

America

An aerial night photograph of Lower Manhattan, New York City. The Freedom Tower stands prominently in the center, its glass facade reflecting the city lights and the dark sky. The surrounding skyscrapers are also illuminated, creating a dense grid of light against the dark blue night sky. The Hudson River is visible to the left, and the East River to the right. The overall scene is a vibrant display of urban architecture at night.

THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC REVIEW

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What Remains

BUILDING HOPE
15 YEARS AFTER 9/11

JUDITH DUPRÉ
RYAN McEVOY
CHRISTOPHER PRAMUK

ROBERT DAVID SULLIVAN
ON DONALD TRUMP'S
CATHOLIC PROBLEM

OF MANY THINGS

I can virtually guarantee you that if you attend Mass on Sunday morning in any parish in the United States, you will find yourself sitting in a pew near someone who disagrees with you about what the public policy should be on abortion. Or same-sex marriage. Or the death penalty. While the teaching of the church on the moral dimensions of these issues is clear and consistent, there is today, as there has always been, a spirited debate about how to apply those moral principles in the public realm, one that is democratic, diverse and nonsectarian. As John Courtney Murray, S.J. once wrote, in a pluralistic society “there are circumstances in which human authority has neither mandate nor duty nor right to use its coercive power against error and evil.”

In other words, it does not necessarily follow from the fact that something is immoral that it should be illegal. Thus our public policy choices belong to the realm of prudential judgment. To be sure, the church’s magisterium has supported specific public policy solutions in the areas of abortion, the death penalty, prostitution and other contentious issues. And not all of those issues involve the same level of moral gravity. Yet Catholics are still free to disagree with one another in good conscience, if not about the moral principles at stake, then certainly about the prudential application of those principles in the public square.

For this reason it is both imprudent and impractical to use an individual’s position on a public policy question, even a life-and-death issue like abortion or the death penalty, as the only basis for determining whether they have a right to sit next to us in church on Sunday morning. I am pro-life. I believe that abortion should be illegal in this country in almost every circumstance. But I can’t imagine saying to the person sitting next to me at Mass, the one who disagrees with me on what the public policy on abortion should be, that he or

she is somehow less Catholic than I am by virtue of that simple fact. I certainly wouldn’t tell them to leave, nor would I protest their arrival at the front door of the church.

Yet this is precisely what happened recently to Tim Kaine. The Democratic vice-presidential nominee was met by a small group of protestors at the parish church in Richmond, Va., where he has attended Mass for 30 years. According to WTVR-TV, “the demonstrators claim the Virginia senator’s voting record contradicts the Catholic faith on issues of abortion and gay marriage.” One organizer of the protest told reporters, based presumably on the fact that the senator has a lamentably near-perfect voting score from Planned Parenthood, that Mr. Kaine “is not America’s dad at all.... He’s really, all I can say, is evil.” Whatever the protester meant, that statement is manifestly uncharitable.

We should note for the record that a much larger crowd enthusiastically greeted “Kaine and his wife, Anne Holton, the Sunday after Clinton picked him as her running mate.” Prescinding from the fact that I strongly disagree with Mr. Kaine about the public policy question of abortion and that this magazine has been sharply critical of his position in a recent editorial (see: **Am.**, 8/15), if I belonged to his parish, I would be standing with the folks who were welcoming him. And I bet that, like the congregation itself, the welcoming crowd would be a mix of “pro-life” and “pro-choice” people. The reason is simple: Our fundamental identity and unity as Catholic Christians does not reside in our allegiance to a set of ideas, much less to some political manifesto. Our unity resides in the person of Jesus Christ. For us, as I have often said, truth is ultimately a person—a “someone” we encounter rather than a “something” with which we beat each other over the head. In other words, jeering your fellow Catholics as they enter the church on Sunday is neither Catholic nor particularly pro-life.

MATT MALONE, S.J.

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Elizabeth Dias, winner of **America's** George W. Hunt, S.J., Prize, discusses the **canonization of Mother Teresa**. Plus, Michael O'Loughlin reports on the **faith lives of Trump and Clinton**. More digital highlights at americamagazine.org/webfeatures.



Prisons Barred

The news was big, the numbers behind it less so: The federal government announced it will end its use of private prisons, having deemed them less safe and less effective than government-run facilities. This is welcome news to those who are hoping for prison reform, yet the total number of facilities affected is only 13 and includes approximately 22,000 inmates. The decision, announced in a memo on Aug. 18 by the U.S. deputy attorney general, Sally Yates, does not affect state prisons, where the majority of inmates in the United States are held. It also excludes immigration detention centers, which, although federally run, are overseen by the Department of Homeland Security.

At the federal level, the change will be gradual: Over the next several years, the government will refrain from renewing contracts with private facilities or will greatly reduce the contracts with them. Although the scale of the decision may seem small and the pace slow, the implications for the prison system could be substantial. This decision creates a model for states to follow. The California State Assembly already has taken steps toward ending contracts for these centers. The Justice Department reported higher rates of assaults at the privately run facilities, putting both inmates and correctional officers at greater risk of injury. Prisons at the state and local level, as well as the immigration detention centers, should also begin to disassociate themselves from private prisons, the number of which has increased over the past 35 years. This move by the Justice Department is a step in the right direction, but for those who hope for widespread prison reform, there remains a long road ahead.

More Than the Minimum

An early study of the increase in the minimum wage to \$11 in Seattle in 2015 suggests that the rise did not have a significant effect on the overall earnings of low-wage workers. While affected employees did bring home higher hourly wages, they also worked slightly fewer hours on average. Researchers at the University of Washington estimated that the new legal minimum was responsible for an average \$0.73 per hour raise for the low-wage workers. The authors note, however, that while the minimum wage increase clearly helped those workers who kept the same number of hours, “offsetting effects on low-wage worker hours and employment muted the impact on labor earnings.”

This study reinforces the need for continued local- and state-level experimentation and research to understand

how increases in the minimum wage affect both low-wage workers and the economy in general. But even these early results—especially in a period when Seattle’s economy was strong—suggest that minimum-wage hikes alone are not a sufficient policy solution for stagnant earnings and may put some downward pressure on employment growth.

A report in *The Wall Street Journal* on Aug. 23 noted that many national companies have recently increased wages for workers at the bottom of the pay scale. Much of the pressure to do so, of course, has been generated by the campaigns for minimum-wage increases. There are other policy avenues that also deserve attention from protesters and legislators alike, especially strengthening the Earned Income Tax Credit, which is designed precisely to increase low-wage income without depressing employment. Perhaps the E.I.T.C. needs a slogan as catchy as “Fight for \$15.”

Privacy at Risk

When Apple refused to help the F.B.I. hack into the iPhone of a shooter in the attack last December in San Bernardino, both sides claimed their actions defended the common good. Apple warned that intentionally breaking their own software would put the safety and privacy of millions of their customers at risk. The government said that not accessing the phone to gather more intelligence would put the public at risk. They also claimed they could be trusted with secret backdoors into software and devices—that is, special access that makes systems, including those of private companies, vulnerable. The tech world was not so optimistic.

In August, a highly sensitive toolkit of exploits—taking advantage of previously unknown vulnerabilities—held by the National Security Agency was leaked. Apple was right.

To be sure, intelligence gathering and data collection are important tools for law enforcement, but they also require strong checks and balances. The leaked N.S.A. exploits have compromised the security of widely used network equipment found in our offices and schools. The privacy and safety of U.S. citizens are no longer just in the hands of the N.S.A.; malicious hackers and foreign governments can join the surveillance party. There are very few binding guidelines for the use and reporting of new vulnerabilities and hacks. When the N.S.A., whose mission includes not only intelligence and surveillance but also information security, discovers new vulnerabilities, it does not have to inform hardware or software makers. Without strong rules for reporting technological vulnerabilities to hardware and software makers, the government is failing to truly protect the common good.

Reading, a Social Good



A recent study reported in *The New York Times* (8/3) determined that people who read books live an average of almost two years longer than nonreaders. Indeed, the lives of readers are likely to be not only longer but deeper. Reading can help develop empathy and build the capacity for more compassion, joy and love. As the United States observes September as National Literacy Month and students return to school, that is all the more reason to be concerned about access to reading and interest in it.

Americans' current engagement in reading is somewhat difficult to assess. More than a decade ago, the National Endowment for the Arts issued a report called "Reading at Risk" (2004), concluding that the percentage of adult Americans reading literature had dropped dramatically. But a nearly contemporaneous Gallup survey in 2005 found that almost half of all Americans were reading a book at the time, an increase over the 1990 rate and more than double the 1957 rate. More recently, a Pew Research Center report in 2015 found that 80 percent of Americans between the ages of 16 and 29 had read a book in the past year and even showed that people in that age range were more likely than those over 30 to be book readers. The Pew data also show a marked increase in the variety of ways people read books, not only on e-readers but also on smartphones or tablets.

As encouraging as some of that data may be, however, there are also clear causes for concern. Literacy survey data collected in 2012 and 2014, the most recent available, show that 17 percent of Americans between the ages of 16 and 65 read at or below the lowest of the four levels of literacy competency assessed. Further, the share of those lacking reading skills is higher among the population that is unemployed or simply not in the labor force.

There are also indications that struggles with literacy can be generationally entrenched. The Foundation for Child Development found that children whose mothers had not graduated from high school, when compared with those whose mothers had a bachelor's degree, were less than one third as likely to be reading proficiently in eighth grade. According to their report, "Mother's Education and Children's Outcomes" (2014), one in every eight children in the United States lives with a mother who has not graduated from high school. And "Children, Teens, and Reading" (Common Sense Media, 2014) documents a significant reading achievement gap between white and black or Hispanic students.

The correlations between socioeconomic status and

reading ability are complicated. Inequitable distribution of resources and underfunding in school systems surely contribute, as does the fact that better-off families enjoy more time and flexibility for parents to act on their desire to read with children. No matter what is ultimately at the bottom of the link between poverty and literacy challenges, these statistics serve as a reminder that reading must not be treated as a luxury but as a basic and necessary human need that calls for a community response.

The reading process starts within the family, ideally with parents reading to their children at as early an age as possible. Schools, libraries and church communities should help prepare parents and provide them not only with books but also encouragement to read with their children, as a demonstration that they are important and loved.

Commitment to reading in schools should also be strengthened, to inculcate not only proficiency in reading skills but also a love of the worlds and insights that books open to readers. Both the traditional Great Books and more recent works from a wider variety of authors are important to help foster empathy and curiosity about the lives of others. In the recent best seller *Lit Up* (reviewed in *Am.*, 8/29), David Denby reports on a year spent monitoring English classes in three different New York and Connecticut public high schools. He found teachers determined to motivate their students to read not only classics like Hemingway, Orwell and Hawthorne, but also authors such as Alice Walker and Amy Tan.

These students became passionately involved through creative assignments and fiery classroom debates. Books, one of our oldest technologies, helped connect them to different experiences, cultures and ideas with greater depth than even the most modern social media networks can offer.

Reading skills are necessary for any participation in the modern economy. But even more important, reading—especially of fiction—inspires readers, helping them grow in empathy, civility, spirituality and political responsibility. Lack of interest in reading is a social ill, leaving people less able to enter the marketplace of ideas or rescue their fellow citizens from injustice. Encouraging a love for reading is likely not only to improve the economic quality of life but also to deepen and enrich life shared together in society.

REPLY ALL

Incompatible Positions

Re “Defend the Hyde Amendment” (Editorial, 8/15): There is no such thing as a pro-life Democratic Party position. It was excluded from the party in 1992 when they refused to let Pennsylvania’s Gov. Bob Casey Sr. (a defendant in that year’s Supreme Court case, *Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey*) speak at the Democratic National Convention. He wanted to give a pro-life speech. The party has degenerated further since then, as pro-life Democrats have slowly departed (from the party or this life). Today, no Democratic politician can aspire to the higher offices unless they get on the abortion train.

The editors write, “But incoherent as it is, being ‘personally opposed’ at least maintains some minimal contact with the difficult moral reality of abortion.” I think the personally-opposed excuse is hypocritical. The goal of that argument, ever since Gov. Mario Cuomo made it at the University of Notre Dame, is to fool pro-life voters into thinking one can be pro-life and Democratic, or principally against and practically for abortion.

Another hypocritical position is to say one can’t be pro-life if one doesn’t agree to more government spending. The implication is that the unborn child doesn’t deserve birth if the government won’t pay a ransom to the mother. Try this out with the slavery argument: Do slaves not deserve freedom if there is no government money to support them when they are free?

TIM O’LEARY
Online Comment

Half the Story

The Hyde Amendment is only half of what is needed. All the Hyde

Amendment does is prevent federal funding of abortion. It does not protect life, because children, born and unborn, may still die because of lack of medical care, lack of nutrition, lack of so much that is needed for a healthy life.

Until the nation provides full protection for life, the claim of pro-life belongs only to those who are fighting to change the anti-life laws and culture that says once the child is born it is no longer our responsibility. Catholic social teaching provides for a full pro-life policy. That is what we need to promote.

ROBERT KLAHN
Online Comment

Blind Spot

In “Out of the Shadows,” by Kevin Clarke (8/15), we once again find a long and concerned article about “people with disabilities,” in which autism, childhood disorders, wheelchair accessibility, deafness and even multilingualism are carefully dissected. Nowhere is there mention of the needs of blind parishioners. “Resources for the Parish” listed at the end of the article omits the Xavier Society for the Blind, which since 1900 has provided religious and spiritual material for the blind and visually impaired at no charge. We provide the monthly liturgical texts in Braille for the many blind lectors as well as blind parishioners who simply want to be part of the parish. We also have a training handbook for blind lectors in Braille. We transcribe catechisms for children and for adults in the catechumenate, so blind people can have the same access as sighted.

The biggest problem for blind lectors is not access to the church building but the pastors who refuse even to give them a chance to read. I suspect the comment at the beginning of the article is particularly relevant to blind

Catholics: They don’t come because they have gone to another church where they have been made to feel welcome.

I am delighted that the church is—maybe—making a more serious effort to be truly inclusive. I am, however, as depressed as I was nine years ago when I went to a Mass at St. Patrick’s Cathedral in New York for people with disabilities. I found a ramp for the wheelchair reader; I found a translator on the altar for the deaf members, and there was even a deaf choir who signed a hymn after Communion. Not a piece of Braille in the place, and there were a number of people with white canes or seeing-eye dogs. When I commented on that, the organizers were duly embarrassed; no one had thought of it.

JOHN SHEEHAN, S.J.
Online Comment

Honorable Service

Re “What Are You Signing Up For?” by Richard Becker (8/1): I was particularly affected by Mr. Becker’s concerns as a father of a young man registering with the Selective Service. As a Vietnam-era Army veteran, the son of a combat-disabled graduate of West Point, the brother of two West Pointers and the father of an Army veteran, I understand more than most the anguish of being a son, brother and parent of children registering for the Selective Service. I shudder thinking we may begin registering our daughters.

Signing up for the Selective Service is an honorable civil commitment to be available in response to the world’s many threats if necessary. We, as freedom-loving Americans, need to take prudent and reasonable measures necessary to defend ourselves, our friends and the innocents of this world. Registering with the Selective Service reinforces our ability to undertake

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the needed measures to protect those needing our assistance.

BRIAN FLANAGAN
St. James, N.C.

Olympic Values

Re “Olympic Crackdown” (Current Comment, 8/1): While I know that the International Olympic Committee has specific standards by which this major athletic event is controlled, perhaps it is time to consider including a values piece in the criteria. For example, how impossible would it be to deny a nation the option of holding the Olympic Games if helpless people need to be displaced in order to do so? The Games advertise that they bring the world together and that they promote peace, but separating people from their homes, however humble, is divisive. A more multidimensional scale of standards for allowing a country to host the games would seem to be in order.

