more than two million Christians in Zhejiang Province, including some 210,000 Catholics. Significantly, a great many Christians in Zhejiang have resisted the demolitions in non-violent ways in the face of armed police, as was recently evident in the city of Wenzhou. The city is known as the Jerusalem of China because it is home to an estimated one million Christians.

Many Christians see the cross demolitions as a way for some elements of the Communist party to reduce the growing influence and visibility of Christianity in Zhejiang and throughout China. Cardinal Tong’s appeal is also seen as an act of solidarity with the local, state-recognized bishop of Wenzhou, Vincent Zhu Weifang, who called for prayers—including saying the rosary—and fasting as a way to protect the faith and the crosses.

GERARD O’CONNELL

Outrage in Holy Land

The Assembly of the Catholic Ordinaries of the Holy Land filed an official complaint with Israeli police after the leader of a radical Israeli movement offered remarks to the press that seemed to encourage the burning of churches. The Rev. Pietro Felet, the assembly's secretary general, filed the complaint on Aug. 7 against Rabbi Bentzi Gopstein on behalf of more than 20 patriarchs and bishops. Rabbi Gopstein, who heads the Jewish anti-assimilation extremist movement, Lehava, said in early August that "churches and mosques could be burned," asserting that "Jewish law advocated destroying the land of idolatry." The assembly said the rabbi's comments "incite hatred and pose a real threat to the Christian religious buildings in the country." The assembly urged Israeli authorities to "ensure real protection for Christian citizens of this country and their places of worship."

'Cherish All Creation'

The Conference of Major Superiors of Men passed a resolution on Aug. 7 committing to "a deeper engagement" to protect the earth and "cherish all creation." The conference, made up of leaders who represent more than 17,000 Catholic religious brothers and priests in the United States, laid out steps for member congregations to take in solidarity with Pope Francis' call to action on climate change in his encyclical on the environment. "With this act, C.M.S.M. commits to a deeper engagement on this issue and transforming practices in communities where they and their members live and minister," the resolution said. "The biblical vision, with Christ in the center of our lives and communities, along with our vows and our mission as religious,

NEWS BRIEFS

In a statement released on Aug. 11, Archbishop Socrates Villegas of Lingayen-Dagupan, the head of the Philippine bishops' conference, said **helping the poor and getting rid of political dynasties** should be the focus of discussion as the nation prepares for elections in May. + Five years after the murder of Bishop Luigi Padovese, Pope Francis named **Paolo Bizzeti, S.J.**, an Italian, on Aug. 14 to succeed the bishop as apostolic vicar of Anatolia, Turkey. + Requests for copies of Pope Francis' environmental encyclical and high demand for tickets to see him at the United Nations indicate that **enthusiasm for the pope's U.S. visit is running high**, said Archbishop Bernardito Auza, head of the Holy See's permanent observer mission at the United Nations, on Aug. 12. + In an effort **deplored by Catholic advocates for migrants**, the Obama administration on Aug. 6 asked a federal judge to set aside her orders for the release of families being held in immigration detention centers. + **Paulino Lukudu Loro, F.S.C.J.**, archbishop of Juba, South Sudan, joining other church leaders on Aug. 8 in a peace initiative to end nearly two years of civil strife, said, "War has made people indifferent to human life; people are dying and nobody cares."



Hungry in Manila

calls us to see the urgency of this issue, not simply as a justice and peace concern but as embedded in who we are," it said. Action on the resolution came during the group's assembly, held on Aug. 5-8 in Charlotte, N.C.

Overcoming Indifference

To promote a reflection on the need for a "conversion of mind and heart" open to the needs of others, Pope Francis has chosen "Overcome indifference and win peace" as the theme for the church's celebration of the next World Day of Peace. Announcing the theme for the celebration on Jan. 1, 2016, the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace said that peace is difficult to achieve when people are indiffer-

ent "to the scourges of our time." The problems everyone must be aware of, the council said in a statement on Aug. 11, include "fundamentalism, intolerance and massacres, persecutions on account of faith and ethnicity," disregard for human rights, human trafficking and forced labor, corruption, organized crime and forced migration. Simply increasing the amount of information about the problems is not enough, the council said; people must open their hearts and minds to the suffering of others. "Today, indifference is often linked to various forms of individualism, which cause isolation, ignorance, selfishness and, therefore, lack of interest and commitment," the statement said.

From CNS, RNS and other sources.

DISPATCH | BEIJING

Another Olympic Run

It was like almost any other Friday evening commute. People filed out of their offices on July 31 in an orderly fashion, headed for Beijing's subway, its public buses or to try their luck hailing taxis. The only difference was that as the city's workers were heading home, Beijing was capping a 21-month, come-from-behind campaign to host the 2022 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games with a win!...and no one seemed to care.

The street scene could not have been more of a contrast with 2001. When Beijing was awarded the 2008 Olympic Games then, the entire city erupted into spontaneous cheering and joyous gatherings. This time there was barely a honking car horn or gleeful hooray from Beijingers done with work for the week. Celebrations shown on television involved only orchestrated "volunteers."

By the time Beijing entered its bid for the Winter Olympics in November 2013, Stockholm, Sweden, had already dropped out of the running. Beijing was facing previous winter games host Oslo, Norway; Almaty, Kazakhstan; Lviv, Ukraine; and Krakow, Poland. Oslo was considered the favorite, with both that city and Lillehammer having given Norway the experience of hosting the winter event twice.

But one by one, the other cities dropped from the race. Oslo was the last to bow out, leaving the precipitation-challenged Beijing up against the dark horse Almaty, Kazakhstan.

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

When the Olympic Committee met in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, at the height of summer to decide which city would host the greatest event in winter sports, snow did not seem to be first on their minds. Beijing won by four votes, 44 to 40, closer than expected but an outcome that was by that point not a surprise.

International reaction was less than jubilant. "Qatar was robbed," read a

The period following the Beijing Olympics has not been particularly bright.

wry subheadline in *The Economist*, referring to the 2022 World Cup host—a choice now awash in controversy—with much of the backlash focusing on Beijing's lack of natural snow. Of similar concern is the impact that a second Olympics will have, or not have, on China. Social-change proponents of the Olympic movement saw the 1988 games in Seoul and the 1992 event in Barcelona as evidence that the Olympics could help move cities, and the countries they represent, out of darker times, like periods of martial law or dictatorship.

The Olympics in Rio de Janeiro in 2016 could still be a sign of a new era in Brazil. But while Beijing 2008 surely marked the arrival of China's capital on the international stage, coming at the end of an almost-unbroken 20-year run of economic growth and expanding global influence, the period following the Beijing Olympics has not been particularly bright.

Hopes for greater press freedom were not realized even during the 2008 games. Since they ended, well-regarded foreign reporters from *The New York Times* and Reuters have been forced to leave the country where several met their wives and where their children were born. In July, before the Olympic decision, 100 or more lawyers who have defended clients charged with political crimes were taken into police custody, and authorities in China's Zhejiang Province continue to clash with Christians by removing crosses from churches—in some cases bulldozing entire houses of worship—under the guise of building violations.

China has also asserted itself territorially, building landing strips on disputed islands in the South China Sea. It continues to antagonize Japan. In September China will stage a massive military parade in Beijing on a newly established holiday weekend, its exhausting moniker the "Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japan and Victory of the World War Against Fascism 70th Anniversary."

That last event has already led to a chorus of "we told you so" from naysayers of the Beijing Olympic pick. In a move similar to pre-Olympic visa clampdowns and other measures designed to limit visitation and pollution in the capital during the Olympics, identity and vehicle checks at provincial border crossings into Beijing began on Aug. 10, almost a month before the new holiday, causing traffic delays measured in hours.

Beijing relied on its Olympic legacy from 2008 to win the right to host in 2022. That suggests low returns for anyone hoping that a another chance to stand out as an Olympic city will be a second chance for change.

STEVEN SCHWANKERT

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—JOHN SNIEGOCCI, "Bombing Japan: Was it the Only Option?"

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A Historic Pulpit

Perhaps you've heard: Pope Francis is coming to Washington. Some people have been talking about this for months. Popes have come before, but this trip is different. Pope Francis has never set foot in the United States. Washington thinks it is the center of the world, but it is not the center of Pope Francis' world. He is more at home in slums than in the corridors of power.

Francis will be the first pope to address a joint session of Congress. This represents a transformation in American attitudes toward the papacy. Only 55 years ago, Billy Graham said John F. Kennedy should not be president because he would take advice from the pope. Now the only thing Congress agrees on is that they need advice from this pope.

A bipolar Washington, both excited and anxious, awaits Pope Francis. There is great anticipation. One of the hardest decisions for members of Congress is who will get their place in the gallery when the Pope speaks. Congress, with a 73 percent disapproval rating wants to be seen with a leader whose unfavorable rating among Americans is 16 percent.

Pope Francis comes to a Congress that is dysfunctional. It cannot pass budgets or appropriations on time. The Congress cannot reform immigration or repair the Voting Rights Act. The nation is fighting ISIS without Congressional authorization. In a city of constant partisan combat, Francis will once again call for "politicians capable of sincere and effective dialogue" ("The Joy of the Gospel," No. 205).

JOHN CARR is director of the Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.

Capital Hill is "demoralized" in deeper ways. It lacks moral direction, serving powerful interests rather than the common good. This August, many Republicans have been traumatized by Donald Trump and his demonization of immigrants, threats against "stupid leaders" and crude attacks on women who dare to question him. The Republican House refuses to vote on immigration and denies the damage we are doing to God's creation. They would repeal health care for the uninsured and cut help for hungry families as part of their ideological agenda. Pope Francis will remind them, "The measure of a society is the way it treats those most in need."

Many Democrats defend Planned Parenthood, dismissing horrific evidence that reveals more clearly than ever the humanity of the unborn child, the brutal violence of abortion and the dehumanizing attitudes of the abortion industry. Planned Parenthood is the N.R.A. of the progressive movement, demanding support or silence no matter what it says or does. Pope Francis is likely to repeat his admonition, "It is not 'progressive' to try to resolve problems by eliminating a human life."

Pope Francis may be new to the United States, but his message will not be new. He warned the European Parliament against a "throwaway culture" and urged protection for unborn children and welcome for immigrants. In the Philippines he urged that "the poor be treated fairly—their dignity be respected, that political and economic policies be just and inclusive." In

Latin America he said, "certainly every country needs economic growth and the creation of wealth, but creation of this wealth must always be at the service of the common good, and not only for the benefit of a few." Everywhere, he calls for respect for family life, defense of religious freedom and care for God's creation. Francis will affirm our founding principles and deliver a message of responsibility and our obligation to use our freedom, power and resources to build a more just nation and peaceful world.

Francis will teach us by what he does as much as by what he says. He will go from meeting the most powerful in Washington to spending time with the least, those who are hungry, homeless or new to our nation. He will

meet with bishops and, I hope, listen to survivors of sexual abuse by members of the clergy. After addressing the United Nations, he will visit a school in Harlem. In Philadelphia he will celebrate Mass with a million people and then bring a word of hope to prisoners as he ends his journey.

If members of Congress want to truly welcome Francis, they should follow his example. Not only might their polls improve, but they might discover what Francis calls "civic and political love" expressed in these simple words: "We must regain the conviction that we need one another that we have a shared responsibility for others and the world, and that being good and decent are worth it" ("The Joy of the Gospel," No. 229).

JOHN CARR

A CAUSE FOR HEALING
OR CONTROVERSY?



Serra's Sainthood

BY JEFFREY M. BURNS

**A CONTROVERSIAL
CANONIZATION. An
image of Blessed
Junipero Serra,
right, is seen
as Pope Francis
celebrates Mass in
Rome on May 2.**

Pope Francis' announcement that he will canonize the Franciscan missionary Junipero Serra, the apostle to California, in September has reignited long-standing resistance to the idea from a number of Native American groups. Some make extreme accusations: One protest group described in the Associated Press chanted, "Serra was no saint! Serra was the devil!" and held signs claiming Serra was responsible for genocide. Another accused Serra of intentionally spreading smallpox among the natives to destroy them. "Serra set up forced labor camps, death camps" was an allegation reported in *The Los Angeles Times*. "Women and children were raped...."

