

# America

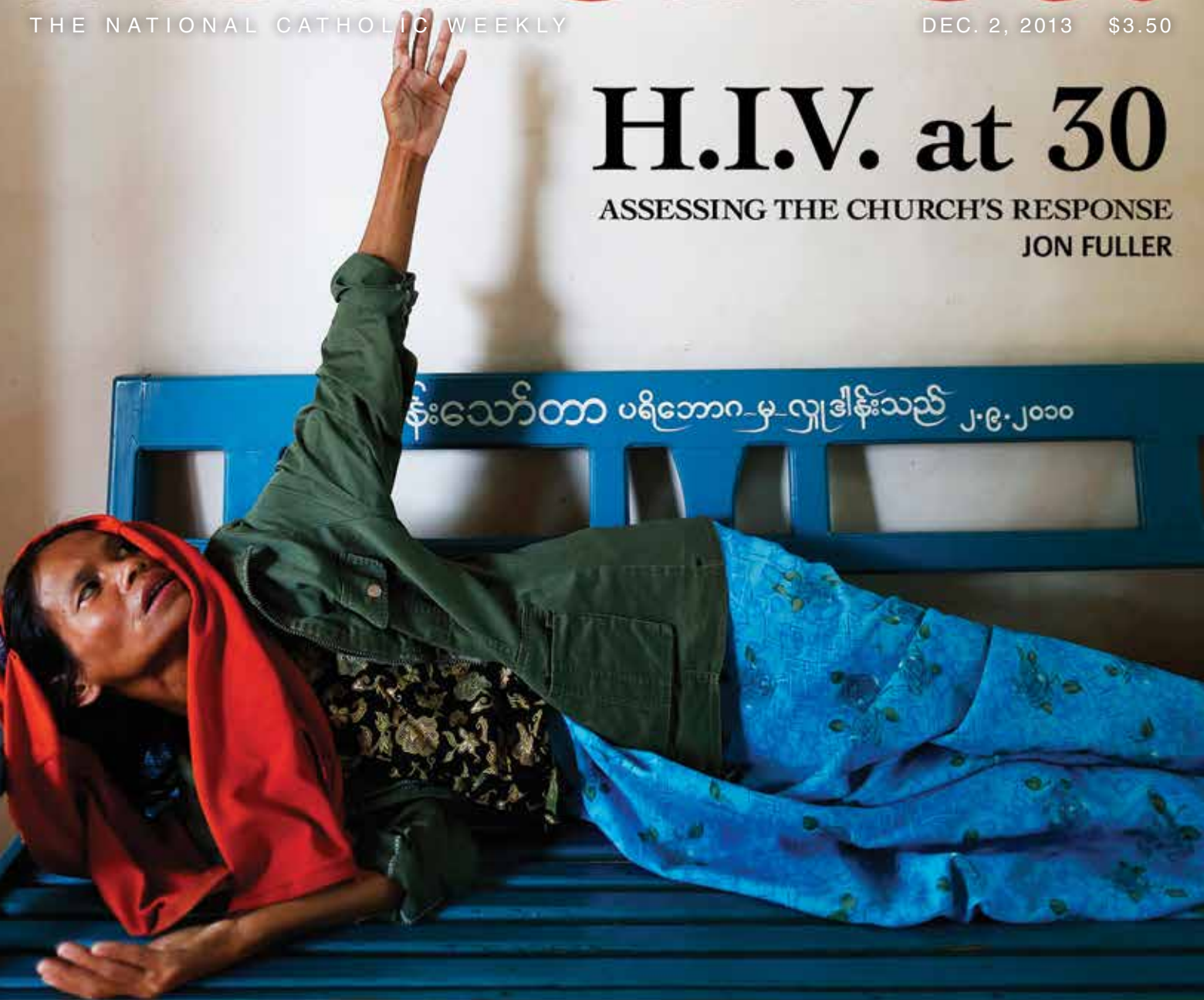
THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC WEEKLY

DEC. 2, 2013 \$3.50

## H.I.V. at 30

ASSESSING THE CHURCH'S RESPONSE

JON FULLER



ALSO:  
CHRISTOPHER COLLINS  
ON 'LUMEN FIDEI'

I well remember the first time that a book made me cry. It was December 1992, on one of those long, gray winter afternoons when the world seems unbearable. For reasons I don't recall but I surely thought were dire, I'd had enough of life, at least for the day. So I skipped the class on the history of Canada with Dr. Mary Wickwire, footslogged across the dank, windswept campus and climbed the stairs to my dorm room, 8 feet by 12 feet of white painted brick and beige laminate tucked into the northeast corner of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. Much like the solipsistic protagonist in "I Am a Rock," that homage to loneliness by Simon and Garfunkel, I fancied myself an escape artist of sorts: "I am shielded in my armor/ Hiding in my room, safe within my womb.... I am a rock/ I am an island."

The "rock," however, had left his bag at the student union and the only book in my room was *And the Band Played On: Politics, People and the AIDS Epidemic*, by Randy Shilts of The San Francisco Examiner. A cutting, heart-rending account of the first five years of the AIDS epidemic, the book is hardly escapist fare. Still, I wasn't about to traipse back across the tundra. Six hundred pages and several hours later, I closed the book and cried. Like most men, I have some vague yet persistent memory of a person I've never met telling me that men shouldn't cry, so this was a big deal. I cried that night for the people I knew who were living with AIDS and for the thousands who had already perished. I wept as well for my country: our national conscience had catastrophically failed us. Too many decent people had allowed too many decent people to die simply because they thought that AIDS was something that happened only to drug addicts and homosexuals, the kind of folks that "decent people" don't mix with.

America's sluggish, half-hearted response to the plight of people living

with AIDS was a mortal social sin, one for which our country has yet to fully atone for. The crisis also brought out the best and worst in the church.

According to Jon Fuller, S.J., while most Catholics didn't engage in the overt scapegoating dished up by the nation's televangelists, "some [Catholic] ministers focused their response to infected persons on a reiteration of the church's teaching on homosexual activity and drug use, rather than asking those facing life-threatening illness how the church might help them to be reconciled with God."

At the same time, says Father Fuller, "in the earliest years of the epidemic, the church responded with its tradition of pastoral care for individuals and families." The Jesuits in Boston's South End, for example, opened the doors of the Church of the Immaculate Conception to people with AIDS who had been rejected by their neighbors and even their families, devoting themselves and their resources to that most basic corporal act of mercy: burying the dead with dignity.

For my part, reading *And the Band Played On* belied the notion that I was ever really alone in my dorm that day. The following spring, I volunteered for the Names Project, the organization that gave us the AIDS memorial quilt, the hand-sewn tribute to those who had died. By October 1996, the quilt covered the entire National Mall in Washington, D.C., and as of 2012, the quilt had more than 48,000 panels. As a volunteer, I was what they call a quilt monitor, someone who ensures that the panels are not touched or damaged. I'd stand there for hours, a silent, virtually unseen witness to a cavalcade of human grief, in all of its strange, tragic beauty.

I learned anew, contra Simon and Garfunkel, just what John Donne had meant: "No man is an island.... Any man's death diminishes me/ Because I am involved in mankind/ And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls/ It tolls for thee."

**MATT MALONE, S.J.**

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Cover: Mye Nyo, 39, rests beneath a religious painting at a Catholic-run hospice for AIDS patients in Myitkyina, the capital of Kachin State, Myanmar, in July 2013. Mye Nyo was infected by her former husband, a heroin addict who died of AIDS. Reuters/Damir Sagolj

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www.americamagazine.org

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DECEMBER 2, 2013



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## ON THE WEB

**Sidney Callahan**, right, answers questions from **America's** female editors, and the editors offer **Scripture reflections for Advent**. Plus, **Jon Fuller, S.J.**, talks about the church and H.I.V./AIDS on our podcast. All at [americamagazine.org](http://americamagazine.org).



### Global Warning

Poverty helped propel the death and suffering in the Philippines just as surely as the surging waters of San Pedro Bay. Around the world in places like Tacloban City, people who live in poverty are often crowded into the most inhospitable and ill-conceived locations, whether backed up against the ocean in the Philippines or against an eroded hillside in Guatemala. The shoddy construction of the homes of the poor offer little to no protection against life-threatening weather events. Having a second floor or a house constructed out of something sturdier than wood and tin meant the difference between life and death for many during Typhoon Haiyan. The suffering in Tacloban has been compounded by the region's poor infrastructure. A choked road system has prevented people from escaping the disaster zone and relief supplies from getting to them.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy in 2012, municipal leaders on the U.S. East Coast began plans for billion dollar mitigation projects to stand against future storms and the historic challenge of rising global sea levels. They have the wherewithal and the luxury to do this. Sprawling urban communities throughout the 7,000 islands of the Philippines sit at or near sea level in the middle of the world's most storm-prone region. How realistic will it be for Tacloban City officials to contemplate similar defenses against the ravages of the next super-typhoon?

While the West is the largest contributor to global warming, it will be the poor nations of the world that endure its worst effects. There has been much talk but little action toward more justly sharing that burden. The nations of the West and other primary contributors to global warming could begin by helping to pay for shelter that meets minimum standards of survivability, road systems adequate to emergency evacuation and the resettlement of those who live in sites that can no longer be protected against the world's surging storms.

### Desert Experience

While the world has been preoccupied with the sprouting of illegal Jewish settlements on occupied Palestinian territory on the West Bank, within Israel proper the long cherished dream of making the Negev desert bloom is running up against some facts on the ground that are difficult to dislodge—the Bedouin, who have lived on the Negev since at least the seventh century. Many now live in poor, “unrecognized” townships that predate the establishment of the State of Israel or were built under Israeli pressure during the 1950s. These Arab Israeli citizens have long struggled under the burden of unofficial status, denied a clear title to their homes

or land and denied access to basic state infrastructure.

Now, however, even these poor communities have become the targets of settler expansion. Renewed efforts to construct gated Jewish farming communities on Bedouin sites, the so-called Praver Plan, threaten to dislocate 40,000 Arab Israeli citizens on behalf of Jewish Israeli citizens. The plan, in effect since 2011 and now entering a terminal phase, has already led to the destruction of hundreds of Bedouin homes and now seeks the demolition of about 40 complete villages and the confiscation of 70,000 hectares of land in the Negev. The region's informal land claims and dizzying array of sometimes contradictory deeds from the Ottoman era or issued under the British mandate make it easy for Israeli authorities to ignore Arab ownership claims.

Activists with the Jewish Voice for Peace and the Association for Civil Rights in Israel describe the plan as a human rights and diplomatic disaster, but the Obama administration has been completely silent on the matter. More prominent U.S. voices of condemnation would be welcome, particularly from within the State Department, before the Middle East peace process sinks completely into geopolitical farce.

### An Invitation to Speak Up

The decision to consult the faithful as part of the preparation for next year's meeting of the Synod of Bishops by means of a questionnaire on “the pastoral challenges to the family” represents a challenge and an opportunity for a church ready to listen. As Cardinal John Henry Newman wrote in his classic essay “On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine” (1859), seeking the *sensus fidelium* is essential because the “body of the faithful is one of the witnesses to the fact of the tradition of revealed doctrine.”

The preparatory document for the synod lists several challenges facing various cultures: cohabitation that does not lead to marriage, same-sex unions, dowries that resemble a purchase price for the woman, the caste system, “hostile” forms of feminism, surrogate motherhood and the abandonment of the sacrament of penance.

The directive urges the bishops to share the questionnaire “as widely as possible. The bishops of England and Wales have posted the questionnaire online and invited responses. Bishop John Hine of Britain told Vatican Radio the document is “extremely significant” and added: “It really responds to the desire of the people...to be consulted on matters which concern them so deeply.” This effort, which is to be commended, is in tune with the desire of Pope Francis to have “shepherds with the smell of the sheep.”

# Healing Communities

One of the last great stigmas in American society is that attached to mental illness. How often we hear insensitive comments about people with mental illness and even accusatory moral judgments, like “They just need to shape up and get over it.” The dynamics of stigma enable the great majority of the population to say, “He or she is not one of us.” And because of the stigma and our own fear, we tend as a society to provide only self-defeating half-measures to care for people with mental illness.

A major ray of hope shone on Nov. 8, however, when the Obama administration issued long-awaited federal regulations implementing the mental-health parity law signed by President George W. Bush in 2008. The new regulations oblige insurance companies to provide coverage for mental illness and drug problems comparable to what they provide for any other illness. It is a historic breakthrough that was a long time in the making.

This initiative reverses the dramatic decline in public support for mental health between 2009 and 2012, when states lost some \$4 billion in mental health care funding, the largest cuts since the de-institutionalization movement of the 1970s, which reduced the number of people in large psychiatric facilities by moving them to local residences. Addressing mental illness as early as possible is critical for helping people to become self-sufficient and live a relatively independent life. We need only to look around us to see the consequences of neglect.

For example, 20 to 25 percent of the homeless population in the United States suffer from some form of severe mental illness. In comparison, only 6 percent of the total U.S. population are severely mentally ill, according to the National Institute of Mental Health in 2009. In far too many states, the second largest “psychiatric” institution is the state prison or a county jail.

To say that the system is broken implies that at one time it was robust and adequate. But progressive care for people affected by mental illness has never been a hallmark of American society. Families with out-of-control, suicidal or aggressive children have no central place to turn to for help, and there is no coordinated action plan they can use to learn about and access services that could provide desperately needed support.

The National Alliance for the Mentally Ill plays a crucial role as a support system for families and as an advocate for mental health resources. Every state has a

chapter, and many of these chapters have a faith or spiritual component.