RICHARD BOOTH
Online Comment

L.G.B.T. Apology

In “Two Communities, One Conversation” (7/18), Judith Valente writes that Pope Francis, speaking about the Orlando shootings, suggested that the Catholic Church should seek forgiveness from the L.G.B.T. community, which has been marginalized. As a point of clarification, I believe the pope was speaking of individual Catholics who have mistreated or mis-spoken about members of the L.G.B.T. community. To say the Catholic Church seeks forgiveness suggests that the church’s doctrine on homosexuality has changed. Such is not the case. It has also not changed with respect to premarital sex, for that matter.

KEN BALASKOVITS
Park Ridge, Ill.

Communion Clarification

Timothy P. O’Malley has done a service to mutual understanding

in “Longing for Communion” (7/18). I must, however, note three issues that call for clarification.

Cardinal Robert Sarah is quoted as saying that “priestly orders are null and void after a church is separated from Rome.” Catholic teaching and practice recognizes the full validity of the orders of many churches not in communion with the Holy See. We fully recognize the orders of the Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, Polish National Catholics and others.

Pope Francis was not the first to note that married couples from separated churches or communities already share two sacraments, baptism and marriage. His response to the Lutheran woman in Rome is in accord with paragraph 160 of the Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism published by the Holy See in 1993. This document notes that interchurch couples already share two sacraments. Thus the Roman document, while stating that such spouses sharing Communion can only be exceptional, does state that it is a possibility.

Finally, I fear that Dr. O’Malley leaves the impression that it is never possible for members of other churches to receive Communion in a

Catholic Church. The document mentioned above, in paragraph 131, does allow for a Catholic minister to share Communion (and penance and anointing of the sick) with one who is at the time unable to receive from his or her own church, asks at his or her own initiative, manifests Catholic faith in the sacrament and is properly disposed. In his beautiful statement on ecumenism, “Ut Unum Sint,” St. John Paul II noted that it is a wonderful thing that at such moments of need the Catholic Church can share Communion with fellow Christians.

(MSGR.) DONALD BECKMANN
Long Beach, N.Y.

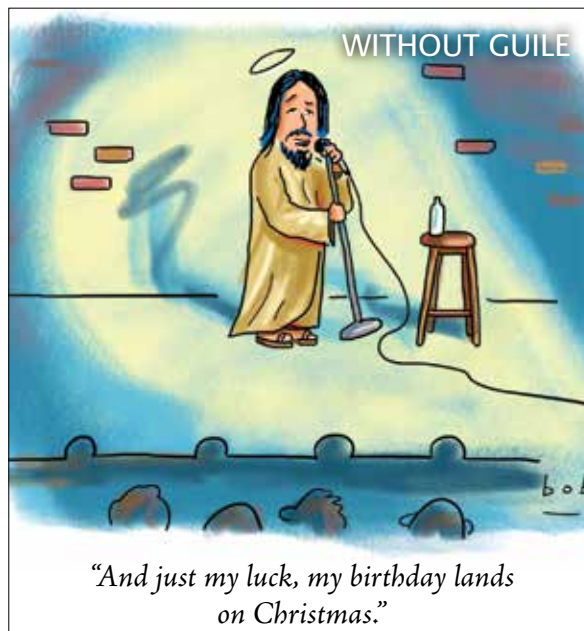
The writer, pastor of St. Ignatius Martyr Church in Long Beach, N.Y., was the director of ecumenical and interreligious affairs for the Diocese of Rockville Centre for 26 years.

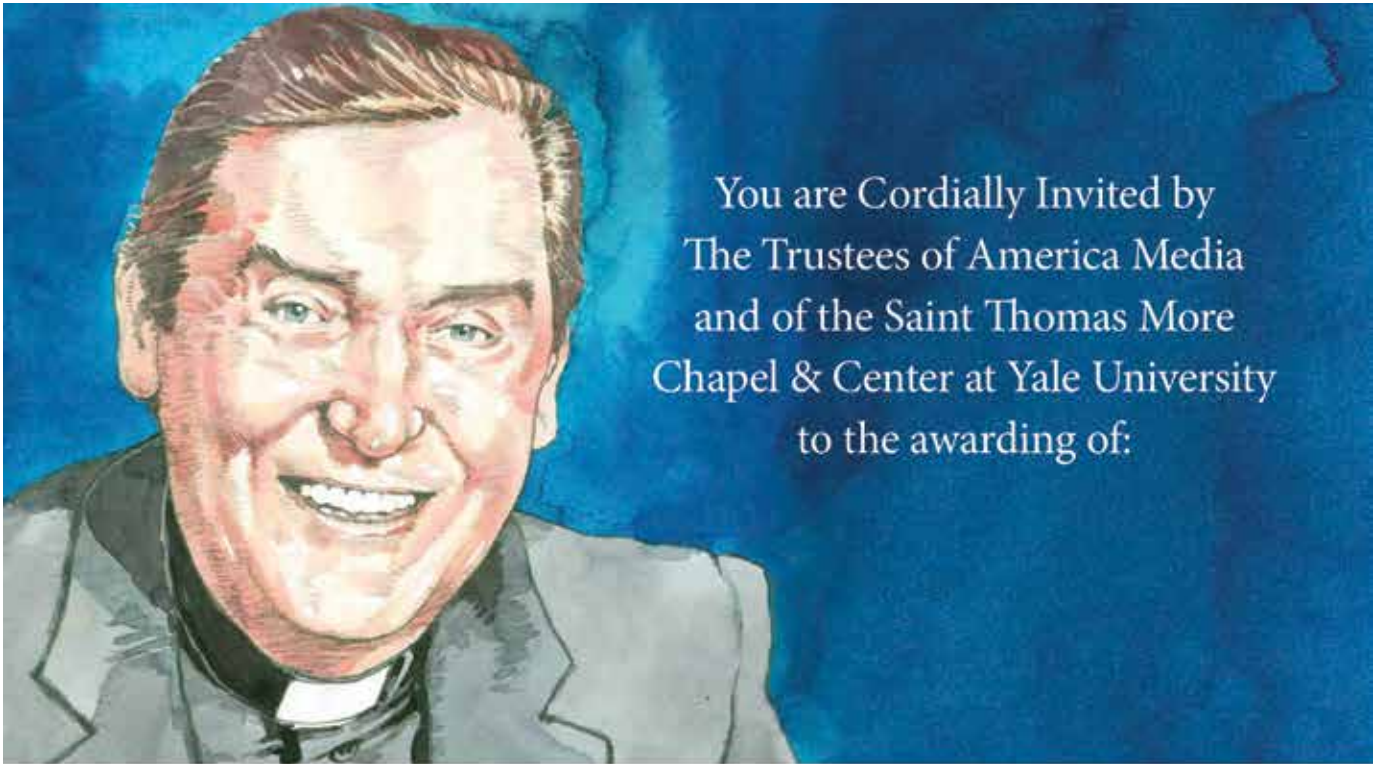
The Reductive Feminist

Re “Feminism Has Not Lost Its Soul,” by Helen Alvaré (7/4): The problem with both the Catholic Church and feminism is that they tend to define women solely in terms of sexuality and reproductive ability. Both are trying to control the power of sexuality and reproduction—when sexuality and reproduction are private matters.

As for defining women’s work solely as working for the poor and marginalized, it is noble work but not the only work that women can or should be doing. The poor and marginalized need truth and beauty—sometimes more than they need more clothes and food. Within the church, speaking the truth is sadly neglected work that women need to be doing. Jesus talked to women about the kingdom of heaven, not about their wombs or sexuality. The church and the women in it need to be following his example.

LISA WEBER
Online Comment





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LOUISIANA

Clean Up Begins After Historic Flooding in Baton Rouge Area



AN UNPRECEDENTED FLOOD. A statue of Mary is partially submerged by flooding in Sorrento, La., on Aug. 20.

Water lapped at the heels of the Rev. Michael Galea, the still steady rain a constant reminder of Mother Nature's unfinished business. Father Galea, pastor at Holy Rosary Church in St. Amant, La., estimated that as many as 90 percent of his parishioners had been affected in some way during the historic flooding that reached nearly every corner of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

"It's going to change the whole dynamic of Holy Rosary as a parish as we know it," Father Galea told *The Catholic Commentator*, the diocesan newspaper. "It's not going to be the same. And we are going to lose quite a bit of people if they choose to move away."

"But hopefully, with love and compassion and a lot of hugs, we can become a family all over again."

How to come together again as a community, parish or even over a family meal is a question many are asking in the wake of the rain—20 inches fell in as many hours—and floods that have devastated the region.

In Livingston Parish, a civil jurisdiction, at least 75 percent of residents suffered some type of water damage. Residents in East Baton Rouge, Ascension and Tangipahoa parishes also were forced to dig out.

As clean-up began, mountains of debris rose on residential streets. Many schools will be closed for weeks, and businesses will struggle to reopen. Curfews

have been enacted in civil parishes throughout the area to diminish the threat of looting.

As many as 100,000 homes may have been damaged, with thousands fleeing to shelters. The floodwaters claimed 13 lives; many survived only after being rescued from rooftops, scenes reminiscent of Hurricane Katrina 11 years ago.

"We were in straight-up survival mode," said Tim Hasenkampf, a Baton Rouge firefighter who lost his home in Port Vincent.

"It's been tough," added Hasenkampf. He and a friend had spent hours in their private boats rescuing people from homes.

According to Joe Ingraham, chief financial officer for the Baton Rouge Diocese, six churches took on water, and the parish schools at two of those were also damaged. Cristo Rey Baton Rouge Franciscan High School, which opened in August, was inundated with four feet of water and has to relocate.

"It could have been worse, when you see four churches out of 71 severely damaged," Ingraham said. "The worst thing is the damage to our parishioners and their homes."

The storm, which began on Aug. 12, drove water into areas that had never experienced flooding before. Initially, torrential rains from the slow-moving system caused street flooding, which also forced water into homes. But the greater damage came in the days that followed as area rivers overflowed their banks into neighborhoods, businesses and even major thoroughfares.

Along I-12, some motorists were trapped in their cars for more than 30 hours, presenting a unique opportunity for ministry for the Rev. Jamin David, pastor at St. Margaret of Scotland Church in Albany.

"We opened up our facilities to ev-

everyone,” Father David said. “It became a humanitarian effort. Really, it was the multiplication of the fishes.”

He said one stranded motorist was a caterer initially headed to Abita Springs, less than 40 miles from Albany. The caterer asked if she could use the parish’s stove to cook the food

she had with her so it would not go to waste.

“We opened up the kitchen and fed about 500 people,” Father David said. Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Baton Rouge has been responding to the unprecedented crisis and is accepting donations at www.ccdiobr.org.

ITALY

Suffering and Heroism After Quake

As hope of finding any more survivors dimmed, the official death toll after a magnitude 6.0 earthquake rocked central Italy reached 290 on Aug. 29. The quake and over 300 aftershocks devastated the homes and lives of thousands of people in the early hours of the morning of Aug. 24.

At least 400 people have been injured, over 2,000 are without a home and an unknown number at press time were still buried under the ruins of their homes in mountain villages. A massive rescue operation involving over 4,000 civil protection workers and firefighters had managed to save the lives of a large number of people, including children.

Pope Francis expressed “his heartfelt sorrow and spiritual closeness” to all those hit by the powerful earthquake. He offered his prayers at the beginning of his weekly public audience in St. Peter’s Square on Aug. 24. Putting aside his prepared text, he invited the thousands of Italians and pilgrims present to join him in

praying the rosary for the earthquake’s many victims.

The Vatican later announced that Pope Francis had sent a team of six members of the Vatican City State fire brigade to a particularly hard-hit community, Amatrice, “as a concrete sign of his closeness” to the people there. They will join the Italian civil protection rescue effort.

Italians followed distressing and emotional scenes on television, as heroic rescuers worked against the clock to save many young and old—in spite of lesser earthquakes, including one of four-plus magnitude—and wave after wave of aftershocks.

Central Italy’s sorrow and pain are great. The stories of heroic deeds of rescuers, and of ordinary men and women, are great, too. One particularly moving episode captured by local media involved one desperate father, who on being alerted to the earthquake, drove immediately with his wife through the night from Rome to Pescara del Tronto. He succeeded in finding and, with the help of rescuers, saving his two boys—Samuele and Leone—who had been buried under the rubble of their collapsed home. They were saved also thanks to their grandmother, Valentina, who got them to get under the bed when the earthquake started.

Another moment that brought great joy came 17 hours after the earthquake, when firefighters managed to extract 4-year-old Giorgia Rinaldo, who was buried under her destroyed house. Sadly, they could not save her 9-year-old sister, Giulia, who was discovered shielding her younger sister in an embrace.

A school that had been fortified against quakes just four years ago crumbled in the now obliterated town of Amatrice, raising many questions for Italian investigators who are looking into concerns that shoddy construction material may be partly to blame for the high death toll.

The Italian church has already donated one million euros to the relief efforts, and on Sept. 18 a collection will be held in all the churches across the country to raise



A SISTER’S SAVING EMBRACE. Firefighters carry the coffin of 9-year-old Giulia Rinaldo in Ascoli Piceno, Italy, on Aug. 27.

PHOTO: AP PHOTO/ANDREW MEDICHINI

money to help the victims of this latest natural disaster, whose epicenter was just over 100 miles from Rome. The Civil Protection Agency, helped by a variety of associations, is setting up tents to provide food and shelter to 2,000 people in the stricken zones. But fear of more tremblers is widespread throughout central Italy, where so many have died and where many homes, public buildings and churches are no more. **GERARD O'CONNELL**

Border Children Return

Thousands of children trying to escape gang violence and poverty in Central America have made their way to the United States this year—and there is no sign that the flow is letting up, the U.N. children's agency said in a report released on Aug. 23. In the first six months of 2016, Unicef said almost 26,000 unaccompanied children were apprehended at the U.S. border along with 29,700 people traveling in family groups, mostly mothers and young children. Most are from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, three countries with some of the world's highest murder and poverty rates, Unicef said. "It is heart-rending to think of these children—most of them teenagers, but some even younger—making the grueling and extremely dangerous journey in search of safety and a better life," Unicef's deputy executive director, Justin Forsyth, said in the report. Unicef officials worry that any children deported to home countries "could be killed or raped by the gangs they sought to escape in the first place."

Condemning Terror

U.S. Catholic leaders and some of Iran's top religious figures issued a joint declaration that calls for the end of weapons of mass destruction and of terrorism

NEWS BRIEFS

Responding to inquiries from the A.C.L.U. and other groups, the non-profit Catholic organization SSM Health agreed to **provide birth control pills** at the 26 clinics inside Walgreens stores in the St. Louis area that it began operating on Aug. 25. + On Aug. 26, France's top administrative court overturned a ban on burkinis, **ending a swimsuit crackdown** that has divided the country and provoked shock around the world. + A suspect has been arrested after **Sister Margaret Held and Sister Paula Merrill**, who worked as nurses among the poor in rural Mississippi, were found slain in their home in Durant, Miss., on Aug. 25. + Cardinal Anthony Olubunmi Okogie of Nigeria appealed to President Muhammadu Buhari in a letter publicized in late August to **speed up reforms** he had promised, warning, "May it not be written on the pages of history that Nigerians die of starvation under your watch." + The Veteran South African anti-apartheid campaigner **Bishop Desmond Tutu** checked into a Cape Town hospital for treatment against a recurring infection, his daughter, Thandeka Tutu-Gxashe, said on Aug. 24.



Sister Margaret Held and Sister Paula Merrill

and of assigning blame for terrorist acts to an entire religion. "Christianity and Islam share a commitment to love and respect for the life, dignity and welfare of all members of the human community," said the declaration, made public on Aug. 24. The declaration called the development and use of weapons of mass destruction and acts of terrorism immoral and called on all nations "to reject acquiring such weapons and call on those who possess them to rid themselves of these indiscriminate weapons, including chemical, biological and nuclear weapons."