These wild and unfounded criticisms accompany more reasoned but no less critical responses, like that of Edward Castillo, the director of Native American studies at Sonoma State University in California. A Native American himself, he opposes the canonization because of the impact the missions had on Native American peoples and cultures. "Missions

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brought death, starvation and disease to California tribal people," he said at a symposium on Serra and California's mission history at the University of California, Riverside in March. The missions "created a legacy of poverty and invisibility," he said, adding that "tribal people still suffer the impact of missionization."

In Search of Serra

At the heart of the arguments used by most opponents of Serra's canonization is the belief that the Franciscan was responsible for the decimation of native populations and the destruction of their cultures. How can Serra be named a saint in light of the history of native Californians?

Defenders of Serra counter that he was "a man of his time" and should not be judged by 21st-century standards. Ruben Mendoza, a religious studies scholar at California State University, Monterey Bay, suggests that many critics of Serra "conflate the American period [after 1846] with that of the missions." As the historian James Rawls pointed out years ago, abundant evidence exists of the intentional destruction of native Californians during that post-mission era, replete with "hunting parties" that massacred Indians, and more "civilized" discussions of whether it would be better to "remove" or "exterminate" the native Californians. Pope Francis has even weighed in on the controversy, praising Serra's missionary zeal and arguing that Serra "defended the indigenous peoples against abuses by the colonizers."

What seems to be missing amid the debate and hard feelings it has provoked is Serra the man, as the scholars Rose Marie Beebe and Robert Senkewicz point out in their excellent book *Junípero Serra: California, Indians, and the Transformation of a Missionary*. Father Serra, born in Mallorca, Spain, in 1713, entered the Franciscan Order and became noted as a holy preacher and learned professor of philosophy. He could have lived a comfortable and respected life in Mallorca, but at the advanced age of 36, he decided to set out to the so-called New World to preach the Gospel to the native peoples. From 1749 to 1767 Serra worked in Central Mexico with natives who had already been evangelized. It was not until 1769 that he finally arrived in California. He was 56 years old.

Three vignettes from Ms. Beebe and Mr. Senkewicz highlight Father Serra at his best, a loving Franciscan determined to minister to and express Christian love for the native peoples. He would have been considered old when

he made his first contact with uncatechized native people. On his way to present-day California (then referred to as Alta California), Serra met a tribal group in northern Baja California. His writing about the encounter reveals the deep emotion he felt. He called it "a day of great consolation."

As 12 "gentiles" (the term used for unbaptized natives) approached, Father Serra was overwhelmed. "I praised God, kissed the ground, and gave thanks to Our Lord for granting me the opportunity to be among the gentiles in their land, after longing for this for so many years." Though amazed at their lack of dress, Serra blessed each one, "I placed my hands on the head of each gentile, one at a time, as a sign of affection." Serra promised friendship and protection to the native Californians and expected to reap a rich bounty of souls.

Things did not always go as well as Serra hoped. In December 1775, the native tribes in the San Diego area, the Kumeyaay, revolted, destroying the mission and killing the mission padre Luis Jayme. Serra's response is instructive as evidence of his vision of mission. Serra asked the military governor that the leaders of the re-

volt be forgiven and counseled against a "military campaign."

He told the governor, "Let the murderer live so he can be saved, which is the purpose for our coming here, and the reason for forgiving him." Serra suggested that after "moderate punishment," he should let the revolt's leader know that "he is being pardoned in accordance with our law, which orders us to forgive offenses and prepare him not for his death, but for eternal life."

An Extraordinary Encounter

That is the essence of Father Serra's project, of what drove and excited him. He was bringing the California peoples, whom he loved, the greatest gift imaginable: the gift of eternal life. To him all earthly troubles and travails paled in comparison.

One final vignette, used by Mr. Senkewicz and Ms. Beebe to introduce their biography, depicts a most extraordinary encounter. In 1776, Serra and a small group of Spanish were struggling in the rain along the Santa Barbara Channel, sinking into the ground as they walked. To their dismay, a group of Chumash Indians, one of the largest and most powerful tribes in California, appeared on the horizon. Previous encounters with the Chumash had been hostile and Serra and his contingent expected the worst.

Instead, a remarkable thing happened. The Chumash approached, took the 63-year-old Serra by the arms, lifted

Though it was never his intention to cause harm to the native people, we must acknowledge the unintended consequences of Spanish evangelization and colonization.

him up and carried him some distance to solid ground. The amazed Serra later wrote, "I [do not] think I will ever be able to repay them as I would hope to do." Over a year later he was still pondering the encounter: "And for me, this served to deepen the compassion I have felt for them for quite some time."

The encounter on the Santa Barbara beach suggests all sorts of possibilities. Here two alien people encountered one another on the most basic level—through an act of mercy and assistance. What would the result have been had this been the model of all such encounters?

But history is never that simple. The enterprise begun by Serra would culminate in a demographic and cultural tragedy. Though it was never his intention to cause harm to the native people, we must acknowledge the unintended consequences of Spanish evangelization and colonization.


The tragedy was not lost on the Franciscans either. One of Serra's successors as mission president, Mariano Payeras, O.F.M., after serving as a missionary in California for 23 years, penned this poignant reflection in 1820: "Where we expected a beautiful and flourishing church and some beautiful towns...we find ourselves with missions, or rather with a people miserable and sick, with rapid depopulation of the *rancherías*," as the native communities were called, "which with profound horror fills the cemeteries."


It is not too much of a stretch to think Serra would have

thought the same thing had he lived to see what Father Payeras saw. Surely Father Serra's deep love for the native peoples would have made him feel the same regret.

So as we approach the canonization of Junípero Serra, let us look beyond the din of charge and countercharge. Let us look for healing. Let us lament what went wrong and to reach out with a healing touch to the many native Californians who still feel burdened by the legacy of the missions. Let us acknowledge the very real pain felt by many Native Americans, and look for ways to move beyond the current controversy.

What we celebrate with the canonization of Junípero Serra is not a failed missionary policy nor the imperial colonization and subjugation of a land and people—and certainly not the death of so many indigenous people. What we celebrate is a man burning with missionary zeal who loved and engaged the native peoples of California. We celebrate the contemporary native Californian Catholic community, who bear witness to this complex history and are, perhaps, Serra's greatest legacy.

At the same time, let us celebrate the heroic efforts of California's native peoples, who were not merely docile victims but a strong, proud people who were forced to negotiate a complex and at times bewildering new environment. Let us celebrate that moment on the beach where two peoples met to share that most basic of human gifts—kindness. 



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BY MINISTRY

Honey, Not Vinegar

Lessons from the psychology of persuasion

BY CHRISTOPHER KACZOR

In his work *On Christian Doctrine*, St. Augustine argued that Christians should make use of rhetorical insights offered by pagan writers, like Cicero. If Augustine were writing today about how parents, ministers and teachers communicate with their children, parishioners and students, what secular wisdom might he draw from? What can be learned, for example, by considering contemporary research on the psychology of persuasion?

Parents and teachers want their children and students to behave a certain way. How do they convince them? One approach is to stress the rules and what happens when people break the rules. The focus is on the ways in which people behave badly. Yet contemporary research suggests that highlighting widespread misbehavior may actually lead to even more misbehavior.

Psychologists recognize “social proof” as an effective motivator of human behavior. For years, advertisers have exploited this human tendency, the bandwagon effect, to sell products. A belief that many or most people are acting in a certain way powerfully influences others to follow their example.

In order to protect Arizona’s Petrified Forest National Park, for instance, rangers posted a sign: “Many past visitors have removed the petrified wood from the park, changing the natural state of the Petrified Forest.” In their book, *Yes! 50 Scientifically Proven Ways to Be Persuasive*, Noah Goldstein, Steven J. Martin and Robert Cialdini expose the surprising and paradoxical effect of this message:

In a finding that should petrify the National Park’s management, compared with a no-sign control condition in which 2.92 percent of pieces were stolen, the social proof message resulted in *more* theft (7.92 percent). In essence, it almost tripled theft. Thus, theirs was not a crime prevention strategy; it was a crime promotion strategy.

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All teachers should think carefully before dwelling on how many people act contrary to a Christian way of life. Emphasizing the widespread nature of racism, for example, may actually increase racist behavior. People instinctively (but erroneously) think, if most people are doing something, how bad can it be?

Use, instead, the powerful effect of social proof. Statistics tell us that 118 million people in the United States report attending church services once a week—more than the 111.5 million people who watch the Super Bowl. Millions more people report monthly church attendance, and many more millions say they plan to go to services at Easter. What if we focused on these numbers instead of how many people are not attending church services? Though I doubt that these numbers reflect actual attendance, they present church attendance as the norm in the United States. Most Americans say they pray every day, and about 75 percent claim the label Christian. Emphasizing these facts can influence people to adopt similar behaviors.

Suppose you want to encourage someone to attend daily Mass. An Advent booklet makes the pitch for this practice

as follows, “Once upon a time, attendance at daily Mass was a popular devotion.... Studies today show that less than four percent of Catholics attend Mass more than once a week.” If contemporary research is correct, this message is almost certainly going to discourage people from participating in the Eucharist during the week. Drawing from these same numbers and applying them to 78.2 million U.S. Catholics, one can fashion a message much more likely to encourage Mass attendance: “For centuries, the faithful have made frequent participation in the Eucharist an expression of their gratitude to God. Studies today show that more than three million Catholics attend Mass more than once a week.” Social proof can motivate positive change.

Fear versus Identity

Here is another way to look at the issue: Are people more motivated to change by appeals to identity or by fear of negative consequences? In her book *The Willpower Instinct*, Kelly McGonagle, a psychologist at Stanford University, compared these two strategies:

Researchers designed two different flyers to discourage binge drinking. One took a rational approach listing scary statistics about drinking like, “One night of heavy drinking can impair your ability to think abstractly for thirty days.”... The other flyer linked drinking with the social lepers of university life: graduate students. This flyer showed a graduate student drinking, along with the warning, “Lots of graduate students at Stanford drink...and lots of them are sketchy. So think when you drink. Nobody wants to be mistaken for this guy.”

Researchers put flyers taking the consequences-based approach, stressing the effects of heaving drinking, in one residence hall and flyers taking the identity approach, which associated drinking with “sketchy” graduate students, in another. The researchers found 50 percent less binge drinking in the student residence with the identity approach flyers.

Let us say we want to urge people to take better care of the environment. How can we persuade people to stop littering? Pointing to the high financial costs of clean up or even serious damage to the environment does not effectively motivate many people. So what does? In their book *Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die*, Chip and Dan Heath point to a successful strategy used in a Texas campaign to reduce littering. The campaign pictured a stereotypical macho Texan who “doesn’t mess with Texas” by littering. In its appeal to identity, this campaign succeeded where many others had failed. We care about belonging, and we care about identity.

Fortunately, Christians have a rich vocabulary for speaking about ethics in terms of identity and models of behavior.

We speak of being a good Samaritan, a person for others, a disciple of Jesus. In emphasizing identities and models rather than rules and consequences, we follow the example of Jesus. In his parables, Jesus gives us both attractive and unappealing models; we wish to identify with the former, not the latter. Consider Lazarus and the rich man (Lk 16: 19-31), the tax collector and the Pharisee (Lk 18:9-14) and the persistent widow and the unjust judge (Lk 18: 1-8).

The psychology of persuasion also stresses the importance of word choice. Christopher J. Bryan of the University of Chicago points to an important difference between nouns and verbs in communication. The appeal “To vote is a civic duty” and the appeal “Voters do their civic duty” led to significantly different outcomes. People are more likely to vote when they heard the noun “voter” rather than the verb “to vote.” Saying, “Volunteers make the world better” will likely be more persuasive in moving people to serve than saying, “Volunteering makes the world better.” This sentence gets across the same point more persuasively. We have a better chance of influencing our audience when we appeal to nouns invoking identity rather than verbs articulating rules.

Research on persuasive communication can help anyone sharing the Christian message. Persuasive Catholics find creative ways to speak less about bad news and more about the good news. Psychology, like philosophy, can be a friend rather than a foe of proclaiming the faith. ▲



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Unplugged but Connected

The role of Catholic schools in the information age

BY MIKE ST. THOMAS

Our nation's current educational vision, championed by both political parties and backed by corporations, looks something like this: Give students better access to more information at higher speeds, and they will be sharper, wiser and better equipped for life in our modern society. President Obama drew on this technocratic narrative in his State of the Union Address early this year, when he promised to bring the Internet into every classroom to help shape the "next generation of digital innovators and entrepreneurs." It's a line of thinking that hopes to put a tablet in the hand of every student, and many schools across the country have already done so. If all goes according to plan, it seems, the American child could acquire an entire education, K-12, by way of a personal screen on which she will trace her ABC's at a young age, watch videos about far-off cultures as her horizons expand, and, in preparation for her Advanced Placement English exam, parse iambic pentameter in Hamlet's soliloquies.