Churches are tremendous social assets, but it is only in the last 25 years that they have begun to harness their resources for the benefit of people with mental illness and their families. Deacon Tom Lambert of the Archdiocese of Chicago underscores the isolation that can occur. He calls mental illness a “no-casserole disease.” When his wife had open-heart surgery 25 years ago, “the doorbell never stopped ringing.” But when his daughter was hospitalized because of mental illness 20 years ago, he said, “No one came to the door.”

Deacon Lambert also found during those dark days two decades ago that Catholic Church leaders knew very little about mental illness and that there was nothing in place to help those with mental illness or their families. So he and his wife established a commission on mental illness in the Archdiocese of Chicago, albeit without any church funding. “I call it an unfunded Gospel mandate,” he said.

Jennifer Shifrin of St. Louis, Mo., worked out of her kitchen to found Pathways to Promise, an interfaith program on ministry and mental illness to support families, which are most often the primary caregivers for people with long-term mental illnesses.

The Rev. Craig Rennebohm of the United Church of Christ has spent a lifetime on the streets of Seattle, greeting people, building trust, sometimes helping them find food or shelter and in some cases paving the way for hospitalization. He will be a keynote speaker at a one-day workshop in Chicago on Jan. 15 on “Creating Hope: the Power of Faith Communities in Mental Health Recovery.”

Pastors and ministers, especially, can help break through the stigma of mental illness by their preaching. One third of the Gospel of Mark depicts the healing ministry of Jesus. And half of all these healings, it appears, were of people afflicted with mental illness. By the religious standards of the day, people with mental illnesses were similar to lepers, prostitutes and others who were considered “unclean” and hence excluded from the community worship. When Jesus healed a person with mental illness, he not only took away their infirmity but also restored them to the community. We too, as people of faith, can engage in this healing ministry, breaking down barriers and welcoming all as children of God.



# WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

*Readers respond to America's special issue on women (10/28)*

### All Called to Serve

Thanks to *America* for including women in the discussions about the role of women in the church. Our church has to play catch-up on years and decades of neglect. Young Catholic women walk away from the official Catholic Church and use their talents and gifts to serve their families and others in need directly. They abandon faith practices in favor of working outside the walls of male-dominated thinking. This may be the future of the Catholic Church unless there are more immediate steps taken to change the status quo.

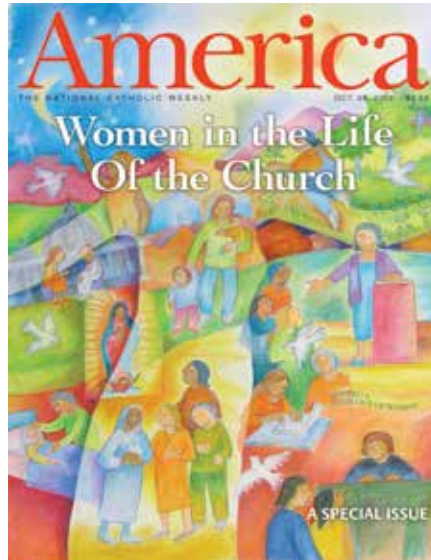
Those of us who love the church structure will stay awhile and try to change the official role of women to reflect the words more closely of St. Paul, who proclaimed that in Christ there is no longer Jew or Gentile, male or female, slave or free. My translation: To see all members—male and female, ordained and lay—participating or officiating in every function, decision and sacrament, dictated only by our discerning of who God is calling or leading to each service.

ELAINE BERNINGER  
*Cleves, Ohio*

### My Daughters' Future

Thank you, *America*, for this special issue. I find it disheartening, however, that we even need to discuss the role of women in the church.

Being Catholic is a huge part of who I am. Now I have three daughters. I want them to demand the same opportunities as the boys and to expect to be part of decision-making processes. Thus, it is getting harder and harder for me to sit with them in Mass each week, where it is so obvious they



will not be given equal opportunity, be part of the leadership or be invited to choose the leadership or have a part in making important decisions. I don't want them to believe that Jesus would think this is right and just.

The fact that Pope Francis said the “door is closed” on women's ordination is very troubling for me. It seems to indicate that very little will change during my daughters' lifetimes, and they too will grow up in a church where women are treated as second-class citizens. This is not what I want for them.

MARYBETH MITTAZ  
*Needham, Mass.*

### A Theology of Men

I read with great interest, as did so many of your readers, your very fine and informative issue. Some of the writers are good friends of mine and their input helped raise my consciousness in the areas they addressed.

In light of this most interesting issue, I would like to propose a study

leading to a theology of men and an issue dedicated to “Men in the Life of the Church.” While excluding clergy like myself, the issue could include articles from several college or university students, a politician, a contractor, an artist, an athlete or coach, a small business owner and even from a truck driver.

I believe it would be interesting to see whether or not the church is addressing the needs of men, especially younger men. How is the church reaching out to them and inviting laymen to contribute their talents in serving the church? Is the church encouraging men in the marketplace to penetrate their various environments with the power of the Gospel?

(MOST REV.) PETER A. ROSAZZA  
*Bloomfield, Conn.*

*The writer is auxiliary bishop emeritus of the Archdiocese of Hartford.*

### The Next Step

I commend the editors for their decision to devote the recent issue to matters that most concern women, and to include among the authors some of the most competent and best informed women on matters of our Catholic faith.

Clearly this issue was designed to address the failure to engage the wisdom and experience of women among contributors to the magazine in the past. I am grateful for your effort and trust that this display of their many gifts will not be limited to this impressive edition. You will concretize your commitment through such actions as hiring more women for staff positions and commissioning them to write articles more regularly.

MARGARET ORMOND, O.P.  
*Columbus, Ohio*

*The writer is prioress of the Dominican Sisters of Peace.*

### More Space Needed

In “Of Many Things,” Kerry Weber states that this special issue on women examines some of the issues “most relevant to Catholic women today,” which

“represent a wide variety of experiences and concerns of Catholic women.”

As a Catholic woman, therefore, I am disheartened that you presented an article extolling the virtues of natural family planning (“Love, Naturally,” by Regina Bambrick-Rust), yet you apparently felt comfortable omitting the perspective of the overwhelming majority of Catholic women who choose other forms of birth control for personal, economic or medical reasons.

Ms. Weber notes that “listening begins when we allow others the space to speak.” How is that goal served by giving space only to the official perspective that the magisterium approves?

ELIZABETH KECK  
*Boylston, Mass.*

### Vatican Access

Re “Opening Doors”: Kerry Robinson, Chantal Götz and company are to be applauded for using their financial leverage to gain access to what have traditionally been the power centers of the Vatican and for using their philanthropic platforms to promote the larger issues around the role of women at those levels of the institutional church.

Their unparalleled access gives them an unparalleled responsibility. Money speaks, especially in the church, and the very presence of these young women who now control their family foundations ought to alert the men in the Vatican to something we women have always known: these days it is the women in the family who most often have the greatest influence not only on the spiritual riches of which Ms. Robinson speaks but clearly on the way the temporal riches of their family are distributed.

I wish them success in their efforts, but I also hope that in the time of Pope Francis a woman will not have to be head of a foundation in order to have this level of access and conversation.

CAROL STANTON  
*Online comment*

### I’m Not Alone

“A Promising Path,” by Kathleen Sprows Cummings, is entirely wel-

come. I have felt guilty, as a cradle Catholic, to have had these thoughts and feelings of rebellion at the treatment of women in the church. I don’t hear anyone else I know express these feelings or thoughts.

At 72, I have no desire to be a priest. But there must be younger women who would. I have been an altar server, a eucharistic minister and a lector—all unthinkable when I was young. There are no good reasons why we women cannot serve as priests.

All four of my daughters-in-law passed on converting because they felt the church was anti-women. I couldn’t come up with a valid enough reason to change their minds. My grandchildren are being raised Presbyterian, Episcopalian and Lutheran. Thank you for letting me know I’m not alone or sinful for feeling this way.

JOAN O’BRIANT  
*Online comment*

### Wrong Image

Though I am a loyal and thorough reader of *America*, I cannot yet get into the content of this issue because of the cover.

I see all the different roles. I see the superimposed female silhouette. But I

am stopped by the fact that the art is... so soft and pretty. It is full of soft and rounded and care-giving forms. It is full of gentle colors and textures. It is a comforting and accommodating visual, as if for a children’s book.

Yes, I know what Jesus said about letting the children come to him. That’s different from recognizing the workers already here in the vineyard, if only we can recognize her and her companions who, by the way, are powerful and maybe even hard and challenging. And tell me again, why can’t women be ordained?

I wish that a stronger image by Ansgar Holmberg, C.S.J., could have been used. They certainly exist.

SUSAN BLACK  
*San Francisco, Calif.*

### Complementary Homilies

Re “At the Ambo”: Thanks for a wonderful article. If there is anything in Catholic teaching on gender complementarity and a “feminine genius,” then it would seem to follow that the church needs to hear women preaching out of their experience as women, and for women to provide a female perspective in leading the church.

CHRIS SULLIVAN  
*Online comment*

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CARTOON: BOB ECKSTEIN

# SIGNS OF THE TIMES

TYPHOON HAIYAN

## Hunger, Thirst and Disease Taunt Survivors as World Responds

**I** J. Chan-Gonzaga, S.J., grew up in Tacloban City in the Visayas Islands of central Philippines. Now he is struggling to adjust the image of the community he knew with the scenes of destruction, death and human suffering he encountered when he returned to Tacloban on Nov. 11. Three days after the storm, amid the debris left behind by hundreds of modest wooden homes washed away by super typhoon Haiyan, “there were just bodies lying in the street,” said Father Chan-Gonzaga.

“This is no longer the Tacloban that we loved. Everything is gone. [My] high school is gone; the church where I did my first thanksgiving Mass three years ago when I made my ordination...the only thing remaining there is the altar.”

But worse, he said, was his final image of Tacloban, pushing through a crowd of people desperate to leave the ruined city and rushing to a waiting military transport. Father Chan-Gonzaga said he was “still trying to process” the sight of the friends and families he left behind on the tarmac at what had been Tacloban airport.

Father Chan-Gonzaga ran into a childhood friend and her family among hundreds of others trying to reach the city’s airport, walking away from communities that had been swept away in the 15-foot storm surge. What was she doing? he asked. Where was she trying to go? “Anywhere but here,” the woman told him.

With good reason. Relief supplies were piling up at the Tacloban airport, but little was making it into what was left of the town where residents had been engaged in a daily struggle to survive since the typhoon raked the city on Nov. 8. A week after the storm, children were becoming ill from drinking dirty water and looting had broken out as survivors searched for food. The city’s municipal authorities urged residents who could manage it to leave Tacloban until order could be restored.

Father Chan-Gonzaga had gone to Tacloban to find his grandmother. The 99-year-old had survived the storm clinging to the back of a neighbor as the waters rose around them, finding safety finally on the second floor of a neighbor’s home. Her harrowing story was just one of thousands being told among survivors in a devastated com-

munity where finding a refuge on an upper floor of a sturdy building often made the difference between life and death. On Nov. 15 the death toll was still rising, but the official figure was nearing 4,000. Thousands had been injured and two million people had been displaced by the storm. Unattended children were observed wandering Tacloban City. Some are concerned they might become victims of child predators or human traffickers. Patience had run out among average Filipinos frustrated by the government’s response to the crisis.

Catholic Relief Services reported that its teams, along with an army of other disaster response agencies, were managing to reach survivors with food, water and temporary shelters. A U.S. navy strike force arrived on Nov. 14 to assist overwhelmed Philippine government agencies.



**AFTERMATH.** A police boat washed into Tacloban City by Typhoon Haiyan

In Baltimore on Nov. 11 what might have been a more or less perfunctory status report on Catholic Relief Services from Bishop Gerald Kicanas of Tucson, chairman of the C.R.S. board, and Carolyn Woo, president of C.R.S., took a dramatic turn as the scope of the catastrophe in the Philippines became clear. C.R.S. made an initial commitment of \$20 million in emergency aid for survivors.

“Our goal is to serve 100,000 families, about a half million people,” Carolyn Woo told the bishops at the U.S.C.C.B. fall general assembly on Nov. 11. The bishops scheduled a special collection to support relief efforts on the weekends of Nov. 16-17 or Nov. 30-Dec. 1. For more information, visit [crs.org](http://crs.org), [caritas.org](http://caritas.org) or [phjesuits.org/pjf/share.php](http://phjesuits.org/pjf/share.php).

**KEVIN CLARKE**





PHOTO: CARITAS INTERNATIONALIS

U.S. BISHOPS

## Dolan: Go Global on Religious Freedom Fight

In his final address as president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Cardinal Timothy Dolan of New York outlined a series of steps U.S. bishops could take to protect religious freedom around the world, “a central social and political concern of our time.” Speaking at the opening of the U.S. bishops fall general assembly in Baltimore on Nov. 11, Cardinal Dolan recited a sad litany of acts of oppression and persecution primarily against Christian minority communities around the world.

“We as bishops, as shepherds of one of the most richly blessed communities

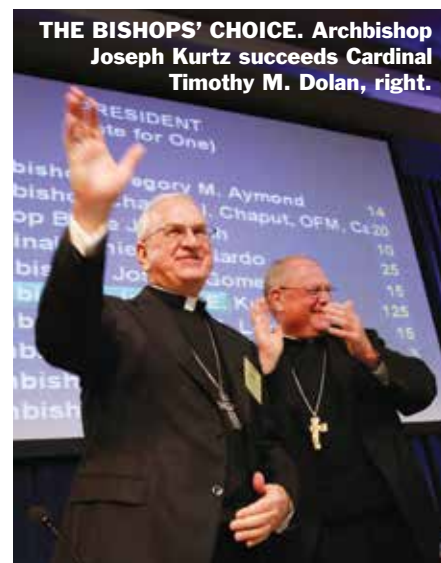
of faith on the planet, as pastors who have spoken with enthusiastic unity in defense of our own religious freedom, must become advocates and champions for these Christians whose lives literally hang in the balance, as we dare not allow our laudable battles over religious freedom at home to obscure the actual violence being inflicted on Christians elsewhere,” the cardinal said. The cardinal asked bishops to raise awareness of the global plight of Christians and urged them to contact political leaders to persuade them to make the protection of “at-risk Christians a foreign policy priority.”