Discernment Needed

In a meeting with Polish Jesuits, Pope Francis worried that too many seminaries teach a rigid list of rules that make it difficult or impossible for priests to respond to the real-life situations of those who come to them seek-

ing guidance. "Some priestly formation programs run the risk of educating in the light of overly clear and distinct ideas, and therefore to act within limits and criteria that are rigidly defined a priori, and that set aside concrete situations," the pope said during a meeting with 28 Polish Jesuits in Krakow during World Youth Day on July 30. The pope asked the Jesuits to begin an outreach to diocesan seminaries and diocesan priests, sharing with them the prayerful and careful art of discernment as taught by St. Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Jesuits. "The church today needs to grow in the ability of spiritual discernment," the pope said. Without "the wisdom of discernment," he said, "the seminarians, when they become priests, find themselves in difficulty in accompanying the life of so many young people and adults."

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

DISPATCH | NEW YORK

A Hate Crime in Queens?

The borough's Bangladeshi community remained tense more than a week after two men were gunned down a few blocks from a humble storefront mosque in the Ozone Park neighborhood of Queens on Aug. 13. Jewel Chowdhury, the general secretary of the Jalalabad Association of America, says the Muslim community's women were hesitant to walk the streets of their neighborhood in traditional dress and men were unwilling to head to Friday prayers unaccompanied. No one was sure if the unprovoked killings would prove an unhappy but isolated incident or the beginning of something much worse.

New York police had a suspect in custody—Oscar Morel, a Brooklyn resident—but were unable to offer a motive in the attack. Among the friends, families and neighbors of the two victims, however, there was considerably less uncertainty. "It was a hate crime," Mr. Chowdhury says bluntly. "I firmly believe that."

"If a person comes from behind and he shoots someone dead and he does not ask for watches, he does not ask for money, what is it? If it is not a hate crime, what would it be?" Mr. Chowdhury asks. "It is common sense; it is hate."

Maulama Akonjee, imam of the Al-Furqan Jame mosque, had just presided over afternoon services and was walking home with Thara Uddin, a member of the mosque, when both men were gunned down in broad daylight. The imam was described as a quiet, devout man, a community leader who

preached peace. "A man like him cannot be shot dead like this," one disbelieving community member told local media.

Mr. Chowdhury's organization, a social and advocacy group for immigrants from the Sylhet region of Bangladesh, includes more than 1,000 members from this close-knit community of some 30,000 to 40,000 strong in Ozone Park. The Bangladeshi immigrant community shares these Ozone

'If it is not a hate crime, what would it be?' Mr. Chowdhury asks. 'It is hate.'

Park streets with immigrants from Central and South America, China and other parts of Asia. The neighborhood has long been a launching pad for new arrivals in the United States.

Like other New Yorkers, many immigrants from Bangladesh have experienced some degree of street harassment. But in some instances these encounters, Mr. Chowdhury said, have escalated to include angry references to religion or national origins, and sometimes inexplicable attacks simply begin that way. Mr. Chowdhury, a Queens resident for 29 years, said he has never experienced anything like the hostility toward Muslim immigrants he is seeing now on the streets of New York.

He blames the difference on this election season's heated political rhetoric, especially anti-Muslim hysteria he believes is being inflamed by a former Queens resident, the presidential candidate Donald J. Trump. While the candidate may not be directly encour-

aging violence, Mr. Chowdhury argues that his comments, particularly a call for a moratorium on immigration by Muslims, may be provoking potentially violent people in unpredictable ways.

That sentiment, widespread in the community, was quickly countered by a statement from the Trump campaign, which described as "irresponsible and obviously politically motivated" any effort to connect the candidate's comments or positions with possible hate crimes.

As police continue to investigate a possible motive in the attack, Ozone Park's Muslim residents have been pressing for stronger security. Mr. Chowdhury said the Jalalabad Association is seeking to put together a meeting with community and police leaders to discuss safety measures around mosques. He thinks additional security cameras and more police patrols will likely be part of whatever additional arrangements are decided. Beyond such precautions, he believes better communication among all members of the Ozone Park community is deeply warranted. He invites non-Muslims to visit their neighbors' mosques, to learn for themselves what is taking place inside them.

In the meantime, he hopes to bring fear in his community to an end, especially the new fears he sees in the youngest members of the Bangladeshi community, the children of this first generation of immigrants. He worries that they are suddenly looking forward to a far less certain future in the United States. "Everyone came here with a dream to build a better future, to build a future for their children," says Mr. Chowdhury. Now, in the aftermath of the murders, the community remains "shocked and devastated."

"This is not the America we want to live in," he says.

KEVIN CLARKE

KEVIN CLARKE is a senior editor and chief correspondent for *America*.

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MOTHER TERESA CANONIZATION
SEPTEMBER 4TH, 2016



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Bad Choices

Labor Day has traditionally signaled the homestretch for presidential campaigns, but there is nothing traditional about this election.

These are not typical nominees. Hillary Clinton is the first woman and the first former first lady nominated by a major party. Donald J. Trump is a complete outsider, who defeated a dozen governors and senators. They have the worst favorability ratings for presidential candidates in polling history. Most people say Mrs. Clinton is untrustworthy, and two thirds of Americans say Mr. Trump is “not qualified” and lacks the temperament to be president. Conventional wisdom has often been wrong, but it is probably true that the only candidates they could defeat are each other.

Some of the religious dimensions in this demoralizing campaign have been unexpected as well. A recent Pew poll reports that Mrs. Clinton leads Mr. Trump 56 percent to 39 percent among Catholics, who have consistently voted for the winner more than other religious groups. Not surprisingly, Hispanic Catholics oppose a candidate who began his campaign by calling Mexican immigrants “rapists and murders,” by 77 percent to 16 percent. In a major change, white Catholics who attend church weekly oppose Trump by 57 percent to 38 percent, a shift of 19 points from their support for Mitt Romney in 2012. Among white Catholics, most Clinton supporters say they are mainly voting to oppose Mr. Trump.

On the other hand, Pew reports

that white evangelical voters (but not all evangelical leaders) are more enthusiastic about Mr. Trump than they were about Mr. Romney. He leads 78 percent to 17 percent despite his difficulty expressing his faith, his past support of abortion and his three marriages.

The Republican Party has been the home of the religious right, but Mr. Trump is the most secular nominee in memory. The strong anti-abortion, traditional marriage and religious freedom positions in the party’s platform were missing in his acceptance speech, at the Republican national convention and at his rallies. The Democratic Party position on abortion is increasingly extreme, with the platform now calling for taxpayer funding for elective abortions. The cultural and secular left are dominant Democratic powers, but when the Rev. William Barber and some families of those killed in gun violence raised their voices, the Democratic convention had moments of powerful preaching, prayer and faith-filled witness. It has been an odd summer for religion and politics.

Both vice-presidential nominees come from Catholic families, but have differing relationships to the church and its teachings. Mike Pence says he is “a Christian, a conservative and a Republican in that order.” What he is not anymore is a Catholic. As an evangelical, he consistently opposes abortion but publicly resisted Catholic efforts to welcome Syrian refugees in Indiana. Tim Kaine worships at his mostly African-American Catholic parish and says he learned “the values of faith, family and work” in his service

with Jesuits in Honduras. Mr. Kaine says his faith shapes his work on economic and social justice. He also says he is “personally opposed” to abortion, but has a 100-percent rating from the abortion lobby. These two leaders express the complexity and contradictions of Catholic witness in public life.

I learned at an early age that Catholics express their faith in differing ways and parties...and that is true this year as well. I am a product of a mixed marriage. Both my late parents were Minnesota Catholics, but my mother and her family were active Republicans. My dad and his family were diehard Democrats. My mom started a pro-life pregnancy center and would be a Paul Ryan Republican. My dad was a populist who would have “felt the Bern.”

The only candidates Mr. Trump and Mrs. Clinton could defeat are each other.

Neither would have adopted the unfortunate “I’m with Her” Clinton slogan. But this year my mother would have been appalled by Mr. Trump’s attacks on a Gold Star mother, refugees, John McCain and a reporter with disabilities. She would be unconvinced of his recent pro-life conversion. My dad would have opposed the extreme abortion policies in his party’s platform and Mrs. Clinton’s ties to Wall Street and her vote for the Iraq war. But I believe both of them—for very different reasons—would have been among the majority of church-going Catholics in the Pew survey who reject Donald Trump. They also would have reminded us to pray for our country at this time of testing on who we are, what we believe and what we will become as a nation.

JOHN CARR

JOHN CARR is *America’s* Washington correspondent and director of the Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life at Georgetown University.

Indispensable



**CATHOLIC
VOTERS HOLD
THE KEYS TO THE
WHITE HOUSE.**

BY ROBERT DAVID SULLIVAN

One hundred years ago, the Democrats were the second-place party, only occasionally breaking out of its Electoral College prison in the rural South. It was saved by the Catholic vote—first the Irish, then the Polish, the Italians and other immigrant groups—which allowed the Democrats to win Northern urban states like New York and Pennsylvania. By the 1960s, when the South began to break away from the party over civil rights, Catholics were the backbone of the Democratic Party.

Since then, the Catholic vote has split and split again. Beginning in the 1970s, Catholic voters began moving toward the Republican Party, with many turned off by the Democrats' championing of legalized abortion and an air of hostility toward religion in general. (See "Identity Politics," *Am.*, 10/27/2014.) Overall, the Catholic vote has been similar to that of the nation as a whole in recent elections. According to 2012 exit polls, Democrat Barack Obama won Catholic voters by two points, close to his four-point win among all voters. But that result masks big differences within the Catholic population.

A Pew Research Center analysis found that the Republican Mitt Romney beat Mr. Obama among white non-Hispanic Catholics by nearly 20 points (59 to 40), while Hispanic Catholics backed the president by more than three to one (75 to 21). That put

A religious sister in Ohio wears a voting sticker: "I Made a Difference: So Can You."

REUTERS/JIM YOUNG

ROBERT DAVID SULLIVAN is an associate editor of *America*.

white Catholics closer to white evangelical Protestants, who supported Mr. Romney by nearly 60 points (79 to 20). The same analysis found that regular churchgoers, both Catholic and Protestant, were significantly more likely to vote Republican.

This year's Republican presidential nominee, Donald J. Trump, is counting on these deep divisions among Catholic voters to beat his Democratic rival, Hillary Clinton. He needs big support from what could be called the 1960 version of the Catholic vote, the one that put John F. Kennedy in the White House—that is, almost all white, with few college graduates. The Republicans need such voters to compensate for the newer elements of the American Catholic population, including Hispanics and highly educated suburbanites, both of whom have been trending Democratic in recent presidential elections. Most of all, Mr. Trump needs to hold together a shaky alliance between white Catholics and white evangelical Protestants, one that dates back only a few decades.

The Catholic viewpoint

Though few exit polls in the presidential primaries included data on Catholic voters, this election year has already produced more survey data on the political views of different religious groups than ever before. In some respects, Catholics (particularly white Catholics) have similar views to those of evangelical Protestants. In other ways, Mr. Trump and the Republicans seem at risk of reversing their party's recent gains among Catholic voters.

A Pew Research Center survey taken last year, shortly after Pope Francis addressed the U.S. Congress and urged them to embrace “those who travel north in search of a better life,” found that only 36 percent of white Catholics believed that immigrants “strengthen” the United States, not drastically different from the 24 percent of white evangelicals who took that view. And a survey from the Public Religion Research Institute, released in June, asked whether discrimination against whites has become “as big a problem” as discrimination against racial minorities. Majorities of white evangelicals (68 percent) and white Catholics (62 percent) said yes, but 61 percent of Hispanic Catholics took the opposite view.

Another question from the P.R.R.I. poll got at the heart of Mr. Trump's appeal. Respondents were asked if the “American culture and way of life” has “changed for the worse” since the 1950s. Among white Catholics, 64 percent said yes, putting them between white evangelical Protestants (70

percent said things have gotten worse) and white mainline Protestants (54 percent). But among Hispanic Catholics, 62 percent said the United States has changed for the better, along with 69 percent of black Protestants and 61 percent of those unaffiliated with any religion.

The poll did not specify how things have gotten worse since the 1950s. Since that decade, American Catholics have experienced the civil rights movement, the “sexual revolution,” the Second Vatican Council, multiple wars, de-industrialization and the decline of labor unions, and a fraying of the social fabric described by the sociologist Robert Putnam in his book *Bowling Alone*. The 1960s also brought a change in immigration policy that eliminated the preferential treatment of white Europeans and has resulted in a sharp increase in Asian and Latino immigrants.

As Robert P. Jones, the chief executive officer of P.R.R.I., writes in *The End of White Christian America*, published this summer, the past four decades have seen “swift and dramatic” demographic changes, including a decline in the white majority and a rise in those not affiliated with any religion: “Falling numbers and the marginalization of a once dominant racial and religious identity—one that has been central not just to white Christians themselves but to the national mythos—threatens white Christians' understanding of America itself.”

Mr. Trump is appealing to voters uncomfortable with that change; and white evangelicals have seemed receptive, even if the candidate does not seem very familiar with Christian theology. But white Catholics may not have exactly the same worldview. In the June P.R.R.I. poll, 77 percent of white evangelicals said that discrimination against Christians is a significant problem in the United States, compared with only 53 percent of white Catholics and 50 percent of Hispanic Catholics. And on another touchstone issue, same-sex marriage, Catholics seem less resistant to change. A national Pew Research Center poll from this spring found that 58 percent of Catholics now support same-sex marriage, compared with only 27 percent of white evangelical Protestants.

The Republican Gamble

While putting Donald Trump on the road to a presidential nomination, the voters in early Republican primaries passed over several Catholic candidates with a longer history of support for at least some restrictions on abortion (including Senator Marco Rubio, Senator Rick Santorum, Gov. Jeb Bush and Gov. Chris Christie). Mr. Trump has promised to support Supreme Court justices who would overturn Roe

Mr. Trump and the Republicans seem at risk of reversing their party's recent gains among Catholic voters.

v. Wade, but he has not always been in sync with the anti-abortion movement (suggesting, at one point, that women who have abortions should face criminal penalties) and has not been on the pro-life page when it comes to capital punishment, assisted suicide or the use of torture by the U.S. military.

In March, before Mr. Trump had secured the Republican nomination, 37 Catholic academics signed a letter published in *National Review* condemning Mr. Trump: "There is nothing in his campaign or his previous record that gives us grounds for confidence that he genuinely shares our commitments to the right to life, to religious freedom and the rights of conscience, to rebuilding the marriage culture, or to subsidiarity and the principle of limited constitutional government." Several of the signatories reaffirmed their opposition to Mr. Trump in late July to Michael O'Loughlin, *America's* national correspondent, with David R. Upham, associate professor of politics at the University of Dallas, calling the election "an especially dismal choice."

These academics did not necessarily reflect the views of Catholic voters, even Republican ones. Exit polls from only two primaries looked at the Catholic vote, but in both Florida and Massachusetts Mr. Trump was near 50 percent among both Catholics and voters overall. (White evangelicals, who were studied in almost every primary, also voted for Mr. Trump at about the same rate as everyone else, but in the few states where the question was asked, Mr. Trump fared worse among all regular churchgoers.)

Massimo Faggioli of Villanova University noted that the letter in *National Review* did not cite Pope Francis (only St. John Paul II) and instead based its anti-Trump argument "on an interpretation of the church's social teachings that is identical to that of American liberal capitalism: their thesis is that Trump is no good for Catholics because Trump is no good for American capitalism." But Catholic supporters of Mr. Trump, wrote Mr. Faggioli, were more concerned with "the religious freedom of Catholics around the country who felt under fire from the Obama administration" and found "a surrogate in the ethnic and nationalistic victimhood professed by Trump against Latinos and the Chinese."