Catholic schools have long provided an alternative to public education, yet in their approach to using technology they have not distinguished themselves from this narrative. Instead, they've tried to keep pace, attempting to look as much like the public schools in matters of technology as their budgets will allow. I know of several Catholic high schools in my region that require each student to purchase a tablet; most encourage students to use iPads and laptops for classroom notes and activities. Attend a conference of Catholic educators and you will see keynote speakers treating personal technology as a panacea, lauding its cost-efficiency and effectiveness in speeding up the learning process.

Like fellow teachers and students who spend their days in the classroom, I know that the technological picture isn't nearly as rosy as its proponents claim. Forget, for a minute, that the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children spend less than two hours per day in front of a screen. Ignore the disastrous effect that screen time at school has on the success of low-income students, as Susan Pinker reported for *The New York Times* (1/30).

Seven years of teaching high school English have taught me that one basic fact suffices to call into question this entire technocratic vision: Personal technology comes between

student and teacher and destroys classroom focus in a way that notebooks or old-fashioned classroom high jinks never did. You would have a hard time finding teachers and students who will not acknowledge this state of affairs. And how could it be otherwise? Given access to the Internet, most adults, never mind children, have a hard time staying attentive to something they are not particularly enthusiastic about.

Do not expect changes when it comes to public education. Classroom reality has a hard time trickling up to policy makers, removed as they are from the day-to-day life of an actual school. Additionally, the same corporate interests that wield powerful influence on the direction of public education benefit from this proliferation of personal tech. So the juggernaut rolls on, more and more schools consider going paperless, and the divide between educational policy and common sense widens.

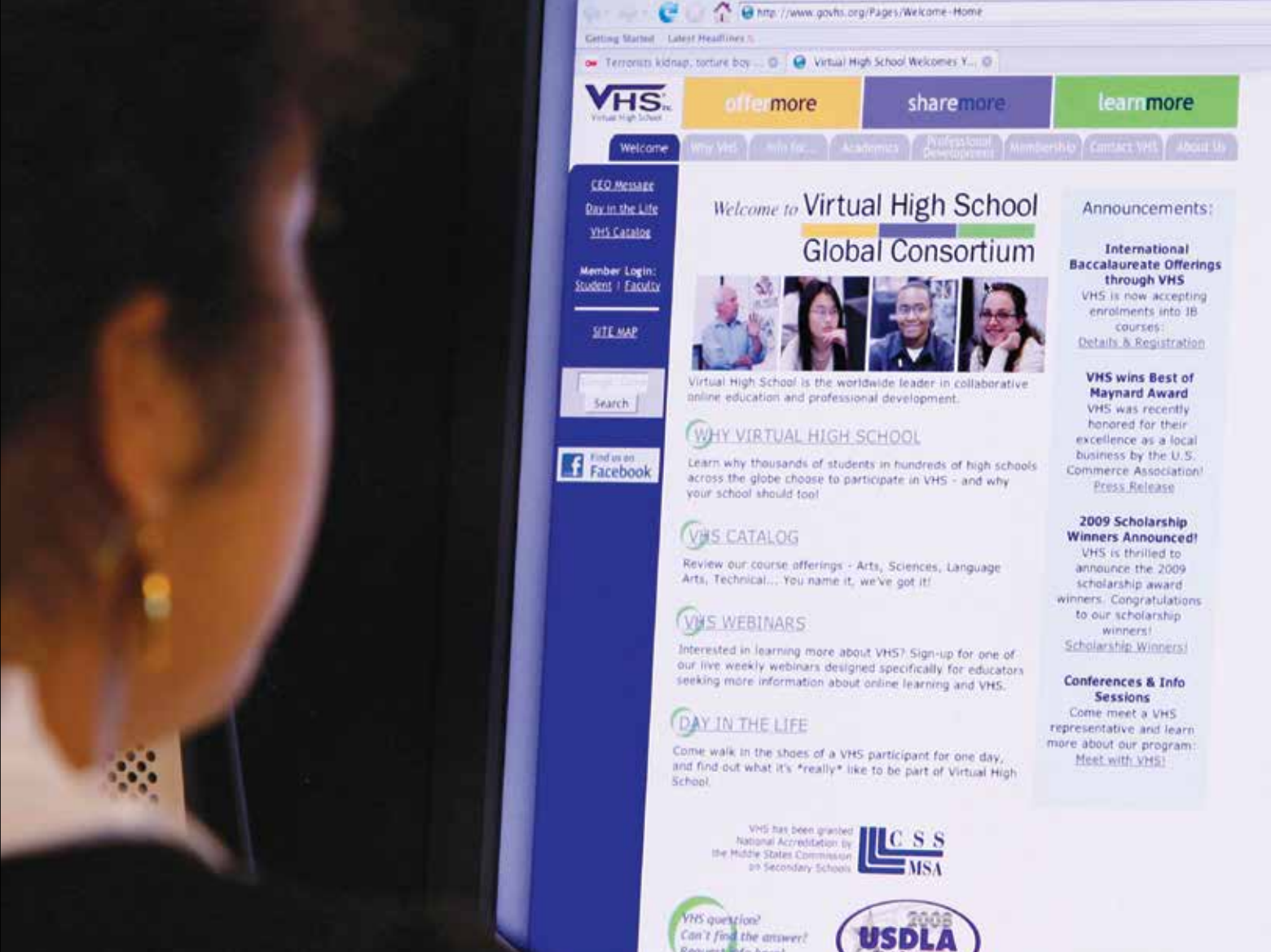
This presents Catholic schools with a unique opportunity to distinguish themselves from their public counterparts. The answer is not to roll back the clock to the days of desk slates and the one-room schoolhouse. Technology is here to stay, and we are certainly aware of the many ways it can help us as educators. Yet we are also growing more cognizant of how technology can harm us, and Catholic educators should seize the moment. Whether they realize it or not, they do possess a powerful answer to the problem of technology overload, one that corresponds with recent research on child psychology but takes its cues from something much deeper.

A Unique Opportunity

What should a Catholic classroom look like in a world where access to information is unlimited? The identity of a classroom hinges on the relationship between student and teacher. So perhaps a better question is: Who should a Catholic teacher be?

As in all things, Christ serves as our model. Those close to him called him *rabbi*—teacher. Like another great teacher, Socrates, his was an unorthodox method. He wrote no rule of law, code of conduct or guidelines for living. In fact, he wrote nothing at all. Instead, he was present with people, spoke with them, laughed and wept with them, guided them, healed them. His teachings emerged from the stories he told, and those stories primarily concerned people interacting with one another: rich men and beggars, landowners

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and hired men, the socially respected and outcasts.

Those who followed him were drawn by his whole person, words and actions. Apostles like Simon, Andrew, James, John and Matthew began to follow Jesus not after hearing about what he taught but after encountering him in person, face-to-face, when he called each of them by name. People thronged around him and reached for his garments in hopes that they would be cured. If it can be said that Christ the teacher had a pedagogy, it was one of “presence.” Like Socrates before him, whose pursuit of wisdom took the shape of personal encounter and conversation, Christ placed being present with others at the fore of his Gospel message.

We might wonder what it would have been like if Christ had lived in a different era. What would happen if he were among us now, teaching and spreading the Gospel? He could reach so many more people with modern technology, we might say. Instead of only a few thousand hearing his words, he could touch billions of lives in an instant. Wouldn't that be so much more effective? If only Jesus had had Twitter!

That question misses the point, really. This figure would

not be Christ, would not even be Christian in the strict sense of the term. For Christ the most important thing was not relaying information but turning others toward him first by being present with them. This spirituality bears fruit in the sacraments, whose graces are channeled through the actions of another person, usually a priest, who must be physically present with the recipient. You cannot be confirmed over the phone or confess your sins by Skype. A priest must be there to administer the sacrament, to anoint with oil, lay on hands or absolve with the sign of the cross. Sacraments, like Christ's teaching, are grounded in personal encounter.

Spirit-Led Change

This spirit has guided Catholic reformers of the modern era in their attempts to thaw our age's icy grip on the soul. Figures like Mother Teresa and Dorothy Day shared the goal of turning us back toward each other in body and spirit. Pope Francis, also, has gone out of his way to place personal encounter at the heart of his young papacy. He is famous for making personal phone calls to those who have sought

his help and for encouraging his bishops to “smell like the sheep.” Though, as Christ’s example shows, Francis’ attitude is one that has animated Christianity from the beginning, it appears increasingly fresh, even revolutionary, in the face of a culture that isolates its members and values them in terms of their ability to stay out of the way of its efficient operation.

The problem with many Catholic schools’ embrace of the technocratic pitch “more technology, better education” is that it ignores the central role that encounter must play in a Catholic environment. Quite simply, the interaction between student and screen displaces the interaction between student and teacher, thereby pushing human relationships to the side. A proper Catholic response to the problem of technological overload, then, must start by prioritizing personal encounter over technology. In this light, a Catholic teacher is one who leads not simply by disseminating information but by being the vessel through which her students come to desire what is true, whether that truth takes the form of chemistry, history or literature.

In my own area, the study of literature, I aim to help students understand how a work speaks to their interior lives. This process requires slow, deliberate thinking. It demands that students and teacher be fully present to one another, listening and responding to each other’s observations. This kind of gradual unraveling of truth—the Socratic method, real-


ly—is exactly the opposite of what personal screens encourage. Especially when it comes to the humanities, unfettered access to information is more important outside of class than in it. The classroom serves primarily as a space for thought, for synthesis, for considering how all of this information fits together and for wrestling with questions of purpose.

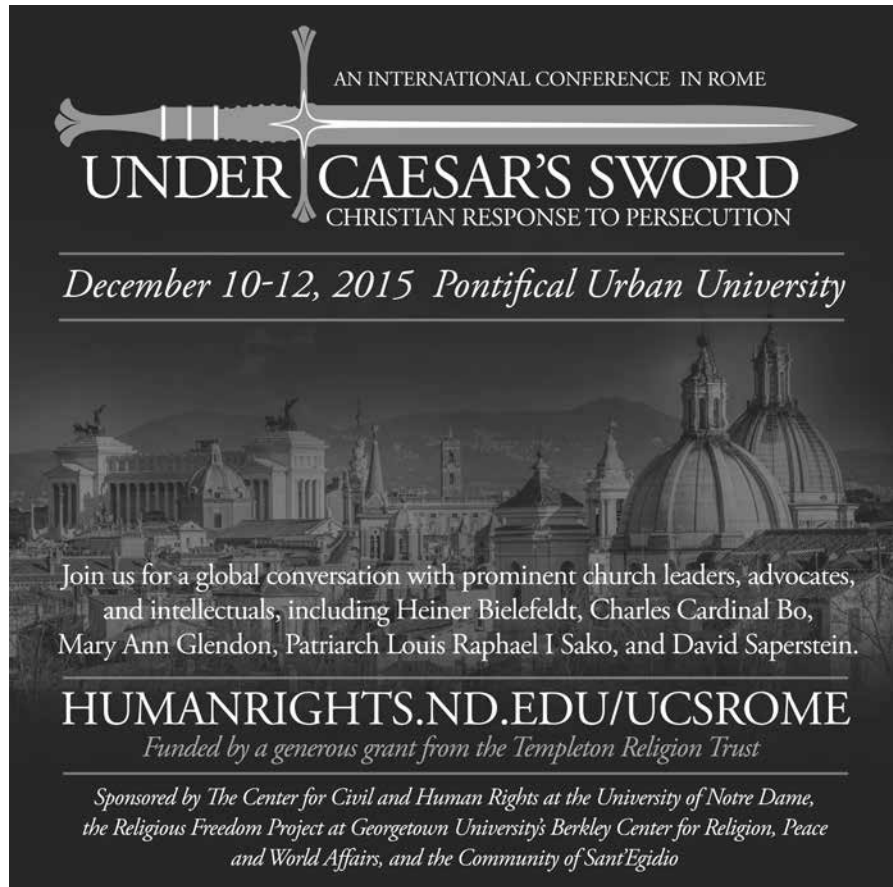
Put another way, the classroom should be a place of conversation. In its root meaning, conversation indicates a “turning” of one person toward another, and in that regard it is different from discussion, which connotes something more benign, people talking about a common idea. Conversation emerges from encounter and suggests a certain vulnerability or openness to what may pass between the individuals who have turned together.