The responsibility to coordinate the conference toward that goal now falls on Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Ky., who on Nov. 12 was elected to succeed Cardinal Dolan. Previously U.S.C.C.B. vice president, Archbishop Kurtz’ elevation marks a return to past practice for the conference, which typically moves the previous term’s vice president into the top spot. In 2010, Cardinal Dolan’s election over then vice president Gerald Kicanas of Tucson, marked a break with that tradition. Archbishop Kurtz won on the first round of balloting with 125 votes. In the voting for vice president, Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston was elected during the third round of voting, defeating Archbishop Charles J. Chaput of Philadelphia, 147 to 87. The terms of the new president and vice president began at the conclusion of the General Assembly on Nov. 14.

Archbishop Kurtz was born Aug. 18, 1946, and ordained a priest for the Diocese of Allentown, Pa., on March 18, 1972. He previously served as bishop of Knoxville, Tenn., from 1999 to 2007 before being appointed to Louisville. Cardinal DiNardo was born May 23, 1949, and ordained

a priest for Pittsburgh on June 16, 1977. He previously served as bishop of Sioux City, Iowa, from 1998 to 2004 before being appointed coadjutor bishop, then archbishop, of Galveston-Houston. Pope Benedict XVI named him a cardinal in 2007, making him the first cardinal from Texas.

Early in the assembly, the bishops discussed the extraordinary Synod of Bishops on the family, called by Pope Francis for next October. Cardinal Dolan said he is awaiting clarification from the Holy See about how preparatory material, such as the answers to a questionnaire sent to the world’s bishops’ conferences, will be used. In the meantime, several bishops said they are already using the questionnaire to consult with their priests’ councils or other diocesan organizations. Bishop



**THE BISHOPS’ CHOICE.** Archbishop Joseph Kurtz succeeds Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan, right.

Robert N. Lynch of St. Petersburg, Fla., suggested the U.S. bishops create several ways that everyday Catholics could respond to the questions on faith and family life posed by the Vatican, including an online survey. In other business the bishops voted to proceed with development of a pastoral statement

on the dangers pornography poses to family life, which should be completed by 2015. They approved several steps toward adapting the Mexican Misal Romano for use in the United States.

A guest speaker of the assembly's was Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò, Apostolic Nuncio to the United States, who told the bishops on Nov. 11: "The Holy Father wants bishops in tune with their people.... he made a special point of saying that he wants pastoral bishops, not bishops who profess or follow a particular ideology." The nuncio said it would be "primarily by her conduct and by her life that the church will evangelize the world, in other words by her living witness of fidelity to the Lord Jesus."

He said, "No one can dispute the clear fact that our present Holy Father himself, as the Supreme Teacher, is giving us by his own witness, an example of how to live a life attuned to the values of the Gospel.

"While each of us must take into consideration our adaptability to the many different circumstances and cultures in which we live and the people whom we serve," he said, "there has to be a noticeable lifestyle characterized by simplicity and holiness of life. This is a sure way to bring our people to an awareness of the truth of our message."

## Fast for Immigration Reform Launched

Photos of happy families were posted inside the Fast 4 Families Community Tent at the National Mall in Washington. Beside the smiling faces, however, were Post-it notes that read "I pray that families stay together" and "God, please don't take my mom away." National religious, labor and immigrant rights leaders launched "Fast 4 Families: A Call for Immigration Reform and Citizenship" and began fasting until members of

## NEWS BRIEFS

On Nov. 13, the U.S. State Department designated Nigeria's **Boko Haram network** a terror organization, bowing to months of pressure to act against the radical Islamist group which has killed hundreds of people, especially among Nigeria's Christian communities. • Working people struggling to support themselves and their families should be protected from **so-called payday loan lenders**, said Bishop Stephen E. Blaire of Stockton, Calif., chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, in a Nov. 13 letter to the U.S. Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. • **Ana and Jose Aguayo**, a brother-and-sister team from the Northwest Arkansas Worker Justice Center, received the Catholic Campaign for Human Development's Cardinal Joseph Bernardin New Leadership Award on Nov. 11 for their efforts on behalf of low-wage workers. • **Jerome Murphy-O'Connor**, a Dominican priest and New Testament scholar, died in the early hours of Nov. 11 in Jerusalem. • In a tour on Nov. 9 of areas in the Democratic Republic of the Congo held only days before by M23 rebels, Bishop Theophile Kaboyi Ruboneka of Goma called on citizens to consolidate a peace "**acquired at the price of blood.**"



**Jose Luis and Ana Claudia Aguayo**

Congress vote in favor of immigration reform. They may have a long wait ahead of them. On Nov. 13, just days after receiving a letter from the outgoing president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Cardinal Timothy Dolan of New York, urging quick passage of comprehensive immigration reform, House Speaker John Boehner ruled out further efforts on the legislation in 2013. Sister Simone Campbell, along with members of Network, a national Catholic social justice lobby, delivered more than 10,000 postcards to members of Congress urging them to vote for immigration reform.

## Jesuit 'Teach In for Justice' Hits Capitol Hill

The Ignatian Family Teach-In for Justice in Washington, D.C., drew about 1,100 participants on Nov. 16. The I.F.T.J. is a nationwide social justice

conference sponsored by the Ignatian Solidarity Network. In addition to the workshops, keynote addresses and policy discussions, participants were scheduled to rally on Capitol Hill on Nov. 18 before collectively meeting with more than 100 members of Congress. Advocates urged Congress to pass humane comprehensive immigration reform, increase the federal minimum wage and provide full funding to nutrition assistance programs that support American families. "The Teach-In is an event students and lay leaders return to each year to find energy and inspiration to continue working for social justice," said Natalie Terry, a graduate student at the Jesuit School of Theology at Santa Clara University and a Teach-In participant since 2006.

From CNS and other sources.



# Criminal Injustice

If there is one cause in this country that Christians should take up, it is reforming the U.S. criminal justice system. Whether we're talking about mass incarceration, harsh sentencing, pervasive racism, the treatment of juvenile offenders or conditions inside prisons, the U.S. justice system is frequently not just, and it is certainly not Christian.

Most Americans probably know that the United States incarcerates proportionally more of its citizens than any other country in the world, about 2.2 million, a rate of 716 prisoners for every 100,000 people. To put that into perspective, Russia imprisons 475 people per 100,000, Costa Rica 314, Iran 284, China 121, Norway 72. Americans make up 5 percent of the world's population and 25 percent of the world's prisoners.

Many Americans also know that black men in this country are far more likely to end up in prison than white men, almost six times more likely. Though far more whites than blacks use drugs, blacks are 10 times more likely to be sent to prison for drug possession.

What many people do not know is that even as crime rates have been going down in this country, life sentences have been going up. Since 1984, the number of people serving life in prison has quadrupled to over 159,000, with nearly 50,000 people serving life terms without possibility of parole. More than 10,000 of all lifers were convicted of crimes committed before the age of 18; one in four of these young offenders received a sen-

tence of life without parole. In the past four years alone, there has been a 22.2 percent increase in these sentences, according to the Sentencing Project, a nonprofit research and advocacy organization working in the criminal justice field.

Life without parole is not reserved only for murder. Consider Travion Blount, who at age 15 participated in an armed robbery in Norfolk, Va. No one was shot or killed. Two of his fellow gang members, older boys who planned the robbery, received sentences of 10 years and 13 years. Blount received six life sentences adding up to 118 years.

Years ago a Jamaican woman told me that she thought Americans were among the most vindictive people on earth. I've never known how to assess that statement, but the treatment of those convicted of a crime in this country would seem to support it.

Conditions inside most prisons have grown worse during the past 35 years, only partly due to overcrowding. Ex-offenders talk about the deliberate dehumanization that goes on in prison.

"When you're there, it's very clear that humiliating people is part of the control mechanism," said Karl Rodney, an ex-con I spoke to in Kansas City last week.

Francis Cullen, a professor of criminal justice at the University of Cincinnati and the author of the book *Reaffirming Rehabilitation*, said that beginning in the mid 1970s, and for different reasons, both liberals and

conservatives abandoned rehabilitation as the dominant perspective on prisons. The focus shifted to deterrence through harsher and harsher penalties. Education programs were cut, and corrections officials no longer were paid to rehabilitate inmates but to keep them in line.

"The biggest thing that happened was that prisons got meaner," Cullen said. "There was a concerted effort to make people's lives miserable."

Americans sometimes become exercised about barbarous punishments inflicted by the Taliban in Afghanistan or in other rough corners of the world, but rarely do we discuss the heartlessness shown prisoners here at home, where

they are warehoused for decades and often put in solitary confinement until they go mad.

Christianity is not a religion of or for perfect people leading perfect lives. Christ came to save sinners. These are a mixed bag and include thieves, drug addicts, murderers and gang members. Redemption and forgiveness are at the core of the Gospels. That does not entail not holding people accountable for their crimes; it does mean recognizing that with the grace of God all of us are capable of change. But nobody was ever punished into a change of heart.

Locking people up and throwing away the key is the antithesis of the Gospel message. It's why Christians should be leading efforts to restore hope, charity and balance to our penal system.

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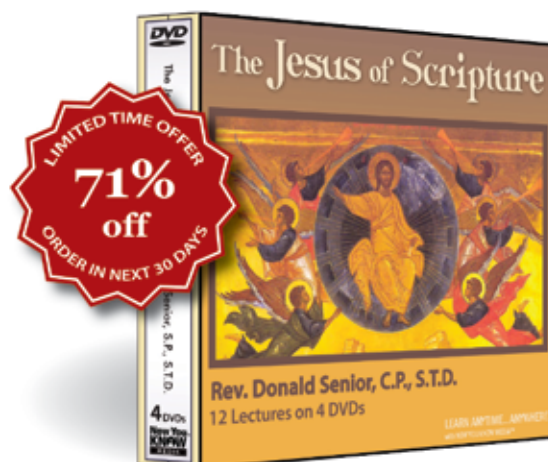
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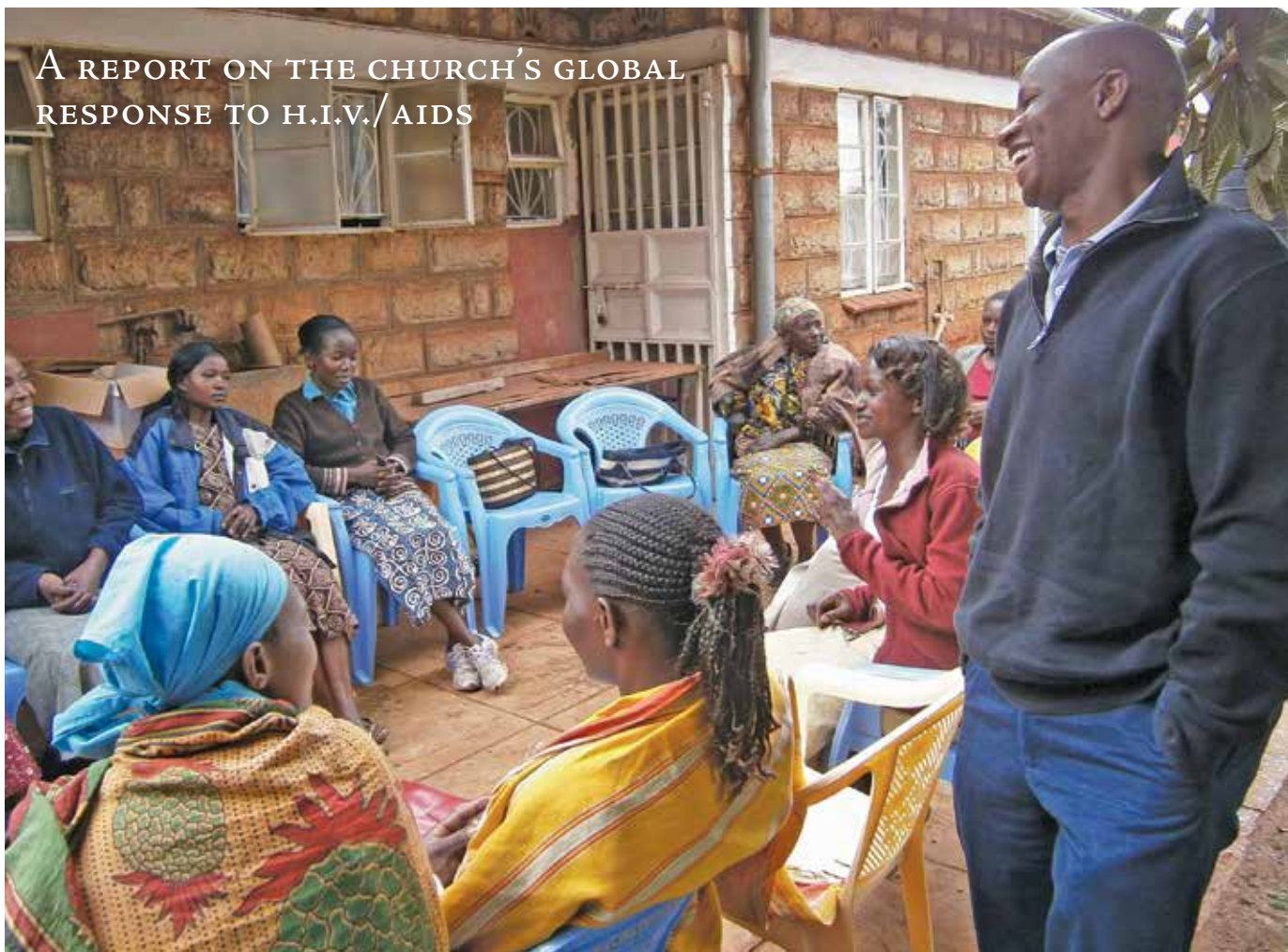
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## A REPORT ON THE CHURCH'S GLOBAL RESPONSE TO H.I.V./AIDS



CNS PHOTO/JAMES MARTONE

# The Continuing Crisis

BY JON FULLER

**ROUNDTABLE.** Stephen Nzioki, S.J., speaks with women being counseled and medically treated for H.I.V. through a Catholic program in Nairobi, Kenya.