Some popular Catholic journalists are more neutral or favorable toward Trump. The Fox News host Sean Hannity has been one of Mr. Trump's loudest supporters. The *Wall Street Journal* columnist Peggy Noonan took offense at comparisons between Mr. Trump and the president she once worked for, Ronald Reagan, but she has tried to explain his appeal, calling him a "vivid" figure and, commenting on his call for a ban on immigrants from nations "compromised" by terrorism, wrote, "to most Americans it will sound like simple common sense."

Another former presidential speechwriter, Patrick J. Buchanan, is more firmly in Mr. Trump's corner. Mr. Trump's



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Fernandez-Duminuco Hall, a 33,000 square foot addition to Xavier High School, stands as a testament to partnership. It celebrates the partnership between student and teacher as it bears the names of Mike Fernandez '72, the lead donor for the project, and his headmaster and mentor, Vincent Duminuco, S.J. It stands as a tribute to the partnerships that have kept Xavier strong since her founding in 1847. Partnerships between faculty and students, Jesuits and their lay colleagues, families and benefactors. Partnerships that will flourish in the classrooms, STEAM lab, music and recording facilities and the James F. Keenan, S.J. Commons of Fernandez-Duminuco Hall.



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“law and order” speech drew comparisons to the campaigns of Mr. Buchanan’s former boss, Richard Nixon, who won the white Catholic vote in 1972, when the Democrats could not even be competitive without it. In an interview with Sean Salai, S.J., a frequent contributor to *America*, in 2014, Mr. Buchanan said that President Nixon “did not tear apart... the social safety net that a lot of Catholics favored.” Mr. Trump, similarly, has distanced himself from Republicans who call for “entitlement reform” and has promised to repeal the Affordable Care Act but at the same time “broaden healthcare access.”

Mr. Trump picked as his running mate Gov. Mike Pence of Indiana, who was raised as a Catholic but now describes himself as simply a “Christian.” Last year, Governor Pence got into a dispute with Catholic Charities in the archdiocese of Indianapolis over the agency’s plan to resettle refugees from Syria in the state; Governor Pence opposed the plan for “security” reasons, but Archbishop Joseph Tobin went ahead and resettled a Syrian family. This issue probably will not shift many votes in November; P.R.R.I. found that 49 percent of white Catholics and 45 percent of Hispanic Catholics support a ban on accepting refugees from Syria, close to the 44 percent of all Americans who favor such a measure.

The Democrats and Abortion

The only Catholic on a major-party ticket this year is Mrs. Clinton’s running mate: Senator Tim Kaine of Virginia, who attended a Jesuit high school in Kansas City and worked with Jesuit missionaries in Honduras before beginning his political career. Mr. Kaine is looking to succeed another Catholic, Joe Biden, as vice president, but where Mr. Biden emphasized his Irish roots (“malarkey!”) and childhood in the former coal city of Scranton, Pa., Mr. Kaine is valued for his fluent Spanish and his track record of getting votes in the white-collar suburbs of northern Virginia.

At the same time that Mrs. Clinton continued the recent practice of religious ticket-balancing, she supported changes to the Democratic platform that pulled the party even further from pro-life principles. Mr. Kaine broke with the platform by affirming his support of the Hyde Amendment, which bans the federal funding of abortions except in cases involving rape or incest (see “Defend the Hyde Amendment,” *Am.*, 8/15). He says he is personally opposed to abortion and as governor of Virginia supported some bipartisan pro-life measures; but since being elected to the Senate, he has received near-perfect ratings from pro-choice groups.

The Democratic platform, as well as Mr. Kaine’s Senate voting record, suggest the party has little interest in winning over pro-life voters, who have been courted by Republicans since the 1970s. Shortly after the Democratic convention, the leader of the Knights of Columbus, Carl Anderson, told an international meeting of his organization: “It is time to end the entanglement of Catholic people with abortion killing. It is time to stop creating excuses for voting for pro-abortion politicians.”

The party platform includes many policy recommendations that line up with the “Economic Justice” section of the U.S. bishops’ document “Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship.” Still, the National Catholic Reporter’s Michael Sean Winters found a discordant note at the party convention: “On virtually every issue, they struck a

distinctly anti-libertarian tone. The theme of Clinton’s campaign—‘Stronger Together’—was on every lip. But, when the discussion turns to abortion, it is all about individual autonomy, and not for the unborn child.”

Here again, Catholic voters seem close to the country as a whole. A 2016 Pew Research Center survey found 54 percent of Catholics agreeing that abortion should be legal on all or most cases, almost identical to the 56 percent of all Americans with this view. (Only 29 percent of white evangelical voters agreed.) The Pew Center also reported that 46 percent of Catholics consider abortion “very important” in deciding whom to vote for, compared with 78 percent saying the same about health care and 75 percent about immigration.

The Francis Effect

This will be the first U.S. presidential election since Pope Francis became head of the Catholic Church in 2013—and since the release of the encyclical “Laudato Si,” with its warnings against the excesses of capitalism and environmental destruction. It also follows the pope’s address to the U.S. Congress last year, in which he emphasized social justice issues and implicitly criticized the electoral process. (“We live in a time when our politics is too often marked by self-interest and demeaning rhetoric. We seem to be caught in a political system paralyzed by ideological extremism and hyper-partisanship.”) This February, the pope became further involved in American politics when he answered a question about Mr. Trump’s immigration policies, including the building of a wall between the United States and Mexico, by saying: “A person who thinks only about building walls, wherever they may be, and not building bridges, is not Christian. This is not in the Gospel.”

**‘We live in a time when
our politics is too often
marked by self-interest and
demeaning rhetoric.’**

Few expect a sea change in how Catholics vote in the Pope Francis era, but even a slight move away from the Republicans—and a widening divergence from the white evangelical vote—could greatly reduce Mr. Trump’s chances of winning. In an August poll by ABC and The Washington Post, Mr. Trump led among white evangelical Protestants 76 to 18 and among white non-evangelical Protestants 55 to 38. But Mrs. Clinton had a slight lead among white non-Hispanic Catholics, 51 to 45. (Data on Hispanic voters was not broken down by religion.) This is a much wider difference between white Protestants and white Catholics than we have seen in recent elections. Leah Libresco noted on fivethirtyeight.com that “Catholics who attend Mass weekly have increased their support for the Democratic nominee by 22 percentage points relative to 2012. They support Hillary Clinton at about the same rate as fallen-away Catholics,” though regular churchgoers have traditionally been more Republican.

This shift raises the possibility that Mr. Trump’s confrontational style, and the near-apocalyptic vision of the United States he outlined in his acceptance speech at the Republican National Convention in July, is not playing as well with Catholic voters as with evangelicals. One possibility is that many Catholics are uncomfortable with Mr. Trump’s disparagement of Muslims, a religious minority; this would also explain the Republican candidate’s weakness in the mostly Mormon state of Utah.

Mr. Trump may also fare better with evangelicals familiar with the “prosperity gospel,” or “Christian libertarianism,” made popular by the Rev. James Fifiield in the 1930s and ’40s. As the Princeton historian Kevin Krause recently told *The Atlantic*: “In his telling, a good Christian goes to heaven; a bad one goes to hell. A good capitalist makes profit, a bad one goes to the poorhouse.” Mr. Trump’s wealth is thus seen as a sign of goodness. Pope Francis has a different view, attacking the idea that “God shows that you are good by giving you great wealth.”

Geography Counts

But if Catholics and Protestants vote differently this year, religious belief may not be the best explanation. The markers of political allegiance can get complicated in a nation as big and diverse as the United States, and in a group as large as American Catholics—who make up the single largest religious denomination in the United States, translating to about 20 percent of all registered voters.

The question is: If white Protestants and white Catholics do vote differently this year, is it because of their religious beliefs or because Protestants are more likely to live in the rural South, with its long history of voting along racial lines, and Catholics are more likely to live in the urbanized North, with its long history of support for more activist government?

There are certainly geographic differences within the Catholic vote. Mr. Romney got 71 percent of the white non-Hispanic Catholic vote in North Carolina and 65 percent in Virginia, but only 52 percent of the same group in Iowa and 42 percent in Maine. The more polling data one goes through, the more it seems that Catholics vote similarly to their neighbors.

Another factor is educational attainment. This year’s polls consistently show that Mr. Trump is doing as well as or better than Mr. Romney did among voters with only a high school education but is doing significantly worse among college graduates. The Pew Research Center’s 2015 Religious Landscape Study found that 26 percent of American Catholics are college graduates, compared with 21 percent of evangelical Protestants. When it is taken into account that a large segment of Catholics without college degrees are Hispanic, a group with which Mr. Trump is faring poorly, it would not be a surprise if the Republican’s strength among less-educated voters does not translate into gains among Catholics.

However, it is essentially impossible for Mr. Trump to win by carrying only self-identified white Protestants, who make up a majority of the population in just six states. If he fails to keep white Catholic voters in the fold, they will surely be included with Hispanic voters as the focus of any post-election “autopsy.”

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Labor in Today's Vineyard

Why we need a new theology of work

BY JONATHAN MALESIC

Last year The New York Times published a much-discussed exposé of the work culture at Amazon's headquarters in Seattle, where 80-hour weeks, ego-crushing performance reviews and the sight of workers crying at their desks are reportedly common. Some of Amazon's former employees told The Times that their commitment to the retailer's mission was questioned after they suffered a miscarriage or received a cancer diagnosis. Workers who embrace the culture call themselves "Amabots" to signify their unflagging work ethic and commitment to the company's rigorist principles.

Amazon seems like a tough place to work, whether you are in the marketing department in Seattle or in a warehouse in Allentown, Pa., where workers have been reported to collapse from exhaustion trying to fulfill their daily quota of shipments. But Amazon is only one especially visible example of the sorry state of work in the digital economy. American workers put in more time on the job than most of their global economic peers, and increasingly, the boundary

between work and not-work is a fuzzy one. As a result, the labor force increasingly experiences work as precarious, discontinuous and materially unrewarding.

There is also a problem in the way we talk about our work. As the stability of work that characterized the industrial era becomes rarer, the terms that theologians, philosophers and the magisterium developed to describe the moral significance of jobs—not just terms like career and craft, but vocation and co-creativity, too—become irrelevant. Despite the strength of its social teaching, the Catholic Church, not to mention many Protestant denominations, has yet to develop terms people in the postindustrial West can use to connect their work to their religious commitments.

For most Christian groups, the issue of work is a theological demilitarized zone. Clergy and laity tend not to discuss it. Clergy often have work experience outside the church to draw upon in the (unlikely) event that a congregant seeks guidance on a work issue, but they almost certainly have no theological training on this topic. Courses on marriage and sexuality are staples of university and seminary curricula, but courses on work are rare. This mutually acceptable silence is a great pastoral failure, a squandered opportunity to understand the universal call to holiness in everyday economic life.

JONATHAN MALESIC taught theology for 11 years at King's College in Wilkes-Barre, Pa. He is the author of *Secret Faith in the Public Square* and can be found on Twitter at @jonmalesic. This essay is adapted from an article that originally appeared in *The Journal of Christian Ethics*.

Look to Genesis

When the icebreaking homily or conversation about work does occur, speakers will need terms that are both traditional and adequate to the reality of work in our postindustrial economy. The Bible is a good place to start. The first four chapters of Genesis tell a tragic story about work. God's effortless work brings creation into being; the first human is created to "cultivate and care for" the garden; labor is divided between the sexes, and the man is condemned to toil among "thorns and thistles" on account of his transgression; and the first murder occurs after God smiles upon the fruit of Abel's labor but not Cain's. Finally, human work becomes fruitless; the earth "shall no longer give [Cain] its produce." Then in the Gospels, Jesus offers a way beyond work's futility: "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest."

There is limitless potential in these verses. The Catholic magisterium has relied on them to articulate norms for social ethics—including issues of salary, job security and the right to organize—but its record of developing terms for speaking pastorally to individual workers is mixed. St. John Paul II's 1981 encyclical "On Human Work" focuses on Genesis and rightly emphasizes the subjective experience of the worker, who bears the *imago dei* and thereby lends work its dignity. Nevertheless, the encyclical's outlook on work badly needs updating. Communist-era concerns, like a lengthy defense of the right to private property, haunt the document.

St. John Paul also displays industrial biases that made sense at the last moment of the West's industrial golden age but no longer speak to the experience of work in the wealthiest economies. He emphasizes co-creativity, for example, the idea that human work continues God's creation, as a primary way to think of work's meaning, but this ideal is hard to square with the abstract nature of work in today's economy. Countless workers do their jobs at a computer, manipulating virtual objects within a symbolic order. Often, the work is materially unproductive in every sense, which surely stands at odds with the positive good of creation. The work of medical care should be a model of maintaining creation, but its actual practice in America is commonly futile. By some estimates, 30 percent of it is unnecessary, producing no positive health benefit.

More recent encyclicals have barely advanced the church's understanding of work. In "Laudato Si," Pope Francis writes that "Jesus worked with his hands, in daily contact with the matter created by God, to which he gave form by his craftsmanship.... In this way he sanctified human labor and endowed it with a special significance for our development." "Laudato Si'" is not meant to be about work, but a statement like this is still too vague. How, exactly, does work contribute to human development? The encyclical is also muddled on the issue of leisure, which the German Catholic philosopher

Josef Pieper argued was aligned with the ultimate purpose of human existence. Francis echoes Pieper in saying, about the Sabbath, "We are called to include in our work a dimension of receptivity and gratuity, which is quite different from mere inactivity." Unfortunately, the very next sentence revokes this point: "Rather, [leisure] is another way of working, which forms part of our very essence." This is a significant problem for an encyclical devoted to "care for our common home." By declaring leisure another form of work, Francis reiterates the primacy of the labor that, especially in wealthy economies, is consuming that home. Pieper argued that receptivity and gratuity are precisely not work. They alone resist the hegemony of the modern condition he called "total work."

Protestantism's touchstone for a theology of work, "vocation," is just as unhelpful today. Martin Luther and John Calvin imagined the person's vocation as the stable position from which he or she contributes to God's providential order. Their inspiration for this doctrine was 1 Cor 7:20, "Everyone should remain in the state in which he was called." Calvin argued that workers will be dutiful and efficient if they imagine that God has chosen them for their work. Moreover, "in following your proper calling, no work will be so mean and sordid as not to have a splendor and value in the eye of God." So don't bother seeking a promotion. Luther, meanwhile, wanted to disabuse his followers of the notion that they would have to enter religious life in order to be holy, but his argument, like Calvin's, stands generally against social mobility.

We have to ask if the idea of vocation as a stable place in the world applies to the way careers operate at all levels of the American economy. Because of the increasing prevalence of on-demand labor, many workers perform odd, often microscopic jobs, like comparing online product descriptions to their accompanying photographs for Amazon's Mechanical Turk project, earning a penny or two per item. Hardly anyone expects to do the same thing for decades. Instead, careers are discontinuous and precarious, and white-collar workers measure their prestige by their skill sets and networks. The long-term unemployed are counseled to see looking for a job as their full-time job. Their "state" seems incompatible with any sense of justice or providence.

The common theological terms used to describe work are not much help in navigating questions that workers face today. How do you recognize, for example, if your work is harming you? How much attention should you give it? How hard should you work? Is it "time theft" to take a mental break from work, given that work is itself a source of stress? What if you are not paid a living wage? Should you remain in a job even if you are burned out because you need the salary and benefits? To answer these questions, the church's theology of work must be portable and subjective rather than objective and tied to a single "state." It must not

overvalue work or drive the overworked even harder.

Ancient Resources

Fortunately, ancient resources can be repurposed to apply to 21st-century work. When it comes to questions of value, as well as what it should feel like to work, the Benedictine tradition, beginning with the sixth-century Rule of St. Benedict, has much to offer. Men and women religious of the various Benedictine orders are well known for making bread, cheese and beer. Trappist monks at New Melleray Abbey in Iowa make caskets by hand out of wood harvested from their grounds. The monastics' devotion to craft is admirable—and resonates with the now-commercialized “artisan” ethos—but it alone is not enough to guide an approach to work.