The same week that President Obama delivered his State of the Union address, Pope Francis released a message for the Vatican’s annual World Communications Day. The two speeches revealed approaches to using technology that could hardly be more opposed. While Obama prioritized placing better, faster technology in the hands of our students, Francis offered an antidote to this technocratic narrative by urging us to turn to one another:

By growing daily in our awareness of the vital importance of encountering others...we will employ technology wisely, rather than letting ourselves be dominated by it.... The great challenge facing us today is to learn once again how to talk to one another, not simply how to generate and consume information.

As public schools commit themselves to finding more time for their students to interact with screens, Francis’ words should serve as a statement of purpose as Catholic educators seek to ground their schools once again in the encounter between student and teacher.

What is the goal of Catholic education in the midst of the flurry of screens and devices that bring the modern world to our fingertips? It is to keep the human person at the center of our enterprise. The world of information may be only a swipe away, but we should know better than to think it is the most important world. That honor goes to a world made of flesh and spirit, of encounter and conversation. That world must guide our schools, and everything else must follow from it. 



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Progress Report

Much remains to be done to improve religious education.

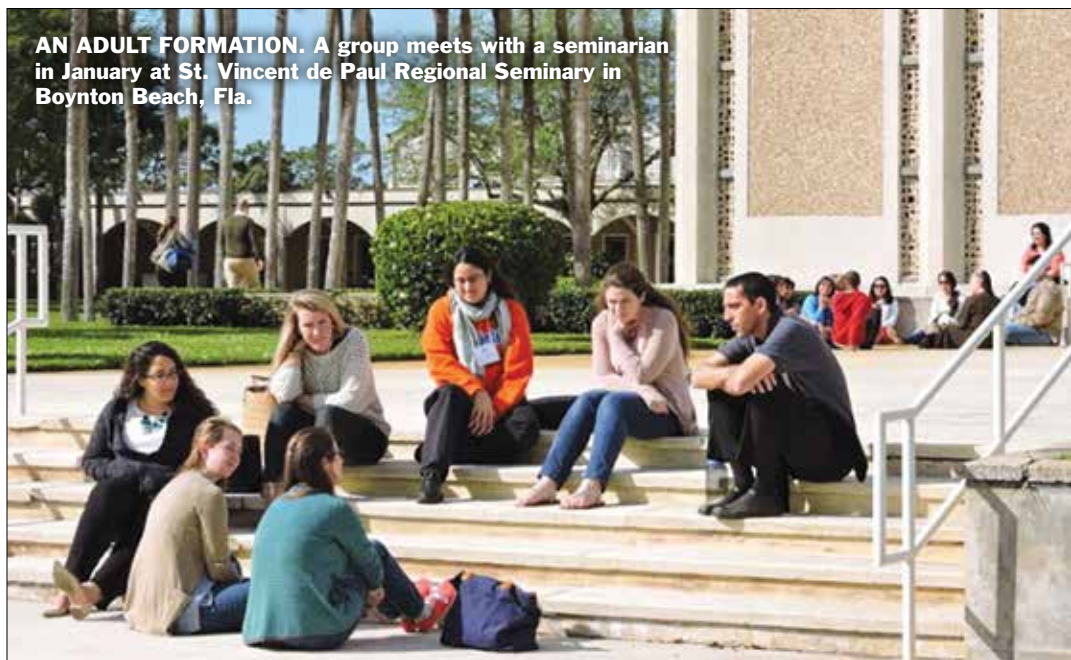
BY JOE PAPROCKI

In 1974, the Chicago Cubs had gone almost seven decades without a World Series championship. Much has changed in the last 40 years: Lights were installed in Wrigley Field for night games, a new jumbotron has been added and seating capacity has increased, generating more income. And yet, 107 years after their last World Series victory, Chicago fans are still waiting.

Also in 1974, **America** published an article by Msgr. Francis D. Kelly, then the director of religious education for the Diocese of Worcester, Mass., with the title “Where Is Religious Education Going?” [see “Fostering Faith,” page 25 in this issue]. The premise of the article was that religious education was stuck but was attempting to emerge from a model that no longer fit the times. Monsignor Kelly drew attention to progress that had been made in incorporating Scripture, liturgy and contemporary insights from education and psychology into the catechetical enterprise but concluded that an overall vision and structure for religious education was still missing and needed. Hence his title question, “Where is religious education going?”

Forty years later, it is safe to say that much has changed in the world of religious education. And yet, like Chicago Cubs fans, one might say that we Catholics are still waiting for many of the ideas raised by Monsignor Kelly to come to fruition. For starters, he advocated greater resources and personnel for religious education, lamenting the fact that in the past these had been assigned “with great reluctance.” Unfortunately, this continues to be a serious concern, as cash-strapped dioceses, many scrambling to pay legal fees and settlements in the wake of the sexual abuse crisis, continue to drastically reduce their budgets and staffs for catechetical ministry. This has had an unfortunate trickle-down effect as

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AN ADULT FORMATION. A group meets with a seminarian in January at St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary in Boynton Beach, Fla.

more and more parishes are doing away with professionally trained catechetical leaders in favor of the part-time or volunteer secretary who is asked to “run the kids’ program.”

Monsignor Kelly wrote about the need for a comprehensive direction—a viable framework—for the catechetical ministry and expressed hope in the soon-to-be-written national catechetical directory, which eventually appeared in 1979 as *Sharing the Light of Faith*. Since then, the church has been blessed with the *General Directory for Catechesis* (1997) and the *National Directory for Catechesis* for the United States (2005), both of which have provided a comprehensive vision and framework for catechetical ministry. In many ways, however, both have been missed opportunities for dioceses that did little to implement the church’s vision for catechesis with the same gusto used to implement the changes in the third edition of the Roman Missal some years later.

Not long ago, Pope Francis made some of his first substantive remarks about the ministry of catechesis during a general audience on May 29, saying, “Catechesis, as a component of the process of evangelization, needs to go beyond simply the scholastic sphere to educate believers, from childhood, to meet Christ, living and working in his church.” At first glance, these words seem to represent a new call for change—until one revisits Monsignor Kelly’s article, in which he warned that

the school of religion/classroom model may not be the “preferred framework for the future of the religious education apostolate.” In too many parishes, we continue to struggle with moving from an overly academic approach to one that truly fosters “a faith that is living, conscious, and active.”

I have written about this too and have argued that catechesis needs to be less about information and primarily about transformation. I have suggested that the key to achieving this is to make our sessions resemble “Mass more than class”—that is, an experience that is permeated by a climate of prayer and coupled with robust opportunities for participating in works of mercy (*Beyond the Catechist’s Toolbox: Catechesis That Not Only Informs but Also Transforms*, Loyola Press).

Perhaps the most powerful propositions that Monsignor Kelly put forth in his article, which was published in the year President Nixon resigned, Patty Hearst was kidnapped, and the Chicago Cubs once again finished in last place, were his assertions that “the effective framework of the future must be much more a genuine family-oriented framework” and that “a total religious education framework will have to take more seriously the challenge of adequate adult religious education, over and above what must be offered to parents.”

Some great strides were made in the area of family catechesis with the introduction of intergenerational catechetical programs in the latter part of the 20th century. Unfortunately, many parishes found the approach overly taxing on limited staff and recognized a deficiency in young

people’s knowledge of the faith when they dropped textbooks altogether. As a result, we have yet to truly discover a “genuine family-oriented framework,” although some parishes are successfully following a model that uses a blended approach of intergenerational experiences coupled with lessons being taught at home by parents using an approved textbook series and parent guides rather than catechist manuals.

As for progress in the area of adult catechesis, we have a long way to go. For an institution like the Catholic Church

to change course is a mighty undertaking, especially when it comes to such a well-oiled machine like the one we have created to educate children. We have done an excellent job of convincing people that religious education ends with the sacrament of confirmation. As a result, most Catholic adults see no reason for ongoing adult faith formation.

Monsignor Kelly mentions that “many bemoan the alleged lack of response to adult religious education programs” but astutely points out that “too often these programs have failed to evoke a response because they were perceived as dealing with abstract theological issues unrelated to people’s daily concerns.”

I could not agree more. Over 40 years later, we still face the same problem. When it comes to adult faith formation, too often the church proceeds like a not very good doctor, issuing prescriptions without doing a thorough examination of the patients, getting to know their history or listening to them describe their symptoms. As a result, we prescribe adult faith offerings that are very “churchy-sounding” and doctrinally driven rather than addressing

people’s daily concerns and helping them to recognize how Scripture and tradition shed light on their experience. We have yet to master St. Ignatius’ approach of “entering through their door” while being sure to “leave through your door.”

In recent years, the Chicago Cubs have shown great promise and have made great strides. And yet they have still not won a World Series since 1908. In a similar way, with 40 years of hindsight, we must still respond to Monsignor Kelly’s question, “Where Is Religious Education Going?” by admitting that while we have made great progress, we still have a long way to go in catechetical ministry before we can claim that we are effectively fostering “a faith that is living, conscious and active.”

Catechesis needs to be less about information and primarily about transformation.

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Fostering Faith

BY FRANCIS D. KELLY

The past three decades have seen substantial positive developments in both content and educational methodology in the field of religious education. The German catechism of the mid-1940s first incorporated the riches of the scriptural and liturgical awakening that had occurred in Europe. These developments rapidly spread around the world, and the number and quality of catechetical texts abounded. Increasingly, the insights of contemporary secular education—especially the principle of psychological adaptation of content—have modified and improved these materials.

While contemporary religious educators can take much satisfaction in these developments, they still have the challenge of making these materials understood and accepted by their constituencies. It seems to me, however, that we need to evaluate the whole religious education apostolate from a broader perspective. In many ways, religious education is in its infancy. In the past, resources and personnel were assigned to it with great reluctance. As the religious education apostolate begins to emerge in American Catholic life as a more significant endeavor, it is imperative that we ask certain basic questions about its

present efforts and future directions.

Religious education is like an uncharted ocean—there are no maps or assured blueprints to follow for success. In this sense, religious education is unlike many other ecclesial apostolates. If one is engaged in school work or in the social work apostolate, there are other secular models at hand that have only to be adopted and modified. This is not the case with religious education, whose goal as stated by the Second Vatican Council is to nourish “a faith that is living, conscious and active” (Decree on the Bishops’ Pastoral Office in the Church, No. 14). Since its goal revolves around the highly mysterious and intangible reality of faith, it will be unique among human endeavors.

Secular sciences in recent years have contributed valuable insights to religious education. Educators like Sidney Simon and Louis Rath have developed techniques for enabling us to help people clarify and discover the values by which they live. Even more refined research by such scholars as Lawrence Kohlberg is giving us new data on the psychological and moral development of infants, children and adults. These insights can serve the cause of faith transmission, but they do not provide us with the comprehensive direction we need.

Increasing pressure will be felt by religious education administrators in the years ahead to produce a viable framework for their apostolate together with

clearly enunciated goals and precise objectives within that framework. This pressure is already somewhat present as religious education programs expand in sheer numbers because of the large number of young people added to parish programs by the gradual and unfortunate demise of the Catholic school system.

The pressure will increase in the years ahead as dioceses throughout the country organize unified departments of education and involve interested and informed lay persons in diocesan advisory boards whose role will be to evaluate, supervise and fund the organized education apostolate. Indications are that these representatives of the People of God will rightly demand far more in terms of accountability from religious education administrators than was ever expected in the days of exclusive hierarchical supervision.

Religious educators are therefore called on more than ever today to research, reflect and pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit to chart the proper course for their service to the church. It is providential that the Catholic community of the United States has embarked at precisely this moment on a project to be known as the National Catechetical Directory. This project will hopefully prove to be a catalyst that will involve many interested Catholic Americans in the prayerful reflection we have mentioned.