**D**ec. 1—World AIDS Day—marks 32 years since the first cases of AIDS were reported. This year also marks 30 years since three papers published in the journal *Science* (5/20/83) identified the causative agent of the epidemic: human immunodeficiency virus, now commonly known as H.I.V. For two of those publications, Luc Montagnier and Françoise Barré-Sinoussi, both of the Pasteur Institute in Paris, were awarded the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 2008. Their discovery led to the development of the first treatment for the virus (AZT, or zidovudine) in 1987 and paved the way for a blood test to detect the presence of H.I.V. in 1992.

Since then, AIDS has been recognized as one of the greatest scourges of humankind, counted by the World Health Organization as the sixth leading cause of death in the

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world (1.6 million deaths in 2011) and by the Joint United Nations Programme on H.I.V./AIDS as the leading cause of death among women of reproductive age (15-44 years). The impact of the epidemic is seen not just in the individual lives that are affected. In 2001 the U.N. Security Council recognized the epidemic as a threat to global peace and security. H.I.V./AIDS impedes economic development and agricultural production and drains countries of human capital—the skills and resources of the youngest and often most productive members of society.

In 2010 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimated that 1.15 million persons in the United States were living with H.I.V. infection—nearly one in five of them do not know they are infected—with another 636,000 having already died of AIDS. Although we have made tremendous strides in treatment, with access to more than 20 licensed H.I.V. drugs (sometimes available as one combination tablet of three to four drugs taken once daily), we have made little progress in preventing new infections. Approximately 50,000 Americans still acquire H.I.V. every year. Unfortunately, African-Americans bear a disproportionate burden of the epidemic. Although they represent only 14 percent of the population, they account for approximately 50 percent of all new infections in the United States.

The Joint United Nations Programme on H.I.V./AIDS estimated in 2012 that 35.3 million persons around the world were living with H.I.V. and that another 36 million had already succumbed to the disease. The number of new infections is slowing significantly, however; 2.3 million persons became H.I.V.-infected in 2012, compared with 3.4 million in 2001 (a decrease of 33 percent in just over a decade). The distribution of H.I.V. infections across the globe remains quite uneven, with sub-Saharan Africa accounting for only 12 percent of the world's population but more than 66 percent of all new infections.

### **The Catholic Church Becomes Involved**

What has been the church's response to this unprecedented crisis? In the United States, Catholic hospitals, like the now-shuttered St. Clare's and St. Vincent's in New York City, responded heroically to this medical and pastoral emergency even before the infectious agent or its modes of transmission were known. During my residency at San Francisco General Hospital from 1983 to 1986, however, I was asked by nurses on Ward 5B to identify Jesuits from the city who could come to visit H.I.V. patients. Nurses explained they some-

times saw patients distressed by pastoral encounters they experienced as judgmental and harmful. Perhaps because of inexperience with affected populations or out of fear of contagion, some ministers focused their response to infected persons on a reiteration of the church's teaching on homosexual activity and drug use, rather than asking those facing life-threatening illness how the church might help them to be reconciled with God.

These encounters made it clear that education and training were needed if the church's ministers were to provide effective pastoral care unencumbered by fear or judgment. The first organization to provide such training in the late 1980s was the Lázaro Center in New York City, founded

by Franciscans. By the early 1990s the National Catholic AIDS Network had also begun education and training. It taught pastoral ministers about the epidemic and about the particular needs of H.I.V.-infected persons; it worked to identify the

resources within our faith tradition that can support those engaged in H.I.V. care; and it advocated for persons living with H.I.V./AIDS. Unfortunately, some 20 years after its founding, as successful treatments contributed to a declining public profile of the disease, the organization succumbed to a lack of funding. Today there is no national Catholic structure with AIDS as its mission, although diocesan- and parish-based programs continue.

In 1987 Caritas Internationalis, the Vatican-based network of 164 national Catholic relief and development agencies (of which Catholic Relief Services and Catholic Charities USA are members) identified H.I.V./AIDS as a priority by establishing a global working group on H.I.V./AIDS. The mission of the working group was to ensure that the church kept abreast of medical and scientific developments, visited high-impact countries, shared "best practices" and provided training for bishops' conferences, clergy and religious orders on the particular challenges of responding to the crisis. Recognizing that the epidemic required deeper theological reflection, it convened meetings of indigenous theologians to reflect on the challenges of AIDS in Western Europe, the United States, Asia, Latin America and in English- and French-speaking Africa.

In the earliest years of the epidemic, the church responded with its tradition of pastoral care and accompaniment for individuals and families affected by H.I.V./AIDS, often led by religious sisters already on the scene. I worked in one such program in Masaka, Uganda, at the Irish Medical Missionaries of Mary's Kitovu Hospital in 1996. Despite

## **In the earliest years of the epidemic, the church responded with its tradition of pastoral care for individuals and families.**

the fact that no specific H.I.V. treatments were yet available at the international level (except in the private market), the hospital had developed two well-organized teams that traveled to rural villages on a two-week cycle to provide education, pastoral care, nutritional support and palliative medications. The M.M.M. sisters served on the national AIDS committee, which developed guidelines for care, especially guaranteeing that all H.I.V. testing was done confidentially by highly trained staff who were able to provide the support needed for patients whose test results were unfavorable.

In 1995, recognizing the particular threat that H.I.V./tuberculosis co-infection posed to individuals and communities, especially combined with worsening tuberculosis resistance, Caritas convened a conference on TB care in the context of the H.I.V. epidemic. Participants were forced to challenge the church's traditional understanding that "anything that could be offered is better than nothing," as TB experts warned that this approach could cause greater harm because of the impact on communities if drug resistance spread. Rather than doing whatever little they could with meager resources, agencies learned that they must instead let individuals die of their infection if they could not guarantee a full TB treatment course. Indeed, in 2006 "extremely drug resistant TB," largely a consequence of incomplete treatment, was first identified among H.I.V.-infected patients in the Kwazulu-Natal region of South Africa. The

median survival time was 16 days after diagnosis.

### Toward Prevention

While the church's teaching on the use of condoms for contraception is clear, some prelates have argued that if individuals are going to violate the Sixth Commandment against illicit intercourse, they should not also violate the Fifth Commandment against killing. They accepted the use of condoms for that specific life-saving purpose. In 2001, in their pastoral letter "A Message of Hope," the Southern African Bishops Conference criticized the use of condoms as a means of H.I.V. prevention but also addressed the problem married couples confronted when one partner was H.I.V.-infected: "The Church accepts that everyone has the right to defend one's life against mortal danger. This would include using the appropriate means and course of action." Comments by Pope Benedict in a 2010 interview also appear to indicate that when used solely to prevent H.I.V. infection, condoms might be viewed from a more nuanced perspective. The church "of course does not regard it as a real or moral solution," he said, "but, in this or that case, there can be nonetheless, in the intention of reducing the risk of infection, a first step in a movement toward a different way, a more human way, of living sexuality."

Globally, church agencies were initially hesitant to become involved in the business of providing H.I.V. drugs



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because of the cost and complexity of administering them. When the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria and the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief provided billions of dollars to bring these drugs to low- and middle-income countries, however, Caritas again convened partners to make sure that Catholic agencies' engagement with H.I.V. therapy met rigorous scientific standards and national treatment guidelines. Catholic agencies subsequently became major providers of H.I.V. drug therapy in many developing countries. In South Africa, for example, at a time when the president and the minister of health were denying that H.I.V. was the cause of AIDS, the Southern African Bishops Conference established 28 H.I.V. treatment centers with Global Fund and PEPFAR support. Although rigorous statistics are not available, the Vatican has suggested that Catholic agencies may provide as much as 25 percent of AIDS care at the international level.

### The Catholic H.I.V./AIDS Network

As Caritas eventually mainstreamed its attention to H.I.V./AIDS and ended its AIDS working group (and subsequent AIDS task force), a parallel structure that had been developed by Catholic development agencies stepped into the breach. Initially known as the AIDS Funding Network

Group, this consortium had been formed to assist donor agencies in supporting AIDS programs by developing criteria to ensure that interventions met uniform ethical and programmatic standards. Over time this group evolved into the Catholic H.I.V./AIDS Network, based in Geneva under the leadership of Msgr. Robert Vitillo of the Diocese of Paterson, N.J. CHAN not only continues Caritas's mission to maintain best practices and scientific rigor, it has also become what is perhaps the best-organized global AIDS network of any religious denomination. The Joint United Nations Programme on H.I.V./AIDS and W.H.O. now count on the experience of the church's response as coordinated through this group, regularly meeting with its members and leadership to share experiences and to evolve guidelines and recommendations. In one of its most important accomplishments, CHAN worked successfully with

pharmaceutical manufacturers to urge development of new formulations of H.I.V. drugs that could be dosed by weight for infants and children.

At the most recent meeting of CHAN, held in Geneva in mid-October, a mixture of emotions could be felt. There was excitement that W.H.O. had raised its target for providing AIDS treatment from 15 million to 26 million persons (10 million are currently receiving drugs) as a result of studies showing that H.I.V. treatment is the best way to prevent new infections (reducing transmission by up to 96 percent). It was also clear, however, that despite these admirable goals, the global economic crisis has led to severe funding crunches for the Global Fund. One round of funding was completely cancelled. The U.S. program PEPFAR has also seen significant cuts in its funding, and it is reducing support for faith-based organizations as it asks countries to take on the responsibility for providing basic H.I.V. care. In southern Africa, this has already resulted in the closure of 22 southern African bishops' H.I.V. treatment centers and three church-sponsored voluntary counseling and H.I.V.-testing centers in Namibia.

Despite the trend in some areas to fund state-sponsored, rather than faith-based treatment programs, the legacy of the church's comprehensive approach has contributed significantly to a new model for responding to global health needs. The pre-AIDS-era "silo" model of externally funded, stand-alone programs (for example, only for vaccinations or only for treatment of TB or malaria) has given way to a new model that strives to provide comprehensive and community-based services. It is hoped that the lessons learned from scaling up treatment for H.I.V./AIDS will lead to a general strengthening of health delivery systems worldwide, bringing the promise of adequate care not just to those living with H.I.V. but to every member of the community. **A**

#### ON THE WEB

Jon Fuller, S.J., talks about the Catholic Church and AIDS. [americamagazine.org/podcast](http://americamagazine.org/podcast)

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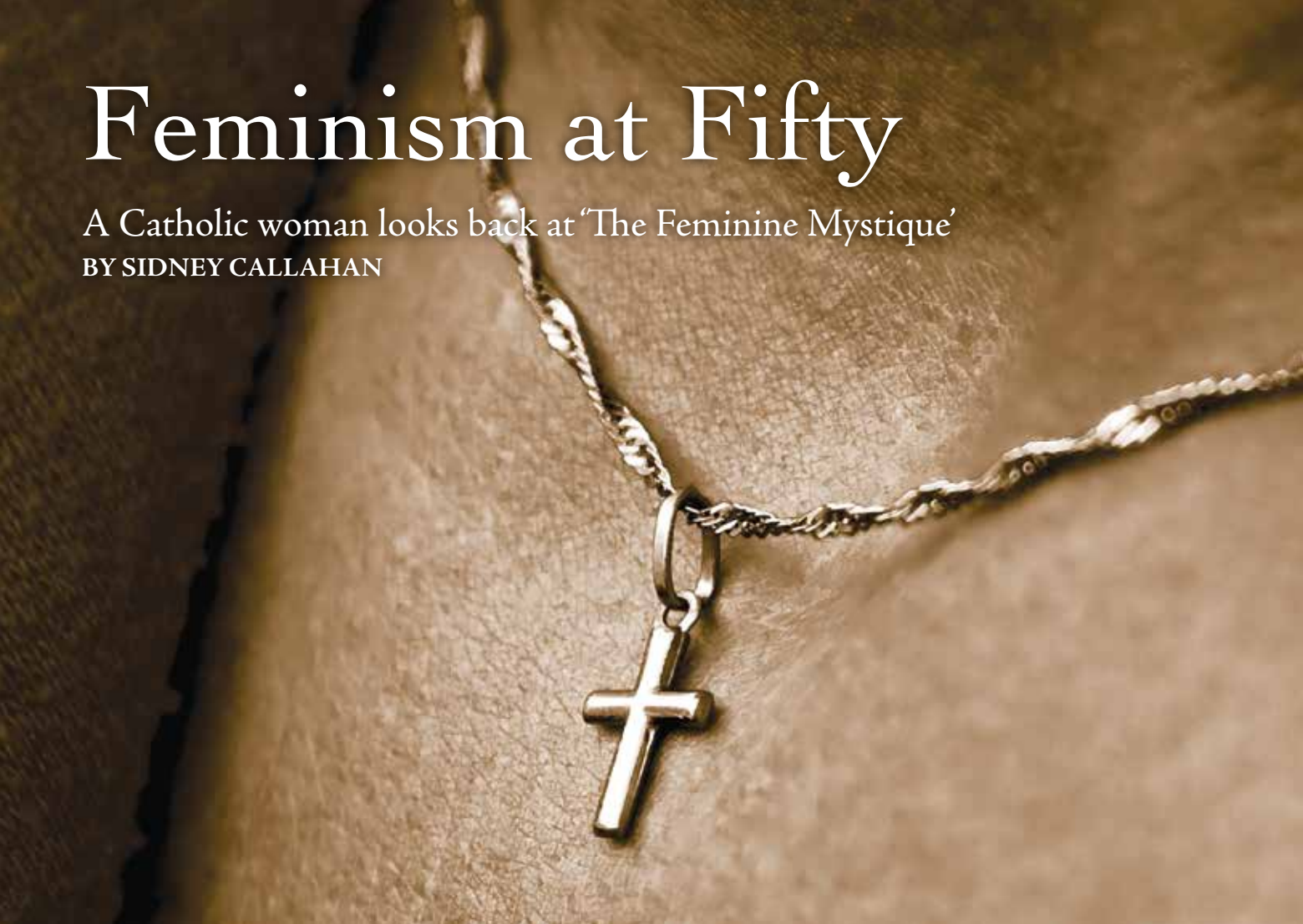
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# Feminism at Fifty

A Catholic woman looks back at 'The Feminine Mystique'

BY SIDNEY CALLAHAN



In 1963, Betty Friedan's book, *The Feminine Mystique*, launched second-wave feminism in an astounding way. Millions of copies were sold, and many women since have claimed, "It changed my life." Opponents were equally aroused, and different interpretations of feminism have remained on the agenda ever since. A 50th anniversary edition of the book, published this year, provoked more discussion in both secular and religious circles. Did Betty Friedan get it right?