Most of us do work that is too abstract to be understood in terms of craft.

The Rule has a larger lesson, though. Its guidelines for living in the monastery teach that work can be a component of spiritual practice and is essential to fulfilling a community's needs, but it must never become an end in itself and in fact should be limited in order to prevent it from inculcating

vicious habits. The discipline that Benedict enjoins upon his monks, and that workers today could emulate, is selective disengagement from labor.

Benedictines have often distilled their way of life down to the motto *ora et labora*, “pray and work.” Benedict likewise compared the monastery to a “workshop” for holiness. And he taught that if all other means of keeping a monk from sinful indolence should fail, then he should “be given some work in order that he may not be idle,” even on Sunday. So the message of Benedict's Rule for today is hardly to quit your day job.

Still, Benedict places strict limits on the monks' work, beginning with the times in which monks are permitted to do manual labor. The work schedule of the monastery is bounded by periods of prayer, which

takes precedence over everything else. As Benedict writes, “On hearing the signal for an hour of the divine office, the monk will immediately set aside what he has in hand and go with utmost speed, yet with gravity and without giving occasion for frivolity. Indeed, nothing is to be preferred to the Work of God,” Benedict's term for communal prayer.

Benedict also establishes limits on how long a monk should perform any one job at the monastery. He calls for essential tasks like cooking, cleaning and reading aloud at mealtime to rotate among the monks. No one becomes a permanent reader, no matter how desirable it would be to have a specialist in that role. In fact, Benedict sees a real danger—to the monk and to the community—in unchecked specialization. Skilled artisans can easily end up with the wrong priorities, placing their work ahead of communal or spiritual aims: “If one of them becomes puffed up by his skillfulness in his craft, and feels he is conferring something on the monastery, he is to be removed from practicing his craft and not allowed to resume it unless, after manifesting his humility, he is so ordered by the abbot.”

This doctrine is exactly the opposite of the vocational division of labor that the Reformers advocated, Adam Smith secularized, and upon which Americans have built our wealth. No one could build an entire iPhone alone. An army of workers, though, each performing a single, minuscule task and collaborating across

The labor force increasingly experiences work as precarious, discontinuous and materially unrewarding.

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continents, can produce half a million of them in a day. Productivity demands singular attention to one's job. But if work is to produce not just profits but also healthy workers and societies, then specialization and focus can become hindrances.

Taking Benedict's approach would force us to reconsider how we think about our work. Instead of, "What work am I called to?" we might ask, "How does the task before me contribute to or hinder my progress toward holiness?" Not "How does this work cooperate with material creation?" but "How does this work contribute to the life of the community and to others' material and spiritual well-being?" Not "Am I doing what I love?" but "What activity is so important that I should, without exception, drop my work in order to do it?"

Answers to these questions should be informed by recognizing two key theological truths that Josef Pieper makes explicit in his book *Leisure, the Basis of Culture*. The first pertains to creation as providential, its fruits sufficient for human needs. Pieper sees a lack of humility in the drive toward what he calls "total work." Someone who believes that everything must be earned "refuses to have anything as a gift" and thereby refuses his or her own status as a creature of God. Abraham Joshua Heschel echoes this idea in arguing for the Sabbath as the heart of human existence. On the Sabbath, the person "must say farewell to manual work

and learn to understand that the world has already been created and will survive without the help of" human beings. We are limited, our needs are limited, and God, through creation, has given us enough to meet them. It is beguiling to imagine that in principle there is no limit to the wealth one can "create" by working. But at some point, work and wealth stop doing anyone any good. How many hours do already-wealthy Americans waste in laboring "to support my family"? And how much damage is done to those families by the adults' anxious obsession with work? Such anxiety denies creation. Better, then, to "Look at the birds in the sky," who eat without laboring (Mt 6:26).

We must also consider the ultimate destination of all of creation, namely, communion with God. The leisure for which Pieper argues is not simply rest from work. It is, in its highest form, a celebration of existence; and the highest form of celebration is worship. Pieper writes that in sacramental worship, the person "may truly be 'transported' out of the weariness of daily labor into an unending holiday," the heavenly banquet. Once our work is over, we have the beatific vision to look forward to. It is a shame, then, that our dreary labor is typically matched with such dreary Sunday liturgy. The first step in developing a new theology of work could be to develop forms of worship that more closely resemble celebration. Convincing people to postpone work may begin by throwing a good party. ▲

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Workplace Philosopher

What would Simone Weil make of the way we work today?

BY E. JANE DOERING

We read more and more these days about the prospect of a “post-job society”—one of automation and cybernetics, of digital technologies, 3D printers and robotics. This sounds very exciting for the well-off and well-educated population. A class of workers, however, will still be needed to construct the hardware and excavate the materials essential for hi-tech applications.

Unfortunately, these workers are often vulnerable and exploited. In “*Laudato Si*” Pope Francis asks us to pay attention to their plight before we advance too quickly to adopt the latest technological innovation. While his remarks touch upon the physical well-being of the poor, he also warns of the spiritual values that are lost in exploitative work. What precisely are these spiritual values, and how do they manifest themselves? What difference do they make to us, and can they be duplicated in a society of leisure?

Simone Weil, a French philosopher and mystic who lived in the first half of the 20th century, explored these questions extensively. She perceived the unique spiritual values of work, in its proper form, as those that hone our human capacity for attention, love of neighbor, prayer and understanding limits.

Life in the Factories

Weil was the rare philosopher of work who gave serious attention to working conditions throughout her intellectual formation. Wishing to experience the industrializing economy first hand, she took jobs as a machinist in three Parisian metallurgy factories where parts were forged for the city’s transport system. She expected to find camaraderie among the workers who were making a major contribution to the future of French society. She found instead overworked men and women who were exhausted, disheartened and desperate about maintaining a sustainable income for themselves and their families. The experience gave her a new reading of reality and of the role of God in the world.

Today the workplace has evolved, but the description above unfortunately still applies not only to marginalized



people in developing countries but also to workers in industrialized countries. An extreme example is the 150,000 electronic waste workers searching the so-called Electronic Waste Dump of the World in Guiyu, China. During 16-hour working days, tens of thousands of individuals scavenge for the valuable elements in discarded cell phones, computer parts and printer cartridges, while the noxious gases from burning toxic waste contaminate the air and water. But the money made by the authorities and the low wages—considered high at \$8 a day—keep the businesses going.

Such work is obviously degrading. But we must ask: What conditions in the workplace would foster spiritual growth? For Weil, work—that is, taking some material element and transforming its purpose in response to a need—puts us in touch with ourselves, with others, with the exterior world, with what is real and has limits. Above all, work can nurture a constant awareness of the purpose of each human being and allow an individual to participate in God’s act of creation. Work in its proper form requires the work-

E. JANE DOERING, *professor emerita of French language and literature at the University of Notre Dame*, is the author of *Simone Weil* and the *Specter of Self-Perpetuating Force* and *The Christian Platonism of Simone Weil*.

er to precede each action with careful, methodic thought. A workplace organized to encourage thought brings equality of respect to everyone trying to accomplish the goal of transforming matter into a useful product.


Weil considered action preceded by thought as the true source of liberty; she defines liberty as the relationship of


ful attention given to solving the problem at hand—is the best vehicle for that apprenticeship. Leisure activities that are not in response to a need cannot rise to the same spiritual level.

Attention Gives Access to God

Attention to the suffering of others is true love of neighbor, Weil argues. Work, with its requirements that one get out of oneself to attend to the task at hand, serves as an apprenticeship for the self-emptying necessary to attend purely to the needs of the other and ultimately to the love of God. Thus work has a moral component. One's confrontation with the material universe teaches us obedience to its implacable limits, builds relationships with others and confers dignity. One's subjective concerns give way to seeing the world from another's perspective, thus refining the ability to follow the second most important commandment: to love one's neighbor as oneself. This apprenticeship in attention can serve as a model for how we carry out all our obligations. For Weil, "attention is the only faculty that gives us access to God."

Weil's reorganization of the workplace would include machines that are changeable for different purposes, according to both market and worker needs, plus decentralization of the workplaces. Life with the new inventions of 3D printers, robotics and cybernetics might well serve those goals, as well as honoring the human quality of thought necessary to achieve a useful product. But not if a considerable part of the global population is left to do the humiliating subservient work. Weil's analogy of travelers in a car rushing pell-mell over rugged terrain without a guide applies to our contemporary situation. No one yet knows the full effects of the increasingly hi-tech society we live in. We should be wary lest the rapid advances in technology be given priority over the well-being of individuals.

We need only to look at the work of Kevin Bales, lead author of the Global Slavery Index, which counts 36 million workers presently enslaved, and of the Brazilian Sebastião Salgado, photographer of the world's forgotten people and places, to know that too often love of neighbor is more honored in the breach than in the observance. All work is hard and at times monotonous, but it does not need to be degrading. Pope Francis reminds us that Jesus sanctified human labor and endowed it with a special significance for our development. He suggests that the following parameters should govern our economic, political and social decisions: "Work is a necessity, part of the meaning of life on this earth, a path to growth, human development and personal fulfillment" ("Laudato Si," No. 128). Both the pope and Simone Weil argue that work is sacred, for it expresses the dignity of men and women who have been created in the image of God. They call on us all to be the guardians of the moral dimension of work. 



For Weil, work puts us in touch with ourselves, with others, with the exterior world, with what is real and has limits.

thought to the network of laws governing the universe—a concept she calls necessity. When the organization of the workplace separates those who do the intellectual planning from those who do the physical work in a blind, subservient way, the situation becomes oppressive rather than liberating. Human beings do not become vital, reflective participants in society after hours of mind-numbing toil. Nor can they seek the "personal growth and sanctification in the interplay of recollection and work," conditions seen as crucial by Pope Francis.

Humankind's teleological purpose is to voluntarily consent to God's love and to regard the material world as an implicit expression of that love. Suffering that exists from causes both natural and criminal creates obstacles to that consent. Loving God even in affliction, however, is possible if the soul is open to supernatural grace. Perfecting one's capacities for attention requires an apprenticeship to prepare the soul to receive God's strengthening grace. In Weil's religious philosophy, the virtue of attention is the purest form of prayer. Work that requires thought before action—mind-



A Sino-Vatican Win-Win?

Pope Francis made history earlier this year when he met the Russian Orthodox patriarch, Kirill, in Cuba. It was the first meeting between a pope and a patriarch of Moscow in 1,000 years.

The pope could make history again before the year's end if, as is now expected, the Holy See and China announce they have reached an agreement on the crucial question of the nomination of bishops.

Three things happened in August that suggest an announcement could come soon.

On Aug. 4, Cardinal John Tong, the bishop of Hong Kong, published an article in which he stated that China "is now willing to reach an understanding with the Holy See on the question of the appointment of bishops in the Catholic Church in China and seek a mutually acceptable plan." This sparked considerable discussion. Some welcomed the development; others feared China would not play fair and that the underground church risked being sold out. Nevertheless, the responses also revealed great trust in Pope Francis.

Not long after the cardinal's article, another meeting of the Joint Working Group took place. This group was set up after last January's meeting of the China-Holy See delegations to hammer out mutually acceptable solutions to the many difficult issues inherent in the agreement. It is said that "the devil is in the details," and that is undoubtedly true for this agreement.

It is understood that the central

element of the agreement is about choosing bishops. Who has the final say? The Holy See has always insisted that the pope has the final word, but Beijing insists on controlling the outcome. The working group has to find solutions to the many questions regarding bishops in the mainland church today. One is whether all eight illegitimate bishops, ordained without the papal mandate, can be reconciled with Rome. Another fundamental question is whether Beijing is willing to recognize all the so-called underground bishops. A third concerns the future of the Chinese Catholic bishops' conference, which the Holy See does not recognize because it does not include the underground bishops. There are other issues, too, including the number of dioceses and the fate of the bishops and priests in detention.

Great secrecy has surrounded the Sino-Vatican delegations' plenary meetings; the same is true of the Joint Working Group's sessions. Surprisingly little information has filtered out, except that they have taken place. Indeed, it seems that even the two Chinese cardinals, Tong and Joseph Zen, do not know the exact terms of the agreement.

Following Cardinal Tong's article and the recent meeting of the working group, *The South China Morning Post*, which is published in Hong Kong, carried an article on Aug. 19 that appeared to acknowledge that a Sino-Vatican agreement is at hand.

Under the headline "Welcome Thaw in Relations Between China and the Vatican," the article asserted that with this accord:

Both sides will benefit from normal, healthy arrangements. China will benefit by joining all the other nations who work with the Holy See on issues such as peace, refugee problems and religious harmony. Chinese civil society will benefit by having a more integrated Catholic hierarchy to serve the people of China in charitable, educational and medical fields. Chinese Catholics

will benefit, too, by eliminating the division between state-approved churches and the so-called underground churches.

The author recognized that "any rapprochement will be opposed by hardliners on both sides. Ultrationalists will stir

'Chinese civil society will benefit by having a more integrated Catholic hierarchy.'

up memories of past conflicts involving foreign missionaries and their nations' actions in China. Traditionalists will oppose any change that undercuts their positions." But, the author also wrote, "we know that wise leaders are able to choose what is good for their country."

The article is significant since the newspaper, which until a few years ago was an independent news outlet, is today effectively under Beijing's control. It was the latest sign that a Sino-Vatican agreement is close to being a done deal.

America, however, has learned that the establishment of diplomatic relations is not part of this agreement. That is a matter for another day. It could come after Pope Francis and President Xi Jinping meet in Rome or Beijing.

GERARD O'CONNELL

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

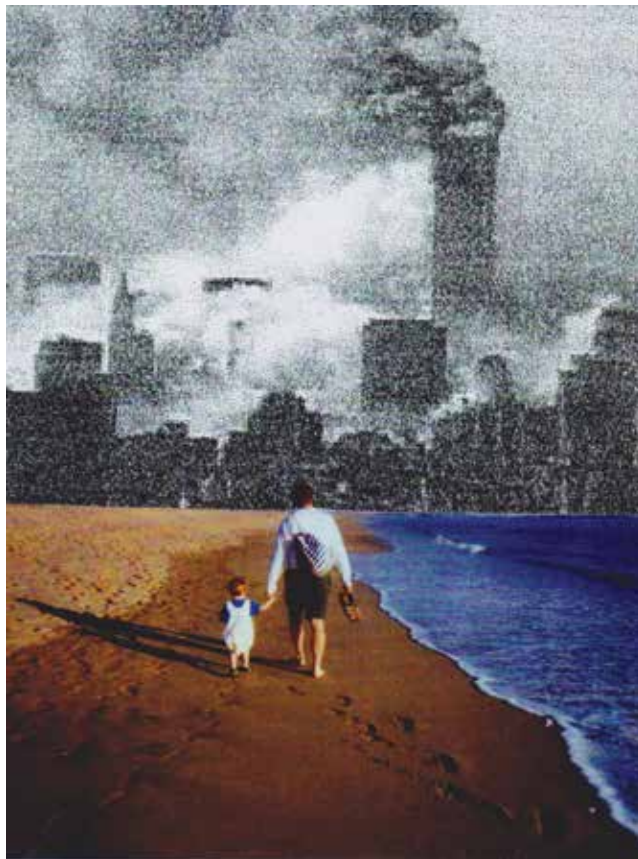
A Father's 9/11 Prayer

Hopes for children in a world marked by violence

BY CHRISTOPHER PRAMUK

Two of the happiest years of my life were spent as a stay-at-home dad when our son, Isaiah, was a toddler. The morning of Sept. 11, 2001, began like most of our days with a meandering walk around our neighborhood after breakfast, stopping whenever we met something of interest: a slug wending its silvery path across the sidewalk; a handful of pebbles to throw, one by one, into the street; a neighbor planting flowers along her driveway. An hour later, after a troubling phone call from my wife about the events unfolding in Manhattan, I was fixed to the television while trying to keep Isaiah occupied in another room. I could not fathom the scene before my eyes—much less could I allow the images to burn their way into a child's imagination.