As religious educators search for the

MSGR. FRANCIS D. KELLY was, at the time of writing, the director of religious education for the Diocese of Worcester, Mass. In 2013 he became a canon of St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican. This article originally appeared in the Jan. 26, 1974, issue of *America*.

appropriate framework for their apostolate, there are many, outside the field and in it, who take for granted that the C.C.D. school of religion model is the preferred framework and that the goal must be to make it work better. In such a view, the objectives of religious educators should be to build catechetical centers containing classrooms, stock them with the best audio-visual hardware and software, improve the quality of teaching through further training of teachers and perhaps even financial remuneration of volunteers.

While these efforts are not to be denigrated and will be necessary for many decades, many wonder if this is in fact the preferred framework for the future of the religious education apostolate. For one thing, even secular education is rapidly moving away from the strict graded classroom approach to education and moving toward nongraded, nonwalled learning-resource centers, where children are more encouraged to develop personal abilities and talents than submit passively to a regimented, predetermined curriculum.

Even more problematic from the religious education point of view is the fact that the school of religion model focuses on the separate learning of the child isolated from the impact of family and the wider community, which, in fact, are more important influences in its life.

Family Oriented

The effective framework of the future must be much more a genuine family-oriented framework. In the normal course of events, a child absorbs the value system of his family and all efforts external to the family succeed or fail with this value system, as the Greeley-Rossi study demonstrated. Accordingly, our religious education framework must work with the family as a family and with the value system of the whole family.

The growth of supernatural faith in the adult is not unrelated to a home atmosphere that allows the child to have a sense of security, trust and acceptance.

Conversely, studies have demonstrated that faith-rejection in later life is often related to the child's rejection of an unfortunate childhood relationship to family that was characterized by hostility, insecurity and rejection.

Faith, then is a reality that is closely tied to the affective dimension of man's life and his whole development as a person in the family from birth onwards. Fostering its growth will require that the church give serious attention to the implications of this fact. Accordingly, a religious education approach that waits till the child is of school age is beginning too late and ignoring some important realities. Religious educators must find a framework that offers opportunities of alerting parents to the fact that religious and human growth are integrated realities. This means that the future religious education approach will have to give serious attention to the parents of infants and preschoolers.

A total religious education framework will have to take more seriously the challenge of adequate adult religious education over and above what must be offered to parents. The church must come to recognize the complexity of modern life and especially assist Catholic professionals—doctors, scientists, lawyers, politicians—to examine the important issues they face in the light of Christian principles and Catholic tradition. The church does not have all the answers to the many dilemmas they must face, but it does have some answers and principles that could cast important new light on their problems.

Many bemoan the alleged lack of response to adult religious education programs that have been offered on diocesan and parish levels. Yet, too often these programs have failed to evoke a response because they were perceived as dealing with abstract theological issues unrelated to people's daily concerns. Efforts in a more vocational framework may overcome this handicap and be a real service to many intelligent adults who would welcome opportunities for information


and dialogue on relevant subjects in the context of the faith.

Another area of adult religious education that needs to be fostered is programs for the elderly. This important segment of the People of God is too often ignored by those perhaps unconsciously seeking more tangible results by preparing persons for Christian life in the world. If the goal of religious education is faith transmission, whose faith deserves more attention than those drawing closer to that ultimate faith-affirmation which is Christian death and their face-to-face rendezvous with the Lord?

Challenging Prejudice

There are many other areas of adult religious education that need to be investigated. The prejudices of many of our people in topics relating to poverty, justice and peace must be challenged in the light of the Gospel and official Church teaching. In these areas, religious educators should strive to work with communications persons so that more effective use can be made of public media to relate the Christian dimension to the daily news.

All of these efforts demand careful research and planning for effectiveness. Too often, religious educators have been—not without some justification—accused of superficiality in their work. The task is too important and the time now too opportune to allow this danger to be realized.

The full vision of what the future holds for religious education is only in the preliminary stages. Special instruction of children and adolescents on the intellectual content of the faith will always be necessary and our efforts at improving this dimension of the total religious education effort must not slacken. It is important, however, not to be so engrossed in the tasks of the moment as to lose sight of a total vision and of the need constantly to evaluate the degree to which we may more effectively contribute to fostering "a faith that is living, conscious and active." 



Timor-Leste Celebrates

Ever attentive to the peripheries, Pope Francis sent the Vatican's secretary of state, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, as his personal envoy to Timor-Leste to participate in the celebrations for the 500th anniversary of the evangelization of the people there and to sign a historic accord between Asia's most Catholic state and the Holy See.

The papal legate was welcomed with honor on Aug. 13 in Dili, the capital of this state, which occupies half the island of Timor. He knows much about the country from his earlier work in the Vatican, where he held the brief on East Timor as it struggled for independence; and a colleague from then, Archbishop Joseph Marino, is nuncio there.

In a statement before the legate's arrival, Prime Minister Rui Maria de Araújo recalled that "the Catholic Church, over 500 years, has provided a great spiritual, human and material support to the Timorese people, and also contributed decisively to the liberation process of Timor-Leste."

For this, he said "the church's action is recognized and valued in the Constitution of the Republic." He recalled how the church "encouraged the people's resistance and legitimized internationally the purposes of the Resistance" in the struggle for independence from Indonesia. Likewise today, he added, "the Catholic Church continues to be a central reference for the population and continues to support our journey along the path of national development, especially in the

area of education."

The evangelization of the Timorese began in 1515, when Dominican missionaries arrived from Portugal. Timor-Leste was a colony of Portugal up to 1975, except when Japan occupied the country during the Pacific war (1941-45). As Portugal's empire crumbled, Indonesia annexed this land and ruled it as its 27th province from 1975 to 1999, when the United Nations took charge to oversee its path to independence. St. John Paul II is said to have boosted the independence drive when he visited on Oct. 12, 1989.

Timor-Leste gained independence on May 20, 2002, and immediately established diplomatic relations with the Holy See. Despite political and economic challenges since then, it remains the most densely populated Catholic country in the world after the Vatican City State: 97 percent of its almost 1.3 million people are Catholic; 60 percent are under the age of 25. The Timorese church has three dioceses, 116 priests serving 58 parishes and some 600 women and men religious. With 574 seminarians, it is rich in vocations to the priesthood. An estimated 400 young men are turned away from the minor seminary annually because of lack of space to accommodate them.

On Aug. 14 the papal legate and the prime minister signed the historic agreement at a ceremony in the government palace. The accord's 26 articles provide a clear understanding of the separation of church and state, while affirming their respective responsibilities and competencies. Speaking briefly after the signing, Cardinal Parolin

hailed the agreement "as a significant sign of the fruitful interaction between church and state" and noted that its Preamble recognizes that for 500 years the church "has been deeply rooted in the history of the Timorese people, who embraced the Catholic faith not by the force of the sword but by the openness of their heart."

The accord, he said, rests on two fundamental principles: the "values and principles of international law in the matter of religious freedom" (Preamble) and "the guarantee of the freedom to profess and practice the Catholic faith publicly (Article 1)." And based on these two concepts, it "offers space and opportunities for the Catholic Church to act in society, in accord with its mission of service to the people" and in line with constitutional norms and local legislation. It defines specific areas where the church can serve the people freely and openly—for instance, by providing spiritual assistance in prisons, hospitals, clinics and orphanages (Article 8), performing works of charity (Article 4), establishing schools at every level and assisting Catholics in educating their children in the faith, including the right to teach the Catholic religion in public schools (Article 9).

Cardinal Parolin concluded by telling his hosts that before leaving Rome, Pope Francis asked him to assure the authorities of his closeness to them on this happy occasion and of his "prayers for this noble and beloved nation of Timor-Leste."

GERARD O'CONNELL

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Bearing Witness

Stories from the Holy Land

BY ELENA HABERSKY



I never realized the power of stories until I began working with refugees in East Amman. The stories I hear vary. Some are extremely happy, filled with vivid memories of times that were present with love and laughter, enough to fill a large Middle Eastern sitting room. These are the stories where you see people's faces light up, their bright brown eyes becoming as large as a full moon hanging in the desert sky to light the secrets of the mysterious terrain that would otherwise be clothed in darkness. When people tell these stories, their whole bodies move, contouring to the universe in a way that almost transports them back in time. It is a place they desperately want to go back to—and they want to take you, too. Yet it will always be secret, always be special to them. These are the things they can carry when everything else they carry will be a burden.

A woman remembers a blissful childhood in a homeland to which she will probably never return. Filled with trips to a local picnic area with family, they are simple memories. The way her eyes light up when she talks about the food she devoured—olives

with warm bread, rice and chicken and rolled grape leaves—you know she can still taste those special days. She tells me she hopes her grown children can experience what her childhood was like someday, so that just maybe all the different seasonings in her mind—memories strewn about as in a messy kitchen—can once again be added together to make a feast of flavors for all to enjoy.

Then there are the stories that break your heart so you can feel the pieces sinking to your toes. The seriousness of their tone almost seems unreal; you want them to become angry, to cry and to scream. They are calm; their faces show no signs of the pain they explain; and their bodies seem motionless, stuck somewhere between a world they want to forget and the only world that truly understands them. Some have visible scars they carry from a memory that will be etched into their souls forever, more so than their faces. You might never know that they ran away from genocide in Darfur, were shot at while trying to cross the Syrian border or have hearing loss from being close to a car bomb going off in Baghdad.

A student stands up in front of the class and thanks his fellow peers for the chance to speak, as all do when given the chance to express their opinions. He is serious as he talks about his hopes and ambitions for the future. He wants

to study human rights law so he can help his fellow countrymen back home, a lofty goal. As serious as ever, he continues, "I will bring justice on those who hurt my people, and I will kill them all as they killed us." It's difficult to find forgiveness when all you remember is the hacking of machetes and blood pouring out like a raging river, which will come out, as from the mouth of a man who remembers only the streams of pain in his memory as the source of his current situation.

Jesus the Storyteller

To be honest, I always had trouble believing in the power of the oral story. How could a single person have that kind of power over people? Did hundreds of people really go listen to one man speak, preach, teach in parables and stories that the common people would understand? Did these people actually remember what he said, enough so they could pass on the stories and eventually write them down to still be read to this day by billions of people across the globe?

That is the raw power given to stories in this area called the Holy Land that I never truly understood until I began hearing them. This is what made me truly understand why Jesus used stories to teach the crowds gathered from all over the area, the area that I have called

ELENA HABERSKY graduated from Scranton University in 2013 and has been working with urban refugees in East Amman, Jordan, since arriving in September 2013 in a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant program.

ART: MEGAN HALSEY

my home for the past year.

It did not matter to Jesus where or when he taught, nor does it matter to me where or when I hear these stories. I have come to realize that what matters is how the stories are told. It is the words that make them come alive, that make the stories living, breathing entities. Jesus originally breathed life into his parables, and we who continue to tell and listen to stories follow his example and by doing so become the living Jesus in this world.

I had trouble believing this until I began interacting with the many vibrant and welcoming refugee communities in Amman. When someone asked me why he did not get a visa even though he was promised one by the government in exchange for translating and risking his life; when I heard of a student's house being demolished by a bomb; and when a student messaged me that he could not come to class because his best friend was just killed back home and he needs to grieve. These stories take me on a pilgrimage that helps me draw nearer to my faith and my understanding of Jesus, both historical and living.

I remember every story, every person who let me in to their lives, if only for a few minutes. Their heights, weights, skin colors and clothing styles are all unique. They come from different countries, different religions and different situations. Yet they show me the commonality and beauty of humanity through their stories.

Sometimes they tell me stories I would rather not hear, and I can imagine the ending before they utter the words. I listen, I learn and I bear witness to stories I would once consider shocking. I want to go forth and spread their news. As outcasts in society, they teach me everything about society. They show me through their stories the good and the bad and the need for reconciliation, peace, love and forgiveness. To me, the refugees in Amman are the living Jesus. We can all learn from them if we just take the time to listen. **A**

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ART | LEO J. O'DONOVAN

SOUTHERN EXODUS

The migration paintings of Jacob Lawrence

In November 1941, just before Edith Halpert exhibited Jacob Lawrence's "The Migration of the Negro" at her Downtown Gallery in Manhattan, Fortune magazine published 26 of the 60 panels in the series. With a limited palette of brilliantly saturated colors and in an abstracted, expressionistic style, the relatively small panels (12 in. by 18 in.) of casein tempera on hardboard depicted the migration of black men, and eventually women as well, moving from the rural South to the urban North to find work in Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, Saint Louis, Cleveland, Detroit and Pittsburgh—cities where they had at least some hope for their human dignity as well. It was "one of the largest and most rapid mass internal movements in history," as Nicholas Lemann wrote in *The Promised Land: The Great Black Migration and How it Changed America*. Overnight Lawrence, who had completed the series at the age of 23, became the most celebrated African-American artist in the country; he continued to hold that distinction, together with his friend Romare Bearden, until his death in 2000.