## A Critical Analysis

Betty Friedan's fiery manifesto was aimed at what she described as a postwar regression from an earlier, 19th-century feminist struggle for the vote, for legal rights and for equal opportunities to participate in society. Women were increasingly tending toward depression, boredom or worse because their capacities for meaningful work and achievement were being underused. This was "the problem without a name," as she called it, accompanying America's affluence and its retreat

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**SIDNEY CALLAHAN** is an author, lecturer, college professor and licensed psychologist. Her most recent book is *Created for Joy: A Christian View of Suffering*.

into suburban consumerism. Trying to live solely through the achievements of their husbands or children did not meet women's own needs for growth through challenging work and accomplishment.

The main culprit, Ms. Friedan declared, lay in a false and pervasive cultural ideal of femininity, or "the feminine mystique." Women were not being encouraged to develop and use their intelligence and education, but to confine their interests to the roles of wife, mother and housewife in isolated domestic enclaves. Business thrived on this mystique by selling women on beauty products, household appliances and ever higher standards of homemaking, childrearing and sexual allure. As women's sexual and domestic roles were increasingly over-idealized, women's education and women's magazines were being "dumbed down" from their earlier intellectual standards. This structural deprivation of demanding, focused and challenging participation in the larger world outside the home could trivialize and damage the lives of women, men, marriage and families.

Betty Friedan herself was a well-educated Smith College graduate, and she backed up her analysis with convincing research on the subtle oppression women were experienc-

ing—all in the name of freedom and domestic prosperity. She found that older, misogynous prejudice still existed and that these labeled women as inferior in mind and body, irrational, childlike, vain and essentially sexual and reproductive objects. These lingering attitudes were used to justify discrimination, civic inequality and male dominance in the name of protection for women. Girls were duly indoctrinated. The feminine mystique served as a more subtle form of ensuring women's subordination to male privilege. (See, for instance, the sexual inequality in AMC's "Mad Men.")

Was it really that bad? the young may ask. Yes, it was. In the 1950s my father, who told me I was intelligent enough to be a doctor, also warned, "Don't be too smart or no one will marry you." Women were not welcome in graduate and professional schools, and the glass ceiling was universally in place. Married women could hardly aspire to combine work and family. Women were considered too different from men to expect fulfillment in anything other than marriage, children and the domestic arts.

## Against Freud

Betty Friedan uncovered and criticized the interlocking arrangements that ensured male power and privilege. She roundly attacked the reigning intellectual justification for the mystique in the dogmas of psychoanalysis. Freud's dictum was that "anatomy is destiny," and he argued that females were subject to "penis envy" and could find satisfactory fulfillment only by embracing marriage, childbearing and subordinate social roles. He believed that a woman's biology determined everything about her psychological, intellectual and emotional nature and that women must resign themselves to their true sexual nature to find mental health. One prominent woman psychoanalyst even described the essential feminine core as "a harmonious [!] blend of narcissism, masochism and passivity."

Women who sought intellectual achievement and careers outside of or in addition to the family unit were considered denatured and indulging in their "masculine protest." Many believed this would lead to neurosis and endanger their orgasmic sexual fulfillment and also harm their husbands, children and family life. Freudian orthodoxy was accepted as scientific truth among the elites and intelligentsia of the day. And the entrapping feature of Freudian thought was that, like Communism, any protests or doubts only served to prove unconscious resistance.

But Betty Friedan, as a researcher trained in psychology, pushed back and leaned in. She provided abundant and excellent evidence opposing the inadequacies of the Freudian system. Other sociologists and psychologists were summoned to the fray. Prominent American personality theorists like Abraham Maslow, Rollo May and Carl Rogers claimed that all

humans, regardless of gender, possessed innate human drives to grow as persons and develop all their potential in work as well as in love. Self-actualization and a mature social identity was the primary human motivation. A woman who developed a mature self-identity with meaningful work could better give of herself to loving, working, her family and the larger society. Other psychologists and sociologists also maintained that social systems could be changed for the better.



Betty Friedan  
in 1960

Betty Friedan argued that young women should not be discouraged from rigorous educations or demanding careers. It was regressive for female success to be defined in terms of female beauty aimed at finding a man, marrying young and being financially and socially dependent. Women who aspired to demanding, focused work need not slight their family responsibilities. According to her acute analysis, the work of running a household tended to expand with the time available. More actively engaged working women got things done faster. Planning for the long term could inspire women to find part-time schooling, part-time work and more flexible child care arrangements.

Betty Friedan's clarion call for change galvanized the society and stimulated changes in women's lives and society's institutions. But the 1960s were a turbulent, revolutionary period, and Friedan's proposals incited criticism from all sides. More radicalized feminists immediately attacked her for not going far enough in furthering women's liberation. Why were gay women's rights and fulfillment being ignored? Other countercultural feminists felt that women should not accept elite male models of professional achievement. Did Friedan not recognize that males too were co-opted into unjust capitalist structures and condemned to meaningless work? Others felt that only educated, elite women like Friedan could advocate careerism as a satisfying way of life. Religious voices were also raised in disagreement with the feminine mystique's secular and worldly assumptions.

## Betty and Me

I was one of those newly emerging Catholic feminists who both supported and criticized Betty Friedan's positions. In 1965 I published my own book, *The Illusion of Eve: Modern Woman's Search for Identity*. In the ensuing debates on women and feminism, Betty Friedan and I often appeared together on the lecture circuit. Not surprisingly, she shared the default anti-Catholic stereotypes held by many in her secular milieu. Friedan was unaware of the Christian inspiration of earlier feminist movements, including our own earlier American foremothers or current Catholic feminist ferment. Friedan had no ear for spiritual and transcendent realities and values. Worship, contemplative practices and prayer were not her cup of tea. She called me an Aunt Tom for my advocacy of motherhood,

marriage, religious vocations and love's free gift of service. My gratitude for having borne seven children could be dismissed by her as an example of the way women escape into producing "teeming hordes of children." Marital love could be described as "a parasitical softening." Naturally we also disagreed about abortion, divorce and the positive role of the Catholic Church in the world.

But I also vigorously agreed with her in her critique of women's inequality and stunted social opportunities. Male dominance and machismo values were a common enemy, as was the dreadful Freudian view of women's essential passivity and psychological determinism. I appreciated our embodied human nature but saw gender differences as less important than the development of virtue, intelligence, character and loving kindness. I emphasized God as mother and held to the liberating words of St. Paul that in Christ there is no male or female, Jew or Greek, slave or free. Great saints of God transcend their gender differences. Each Christian is to be both bride and groom, brother and sister, friend, lover and disciple of God.

My understanding of the Gospel call to grow up into the fullness of Christ is one that stresses loving interdependence with the whole community. Roles and leadership can hardly be decided simply by gender, since the Spirit blows where it will. God is no respecter of persons. Consequently I am un-

easy with talk of "the eternal feminine" or "a theology of women" since it seems to imply that women should differ in their capacities and roles in church and society. Instead, I would see "the eternal feminine" as describing but one more characteristic of God's love, omnipotence and perfection. Do we talk of "the eternal masculine" or a theology of men? Should there not be a theology of the human person? Christianity has a great and liberating revelation for creation. Humans, made in the image of God, are called to love, serve, reason, create and transform themselves and the world.

I think Christianity affirms that human embodiment is the greatest of gifts. The resurrection of the body is the blessed destiny of humanity, when God is all in all. And yes, in this life it seems clear to me that women's capacity to bear and nurse children is the privilege of privileges. This understanding is the inspiration of pro-life feminism. But gratitude for the gift of mothering and nurturing new life should not be over-glorified, since men and single women also generate life for others in many creative ways. Although nothing in our culture may be as imperative as supporting women and protecting those who are mothers from violent harm and neglect, I resist reviving any form of a Catholic feminine mystique. Let us support children, women, men, families and the poor as the first work of Catholic feminism. Surely She Who Is approves. **A**

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# Left Behind

Literacy is today's civil rights issue.

BY JOSEPH J. DUNN

**A**s a society we acknowledge that a college degree opens doors to higher paying jobs. So it is not surprising that a case before the U.S. Supreme Court concerning a Michigan law that prohibits using racial criteria in admissions for public universities is receiving wide attention. Americans may disagree about whether affirmative action is a legitimate way to correct historical wrongs or to promote diversity, but at least there is consensus that a person should not be excluded from higher education solely because of skin color or national origin. Yet today education remains a civil rights issue, though in a different sense. For children who are poor, the issue is not access to college. It is basic literacy.

In 1900, 11 percent of American adults were illiterate. Ten states, including New York and Pennsylvania, counted more than 300,000 illiterate people, according to the national census. Over the century, taxpayer-supported free education through high school prepared many for the skilled trades and shopkeeping jobs. Public schools expanded to offer college-preparation curricula. Private schools, supported in large part by donations, offered a parallel educational system—a form of consumer choice. Community colleges since the 1960s opened doors for high school graduates from every neighborhood. Today's children, even those in poverty, have educational opportunities beyond the imagination of their peers a century ago. Teachers and parents today are the trustees of that inheritance as they disburse to each child a wealth of knowledge, analytical skills and effective communication methods, and encourage every child to participate fully in this legacy.

## Illiteracy and Poverty

Not all children, however, receive the benefit of that inheritance. High dropout rates in many large city school districts make headlines. But recent studies reveal a more extensive scandal. The diplomas awarded to many high school graduates—those who have passed all the tests required by their local school districts—are worthless pieces of paper.

The Education Trust, a nonprofit organization concerned

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JOSEPH J. DUNN is the author of *After One Hundred Years: Corporate Profits, Wealth, and American Society* (self-published, 2012), from which this article is adapted.

with the education of youth, reported on the results of tests administered by the U.S. Army to 350,000 high school graduates seeking enlistment between 2004 and 2009. As explained in "Shut Out of the Military," a report published in 2010 by the Education Trust, the army tests aptitude in word knowledge, paragraph comprehension, arithmetic reasoning, mathematics knowledge, general science, mechanical comprehension, electronics information, auto and shop information and assembling objects. Twenty-three percent of the test-takers in this very large sample failed to achieve the minimum qualifying score for enlistment. These dismal results are not unique to a particular race, immigration status or region of the country. Failure rates among white high school graduates in Maryland, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Arizona and Hawaii, for example, all exceeded 20 percent. Many schools promote and graduate young people lacking the ability to qualify for basic jobs in the military—jobs that can provide specialized

**Society pays a high price for illiteracy. Those with below basic skills were far more likely to depend upon public assistance.**

training and experience that can lead to solid civilian careers. Graduates who fail this test of literacy and technical aptitude are hardly prepared to take their place in civilian society. Not every student needs to attend a four-year university, but every student needs to train for a job that ultimately serves customers or clients.

The signs of failure are sometimes subtle. One public school district recently explained in a glossy annual report to the county taxpayers that two years hence it would require each student to demonstrate proficiency in 10th-grade algebra, English and civics in order to obtain a high school diploma. This new initiative was presented as the Board of Education's insistence on a higher level of academic performance. But a sense of stewardship might lead taxpayers to rebel at financing the buildings, supplies, books, utilities and salaries for a 12-year education system when only 10 years of performance are required. Local

**KEEPING UP?** Jayla, left, prepares for her weekly Schools on Wheels tutoring session at a homeless shelter in Los Angeles, Calif.



PHOTO: REUTERS/LUCY NICHOLSON

employers no doubt wonder why they should hire high school graduates from this school district rather than from schools with higher standards. These students, to their lifelong detriment, are being deprived of their full inheritance. Parents who understand the subtle message are left to improvise ways to assure that their own children receive a decent education.

“Literacy for Everyday Life,” a study of adult literacy in 2003 by the U.S. Department of Education, shows the cumulative damage caused by such low expectations. In a sampling representative of the adult population in the United States, approximately 20 percent were unable to perform basic tasks involving printed material. Specifically, they had trouble completing a job application form, understanding written instructions and reading a basic health bulletin or apartment lease. They were unable to locate numbers and use them in simple operations like addition, even when the math information was very concrete and familiar. This 20 percent demonstrated, in the report’s terminology, “below basic” literacy skills. Some experts use the term “functionally illiterate” to describe this skill level.