Some months later, in a reverie of prayer and artistic experimentation, I created an image by cutting and pasting vacation photos and news stories from Sept. 11, 2001. It is hard to express what I feel today, 15 years later, when I contemplate this image, with



its apocalyptic juxtaposition of father and son walking on the beach against the smoldering buildings and silent cry of Manhattan in the background. There's at least this: The same painful vulnerability and almost desperate love of a parent, who hopes against hopelessness for something better than what appears to lie on the horizon for my children—for all the world's children—as the world's grownups study and prepare and continue to practice the terrible art of war and revenge.

Yet it is in our acts of mercy, not retribution, that we share in the very life of God. Then there is no separa-

tion. When we live in the spirit of mercy, we become God's hands and feet in the world. Measuring the whole human situation, Jesus reorders all relationships under the demanding light of God's care for all persons, guilty and innocent alike. Jesus, the wisdom of God incarnate, sees and responds to all things in the light of God's scandalously inclusive love. To live "in Christ" is to strain every muscle to do likewise. Blessed are the peacemakers, no matter their creed, for they are daughters and sons of God.

"A world without mercy is not a human world," Cardinal Walter Kasper has written. And a world without merciful human beings, religions, cultures and societies is a world without God. God needs human beings to be God's

redeeming action in the world. Jesus' command to love our enemies presumes our graced capacity to do so. Is Christ's trust in us misplaced? Our image of humanity—of ourselves, our religion, our nation—is inseparable from our images and narratives of God.

To practice the presence of God in the world is to be and become what we receive freely, with every breath: the divine mercy. Yet our drones fill the skies in the East and strike with fury from above. The wheel of retribution spins round, a juggernaut rotating between us and them, generation after generation. Where is God? With whom is

CHRISTOPHER PRAMUK is an associate professor of theology at Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio. He is the author of *At Play in Creation: Merton's Awakening to the Feminine Divine*, *and Hope Sings, So Beautiful: Graced Encounters Across the Color Line*, a meditation on race relations in society and church.

God? Is God? Jesus measures the situation, bends down, runs his fingers through the earth and asks the pivotal question. He is asking still.

In his sublime prose poem “Hagia Sophia,” Thomas Merton narrates one man’s awakening to the “soft voice” of Wisdom, the God whose loving presence shines from within all things “like the air receiving the sunlight.” She is God’s relational essence, the dance of love itself in the heart of the Trinity, poured out from the dawn of time, unleashing the inner dynamism and “suchness” of all created things, even the most humble. She is the child who “is prisoner in all the people, and who says nothing.” Above all she is God’s

mercy—or mercying (*misericordiano*), to borrow Pope Francis’ favored term—that makes possible in us miracles greater even than creation: the work of patient listening and understanding, truth-telling, reconciliation and peace. In Wisdom’s house there is room for all: the poor, the refugee, the forgotten. In my house, she sows forbearance and laughter, dancing around the dinner table to the music of Stevie Wonder, and unexpected courage to do it all over again the next day, when all reserves seem to have run dry. “But she remains unseen, glimpsed only by a few. Sometimes there are none who know her at all.”

My son Isaiah is now 18 and just

beginning college. My prayer is that he and young people across the suffering earth will come to know the God of mercy and peace, the God of creation’s astonishing beauty, diversity and gratuitousness. I pray they will come to know the God who frees her children to imagine again, and to imagine together, so that they might face an unsettling horizon with hopefulness and possibility, not in fear and despair. Who will teach them? To whom else shall they go? I pray with Merton’s words: “Gentleness comes to him when he is most helpless and awakens him. Love takes him by the hand, and opens to him the doors of another life, another day.”

GENERATION FAITH

Faith, Far Away

Growing up Catholic in a post-9/11 world

BY RYAN McEVOY

By the time Nov. 13 came around, I was well adjusted to the 10-and-a-half hour time difference between New York City, my hometown, and Bengaluru, one of the largest cities in South India, where I was pursuing a study-abroad program on international development. In addition to the time difference, the spotty internet connectivity and frequent power outages hampered my ability to communicate with my family and friends, let alone keep up with the 24-hour news cycle.

RYAN McEVOY is a senior at the University of Richmond in Virginia. A graduate of Regis High School in New York City in 2013, he concentrates on international studies, German studies and history and is minoring in Jewish studies. He is actively involved with the multi-faith student council, which works to facilitate dialogue among students of different spiritual traditions on campus.

But on that morning, the only message I needed to hear appeared quite clearly to me, even as the broadcasters chattered in Kannada, the local language, and struggled to make sense of the still-emerging details about yet another massive terrorist attack, this time in Paris. As I frantically searched for the BBC on the channel guide, I became filled with the familiar feelings of sadness, anger and stress that always color these scenes. In this moment, I thought of and longed for home, 8,300 miles away, where I had first experienced this combination of emotions 14 years earlier, as my first grade class was interrupted by the news that a plane had crashed into the World Trade Center, just miles away from my elementary school.

As a member of the generation brought up in the dark aftermath of

the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, I can point to several ways in which the social environment of my childhood played a central role in the formation of my current worldview. As the son of a first responder, for instance, I will forever have the deepest gratitude for the heroes in uniform who risk and sometimes sacrifice their lives to keep my community safe. At the same time, the strength and love my local community demonstrated during those dark weeks and months persists as we collectively face new challenges. But when I consider the influence of this environment on my Catholic faith, it is exceptionally difficult to develop similarly clear conclusions.

Raised in an era marked by terror fueled by religious extremism and intolerance, I struggle. I struggle with the knowledge that the cover of the news-

paper often shakes my belief in the basic goodness of people, as I confront images of a bombed train or bullet-ridden restaurant. I struggle as blood continues to be shed around the world, frequently that of the most marginalized. Most of all, I struggle as I hear talk about how terrorism demonstrates that people of different faiths cannot coexist, and that conflict and destruction are inevitable.

But in the face of powerful voices that so often tell my generation that pursuing peace is an admirable but naïve goal, I have hope. In the past few years, I have been blessed with numerous opportunities to see people around the world, in ways large and small, counter this narrative about the end of civilization. In my struggle to make sense of my faith in a chaotic, often violent world, I have looked outward, discovering moments that reaffirm our common humanity. This ongoing personal journey has proved enormously rewarding; indeed, as I learn how multifaith cooperation manifests itself on the ground, my faith in God and the saving message of the church have been reaffirmed and strengthened.

The University of Richmond has generously provided me with numerous chances to explore simultaneously my passions for travel and learning. Two years ago, I traveled with a group of students from the office of the chaplaincy to Poland, where we explored questions of memory and reconciliation in the context of the history of the Holocaust. The pilgrimage was emotionally powerful, and I will carry many of the harrowing images from my time there with me for the rest of my life.

Today, I vividly recall encountering

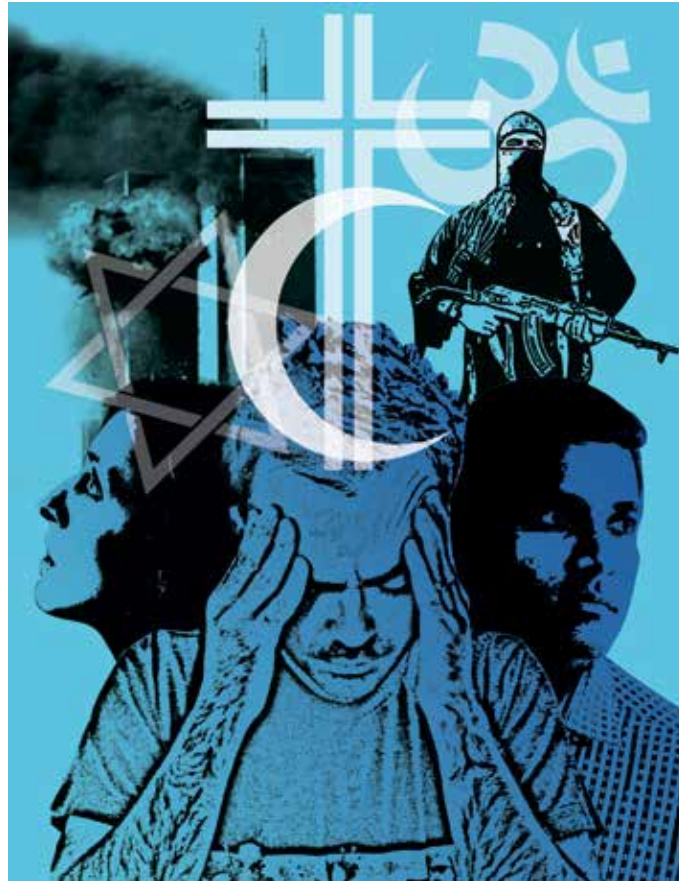
people and organizations devoted to the preservation of memory and to educating a new generation about one of the darkest chapters in human history, with a firm understanding that honest dialogue can begin only after we, as a society, make a good-faith effort to understand the experiences of others—in this case, relating to the way the grim legacy of the Holocaust partly shapes modern Jewish identity. This experience made clear to me that memory is a

ter the Poland trip, I was exhilarated as I set foot in Israel with other Catholic, Protestant, Jewish and Muslim students. We were there to study the shared origins of the Abrahamic religions and to make connections with the contemporary efforts to ensure peace in the Middle East.

During this visit, I soaked in the many breathtaking sites that the land has to offer. I found myself most captivated by conversations with local people, who passionately shared their narratives about claims of ownership in the region and frequently expressed their desire to live in peace with their neighbors. I walked away from this with a much more nuanced view of the complexities of multifaith coexistence but also, critically, an understanding that although some people, like the terrorists who attacked New York 14 years ago, may pursue death and destruction, there are a great many in all faith communities with a firm desire to pursue life, even if just on their own streets.

I capped off 2015 with a four-month study-abroad program in Bengaluru, India. One anecdote well captures for me the beauty of my time there. Traveling around the city was stressful because of the language barrier, lack of transport options and faltering infrastructure. There were no churches within walking distance of my home, but I wanted to attend Mass.

During my first week, I anxiously prepared for the half-hour trip to the church. My discomfort must have been obvious to my Hindu host family. They generously agreed to ride with me to the church, but I was very surprised when they then decided to attend Mass with me. I could tell that they did not



key part of keeping faith in the modern world, both to preserve sacred traditions and understand the perspectives of others in order to advance a more inclusive view of what a modern society ought to look like.

Just one year later, I found myself aboard a plane bound for Ben Gurion airport in Tel Aviv on another pilgrimage. Having decided to solidify my interest in the study of another religion by declaring a minor in Jewish studies af-

understand much of what was taking place, but as we linked hands for the Lord's Prayer, I found myself at ease for the first time since arriving in this foreign land.

When news of the attacks in Paris

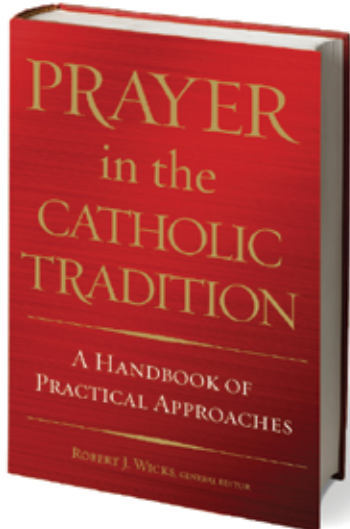
arrived weeks later, I thought not only about home, but also about that personal experience of cross-faith unity. I understood that even in the face of sometimes vicious divisions and religious violence, I could rest firmly in my

Christian belief that another day would come and that the instances of mutual understanding I had witnessed in the previous year were not anomalies but rather glimpses into a better future, however far away that might be. **A**

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BOOKS & CULTURE

IDEAS | JUDITH DUPRÉ

WHAT REMAINS

*Structure and story on the
15th anniversary of Sept. 11, 2001*

Last September, Pope Francis descended into the 9/11 Memorial Museum and presided over a multifaith prayer ceremony of great breadth and resolve. “We can and must build unity on the basis of our diversity of languages, cultures and religions,” he said. “Together we are called to say ‘no’ to every attempt to impose uniformity and ‘yes’ to a diversity accepted and reconciled.” Alongside leaders from many faith traditions, he prayed before the raw slurry wall that protects the World Trade Center site, its symbolic power never more evident than on that day. In that unforgettable moment, full of grief and hope, a secular museum became a holy temple.

Slurry walls are the massive, watertight concrete walls that encircle the foundations of the entire Trade Center. On Sept. 11, 2001, the original slurry wall foundations held back the Hudson River, which threatened to inundate ground zero and much of lower Manhattan. They became infused with meaning, thanks to Daniel Libeskind, the master planner, who deemed the unlovely walls “profoundly miraculous,” both as the vulnerable remains of the terrorist attacks that day and, planted in bedrock, as a powerful metaphor for American resilience.

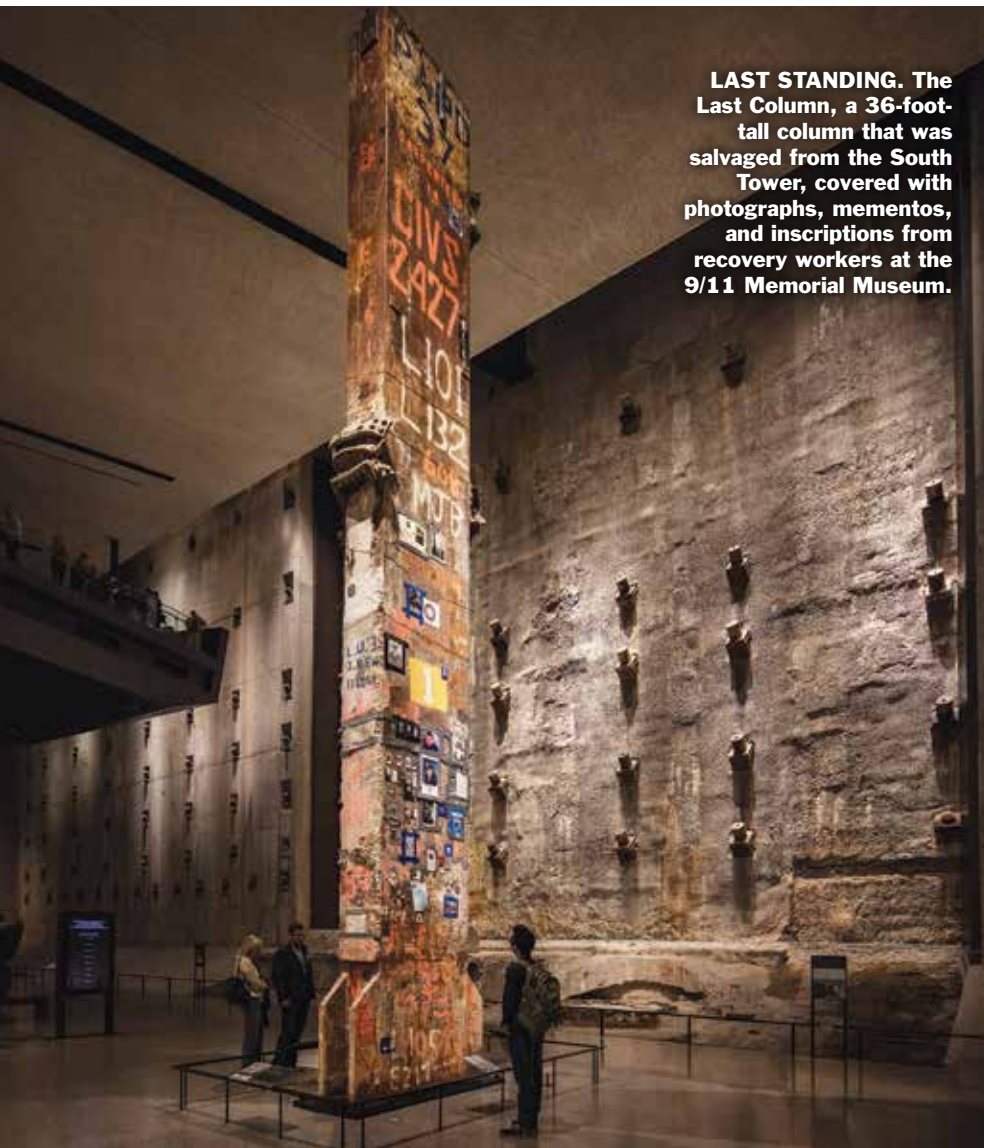
They are one of a number of commemorative elements encoded in the nine structures that have arisen in the 15 years since the terrorist attacks of

LOOK HIGHER. One World Trade Center is 1,776 feet tall.