Lawrence was born on Sept. 7, 1917, in Atlantic City, N.J., to parents who had "come up" as the great migration began during World War I, his mother from Virginia, his father from South Carolina. The family lived for some time in Pennsylvania, and after

Panel 48: "Housing for the Negroes was a very difficult problem," by Jacob Lawrence.



the marriage failed, his mother moved to Harlem to find work and brought young Jacob and his two siblings there in 1930. In the second phase of the Harlem Renaissance, the boy dreamed of being an artist but hardly dared to think it possible. Fortunately he found a generous and discerning teacher in the painter Charles Alston and another in the sculptor Augusta Savage. And the Works Progress Administration Federal Arts Project eventually provided him not only with financial support but with his "real education" among fellow artists, writers and intellectuals, as he later wrote.

In 1938 Lawrence had his first solo show—vigorous, gritty scenes of everyday Harlem life—at the Harlem Y.M.C.A., and in that year also completed a cycle of 41 paintings on the Haitian revolutionary leader Toussaint L'Ouverture. In 1939 he did a 32-panel cycle on the great abolitionist Frederick Douglass and also began research at the 135th Street Public Library (now the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture) for what was to be his immigration series. Another cycle, on the life of Harriet Tubman, heroine of the Underground Railroad, followed in 1940, by which point he was clearly a rising star.

In a studio made possible by his Federal Arts Project grant, Lawrence

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Panel 1: “During the World War there was a great migration North by Southern Negroes,” by Jacob Lawrence.

and his future wife, Gwendolyn Knight, began by writing the captions that were to go with each panel—terse, impassive statements that became still more laconic when in 1993 the artist renamed his work “The Migration Series” and edited most of the captions.

Beginning with an unforgettable panel of a throng of figures streaming toward ticket windows for Chicago, New York and St. Louis, the narrative varies dramatically from crowded scenes to single figures, from threatened violence to aching intimacy, musically varied between horizontal and vertical panels—“as tightly thought through,” notes Holland Cotter, “as any fresco program by Giotto.”

The terror inspired by sudden arrests and unjust courts, lynchings and the ambiguous duties of the Northern labor agents sent to recruit workers is evoked with searing economy. But you

also see and read (image and caption being conceived as one) what other causes there were for the migration—floods on the Mississippi, crop failures

and damage from the boll weevil and the steady encouragement of the black press.

The caption for Panel 10 is spare



Panel 58: “In the North the Negro had better educational facilities,” by Jacob Lawrence.

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PHILOSOPHY, AND RELIGION

LECTURE 1

October 7, 2015 | 6:30 p.m.

SCIENCE, RELIGION,
AND THE TRANSMISSION
OF KNOWLEDGE

John Greco, PhD
Saint Louis University

LECTURE 2

November 18, 2015 | 6:30 p.m.

THE WORLD OUTSIDE
AND THE PICTURES IN
OUR HEADS: A CASE FOR
INTELLECTUAL HUMILITY

Nathan Ballantyne, PhD
Fordham University

LECTURE 3

March 10, 2016 | 6:30 p.m.

BUILDING BETTER POLICIES:
MAKING THE MOST OF WHAT
THE SCIENCES TEACH

Nancy Cartwright, PhD
University of Durham
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and almost unbearable: “They were very poor.” The housing conditions and educational opportunities are shown to be “better” in the North, but accompanied by increased crowding and tenements, a rising death rate due to tuberculosis, and race riots. One panel on the housing problem is as claustrophobic an image of entrapment as I’ve ever seen; and another, on the infamous East St. Louis riot of 1917, is simply terrifying. A single religious panel presents a church as “one of the [migrants’] main forms of social and recreational activities.”

Lawrence conceived the series as a single work and wanted it shown that way. But some of the panels have such direct emotional and formal impact that you tend to remember them apart: the marvelously syncopated railway car of migrants arriving in Pittsburgh, for example; or the iconic three young girls in bright red, yellow and green dresses writing on a blackboard; or the intent laundress in white, almost certainly inspired by the artist’s own mother, using sheer color to render depth. And so it is with the last panel, in which we see a crowd of people standing on the other side of the tracks from us and read: “And the migrants kept coming.”

The great migration is generally said to have ended in the 1970s, after six million African-Americans had moved to the North. But the show at the Museum of Modern Art, running through Sept. 7 and organized by Leah Dickerman with Jodi Roberts, in cooperation with The Phillips Collection and the Schomburg Center, concentrates on the ’30s and ’40s. Its title is **One-Way Ticket: Jacob Lawrence’s Migration Series and Other Visions of the Great Movement North**. The “Series” is being shown in its entirety at the Modern for the first time in 20 years, and it is marvelously contextualized in three surrounding galleries.

In the central gallery you can hear the voices of Louis Armstrong, Bessie

Smith, Paul Robeson, Mahalia Jackson and Huddie (Lead Belly) Ledbetter. Most moving of all are two films. One shows Marian Anderson, excluded in 1939 from Constitution Hall but then singing “My Country ’Tis of Thee” in front of the Lincoln Memorial to a crowd of 75,000, with millions more listening at home. The second is of Billie Holiday, reprising in 1959 her signature song from 1939, “Strange Fruit.” (It stuns with its stark evocation of lynching, while Lawrence’s two panels on lynching hang on the other side of the gallery wall.)

There is also a bracing selection of books by writers like Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison and Langston Hughes (whose book *One-Way Ticket* Lawrence illustrated); photographs by Dorothea Lange, Ben Shahn and Gordon Parks; sociological studies and more visual material by Alston, Bearden and Charles White. Among the many special commissions accompanying the show are a self-guided walking tour of Harlem and the Migration Series Poetry Suite, in which 10 poets selected by Elizabeth Alexander read their responses to Lawrence’s work.

Lawrence first spoke of his art as “dynamic cubism,” then later as a form of expressionism. But he was most deeply influenced by the history of his community and particularly by his early experience of the sights and sounds of Harlem. Critics struggle to express their admiration for his combination of aesthetic refinement and social commitment, so seldom found in such powerful balance. And if his work persuades through its documentary power, it is equally a declaration of human dignity in all its anguish and hope. Though much has changed since these images were produced, their relevance remains. Who would dare to say the struggle has ended?

LEO J. O’DONOVAN, S.J., is president emeritus of Georgetown University.

HERE BE MONSTERS

How do we represent fear? Much of what we see in popular culture today focuses on this. From works by H. P. Lovecraft and Stephen King to shows like “Buffy the Vampire Slayer” and “American Horror Story,” it is evident that the symbols of fear are much more complex than just a killer in a ski mask with an axe in the woods or the chainsaw-wielding maniac in a secluded Southern town. Fear is psychological, often arising from our own personal demons.

“Penny Dreadful” is a British-American horror television series created by John Logan that brings various well-known horror tales together, like Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* and Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*. Throughout the show’s two seasons, we watch as the protagonists encounter various dangers: Sir Malcolm Murray (Timothy Dalton) fighting vampires in an effort to save his daughter, Mina (Olivia Llewellyn); Vanessa Ives (Eva Green) protecting herself from a coven of witches; Dr. Victor Frankenstein (Harry Treadaway) battling the Creature (Rory Kinnear), the monster he created and abandoned.

The show contains many of the traditional devices meant to elicit fear in viewers. There is the ominous music, composed by Abel Korzeniowski; the gloomy, foreboding streets of London, courtesy of the production designer Jonathan McKinstry; and the monsters, like the vampires and witches, created by the make-up effects and creature designer Nick Dudman. But we see the most poignant depictions of fear in the internal struggles of each character.

There is Vanessa Ives. Her fear is

that she will allow herself to be seduced by the force that hunts her: the Devil. She learns that “when [the Devil] fell, he did not fall alone” and that he will pursue her “until the end of days.” We see the constant mental and physical harassment she faces. She knows she can make it all stop if she just gives in to the seduction and renounces her religion and power. There is a powerful scene in season two in which Vanessa kneels before a cross in her room. The candles around her go out as she continues praying with her eyes shut; as the camera frame widens, we see that as she prays, she is encircled by the three witches who have been hunting her. Despite her “complicated history with the Almighty” and the taunting of the witches, she continues praying.

There is the Creature, the disfigured monster brought back to life by Dr. Frankenstein. He is extremely self-conscious and is often shunned because of his physical deformities, which elicit fear in those around him. At times he expresses despair at having been brought back from the dead, stating, “I would rather be the corpse I was than the man I am.” In season two, the Creature takes a job working for Putney Family Waxworks but is eventually betrayed by the owner, Oscar Putney, who wishes to turn the Creature into a living freakshow. He ultimately escapes, killing Putney and his wife in the process, giving in to the violent tendencies he tried desperately to avoid.

There is also Ethan Talbot, whose greatest fear is of exposing his true self—a werewolf—to those around him; he fears losing control and hurting those he cares about. His struggle to repress the werewolf in him embodies the troubling and terrifying differences between interiority (the “I” who comments on our lives) and exteriority (the “selves” we wear at work, at home, throughout various social contexts).

And, finally, there is Victor Frankenstein. He rejects religion, stating that what he believes in is a place between heaven and hell. He describes this as a “glorious place with everlasting rebirth, perhaps even salvation.” This belief leads to an obsession with reversing death, a process that eventually leads to his conception of the Creature.

These characters symbolize what humanity often fears the most.



These characters symbolize what humanity often fears the most: loneliness, a loss of faith, fear of self and a loss of beauty. In humans, fear does not manifest itself only in physical monsters or demons. Rather, the answer to the question “What represents fear?” is often that which stares back at us in the mirror. We often fear what we are capable of (Ethan Talbot); we fear our faith being tested (Vanessa Ives); we fear loneliness (Frankenstein); and we fear not living up to the superficial physical expectations society creates for us (the Creature). “Penny Dreadful” demonstrates that quite often, what most terrifies us is what we have within ourselves, our very own humanity.

A NOT-PERFECT SAINT

JUNÍPERO SERRA California, Indians, and the Transformation of a Missionary

By Rose Marie Beebe and Robert M. Senkewicz
University of Oklahoma Press. 504p
\$34.95

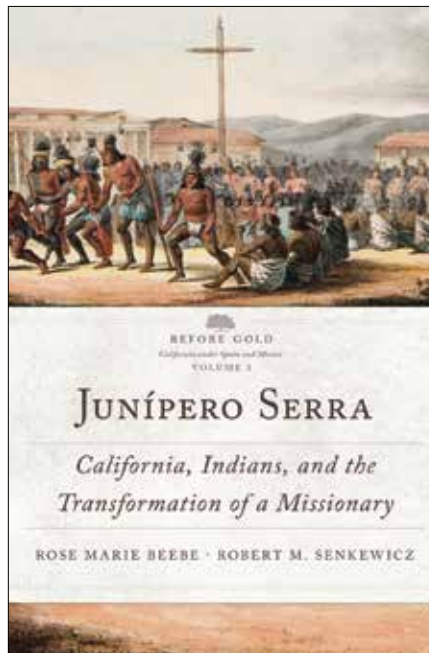
Pope Francis' announcement that he will canonize the Franciscan missionary Junípero Serra, founder and father president of the mission system of Alta California from 1769 to his death in 1784, has fortuitously coincided with the recent appearance of three biographies of this controversial figure: Steven W. Hackel's *Junípero Serra: California's Founding Father* (2013), Gregory Orfalea's *Journey to the Sun: Junípero Serra's Dream and the Founding of California* (2014), and this latest and most sumptuously produced biography by a husband-and-wife research and writing team on the faculty of Santa Clara University, a Jesuit institution whose campus is centered on the reconstructed Mission Santa Clara de Asís (1777).

These three biographies—successors to the two-volume biography (1959) by the Franciscan historian Maynard Geiger and the four-volume edition (1955-1966) of Serra's writings by the Franciscan scholar Antonine Tibesar—by and large take an even-handed approach to a figure enmeshed in controversy since the revisionist 1960s.