The study showed a straightforward connection between literacy skills and household income. Most of the adults with “below basic” literacy (54 percent) lived in households with annual income less than \$20,000. The poverty level in 2003 was \$18,810 for a family of four. Meanwhile, higher literacy skills correlate to higher incomes. For adults demonstrating

“intermediate” literacy skills, 63 percent lived in households with incomes greater than \$40,000. Among adults with “proficient” literacy (the highest level), 65 percent enjoyed household income greater than \$60,000. Lower literacy skills confine people to lower pay scales, but the more devastating impact of lower literacy skills is the inability to get work at any pay level. A staggering 50 percent of those with “below basic” literacy skills described themselves as not in the labor pool—with no job and no hope of a job—in a year when unemployment averaged 6 percent. The percentage of adults who described themselves as not in the labor pool is significantly lower at each higher level of literacy skill.

Society pays a high price for illiteracy. Those with “below basic” skills were far more likely to depend upon public assistance than those with higher level skills, and three times more likely to be long-term dependents (receiving assistance for more than three years) than those with intermediate skills.

A study by the Pew Foundation in 2005 (three years before the Great Recession) found that 15 percent of American households had a zero or negative net worth. Household net worth is the sum of assets (house, cars, savings and checking account, stocks and mutual funds, retirement accounts, etc.) minus the sum of debts (mortgage balance, car loan, credit card debt, etc.). These households are at the lower end of the nation’s wealth gap. For those with low literacy skills, as the Department of Education study suggests, chances of

securing stable, well-paid employment are slim indeed, even in a growing economy.

## Public Consequences

The correlations between literacy skills, employment prospects and income and wealth levels point to raising literacy skills as a necessary first step in addressing inequalities in civic participation, health, housing, incarceration rates and even life expectancy. The 20 percent of adults who demonstrate “below basic” literacy skills constitute a group in critical need of remedial services. Some of these adults may have had too little pre-school foundation, or school years interrupted by chaotic domestic situations. Perhaps school itself was a traumatic experience. Whatever the reasons for their current illiteracy, this condition is at the heart of their numerous disconnections from society.

People with weak reading skills are unable to participate effectively in our democracy. They are consigned to the 30-second television commercial or the robocall for information about election issues and candidates. They are unlikely to get jobs that require more than menial skills and even less likely to succeed in a small business—an avenue out of poverty for many. The wealth of information in libraries and on the Web is inaccessible. The rights afforded them in an apartment lease, credit card statement or employee benefits booklet are unintelligible. Considered in this light, adult literacy might appro-


priately be placed at the cornerstone of civil rights issues today. It should not only receive the attention of professionals in education, but should also be the focus of grass-roots efforts by ministers and college students, retirees or others—anyone with a few hours to give to an important cause. A citizenry alert to this issue might cooperate more intensely with teachers and administrators. Voters aware of the growing social costs of illiteracy might support larger education budgets and demand more accountability.

Helping today’s students achieve higher literacy skills at an early age is fundamental to building a better society. President Obama’s call for more pre-kindergarten opportunities acknowledges this reality. To implement it, some communities may need to shift already-scarce resources into this top-priority initiative. This redistribution may be painful for some, but it is prudent, since a child with poor reading skills is unlikely to be successful in upper grade levels. With those skills, a child has access to a lifetime of learning.

North Carolina is embarking on a radical experiment. The state’s education budget for 2013-14 increases the seats for pre-kindergarten programs and establishes vouchers for children in low-income households who choose to attend private schools. But the budget also cancels extra compensation previously paid to teachers who earned a master’s degree, eliminates teacher assistants in grade two and grade three and provides no salary increase for teachers who are already among the lowest paid in the country. Funding is increased to hire recent college graduates under the Teach for America program, but the budget also sets the stage for eliminating teacher tenure in 2018. In total, the state will spend \$286 million less on education this year than last. Will these changes produce higher student achievement, especially in the critical area of literacy? In education, as in every area of social action, right moves bring good results and wrong moves cause real misery. No doubt the citizens of North Carolina will insist on timely measurement of results—and on changes as needed.

A century ago, when universal education was in its early stages, rural communities and cities marshaled their resources to build schools. Philanthropists helped pay for schools in areas with weak economies. Literacy efforts were supplemented by Andrew Carnegie, who donated the funds for 1,600 public libraries in the United States. Today, a child can carry all the volumes of those libraries in an iPad that weighs less than two pounds. Technology should make learning to read easier. Yet we are falling behind.

In 100 years, we have made progress against the prejudices of race, religion and national origin. One disenfranchised minority remains far behind, however: those with poor literacy skills. These deficits are at the heart of inequalities in income and wealth and of numerous other injustices. In the United States today, it might well be said, “If you want justice, work for literacy.”



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9:15 a.m.: Registration and Coffee Social

10:00: Mass – Feast of St. John of the Cross

Most Rev. William F. Murphy, Bishop of Rockville Centre, presider

11:15: Opening Session – The Mission of the Catholic Journalist Today

Welcome:

Rev. Msgr. Peter Vaccari, Rector, St. Joseph's Seminary and College

Opening Remarks: Matt Malone, S.J., Editor in Chief, **America**

Perspectives on Mission:

Jeanette Demelo – Editor in Chief, **National Catholic Register**

Meinrad Scherer-Emunds – Executive Editor, **U.S. Catholic**

Paul Baumann – Editor, **Commonweal**

R.R. Reno – Editor, **First Things**

1:00 p.m.: Lunch – Courtesy of Saint Joseph's Seminary and College

2:00 Panel Discussion – Reflections on Morning Presentations

Panelists:

Jeanette Demelo – Editor in Chief, **National Catholic Register**

Meinrad Scherer-Emunds – Executive Editor, **U.S. Catholic**

Paul Baumann – Editor, **Commonweal**

R.R. Reno – Editor, **First Things**

Matt Malone, S.J. – Editor in Chief, **America**

Moderator: James Martin, S.J., Editor at Large, **America**

3:00 Coffee Break

3:15 Plenary Session with Audience Participants

4:30 Closing reception

Courtesy of Saint Joseph's Seminary and College

“Let us try also to be a church  
that finds new roads, that is able  
to step outside itself.”

—Pope Francis



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**America**



# Talking About God

‘Lumen Fidei,’ a new invitation to faith

BY CHRISTOPHER COLLINS

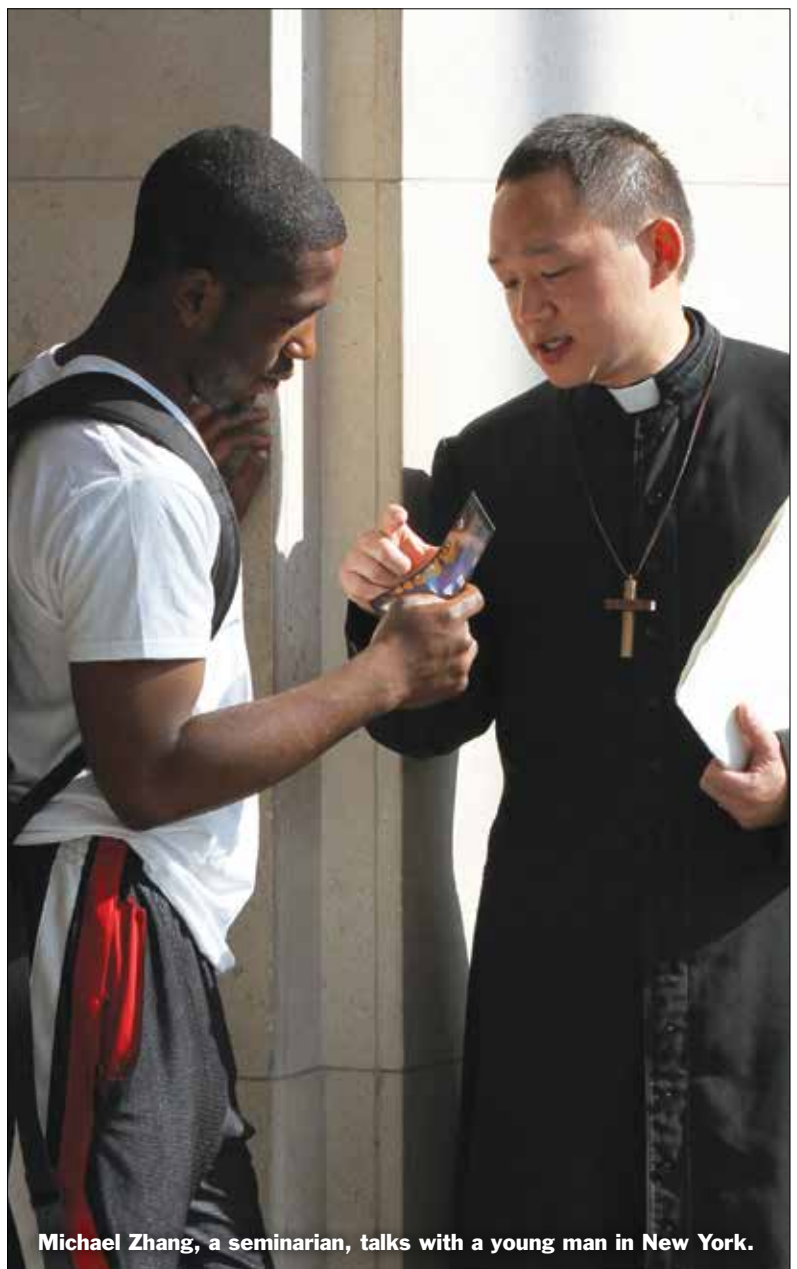
**B**efore his election to the papacy, Joseph Ratzinger recalled an anecdote from the deliberations that preceded the Second Vatican Council. When they were first gathering, the bishops clearly saw their mission as continuing the work of the First Vatican Council. The primary task would be, as John XXIII so familiarly said, to help provide an *aggiornamento* of the church. But from within that perspective, another voice emerged, that of the elderly bishop of Regensburg. He proposed a more foundational vision to his brother bishops, urging them to “talk about God. That is what is most important.”

According to Cardinal Josef Frings of Cologne, a new tone was evident after that intervention. The bishops’ task would indeed be to update the church, but the only way to do that authentically would be to allow for the primacy of the spiritual, to go to the divine source of the church, God’s very self. Going to this source would need to be an act of humility, opening up yet again to the freshness of the mystery of what it means to be in relationship to God as God’s people. It would be an opening up to the light of faith.

Some 50 years later, the church has been given a new invitation to allow again for the primacy of the spiritual, letting this light of faith radiate anew. On July 5, Pope Francis offered his first encyclical to the universal church, extending precisely this invitation to Christians everywhere. Francis acknowledges that the text of the encyclical is largely the work of his predecessor: “He [Benedict] himself had almost completed a first draft of an encyclical on faith. For this I am deeply grateful to him, and as his brother in Christ I have taken up his fine work and added a few contributions of my own” (No. 7).

“The Light of Faith” might well be read in light of that earlier intervention before the council, in which her pastors were called not just to adjust ex-

ternal structures and strategies for the renewal of the church but first and foremost to “talk about God.” This is precisely the task Benedict and ultimately Francis have undertaken in this encyclical, the last in a triptych on the theological virtues, following encyclicals on love (“God Is Love”) and hope (“Saved in Hope”). In each of these, Benedict offered extraordinarily tender visions of the nature of God, who is



Michael Zhang, a seminarian, talks with a young man in New York.

**CHRISTOPHER COLLINS, S.J.**, is director of the Catholic studies program and assistant professor of theological studies at Saint Louis University. He is the author of *The Word Made Love: The Dialogical Theology of Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI* (Liturgical Press).

CNS FILE PHOTO/GREGORY A. SHEMITZ

self-emptying love, and how humanity is saved by that love offered from the heart of Christ pierced on the cross. He has pointed to the reality of humility in God as well as the necessity of humility in humanity to receive divine love.

## Humble Popes

Francis' popularity since his election has been widely noted. The cause of this seems to be his simplicity and humility. Whether because of his choice of papal name, his first gesture from the balcony of St. Peter's asking for the prayers of the people before he would offer his own blessing or his words and deeds since then highlighting a spirit of collegiality and resisting the trappings of pomp and circumstance, people of all sorts seem to be taken with his spirit. This manifestation of humility resonates with the preaching and writings of his predecessor. Indeed, the very creation of "The Light of Faith" strikes us as humble. The humility of Benedict, who did the labor of the writing and then simply left it on the desk for his successor to do with as he pleased, is striking. So, too, we are struck by the humility of Francis to receive such a gift and then to acknowledge in the text itself that it was largely the work of his predecessor. Very little ego is at work in either of these men. This is refreshing. And yet there is great zeal and confidence in each of them to propose to the

world the joy that comes in living this common faith.

These characteristics of humility and receptivity display the very structure of faith that this encyclical explores. Only in a posture of humility and receptivity can we be open to the light that comes to us from above. Faith is first of all a gift. The light of faith cannot be autonomously generated (No. 4). It is given first from God (No. 6). It is handed on down through the generations of the faithful who have preceded us (No. 8). It is given in a way that is mediated (No. 14), paradigmatically through Abraham and Moses. This gift of faith culminates in the person of Jesus (No. 15) and is extended to the present through the apostles whom he chose and their successors (No. 40). And yet this faith always remains personal. It requires not only our listening, but also our response.

The structure of faith, since it is handed down from earlier ages, is about remembering. Following Augustine, Francis indicates that it is essential to use the sacred faculty of memory to continue to allow the light of faith to shine. We must remember what God has promised, indeed what God has done.

Only in this act of remembering, in turning back to God and God's word, can we get our bearings in the present to know who we are, what we are made for and where we are going. This structure is established from the beginning in the model of Abraham. Francis explains: "As a response to a word which preceded it, Abraham's faith would always be an act of remembrance. Yet this remembrance is not fixed on past events but, as the memory of a promise, it becomes capable of opening up the future, shedding light on the path to be taken" (No. 9).