FOUNDATION PRINCIPLES. One World Trade Center's luminous podium echoes, in reverse, the image of the dark memorial pools.

PHOTO: PORT AUTHORITY OF NEW YORK & NEW JERSEY



LAST STANDING. The Last Column, a 36-foot-tall column that was salvaged from the South Tower, covered with photographs, mementos, and inscriptions from recovery workers at the 9/11 Memorial Museum.

Sept. 11 that illuminate the site's spiritual dimensions. A commemorative precinct as well as a commercial office development, the new World Trade Center bubbles with holy effervescence.

Echoing that same joy and resolve, One World Trade Center takes the form of an obelisk, a military marker favored by the Egyptians and later adopted by Roman rulers in the first century, which eventually took on religious meaning in Christian Rome. When Sixtus V restructured Rome in the 16th century, he positioned obelisks along the routes to holy shrines, transforming them in the pilgrim's imagination into symbols of Catholicism's strength and authority. Years later, the architect Robert Mills brought back the ancient form when he conceived the Washington Monument, which marks the birth of the American democracy.

David Childs, lead architect of the architecture and design firm Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, saw an opportunity in that tapered obelisk profile and incorporated it into his design for One

PHOTO: COURTESY OF LITTLE, BROWN AND COMPANY / DBOX

World Trade Center, which is a skyline commemoration of the 9/11 Memorial at its feet. The office tower soars to a height of 1,776 feet, a reference to the year our new nation declared that all were equal. The roofline is accentuated with a six-foot-tall stainless steel parapet that marks the heights of the Twin Towers: 1,362 feet and 1,368 feet. Its square base measures 200 feet by 200 feet, dimensions it shares with the original Twin Towers and with the memorial pools that mark the spots where the towers once stood. It is also the width of a typical Manhattan block, conjuring the fabled street grid that confers order on a city of irrepressible energy and limitless hope.

Mr. Child's tower had an impossible task: to stand tall and yet remain humble, to represent all that was lost and reclaimed after Sept. 11. It does this by reflecting everything around it in its facade, which looks like a single sheet of glass from a distance but is actually composed of thousands of window units. Utterly unadorned, the tower appears minimal, but it is not. It changes constantly, assuming over the course of a day every shade of blue, insisting on the present, unrepeatable moment. Much like the city, the building's truest identity is found in its capacity to absorb, change and endure.

Memory and diversity also inspired Spencer Finch's art installation inside the 9/11 Memorial Museum, which consists of 2,983 unique watercolors, one for each of the victims of the 1993 and 2001 attacks. The title, "Trying to Remember the Color of the Sky on That September Morning," refers to the lapidary blue sky that cradled Manhattan 15 years ago. Like a mosaic, the squares are placed in a regular grid on the wall of the repository that holds the unidentified remains of some who died at the site. Each square is uniform in size, a microcosm of the square footprint of the Twin Towers, and painted on paper, a material that recalls life's ephemerality and the papers that blan-

keted lower Manhattan in 2001, both those posted by families searching for their loved ones and those that floated down from offices once housed in the towers. Each is a different shade of blue, unique like those who were lost and those who remain.

Soon, St. Nicholas National Shrine will open at Liberty Park, the elevated park that runs the length of the Trade Center's southern edge. Santiago Calatrava designed the diminutive Greek Orthodox church after the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul, the great domed basilica that melds Eastern and Western Christian thought. The site's only overtly religious structure, the church is clad in alabaster, which is backlit. At night, it will glow like a votive candle, restating in the language of the sacred the emotion expressed by the illuminated base of One World Trade Center on the opposite corner. The wide staircase that wraps around the church's exterior was inspired by Psalms 120 to 134, known as the psalms of ascent. This special grouping of 15 songs describes the steps of a spiritual journey—from distress to despair to hope to joy—that ring as true today as they once did for ancient pilgrims who were going up to Jerusalem. Standing atop Liberty Park, one sees a parallel progression: The eye travels over the two dark voids of the memorial pools to One World Trade Center's glowing base, a journey that moves from death to life, from darkness to light, from despair to hope.

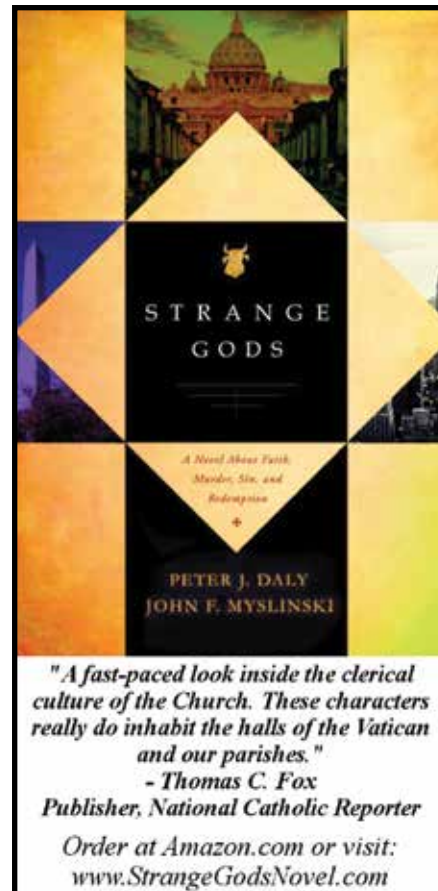
Amid sorrow, anger and every nuance of emotion in between, there is relief that this small patch is nearly rebuilt. Construction and healing continue. There is very little indifference toward the new World Trade Center. Every inch of it has been politicized, scrutinized and criticized—and yet thousands come daily to witness what has been reclaimed there and to rejoice in its beauty and vitality.

Great resistance—to an idea, to a building, to those we deem unlike our-

selves—usually means there is something still to understand. The opposite of love, as we know, is not hate, but indifference. This project tells us something important about what human beings are capable of and what is possible when we acknowledge the strength of our diversity. Hope does spring eternal, even and especially when our dreams of equality, peace and unity seem just out of reach.

God is good, all the time. It is the "all the time" part that we stumble on, wanting only light and not darkness. To help reconcile the two, there is a rich inventory of signs and symbols downtown that allow us to reflect on the particular glory of our idiosyncratic species, individuals who are irrevocably bound together, each of us bearing unique gifts and the wisdom to share them, and to see them in others.

JUDITH DUPRÉ is the author, most recently, of *One World Trade Center: Biography of the Building* (Little, Brown, 2016).



SAINTS OF SOUTHWEST BALTIMORE

Last spring I took my car to my mechanic for repairs. I explained that I needed it back by Friday because I was taking a trip. “Where you going?” he asked. “Baltimore,” I replied. “Baltimore?” he responded, without missing a beat. “Why would you want to go there?”

Sadly, this reflects many people’s view of Baltimore. Perceptions of the city as a violent, drug-ridden war zone have been shaped for decades by TV shows like “Homicide: Life on the Street” and “The Wire.” Many Baltimoreans accept this view as well. During the two decades I lived there, the murder rate rose to over 300 per year, one of the highest in the country. People have referred to the city we called home as “Bodymore, Maryland.” The slogan one former mayor had painted on the bus stop benches, “Baltimore, the City That Reads,” was routinely altered by graffiti artists to: “Baltimore, the City That Bleeds.”

Baltimore’s troubled history has been further confirmed by recent events. The death of Freddie Gray galvanized the city, provoking protests and riots. The ensuing trials of the officers responsible for his death concluded with all charges being dropped, a turn of events that seemed to exonerate the police, but not for long. A recent study of the department has uncovered ingrained corruption, unjustified arrests and police brutality, among other abuses.

This is the version of Baltimore many Americans recognize, including my mechanic, but it is a caricature of a

complex community. So I was delighted recently to discover a much-needed corrective. In their new book, *The Long Loneliness in Baltimore*, Brendan Walsh and Willa Bickham offer an account of their 45 years running Viva House, a Catholic Worker house of hospitality in the impoverished neighborhood of Southwest Baltimore.

Theirs is a rich history: they opened the doors of their home in October 1968 to their first guests, the members of the Catonsville Nine. During the trial of the protesters, Dorothy Day, then 70 years old, joined the community, fortifying Brendan and Willa’s sense of purpose and giving their new ministry direction.

Their doors remained open during the unrest of the late 1960s, as the Vietnam War raged, during the housing crisis of the 1970s and during the 1980s, when the homeless population reached epidemic proportions, and Brendan and Willa enhanced the services they offered with the help of a growing force of volunteers. Over the past half century, they have served the poorest of the poor, providing more than one million meals, offering shelter to over 3,000 people and distributing over 375 tons of food to neighborhood families. In the midst of urban decay, Viva House has remained, a fount of life amid a culture of death, offering solace and sanctuary for Baltimore’s forgotten citizens—the homeless, the addicted, the orphan, the widow, the stranger.

The Long Loneliness in Baltimore of-

fers a view of the city few people have seen, including many of us who have lived there. Brendan, a former seminarian, and Willa, a former member of the Sisters of St. Joseph, have devoted their lives to the hallowed and holy enterprise of bearing witness. In addition to providing a historical overview, the book presents poignant vignettes,

moments of revelation that illuminate the life of the neighborhood and the plight of the poor—not just the poor of Baltimore, but those across our country who struggle to survive in the merciless environment of the modern American city. Brendan’s unflinching narrative and Willa’s delicately rendered illustrations of daily life give a face and a name to the anonymous poor and depict the challenges they face. Their stories

attest to the lives, the courage and the wisdom encountered in ordinary people. They are no longer invisible, but instead fully fleshed children of God with names, identities and histories that cry out to be heard and told. What we find in this testament of faith is not so much poverty as vast richness.

To read *The Long Loneliness in Baltimore* is to see beauty in the blighted world and the divinity that dwells in the human heart. To read *The Long Loneliness in Baltimore* is to perceive, along with Brendan and Willa, that “saints are everywhere”—even, and especially, amid the rubble of Southwest Baltimore.

‘Baltimore?’
he responded,
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missing a beat,
‘Why would
you want to
go there?’



ANGELA ALAIMO O'DONNELL is a writer, professor and associate director of the Curran Center for American Catholic Studies at Fordham University. *The Long Loneliness in Baltimore*, not to be confused with an earlier book with a similar title by Brendan Walsh, is forthcoming from Apprentice House Books. Twitter: @AODonnellAngela.

FRANCIS THE DREAMER

Two Jesuits with new books on Pope Francis

FRANCIS, BISHOP OF ROME The Gospel For the Third Millennium

By Allan Figueroa Deck, S.J.
Paulist Press. 160p \$20

GO INTO THE STREETS! The Welcoming Church Of Pope Francis

By Thomas P. Rausch, S.J. and
Richard R. Gaillardetz
Paulist Press. 192p \$20

I knew that *Francis, Bishop of Rome*, the slim new volume of reflections about Pope Francis by Allan Figueroa Deck, S.J., was going to be something special three pages into the Introduction. Deck, who has spent his life working in the fields of Latino theology and ministry and currently serves as the rector of the Jesuit community at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles (where I live), is describing his travels to meet people who knew the young Jorge Bergoglio—schoolteachers and brother Jesuits, theologians who inspired his early thinking, even the pope’s sister, María Elena. (Deck says she agreed with the many who said that upon becoming pope her brother had become a “different man.”)

He has been wandering the neighborhood in which Bergoglio grew up, has seen the font in which he was baptized and “the confessional where he first sensed God’s call to be a priest.”

And he finds himself in a Jesuit community in Buenos Aires where Bergoglio had been rector. He had hoped after lunch there to go to San José, the parish where the pope had been pastor, but a rainstorm has kept him at the community. The rector suggests he take a siesta and offers, of all places, the pope’s one-time bed. (You

can’t ask a writer to get much closer to his source material than that.)

In Bergoglio’s “simple, austere” room, Deck discovers something interesting: “I noticed a statue of St. Joseph in a pose I had never before seen. It was Joseph, the husband of Mary, lying down asleep and dreaming.”

Apparently the statue had been in the room all the way back when Bergoglio was there; this image of Joseph sleeping is popular in Argentina. And “it struck me,” Deck writes, “as particularly fitting for understanding this pope. Like Joseph, he is a guardian of Jesus and of the fledgling church of which Mary is a model. The Holy Spirit—the source of Mary’s fecundity in giving birth to Jesus—communicates in mysterious ways and is inspiring Bergoglio just as he inspired Joseph.”

Put another way, what lies at the heart of this man is his willingness to dream, to imagine.

This spring also saw the release of *Go Into the Streets! The Welcoming Church of Pope Francis*, a volume of short, accessible articles on different aspects of the pope’s thinking co-edited by Thomas Rausch, S.J., a systematic theologian at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, and Richard Gaillardetz, a theology professor at Boston College. If Deck’s book is a deep dive into the pope’s early influences, the book by Rausch and Gaillardetz offers instead a broad set of perspectives on topics like the pope’s vision of a church of the poor,

by the Brazilian theologian María Clara Bingemer; his notions of evangelization, by professor Cecilia González-Andrieu of Loyola Marymount; and a consideration of the pope’s image of ministry, by the Australian-born theologian Richard Lennan.

Early this summer, I had the opportunity to sit down with Fathers Rausch and Deck to talk about their projects and lessons learned about the church and Pope Francis.

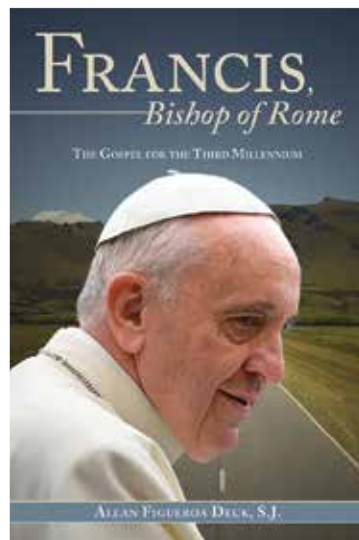
An Era of Change

“Pope Francis is trying to reclaim what the Second Vatican Council did,” Rausch proposes as we begin. “We’re moving from a more conservative re-interpretation of the Second Vatican Council that really goes against many of its impulses, [like] its impulse towards collegiality, toward a church that is *communio*, that allows local churches to make their own decisions.” It is, he believes, a time of “epochal change” in the life of the church.

Deck agrees and suggests another aspect of this monumental shift. “In the period of the Enlightenment,” he offers, “the faith wasn’t credible if you weren’t intellectualizing [it] and putting it in very rational terms.” The church’s emphasis was on providing a clear set of doctrines to which believers should adhere.

“But in the new period in which we find ourselves, clarity of doctrine isn’t enough. It isn’t bad, but it isn’t enough. In order to really persuade, in order to motivate, you have to somehow reach the heart.”

Pope Francis clearly excels at this, says Deck. “In the way that he’s communicating, the gestures that he makes, we see a very high regard for appealing to the affective aspect of people. He’s not



communicating so much in concepts but in a more symbolic way.”

Deck and Rausch see this “affective impulse” in Francis as the fruit of both upbringing and formation. “In the global South,” Rausch explains, “there is a much greater emphasis on how things touch our hearts, and not just our heads.” They also note that the Spiritual Exercises, which form the foundation for the spiritual life of all Jesuits, serve to develop a personal, affective relationship with God—indeed, a friendship.