Prior to the 1960s, Junípero Serra enjoyed widespread approval in California as the saintly founder of Euro-California. In 1931 the state legislature selected Serra as one of two Californians to represent California in the Hall of Statuary in the Capitol in Washington, D.C., the other being the Unitarian minister Thomas Starr King (1824–64), Serra's counterpart

in the subsequent founding of Anglo-American Protestant California. In 1933 the popular Catholic writer Anges Repplier issued a best-selling biography chronicling Serra not only as a founder but as a saint; and the following year the Diocese of Monterey-Fresno formally initiated Serra's cause for canonization.

Fifty-two years passed before St. John Paul II declared Serra venerable



in 1986 and blessed in 1988. Since that time, Serra's cause for canonization seems to have languished until Pope Francis's unexpected and unilateral declaration of intent. Even if one has no opportunity to review the secret procedures of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, it is reasonable for one to speculate that at some point in the canonization process, most likely in the past 30 years, the emerging revisionist interpretation of Serra and the California mission system by scholars, Catholic and non-Catholic alike, slowed down, if not outright derailed,

Serra's cause until the recent ukase by Pope Francis.

There were just too many paradoxes and contradictions in Serra and the mission system he founded for the unalloyed chorus of praise to continue. Serra's medieval asceticism (it included a lifelong preference for self-inflicted whipping and a morbid preference for pain) proved disturbing to contemporary psychological insight and led to speculations that Serra was perhaps trying to lash from himself a possible ancestral Jewishness that had delayed his acceptance into the order by the Franciscans of Majorca. Then there was his role as an agent of the Inquisition during his tenure as a missionary in Mexico, followed by his endorsement of physical punishment for recalcitrant Indian neophytes, along with his quarrelsome relationship to civil authorities and hostility to the settlement of Mexican Catholic laity in an Alta California that Serra wished to preserve as a Franciscan protectorate.

Although they did their best to conceal their resentment, Jesuit scholars found it troublesome that Serra and his confreres seemed so eager to replace the Society of Jesus in the staffing of the California mission system and offered little if any support to more than 650 Jesuits arrested and force-marched into exile in 1767, many of them dying on this particular trail of tears.

From the point of view of the scholars of recent decades, the mission system created by Serra and his confreres constituted a colonialist suppression of an indigenous people of a first order of magnitude. Native peoples, these scholars pointed out, were forced into missions, retrieved by soldiers if they escaped, regulated and indoctrinated with little if any regard for inculturation, devastated by European diseases and baptized on a wholesale basis with little or no true knowledge of Catholicism.

The Franciscans performing these baptisms were followers of the medieval Franciscan philosopher Duns Scotus,

who taught that since the finite was possessed of an innate drive toward the Infinite (with a capital I, meaning God), Native Americans were almost immediately capable of grasping and assenting to the existence of a supreme being and the intricacies of the religion, even if presented with little effort for inculturation. Baptism alone was necessary, and hence the Franciscans trumpeted their alleged success with mere statistics of baptisms performed.

The mission system was supposed over time to produce a Christianized and Hispanicized Indian laity capable of making the transition from living in the mission system, which would be secularized, to living independently in a diocesan system similar to that which was developing in the rest of Latin America. But that never happened. The Franciscans never surrendered their protectorate, and the Native American population of Alta California—300,000 at the time of Serra's arrival in 1769—had been reduced by half by the time the mission system was secularized by the civil government of Mexico starting in the mid-1830s.

Over the past quarter century, Beebe and Senkewicz have been the respected leaders of a counter-revisionist and more even-handed approach to the Hispanic colonial experience in Alta California. Avoiding a return to prior pietism while remaining appreciative of the best possibilities of Hispanic culture and Catholicism, Beebe and Senkewicz have created an impressive canon of interpretation built upon the scholarship of the Franciscans Geiger and Tibesar, the monumental explorations of the Methodist scholar Herbert Eugene Bolton of the University of California, Berkeley, and the post-revisionist approach of the recently deceased University of San Francisco history professor W. Michael Mathes, to whom their book is dedicated.

Do not use either Serra or the mission system to fight contemporary

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Contact Brian Smith, CHA senior director, mission integration and leadership formation, at bsmith@chausa.org or (314) 253-3503.

battles, these scholars have urged and practiced through their writings. Do your best to approach the past on its own terms and not as an occasion for sloganeering. Pay attention to the evolution of Spanish colonial civilization in terms of its achievements as well as its deficiencies. No era is perfect, including our own.

Practicing an exhaustive and appreciative scholarship when appreciation is justified—as well as an evenhanded acknowledgement of deficiencies when such deficiencies are encountered—Beebe and Senkewicz have compiled a biography of Serra that is also an anthology of his freshly translated letters that allow him to make his own case: all this set in the realities of Franciscan missionary culture in the late 18th century.

Dominicans and Franciscans, it must be remembered, were among the first to denounce the genocidal effects of the colonization by Spain of the Caribbean in the 16th century. The Franciscans were especially eager to redeem this performance in the missions they established in Florida, Texas and Alta California. Like the Jesuit missionaries in Baja California, Serra and his confreres distrusted civilian development in part because they were attempting to avoid the exploitation of vulnerable Indians. Serra was particularly outraged by the sexual exploitation of Indian women by Spanish soldiers and made a special trip to Mexico City to protest this behavior and ask for countermeasures.

True, in terms of developing a Hispanicized Catholic laity within a reasonable time frame and transferring to that laity the mission properties as called for by the Laws of the Indies, the California mission system must be judged a failure. In terms of the anthropological and physical damage done to the Native Americans of California, the failure of the mission system was compounded into tragedy. But let us also remember that those 150,000 Native

Americans who survived the mission system to emerge into the American era were reduced by their encounter with American California—by state-sponsored ethnic cleansing, by de facto slavery, by depredations of every sort—to some 30 to 40 thousand survivors by the time that Ishi emerged from the forest in 1911, the last Native American of California to live his life in the manner of his ancestors.

Perhaps that is what Pope Francis is trying to suggest by pre-emptively canonizing Junípero Serra. Saints do not have to be perfect. Nobody is perfect. Sanctity is just another mode of imperfection. Nor do good intentions guarantee good outcomes. Intended to protect Native Americans, the mission system helped reduce the Native American population by half. Even good intentions, moreover, are inevita-

bly mixed with self-interest. Displaced by diocesan clergy in the rest of Latin America, the Franciscans were seeking a new lease on life on the Spanish Borderlands.

Be humble, therefore, in the face of history. All human culture, including the human culture of the Catholic Church, is by definition flawed and uncertain in outcome. When Pope Francis raises Junípero Serra to the altar later this year, Christian humility demands that he pay special tribute to the shared tribal sanctity, the martyrdom even, of those thousands of Native Americans now anonymously at rest in the unmarked graveyards of the California missions.

KEVIN STARR is a professor of history at the University of Southern California and the author of *Americans* and *the California Dream*.

LISA A. BAGLIONE

THE ROAD TO TERROR

THE BROTHERS The Road to an American Tragedy

By Masha Gessen
Riverhead Books. 274p \$27.95

Masha Gessen has written a thought-provoking and disturbing book about the Boston Marathon bombing in 2013 and those deemed responsible, the brothers Tamerlan and Jahar Tsarnaev. This topic must have been particularly compelling for her as someone who came to the Boston area from the Soviet Union as a girl and upon adulthood spent 20 years as a journalist covering post-Communist Russia, with special attention to the violence in the Caucasus.

Gessen provides sufficient context and explanation to allow readers to understand why the Tsarnaevs became terrorists. Her insights will likely be

disturbing; she doubts that Tamerlan became radicalized and that radicalization was even necessary. Instead, she counters that young men who oppose the policies of the state in which they live and whom promises and opportunities have passed by can decide to achieve the “greatness” that is elsewhere eluding them through terrorism.

In telling the Tsarnaevs’ story, Gessen stresses the upheaval that both they and their parents experienced. Although they met in Siberia, their mother, Zubeidat, was from Dagestan and the father, Anzor, was an ethnic Chechen who had grown up in Kyrgyzstan, to which Stalin had deported his people. After marrying, Anzor and Zubeidat wandered, trying to find a place that was suitable for earning a living and raising a family. In the collapsing Soviet Union,

this search was not easy. Moving to Chechnya at the most inopportune time—just prior to the outbreak of conflict between that breakaway region and Russia—made financial and personal security difficult. Although they fled the war in its opening stage for Kyrgyzstan, the Tsarnaevs' goal was to get to the United States. With the help of some friends and relatives, they arrived in Massachusetts. Their timing again was very poor. Anzor and Zubeidat came to the United States in early 2002, not the best time to be Muslim in America.

While their tale has elements of kindness from both Americans and recent Chechen immigrants, the Tsarnaevs struggled in Cambridge.

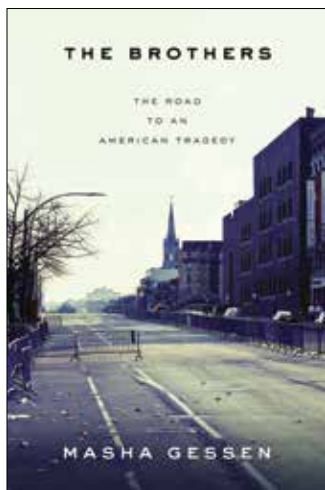
They were economically marginalized and culturally different. While the children seemed popular at school, they were not achievers. Both parents and children were trapped at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder with no way up or out. Initially, music or boxing might have been Tamerlan's ticket, while easygoing Jahar seems never to have had much ambition, although he did win a college scholarship. Certainly their upbringing and the structural inequality in today's United States contributed to their lack of opportunities,

but neither of these factors can fully account for their terrible choice. Many young men endure similar hardships without resorting to such violence.

In seeking to understand their mo-

tivations, the account becomes disconcerting. Gessen notes that many Caucasians see parallels between American and Russian treatment of minorities; these similarities are unnerving, given the levels of authoritarianism in Russia today. To some observers, the American conduct of the war on terror has led to the violation of the civil rights of many American citizens and residents and should cause U.S. citizens and their friends to worry deeply about its hidden costs. Also distressing is the ease with which the brothers pulled off their act of terror. According to their friends, Tamerlan and Jahar behaved normally in the days leading up to the bombing and in its immediate aftermath. They had no outward angst, worries or displays of conscience. Most readers will likely have no sympathy for them. Their friends and relatives, however, in disbelief sought other answers.

Although Gessen rejects the brothers' supporters' preferred explanation



for the bombing, her version has no heroes and a troubling conclusion. She asserts that officials handled Jahar's friends—many of them Muslim immigrants—extremely poorly, making them write confessions that were inaccurate and contradictory. She also notes the brutality with which F.B.I. agents treated an old friend of Tamerlan, Ibragim Todashev, killing him during an interrogation in Florida. Most disturbingly, Gessen argues that U.S. law enforcement is directly implicated in the horror of April 15, 2013.

Although she recognizes Todashev's fearsome reputation, which could have caused agents to overreact during the questioning, Gessen suggests that killing a man who might have information about both the terror attack and another unsolved triple homicide makes no sense, unless he had to be silenced.

This contention supports her claim that during the manhunt the F.B.I. was trying to capture the brothers before other law enforcement partners could reach them because agents had been working with the Tsarnaevs and either helped them assemble the bombs or gave them the deadly pressure cookers. Apparently, the defense attorneys at Jahar's trial were not able to convince jurors of Gessen's conclusions or other accounts that might excuse the brothers.

Gessen's story leaves the reader with enormous sadness, about the senseless violence and destruction of so many lives, as well as the hopelessness of some immigrant and American men living with little ambition, skill or hope in urban America (think also of Ferguson, Mo., North Charleston, S.C., and Baltimore, Md.).

While many readers will reject the idea that the F.B.I. could have been involved in this horror, that a highly reputable journalist could follow the leads and reach that conclusion must give pause.

Having engaged in questionable previous behavior, the United States has tarnished its reputation, making others see only the evil in American policy and believe in its official duplicity, which is used to justify more violence directed at the United States. The story of the brothers, then, particularly in the context of 2015, is a story about brutality and alienation as well as a cautionary tale regarding the need to promote opportunity among urban young men and to strengthen the rule of law at home so that police agencies have unimpeachable reputations, not only among those who don't encounter them directly, but in the eyes of all.