Francis acknowledges that this call to remembrance is always a challenge because there is a constant temptation to lose patience with the call to remember who the living God is and to take the time to listen and speak with him. It is tempting to put our trust in something more immediate and not so unsettling as a relationship with a personal God. Drawing upon Martin Buber's recollection of a way of describing idolatry as "when a face addresses a face that is not a face," the constant need before us is to turn again to the living God who has shown us his face in Christ. We continue to be fooled into thinking there must be a more efficient way, one that affords us a more acceptable level of control. Yet, "Once I think that by turning away from God I will find myself, my life begins to fall apart (cf. Lk 15:11-24). The beginning of salvation is openness to something prior to ourselves, to a primordial gift that affirms life and sustains it in being" (No. 19). This is the context of this encyclical offered by Francis, seeking, like his namesake, to rebuild God's church by stirring up a desire in the people of God to seek again the face of God. ▲

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# A Quiet Man

My father's homecoming

BY BILL McNAMARA

**M**y father, a Tipperary man, was proud of his Irish ancestry, though he was so complaisant of disposition you would be hard put to discern that right away. He was a modest man of modest means and modest ambition. Since his departure from this world, little is said of him in family circles. At times I wonder if they remember he ever existed.

I do. I remember his smile, deep and wide, when my kid brother Eddie said something smart or funny. I remember the great care he took washing the bottles in the cellar, sucking the air from the tube so the near-beer he had crafted would pour into the bottles that I would cap and shelve for the year's supply. During election campaign season, I recall Pa, in his Sunday suit, walking down toward headquarters to help out with mailings and the like.

At Sunday Mass he would follow the liturgy intently in his leather-bound missal, giving us kids the eye whenever we got out of line. At night, though he thought he had closed the door behind him, I can still see him kneeling at his bedside, his head in his hands, checking things out with his Maker. Pa never talked about himself. He was a good listener. And though he was stingy with this, he could sing an Irish ballad—any Irish ballad—with

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**BILL McNAMARA**, a native of Providence, R.I., started his career at *The Providence Journal*, where he was nominated for a Pulitzer, and then was a religion columnist for *The Standard-Times of New Bedford, Mass.*

the authority of a John McCormack.

Then there was the telegram. It came from Ireland, from my older brother who had just changed his name from John Jr. to Father Pat of the Servite order. He had completed his theology studies at the Servite



My mother, brother Eddie, and father

monastery in Benburb, Co. Tyrone, and remained there for his ordination in 1949. My father, John, and mother, Margaret Gannon, had flown over to witness their first-born son being made a priest, fulfilling the most ardent, long-held wish of my mother. (She would receive the second fulfillment from the kid brother.)

It was their first and only trip back to the land of their birth since leaving it separately four decades earlier. However, truth to tell, they almost didn't go. "Now listen John,"—that's my mother talking—"you have to have those teeth cleaned before we go. I'll not go at all till you do that one thing. For me, yes, but even more for your son the priest, and don't forget your poor mother waiting for the miracle of seeing her own first-born son that left

her 40 long years ago. I'll call the dentist now and make the appointment, and I'll get your brother Joe to drive you; sure he'll not mind, he has little else to do."

My father never had a car or a license to drive one. He had never been to a dentist either, and he attributed that satisfaction to the pipes he puffed on and the tobacco he chewed. One day, when he sent me to Finley's to purchase a plug for him, I snatched a wee bite and marveled that any man could abide the awful taste, and never mind the yellowing. Wonder of wonders, however, after a litany of objections and dismissals of prior supplications, this time Pa caved in. He believed what his wife said about

refusing to go. He couldn't go without her. The yellow teeth were cleaned, and he looked to be a new man with a new prize to smile about.

Then a telegram message came from Tipperary, my father's home-place, and it said: "Pa's not well. See you at Logan tomorrow at 10:45 a.m." Signed, "Fr. Pat."

Not well? Not well? How much and what kind of not well? The questions rattled around my brain on the 40-mile drive to Logan International Airport in Boston. In those days you could wriggle close to the passengers' entrance gate. You could watch your travelers walk from the plane to the gate. First I spotted my mother and brother, side by side, their faces set on grim, almost as though they were in mourning. But there, shuffling along

PHOTO: COURTESY OF AUTHOR

10 feet behind them, carry-on bag in hand, was Pa, facial expression resigned, almost as though he were being delivered to a new country alone, no gentle arm to support him, no friendly voice chatting him up. Was I seeing right? What was the altered relationship of these three people I used to know? What was motivating it? Shame, confusion, fear?

My father had seen his son elevated to the priesthood, seen him celebrate his first Mass; had seen and embraced his mother in the house he grew up in with his brothers and sisters; had visited the Trappist monks at the monastery where he taught Gaelic before emigrating; had gone to bed where something snapped and made his movement labored and his voice mute. He had suffered a stroke, and not a little one. I was surprised that the doctor who examined him approved of his

flight home. He was not well and the prognosis was glum.

He sat beside me up front on the ride home, his lovely singing voice gone. I told him things I can't remember. His response was a small smile or a little nod of the head. I asked him if he would like to stop for a glass of beer en route. Bigger smile, deeper nod. In the back seat, frowns of disapproval.

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When we did make our stop at a first-aid station lit up with Bud and Gansett signs, the back-seaters said they would wait in the car for us and not to be long. We sat at the bar and made short work of two cool draughts, cheeky smiles to and fro.

At my parents' home in Providence, R.I., she started calling doctors while Father Pat, obviously shaken to his core, unpacked a suitcase. He was blaming himself, I thought, and still think.

Through this uncertain time, I was married to the Most Ideal Wife of the Duration, with four young sons and counting, and had a writing job that seemed to matter quite a lot. We lived in an old, come-hither farmhouse in Greenville, R.I. My younger sister lived in similar circumstances in Cranston, just a few blocks south of my mother. We had that younger brother too, who had left home at age 13 to become a Carmelite monk. He worked his first miracle for us by finding a room and bed for Pa at a hospice facility run by the Hospitaller Brothers of St. John of God in Gloucester, Mass. When I told my father that his caretakers were the same outfit that took care of the pope, he produced a smile that made the cool-beer grin seem trifling. He was in the same league now as the pope. Not bad for a guy who could not even talk.

Through his lifetime, my father read tons of books and tended to his gardens and his chickens in the backyard. He didn't watch television or go out to movies or parties. He had to read all those books and to write letters till the cows came home. Most of his letters landed there in the old country. As kids, we found out that my mother kept an autograph book in the middle of which Pa had written (well before pa-hood): "If I could have my dearest wish fulfilled and ask from heaven whatsoever I willed, I'd ask for you." And then, not to be forgotten or taken lightly, he claimed the last page of the book for this entry: "You asked me to write in your album, to put something original in, but there's nothing original in me since I lost original sin."

With the Hospitallers, his last year of life was one of peaceful resignation. The loving care showed in his eyes, in his whole countenance. When he died without a whimper in the middle of the night, he took his last trip alone, wrapped in solitude and full of grace replacing that damnable original sin.

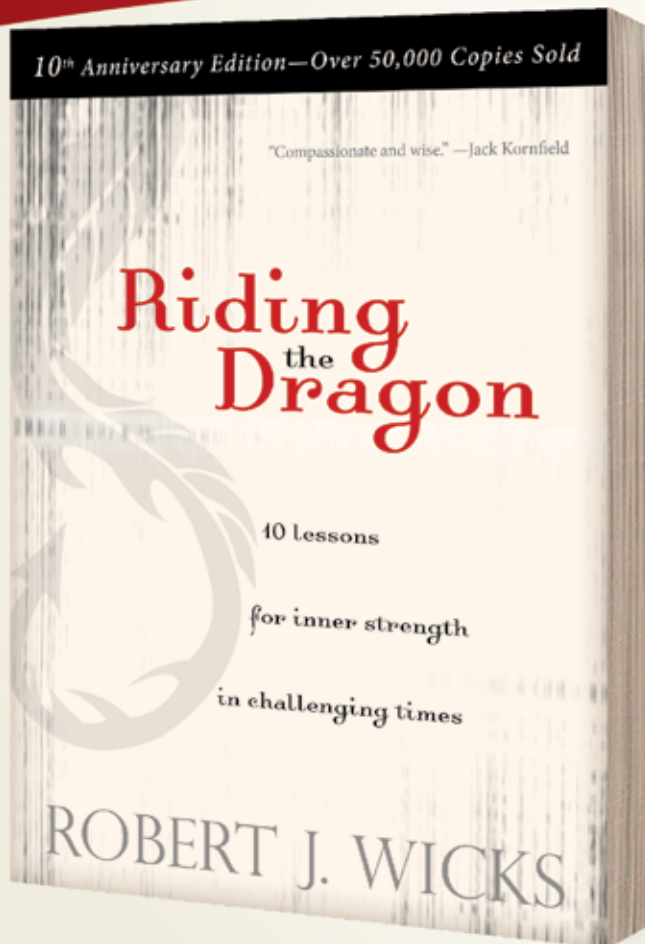
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FILM | JOHN ANDERSON

## SCAMMING FOR SURVIVAL

*The reckless life of an AIDS rebel*

The gaunt cheeks and hollow, staring eyes of Matthew McConaughey in **Dallas Buyers Club** will suggest many things to many people, including a redneck rodeo junkie and a portrait of Christ by El Greco. What his image will also recall, for people with memories long enough, are those friends who at the height of the plague years, came around less and less, because there was less and less of them to see; who made themselves scarcer and scarcer; and when they did turn up were thinner

and thinner, until their faces became a mask of death and they simply disappeared.

That sense of vanishing is embodied by McConaughey, who isn't going anywhere but up. It is unclear when he became an actor, but after a career of movies like "Sahara" and "Failure to Launch," he started giving astonishing performances a couple of years ago, in "Bernie," "The Paperboy" (woeful though the film may have been), as the strip-club owner in "Magic Mike" and then as the title character in this

year's "Mud," which seems to have taken everyone by surprise and, if not for "Dallas Buyers Club," would be the McConaughey film people are talking about.

As it is, they're talking about "Dallas Buyers Club," and not all the talk is good. Should America's biggest AIDS film since "Philadelphia" be built around a hero who's not only hetero, but a raging homophobe? Probably not. But it isn't really McConaughey's problem. He does his job.

It is a job that began long before filming started on director Jean-Marc Vallée's engaging, accessible, fact-based film, and the stunt dieting can't help but be a bit of a distraction. McConaughey has long been among Hollywood's more impressive physical specimens, so the massive weight loss he endured to

Matthew McConaughey, right, in "Dallas Buyers Club"



PHOTO: ANNE MARIE FOX

play the real-life Ron Woodroof makes its own separate statement about artistic sacrifice and temporal beauty. But it also upticks the intimation of mortality that informs both the movie and its principal character, whose fragile shell McConaughey inhabits to a degree sufficient that we forget the act of wasting and think only of the intractable Woodroof, who in the mid 1980s, was given 30 days to live and persisted for six years.

During that time, by researching, smuggling and distributing AIDS drugs that were not yet approved by the Food and Drug Administration, he managed to take a little chink out of the wall of government intransigence permitted by President Reagan, who, as has often been noted, did not utter the word AIDS until six years had passed and nearly 60,000 people had died.

The only death that concerns Woodroof is his own, at least at first. An electrician and a rodeo clown, he lives a debauched life of hard-drinking, hard-drugging and sex with cowboy groupies in the stalls of the arena and is, as they might say in Texas, mostly hat and not much cattle. When a routine blood test comes back positive for AIDS, he greets the diagnosis of his doctors/researchers—played by Denis O’Hare and a wonderfully understated Jennifer Garner—with a torrent of invective, showering them with the F-word, and the other F-word, and it is unclear whether he is more upset about the idea he is going to die, or that someone might think he is gay.

Vallée, who is from Quebec and had a sizable hit at home with the family drama “C.R.A.Z.Y.” a few years back, does several things very well. One, he creates a sense of isolation around his character, even when Woodroof has created his network of pharmaceutical “clubs.” To skirt federal drug laws, the members pay a monthly fee

of \$400 and get all their medications “free.” Woodroof has no spiritual life; he is out to save himself from physical death and—why not?—make a tidy profit along the way. The sense that



Jennifer Garner in “Dallas Buyers Club”

he is on a mission is slow in coming, accelerated to a certain degree by his friendship with Rayon (Jared Leto), an H.I.V.-positive transvestite who is the conscience of the piece. What Vallée is not afraid to do, abetted by two actors starving their way to Oscars, is to make the focus of his film so hard to like.

Similarly, what is worth pointing out about the screenplay by Craig Borten and Melisa Wallack is its embrace of a key mechanical principle of moral fiction: Don’t send a message. Tell a story, and the message will follow. The true heart of “Dallas Buyers Club” is about a fairly repellent character receiving enlightenment. His homophobia dissipates; he discovers that the AIDS-infected are human beings worthy of his respect; and he finds out who his friends are—not the coke-snorting cowboys who shun him as soon as they find out he is H.I.V.-positive, or the landlord who locks him out of his trailer or, Lord knows, the F.D.A., which during the Reagan-Bush years dragged its feet to the point of genocidal neglect. (The feds are the

black-hatted villains of the film).

But the film doesn’t thump a tub on behalf of brotherhood or sisterhood; it is a kind of thriller, put together like the most accessible Hollywood feature, and keeps the viewer engaged not via moral outrage but storytelling. Woodroof’s trips to Mexico, where he gets in league with a renegade American doctor (Griffin Dunne) dispensing cutting-edge AIDS medications, and whose work is leading up to the cocktail that would eventually prolong the lives of millions, is the stuff of a caper film. At one point, Woodroof dis-

guises himself as a priest to get by border agents, the whole thing being played as something close to farce. Immensely entertaining farce.