A Popular, Incarnated Fatih

Both Deck and the authors of *Go Into the Streets!* emphasize repeatedly the centrality for Francis of “popular religion.” Rausch explains the term: “It’s all of the ways the Catholic faith takes on flesh and symbol and meaning in the life of the people—rituals, devotions [like those] to Mary, to the saints, fiestas.”

Deck goes on: Popular religion “is imaginative. It knows how to engage, motivate and fascinate people. It’s festive, it brings with it joy. It models ways in which the faith can concretely become life—through celebration, through beauty, through memory and people’s family traditions.”

“In other words,” he explains, “it’s not just a religion that’s codified in books or in catechisms, which in a sense dehumanizes our belief, removing it from the realm of symbol, gesture, narrative, myth—all the ways that religion really flourishes in the heart of the people.”

“Popular religion is about what the faith really means to the people. How do they live it?”

Rausch notes this is not just a Latin American phenomenon. “Andrew Greeley always stressed we have the high tradition of our theology and doctrine, and the low tradition of the stories and symbols that are passed on in families, which really communicate the faith to the next generation, which touch people’s hearts and shape them as they grow up.”

I suggest the nativity scenes that

families put up at Christmas as a possible example of this. Rausch emphatically agrees, noting how children look to a crèche with fascination: “There’s Jesus in the straw and the Virgin and the animals,’ they say. That’s far more effective than a lecture on the Incarnation.”

This makes me wonder if we might think of some of the pope’s public gestures of compassion and welcome as another sort of “performed” version of popular piety—vignettes like the scenes from Scripture in the Spiritual Exercises, meant to draw us into relationship with God or deeper reflection on our lives. Deck thinks the term performative is apt; in Latin American culture, he says, “you witness to what you believe. The faith is performative. You don’t theorize about it; you enact it.”

Conflict and Conversation

Another idea that stands out in these new books is *parrhesia*, which Deck translates from the Greek as “apostolic boldness” or “the boldness of Christ’s disciples as fostered in the Spiritual Exercises.” While clearly Pope Francis embodies this principle, Deck and Rausch feel he also views it as a template for the church as a whole.

They cite the recent meetings of the Synod of Bishops on the family. Some looked at the open conflicts during the meetings with concern, even horror. The modern church has generally tried to hide or suppress any signs of internal differences. But Deck and Rausch believe that for Pope Francis, such open conversations are essential. “*Parrhesia* means saying what you think,” says Rausch. “No one should say ‘I’ll embarrass the pope if I say what I think.’ This

pope wants to know what you think. He’s very clear about that.”

Deck notes this way of proceeding is “nothing new”: “All you have to do is

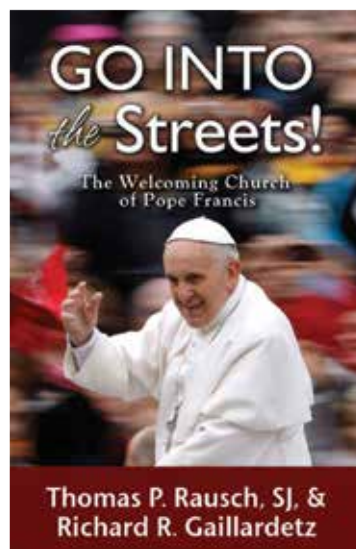
read the Acts of the Apostles, or Galatians, where Paul says he confronted Peter to his face.”

Perhaps, I posit, what throws some is that, unlike many modern popes, Francis seems to resist defining the teaching of the church in terms of what he himself has to say. So in his encyclicals, he regularly quotes bishops’ conferences, not himself. At the Vatican, he

likewise preaches not from the papal chair but from a pulpit, like an ordinary priest.

Rausch argues that Francis clearly believes truth is to be discovered not just in the hierarchy but in the people of God. “We’ve divided the church into two parts, the teaching church and the taught church, and we’ve tended to think of the hierarchy as the teaching church. But the church is really a *communio*. It’s all of the people animated by the Spirit with different gifts and ministries.” Instead of only church leaders being the main actors or subjects, says Rausch, “they’re all subjects. The whole church is subject.”

I put it to them: Are they saying that for Pope Francis, conversation is essential to learn how best to communicate the word of God? Or that through conversation with people, even the church learns more about who God is? “It is about learning who God is,” replies Deck. “We are able to learn about the mystery of God and pursue truth from any quarter. It can come from any place. So it’s not just about communicating what we think the message is. It’s about learning our own message. It’s intercul-



turation, a back and forth.

"Pope Francis at one point mentions that pastors in the church are sometimes in front of the sheep. Sometimes they're with the sheep. And sometimes they follow the sheep."

"And did you ever see a flock of sheep with a shepherd?" Rausch chimes in. "He's usually following them. Because they know where to go."

Based on what they are saying, I wonder if the arguments some people make that this pope is trying to radically change church teaching are actually describing him in terms that don't really fit. Rausch and Deck agree. "He doesn't want to change doctrine," says Rausch. "He wants to address pastoral issues. God's people are hurting. How do we bring the mercy of the Gospel and the joy of the Gospel into their lives?"

"The pope's function is not just to clarify doctrines," explains Deck, but to create the "connection that theology must have with spirituality"—that is, the lived practice of the faith. And out of that connection comes action or "engagement."

Mercy and the Hierarchy

Rausch's comments on mercy provoke a final area of inquiry. The pope has powerfully represented the church as fundamentally a community of mercy; but when it comes to the hierarchy, he does not seem to show much of that compassion himself. Why is that?

Rausch acknowledges the point. "He needs to be pastoral toward them. But he does want change, too. Clericalism is an enormous problem in the church. How many Catholics are turned off by pompous clerics who are not pastoral in their approach, who don't care about them?"

"The pope has a vision of what it means to be a priest," Rausch argues. "You accompany the people, you show them God's mercy, you show them the joy of the Gospel. But that's not the experience of a lot of people."

Deck agrees. The pope, he says "is

reflecting an impatience that you can often find in the people themselves, who love the church, who love the leaders of the church. He'll say things like 'Doctors of the law, or pastors of the flock? What are we? We don't need more doctors of the law.'

Stepping back, Deck finds the issue relates to the dramatic changes going on in the church.

"I would say one of the main qualities that was sought in a bishop, and this has been true for centuries, was loyalty. Loyalty to what, though? Loyalty to a certain kind of understanding of what

we're doing, of where we're going.

"Well, the fact of the matter is, the church is turning a corner. It is now headed in a slightly new direction, and not everybody realizes this. It takes a while to catch up. That's what's happening.

"So it's going to be difficult because we have leaders in the church who were formed for a slightly or maybe a considerably different church. But change is happening."

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THOMAS V. McGOVERN

NONES BEYOND THE NUMBERS

CHOOSING OUR RELIGION The Spiritual Lives Of America's Nones

By Elizabeth Drescher
Oxford University Press. 324p \$29.95

You can tell this book by its cover! The cover shows five empty boxes under symbols for Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism. A large red check mark fills the space outside all the boxes.

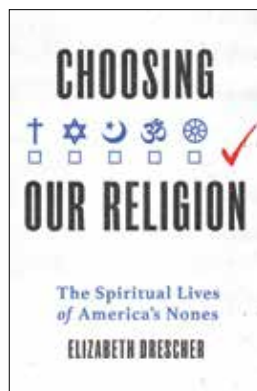
Elizabeth Drescher, a professor of religious studies at Santa Clara University in California, writes with amiable skepticism in this book, subtitled, "The Spiritual Lives of America's Nones," a group that now makes up nearly 25 percent of the general population. Drawing on national surveys on the sociology of religion, she sketches the space outside the traditional boxes, having listened with keen empathy to the stories of women and men, mostly white, urban and suburban, and predominantly aged 18 to 49. They responded to the typical prompt: When someone asks,

"What is your religion?" what are you most likely to say? And then to her follow-up: How would you describe yourself spiritually?

Drescher tells many road stories about becoming and being a none. Extended quotations from in-depth interviews suggest tentative directions for navigating a new terrain. What she reports will vex readers predisposed to fixed travel plans and will elicit considerable anxiety in the clergy and parents who continue asking: How did they lose their (my) way? Even baby boomers who marched away from religion as "seekers" may feel disoriented.

Be prepared to set aside the divine compasses used by Augustine and

Dante's pilgrims to journey through regions of the *Inferno* and *Purgatorio* to reach *Paradiso*. Thomas Merton's 20th-century geography, which led him inexorably from the secular world to Gethsemane and finally to the Dalai Lama's mountains, will seem too predestined. Imagine instead being an eyewitness to Job's travails or an em-



bedded journalist with the Exodus wanderers but without God's guiding voice in the days and darkness. Listen patiently for transcendent moments that appear when least expected. It could be beneficial to rediscover the words, healings and loving acts of Jesus in the Gospels as your AAA Triptik.

Understanding "nones beyond the numbers" requires a paradigm shift from studying religious ideas and observances as complex as Manhattan, Kan., to interpreting a spirituality as diverse and global as Manhattan, N.Y. Orthodox certainties—about fashioning church programs or designing scientific investigations into "believing/belonging/behaving"—have been deconstructed to qualitatively map those lingering experiences that stimulate "becoming and being."

Drescher writes that to become a none is to "religiously manufacture a spiritual self-invention." Nones left behind the faiths of their mothers and fathers after critical incidents of perceived hypocrisy, sometimes with anger or profound sadness over ministerial insensitivity or downright cruelty, and after being bored silly by vapid preaching. Faithful "somes" ask: How do we get them back? Zealous entrepreneurs respond with new packaging strategies, marketing slogans with technologically hip media to seduce a Sunday drive-by to a mega-church or enrollment in an online program that inspires and connects those with a taste for holiness.

After critiquing stereotypes of the unaffiliated's "whatever," without commitment, Drescher offers an excellent tutorial on "being none," "prayer among the unaffiliated," "a Good Samaritan/cosmopolitan ethics of care" and "raising the next generation." I paused often, asking myself her questions, creating my own dialogue of discovery with her respondents and thinking hard about

how best to synthesize their authentic perspectives. Why have family commitments, loving friendships, the earth and its creatures and gathering for meals always been so central to a spiritual life? How, when and with whom do the experiences of prayer connect us to transcendence and the sacred all around us? Why are empathy and compassion acts of courage, requiring clear heads, open hearts and resilient discipline? How do children learn to be lifelong learners about justice, mystery, being good and the grace of community?

Choosing Our Religion parallels themes explored by recent research in two other disciplines. Positive psychology scholars and practitioners like Martin Seligman suggest that well-being can be mapped using the markers of positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment. Pathways to this end can be derived from Eastern and Western religions and philosophies, including the daily practice of common denominator virtues like wisdom, humanity-love, justice, courage, temperance and transcendence. In her historical analyses of the transformative powers of religious traditions, Karen Armstrong evaluated Axial Age (900 to 200 B.C.E.) sages. Their outside-the box teachings in violent times and cultures inspired people's experiences of ritual, kenosis, enlightened self-knowledge, suffering, empathy, compassion and transcendence. Jesus and Mohammed inherited a world ready, albeit unreceptive, to these seeds of spiritual consciousness. Either of these scholarly templates could be used to capture continuity in the none's changing choices.

A quotation from John's Gospel introduces the final chapter: "The spirit blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes" (3:8). Drescher summarizes how nones

differ from the religiously affiliated:

- + Relationships that highlight intimacy and changing patterns of connectedness are the starting point for a spiritual life;
- + Spiritual and cosmopolitan differences are to be expected and respected until they make no difference;
- + New technology reorients affiliation and spiritual engagement to be networked, provisional, pluralistic and pragmatic, and no longer hierarchical and prescribed;
- + Caring compassion transcends ideology or theology as the core of a meaningful spiritual life.

Nones are not interested in being "re-captured," going back through a narrow gate. When asked if they are looking for a new religion that would be right for them, 88 percent said, Thanks, but no thanks. Yet, "Becoming None does not erase or overwrite whatever came before it, whether that includes elements of cultural identity, spiritual practices, moral values or re-configured personal relationships.... Nones shape spiritualities that alternately draw a boundary and bridge their religious past and present."

Drescher counsels readers that "It seems a far better spiritual investment to listen more deeply to their stories so that we can develop a richer, more complex story of the American spirit." Exploring the open spaces illuminated in *Choosing Our Religion* may invigorate composing our own spiritual identity stories, as well.

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[Classified ads can be found on Page 30.]

Serving God

TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (C), SEPT. 18, 2016

Readings: Am 8:4-7; Ps 113:1-8; 1 Tm 2: 1-8; Lk 16:1-13

“You cannot serve God and wealth” (Lk 16:13)

The complexity of the parable of the dishonest manager, found in Luke’s Gospel alone, did not stop the church fathers from cutting to the heart of the matter. Jesus commended the dishonest manager for slashing the amount of money the debtors owed to his master and encouraged his listeners to also “make friends for yourselves by means of dishonest wealth, so that when it is gone, they may welcome you into the eternal homes.” The commendation of the dishonest (Greek *adikia*, “unrighteous”) manager seems out of place, but ancient interpreters put the emphasis on the repentance of the manager that led to his proper use of earthly wealth.

Cyril of Alexandria, in his commentary on this passage (Homily 109), said: “Let those of us who possess earthly wealth open our hearts to those in need. Let us show ourselves faithful and obedient to the laws of God.” Ambrose of Milan (“Exposition of the Gospel of Luke”) focuses on the manager’s repentance and subsequent use of money, which he extols “so that by giving to the poor, we may match the grace of the angels and all the saints for ourselves. He does not rebuke the steward.... Although he has sinned, he is praised because he sought help for himself in the future through the Lord’s mercy.”

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Cyril and Ambrose see the antidote to greed and the manager’s path back to God grounded in opening “our hearts to those in need” and “giving to the poor.” Centuries earlier the prophet Amos revealed God’s care for the needy, decrying “you that trample on the needy, and bring to ruin the poor of the land” by practicing “deceit with false balances, buying the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals, and selling the sweepings of the wheat.” Amos promises that God will “never forget any of their deeds.”

God’s concern for the poor is grounded in the humanity that all of us share, which itself is grounded in God’s creation of us and love for each of us. To take advantage of another human being is to turn away from God’s love. More than that, to cheat a neighbor might also turn them away from God’s love and mercy. This is the ultimate result of sin, that we might substitute lesser things, like mammon, for God, or turn others away from God because of our unrighteous behavior.

The First Letter to Timothy, attributed to the Apostle Paul, draws a connection between Jesus’ common humanity and our salvation. There is “one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus, himself human, who gave himself a ransom for all.” The fact that Jesus shares in our humanity indicates that every person is intended for salvation. Since God desires “everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth,” we need to ask how

our behavior affects those to whom the Gospel is to be brought. How does our behavior impinge on God’s desire that every person might come to know the truth?

Since all of us, rich and poor, share a common humanity, and since we share that humanity with Jesus, the one mediator, “who gave himself a ransom for all,” our constant goal must be to build our relationships with an eye to maximizing the dignity of all people. Improper use of wealth, cheating in business,



PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Meditate on God’s desire that all people be saved. How does the Incarnation manifest God’s love of each person? Do you see how your daily financial behavior can bring people to God or turn them away from God? How can you use your wealth more productively for the kingdom?

ART: TAD DUNNE

bullying the poor or taking advantage of them financially might seem like small potatoes when compared to “greater” sins, but they matter in the big scheme of things. Jesus’ common humanity with us calls on us to treat everyone with the respect that the Incarnation makes manifest. God’s desire that we all be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth means that we should not act in ways that would turn people from this saving truth. Wealth, and how we use it, matters; and as the dishonest manager demonstrates, it is never too late to get honest and serve God instead of mammon.

JOHN W. MARTENS



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