LISA A. BAGLIONE is a political science professor at St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia.

both Dorie's mother and the full use of her right hand, a physical deformity that looms large at various points in the novel's plot. Dorie was likewise separated from her father and twin sister mere months after birth.

The death of Dorie's last remaining adoptive parent sets off the novel's plot. After learning that she is heir to an immensely valuable painting by her biological father (a famous abstract artist), Dorie also finds that her twin became a cloistered nun in nearby Big Sur, Calif., after their father died.

Hoping to connect with her sister, Dorie proves herself a distinguished liar. Visiting the cloister, the "collapsed Catholic" fakes interest in a vocation to learn about the monastery. Once inside, Dorie observes a stunning painting by one of the cloistered nuns, in which Christ's right hand appears much like her own. Somewhat unsurprisingly, the artist is her sister, who has conveniently taken a vow of total silence.

Mercifully, *Contrition* does not exploit the possible suspense of Dorie's meeting with her sister. After two initial interactions fail to yield a reunion, Dorie again pretends vocational interest to gain a two-week stay in the convent. Even their eventual reunion is somewhat anticlimactic. Catherine has known all along that the aspirant is her sister.

Gradually, Dorie's interactions with the nuns brings up a fairly obvious question: is she really lying about her vocation? Her relatively few visits to Big Sur diminish not only her obsession with career, but also dispatch her cravings for booze, cigarettes and men. She briskly returns to the faith of her childhood. Alas, this religious "relapse" feels as predicable as her eventual confession that maybe she wasn't lying about the vocation after all.

During Dorie's two-week visit, the nuns announce that they are in financial straits. When the journalist's private notes from the visit and her

TIMOTHY O'BRIEN

THE SISTERS' STORY

CONTRITION

The Art of Sibling Rivalry

By Maura Weiler

Infinite Words. 331p \$15

Preparing to enter the Jesuit novitiate in 1868, Gerard Manley Hopkins famously incinerated the poems he had written up to that point. Hopkins later quipped that "brilliance does not suit us" (i.e., Jesuits), a lapidary distillation

of the tension he and others have seen between deploying one's talents (particularly artistic talents) and heeding a call to communion with God in religious life.

A similar tension surfaces repeatedly in Maura Weiler's debut novel, *Contrition*. The book's narrator and protagonist is Dorie McKenna, a young and restless tabloid journalist from Los Angeles. Childbirth claimed

photos of Catherine's masterpieces are published against her will and without her permission, the twins find themselves instantly famous and singularly unhappy. The convent, however, has found a potential path to solvency: selling off Catherine's paintings. The only question is what will happen when the silent nun's method of creative prayer (she swears that God paints, not she) is co-opted for financial benefit?

It is perhaps best to view these siblings as perpendicular characters: heading in quite different directions, the pair nevertheless has an intensive period of convergence, intersection and divergence. Each twin discovers more about herself, and this draws one closer toward the monastery while repelling the other. Perhaps because Catherine is silent for so much of the novel, the reader knows rather little about her motivation and personality, resulting in an underdeveloped and, frankly, odd character.

As the book's subtitle suggests, ri-

valry between these siblings looms large throughout their budding relationship. Jealous of her sister's artistic prowess, Dorie is able to tap her own creative forces only as her relationship with God develops throughout the novel. And as Catherine's own output becomes less about prayer and more about profit, her creativity ebbs.

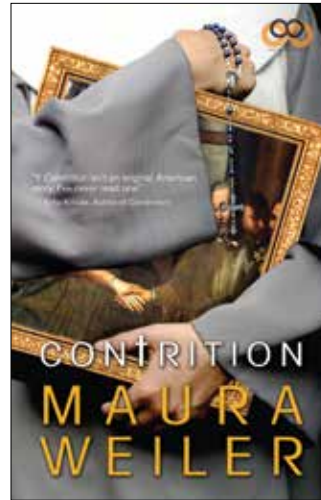
This is indeed an interesting theme in the novel. At times, however, it almost seems that Weiler is concerned that readers will overlook it. Not only is it announced in the subtitle, it is also trumpeted rather heavy-handedly at certain points. This is perhaps a second theme, though likely unintended. Readers need not worry about observing nuance in this novel. The

distressed mother superior reflexively clutches her stomach when finances are discussed. If one misses this detail, fear not. She later begins swigging

Mylanta from the bottle at the mere mention of money. The resulting characters, perhaps excepting Dorie, often resemble parodies more than personalities.

Similarly, the novel trades on a tired stereotype of religious as a spiritual elite floating above the run of mere mortals. It is only a slight exaggeration to say God's presence is physically confined to

the monastery at Big Sur, as though grace worked only in a certain ZIP code. Those straying from the holy mountain watch their connection to the deity wane, while Dorie's eventual entrance yields an immediate cure of



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her hand the very moment she accepts the veil. (“This proves it.... You’re exactly where you belong, Dorie,” gushes her erstwhile lover and almost-fiancé). With all respect to miracles and sacred space, it is here that the novel swerves into mawkish hagiography of religious life.

Nevertheless, Weiler’s book is obviously the fruit of considerable research into the various forms of women’s religious life in the Catholic Church. It is here that the book excels, as well as in those places where Weiler, herself a practitioner of the visual arts, probes the historically well-attested nexus between prayer, spirituality and artistic creativity on the other. It is here that she writes powerfully, knowingly even, about how artistic creativity serves as a privileged pathway to the divine.

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Be Strong; Do Not Fear

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (B), SEPT. 6, 2015

Readings: Is 35:4–7; Ps 146:7–10; Jas 2:1–5; Mk 7:31–37

“The Lord watches over the strangers; he upholds the orphan and the widow” (Ps 146:9)

How can people be upset about a lion being killed, even if it was lured out of a protected area and slaughtered? A lion? There are babies being killed throughout the country, the world even, and people are upset about animals? Why is Planned Parenthood not at the top of the news? But what about human lives after conception, do these lives matter at all? Do #BlackLivesMatter? Do the lives of migrants drowning in the Mediterranean matter to anyone?

But to protest about one sort of injustice does not mean that people consider other injustices irrelevant. Expressing moral outrage over animals and their environment need not be at odds with defending the lives of innocent babies in the womb whose lives are brutally ended or with neighbors whose lives are at risk daily from racism, manifested in numerous ways, but most clearly in white supremacist rhetoric that leads even to the mass murder of black Christians praying in the quiet of a church. One can act on behalf of migrants making their way to Europe on the flimsiest of vessels and still speak out about the incarceration rate in U.S. prisons.

While each of us has limited time and energy and will have to choose to which of these various injustices we will lend our voice and effort toward healing, we are not engaged in some sort of zero-sum game of indignation, in which one cause must rule them

all. As Pope Francis has written of St. Francis of Assisi in “Laudato Si;,” “He shows us just how inseparable the bond is between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and interior peace” (No. 10). They are not odd pieces of a puzzle that will not fit together but integral pieces that are all necessary for the puzzle to come together.

But what of another piece of the puzzle, the interior peace of which Pope Francis speaks? How does outrage lend itself to interior peace? This is where it is important to see outrage as a manifestation of that inchoate desire for justice, implanted in us so deeply by God, which itself needs purpose and goal. Our outrage reflects our desire for justice, but the desire for justice needs hope to flourish. It needs the promise: “Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you.”

We must cry out for the oppressed, weep for the loss of innocent life and act, but we must never forget to pray in hope. God has not forgotten and God will not forget. Our hope for justice is an inkling of God’s will, “who executes justice for the oppressed; who gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets the prisoners free; the Lord opens the eyes of the blind. The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous. The Lord watches over the strangers; he upholds the orphan and the widow, but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.” God has not

suddenly turned his back on the prisoners, the weak and the oppressed or forgotten the ways of wickedness. God calls us to be strong, to not fear and to act with hope.

As we act, we know that God is with us. Action begins at home, says James, by not making distinctions among the poor and the rich at church, treating the “poor person in shabby clothes” with disdain and “the one wearing the fine clothes” with honor. Think of Jesus’



PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Though we can feel overwhelmed by injustice and sin in the world, God asks us to have hope. How can you act in response to injustice? Pray for guidance that you may implement justice more fully in your life.

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ministry, how ordinary and mundane it was in many ways, reaching out to individuals as he walked a particular and small patch of this earth. Jesus responded to human need and suffering around him by healing a deaf man, feeding the hungry—each person of value in God’s plan to redeem humanity. That plan of redemption has not come to an end, and we can act in concert with it, for “the God who created the universe out of nothing can also intervene in this world and overcome every form of evil. Injustice is not invincible” (“Laudato Si;” No. 74). Indeed, God’s word is clear: true justice is our hope and destiny.

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The Things of God

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (B), SEPT. 13, 2015

Readings: Is 50:5–9; Ps 116:1–9; Jas 2:14–18; Mk 8:27–35

“For you are setting your mind on human things” (Mk 8:33)

Jesus bluntly rebukes Peter, telling him, “You are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.” There are two contexts for this rebuke: one is the particular circumstance in which Peter himself rebuked Jesus for revealing his Passion; and the other is the general human reality in which all people struggle to understand the division of human things and divine things.

In the first context, an interesting question is, What did Peter actually say to Jesus? Given that Jesus has just disclosed that “the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again,” it is not a stretch to believe that Peter rejected the need for the Son of Man to suffer and die. Jesus’ divinely ordained and freely chosen destiny is, in this context, the “divine things” (the Greek is literally “the things of God,” *ta tou theou*).

More concretely, though, what might these “human things” (“the things of human beings,” *ta tôn anthrôpôn*) be? What are the things that draw us away from God’s ways and desires? Although “human things” in themselves are not necessarily negative—avoiding suffering and death is not inherently wrong—what seems to be the case is that whenever (divine) values and (human) preferences come into conflict, one chooses the “divine thing.” Values and preferences are not always at odds, but when they are, the

choice must be made for the things of God.

What things did Peter tell Jesus to choose? When we reflect on Peter telling Jesus to choose the “human thing,” it is hard to avoid considering the concrete temptations Satan offered Jesus in the Synoptic Gospel narratives, since it is Jesus who raises the specter of Satan here in Caesarea Philippi. It seems likely that Jesus does not consider Peter as Satan, but that the temptations Peter offers in the guise of helping Jesus are connected to the temptations of Satan that we know from Matthew and Luke—that is, the basic temptations that underlie all “human things.”

In the temptation accounts, Jesus is offered the power to satisfy all his earthly hungers, the power to presume upon God’s will and favor, and the power over all kingdoms. Wealth, authority and fame—what more could a person want? Did Peter tempt Jesus with a plea for him not to die at the hands of foreign oppressors, the Romans, but to institute God’s kingdom by conquering them militarily and installing himself as king? While it is impossible to know precisely what temptation Peter called upon Jesus to accept, it is not too much to believe that he asked him to act on his power and authority and bring about the kingdom of God in a way that aligned with “human things,” that involved shows of force, might and revenge.

When Peter identified Jesus as the Messiah, he must have had particular ideas not just of what this meant for the Messiah, God’s Anointed One, but for those who were the Messiah’s closest friends, his apostles and disciples. Whatever kingdom Peter’s mind conjured, it probably did not involve denying himself and taking up his cross to follow Jesus or losing his life for the Gospel. What kind of kingdom is that? Feel for Peter for a moment. What kind of ridiculous kingdom is built on the broken body of a defeated Messiah?

This is the kingdom of “divine things,” the kingdom of paradox. Tomas Halik, the Czech priest and theologian, says, “If we have never had the feeling that what Jesus wants of us is absurd, crazy, impossible, then we’ve probably either been too hasty in taming or diluting the radical nature

PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Jesus speaks very bluntly to Peter about the things of God and the things of human beings. As Jesus speaks to you about divine and human things, does it seem too difficult? Do you have any questions for Jesus?

of his teaching by soothing intellectualizing interpretations, or (mostly naïvely, illusorily or even hypocritically) we have too easily forgotten just to what extent—in our thinking, customs, and actions—we are rooted ‘in this world’ where totally different rules apply” (*Night of the Confessor*, p. 27). Jesus offers us the things of God, the things in which we save our lives by losing them and build a kingdom whose divine power is seen as human weakness.

JOHN W. MARTENS

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