Some may find this film objectionable. Shouldn’t we be satisfied, as viewers, with just having our dander worked up and our righteous indignation stimulated or even our tear ducts agitated by a story whose underlying tale is one of catastrophe, bias and government inertia? And without making a movie about a straight guy saving the gay world? Perhaps, but 2013 is not the ’80s, when the fear and hatred portrayed in the film were very real; and perhaps only someone like Ron Woodroof—a kind of mole in the world of AIDS—

could have perpetrated the kind of audacious scam with which the movie is concerned. That itself is something to ponder—and not the only thing, in a movie that is most assuredly a story, and only incidentally a lesson.

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

# SLAVERY AND THE SHOCK OF THE OLD

Sitting in a Cambridge, Mass., movie theater with a friend, I forced myself not to look or shy away from the violent scenes in Steve McQueen’s “12 Years a Slave.” Unlike the gratuitous violence of Mel Gibson’s “The Passion of the Christ” or Quentin Tarantino’s “Django Unchained,” there was nothing over-the-top, nothing self-ish about what was painfully depicted on screen in McQueen’s adaptation of the story of Solomon Northup. That is what made it so difficult to watch and why I wanted to look away so badly. The presentation seemed so real.

As the Yale historian David Blight, an expert on American slavery, said in an NPR interview, “We love being the country that freed the slaves, [but] we’re not so fond of being the country that had the biggest slave system on the planet.” Whereas Gibson’s depiction of the Passion was an idiosyncratic reflection of his own personal piety and Tarantino’s slave film was fictive, “12 Years a Slave” offers an indicting narrative that forces its viewers—particularly its white American viewers—to confront a dangerous memory that we would collectively like to forget.

Blight said that the history of American slavery is “a problem in our culture because, to be quite blunt about it, most Americans want their history to be essentially progressive and triumphal, they want it to be a pleasing story. And if you go back to this story, it’s not always going to please you, but it’s a story you have to work through to find your way to something more redemptive.”

The way Blight talked about the importance of McQueen’s film reminded

me of the work of the German theology professor Johann Baptist Metz. In his book *Faith in History and Society*, Father Metz describes two types of memories. The first is the sterilized form of memory, “in which we just do not take the past seriously enough” and recall everything in a soft, glowing light. This type of memory is usually evolutionary or progressive, reflecting a trajectory of history moving toward an increasingly better world. The other type is what Metz calls “dangerous memories, memories that make demands on us.” The latter are what he sees constituting the Christian narrative when we take seriously the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Metz explains that these dangerous memories “illuminate for a few moments and with a harsh steady light the questionable nature of things we have apparently come to terms with, and show up the banality of our supposed ‘realism.’”

Far too often the history of slavery in the United States is reduced to the sterile, clichéd and comforting former type of memory. The stark reality of slavery and our collective complicity in its perpetuation are reduced to a caricature. Alternatively, we tell a story about the triumphant work of the “liberator-martyr” Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War, which overshadows the complexity of a past marred by the indescribable suffering of generations of persons who have been dehumanized, sold, owned, raped, murdered and destroyed. Many who have the

luxury to look away and forget do so. This selective memory silences the oppressed, the victims and the dead. This is a kind of memory that allows the sins of American racism and white privilege to continue today, an unquestioned status quo shielded by our willful ignorance and desire for historical “progress.”

But slavery in this nation is a memory of the latter kind, a dangerous memory. Like the resurrection of Christ, which can never be separated from his life and death, there is something redeeming about calling to mind the suffering caused by American slavery and its continuing effects.

What is redemptive is not the belief that “all is O.K. now.” Rather, the way toward redemption is directed by an awareness that things are far from O.K. What makes the memory of American

slavery so dangerous is that in calling to mind the suffering of history’s victims, we begin to see that the suffering continues. Hope is found in the interruption that films like “12 Years a Slave” make in our everyday lives and presumptions. This interruption should shock us into hearing the muted cries of history’s victims (Psalm 34) and recalling that, although we are many parts, we are one body in Christ (1 Cor 12:12).

The body of Christ continues to suffer. The dangerous memory of slavery calls us to take seriously the question: What are you and I going to do about it?

Selective memory silences the oppressed, the victims and the dead.



DANIEL P. HORAN, O.F.M., is the author of several books, including *The Last Words of Jesus: A Meditation on Love and Suffering* (2013).



# STAGING SCRIPTURE

## THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SHAKESPEARE

By Piero Boitani

Translated by Vittorio Montemaggi and Rachel Jacoff

University of Notre Dame Press. 168p \$27

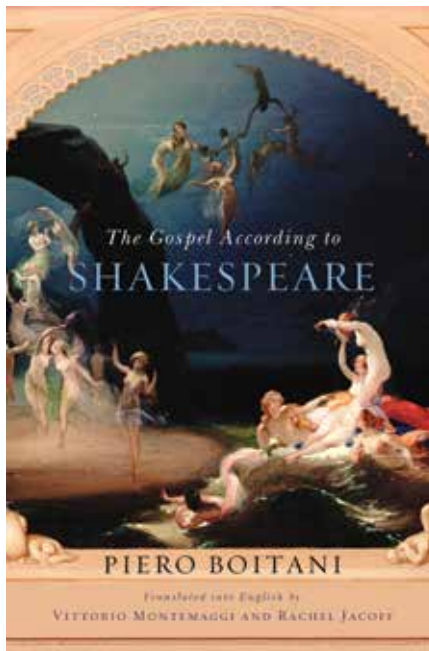
A short and intriguing book, Piero Boitani's *The Gospel According to Shakespeare* is written by a major scholar for everybody: for scholars, for non-scholars, for us all. It is a fine book, and its intriguing quality is that the reader keeps wondering if Boitani can pull it off. Can he establish, with scholarly care, that there really is a "Gospel according to Shakespeare"?

To make his case, Boitani, professor of comparative literature at the University of Rome ("La Sapienza"), argues that Shakespeare in his last works—two tragedies and four late romances—"is meditating on providence, on forgiveness, and on goodness and happiness, and is doing so in Christian terms." After six short, clear and lively chapters on "Hamlet," "King Lear," "Pericles," "Cymbeline," "The Winter's Tale" and "The Tempest" (each begins with a helpful plot-summary), Boitani concludes that Shakespeare's late plays "constitute his good news, his Gospel," a final "testament that is truly his: the New Testament of William Shakespeare." In arguing his case, Boitani goes from Hamlet's echo of Matthew's Gospel in "There is special providence in the fall of a sparrow" to Prospero's rewrite of the "Our Father" as he ends "The Tempest," "As you from crimes would be pardoned be/ Let your indulgence set me free."

Perhaps I can best introduce Boitani's *Gospel* by first describing his methodology—his framework of thinking—then by showing its use through examples. Boitani describes

his book as "meditating" on "movements" as happiness, relationships, revelations, reconciliations, epiphanies, apocalypses, suffering, death, endurance, purification and fulfillment. In these meditations Jesus, Job, the Gospels and the Scriptures hover in the background, for Boitani holds that "Shakespeare...always approached the Bible obliquely."

In these six late plays the broad themes come alive in dramatic and



specific terms through multiple Gospel and scriptural parallels, allusions, even quotations. I take my examples first from the two tragedies. Besides young Hamlet's mention of "the fall of a sparrow," he earlier spoke of a "consummation/ Devoutly to be wished," which Boitani finds a reflection of Christ's "consummatum est"—"It is finished"—in John's Gospel. Then King Lear's loss of everything resembles Job's "tragedy of evil and suffering," as Lear on the heath (like Jesus in Gethsemane) at first wants only to "pray and then...sleep" but

suddenly has a change of heart, sympathizes with the "poor naked wretches" who are homeless and hungry, and in pelting rain wants only to "expose" himself—rip off his clothes—"to feel what wretches feel," with Gospel-like generosity and "charity." Then near the end, as Lear and his daughter Cordelia prepare for prison, he tells her they will "pray and sing" and "take upon us the mystery of things,/ As if we were God's spies." In this scene, writes Boitani, "the Gospel according to Shakespeare takes its first form...as Lear and Cordelia resemble the Christ who takes upon himself the evil of the world."

The four romances expand this Gospel. In "Pericles," the hero, like Lear, loses everything but "speaks like the Scriptures and feeds the hungry," and becomes "the 'meek' of the Gospels, of the Sermon on the Mount." In "Cymbeline," set in pagan Britain at the time of Christ's birth and life, death and rebirth dominate the whole play, as "a new light shines on existence," Jupiter's appearance "is a theodicy," and Imogen "is divineness." In "The Winter's Tale," the main theme is resurrection: Paulina uses the words *faith* and *redeem* about Hermione's statue coming to life, and, writes Boitani, this and other "parables" "preach, in feminine mode...the resurrection of the flesh." Finally, in "The Tempest," Prospero becomes a Christ-figure, "the god who makes himself man," and shows "a moral grandeur out of the ordinary...that transcends human ethics, as if it were that of a Christ who takes upon himself the sin of the world." In these ways, Boitani finds "profound links between these plays" which lead him "to follow the development of such links...in this book." Shakespeare's "larger vision" in these plays thus becomes "theological," and the "final scenes of [his] romances" offer "a plenitude—a grace—that is found only in the Gospels (and particularly in those of John and Luke) within the post-Resurrection scenes."

I greatly enjoyed reading *The Gospel*

According to Shakespeare. Though not a Shakespeare scholar, I have taught his plays, and I have seen them staged in Philadelphia, Washington, New York, and—best of all—London, at the Old Vic, the National Theatre and Shakespeare’s Globe. I remember four London stagings with special delight: years ago at the Old Vic, Laurence Olivier’s famous blackface “Othello” and a ferociously funny “Much Ado about Nothing”; more recently, at Shakespeare’s Globe, a luminous “Henry V” and “King Lear.” Enriching all these stagings, Boitani showed me Shakespeare’s sense of transcendence; his creativity, imagination and art; his love of recognition scenes and of forgiveness; and his deep knowledge of

**ON THE WEB**  
The Catholic Book Club discusses *Someone*, by Alice McDermott. [americamagazine.org/cbc](http://americamagazine.org/cbc)

the Gospel and of Scripture that resonates with care for his characters, events and phrases. The breadth, the complex linkings and the fresh “angle of approach” made this book, for me, epiphanic and unforgettable, as if I lived in a world of peace, joy, reconciliation and Christian wisdom.

So yes, Boitani did pull it off. There really is a “Gospel according to Shakespeare” in these six plays, and Boitani explains it with clarity and elegance. Shakespeare will be richer for me after this warm and insightful study of his new “Gospel.”

**JOSEPH J. FEENEY, S.J.**, is professor of English at Saint Joseph’s University in Philadelphia, and every spring teaches “King Lear” to freshmen.

Mead as well as Thomistic natural law theory. She believes that moral selves are formed in and by communities of discourse, but Christian communities are not “insular.” They interact and dialogue with other communities. Hence, shared commitments are possible, and theology is public discourse linking the church and the polis.

After reviewing the creation narrative and the dynamics of evil, she concludes that it does not explain why evil exists but rather points the way to God’s redemptive activity and calls for human response to eradicate its consequences. The Christian answer to the problem of evil is the kingdom of God, which gives content to salvation. Cahill argues that Jesus saw salvation as corporate and political and presently effective in transforming social and political life rather than purely personal and spiritual. Jesus’ kingdom was inclusive and open to the poor, women and outsiders (Gentiles). After noting the tension between the present and future aspects of the kingdom, she argues that the present dimension is essential to validate transformative action in Christian ethics.

For specifically Christian ethicists, the guarantor of salvation and transformative political action is Jesus as the

Christ, fully human but also fully divine. How this can be understood is the focus of Chapter 4. Recognizing that there was a plurality of Christological formulations from the beginning, Cahill seeks to reconcile the two most important trajectories—Word and Spirit Christologies. Word Christology, exemplified in the prologue to John’s

Gospel, has been “in possession from Nicaea onward” and emphasizes the divinity of Christ. It has had a lasting hold on the Christian imagination, so

T. HOWLAND SANKS

## AQUINAS RECONSTRUCTED

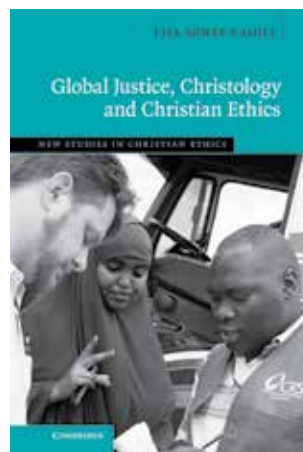
### GLOBAL JUSTICE, CHRISTOLOGY, AND CHRISTIAN ETHICS New Studies in Christian Ethics

By Lisa Sowle Cahill  
Cambridge University Press. 328p \$99

As is true of all Lisa Sowle Cahill’s writings, this latest volume from the distinguished Christian ethicist from Boston College is a significant contribution not only to that discipline, but also to theology. Here she is less concerned about particular social issues and aims to provide a sustained theological basis for global justice. She argues that the relationship between theology and ethics is a two-way street. “Not only do biblical and theological claims about salvation in Jesus Christ require active commitment to social justice; the practices in which Christians are already engaged shape their theological vision, and the

just or unjust practical consequences of Christian concepts and doctrines are indicators of the latter’s truth and adequacy.” Hence, in subsequent chapters Cahill tries to show how the Christian doctrines of creation and sin, of the kingdom of God, of various Christologies, of the Spirit and the Cross have implications and consequences for global justice.

In the first chapter Cahill lays the basis for the central argument of the book: Despite the intransigence of sin and evil, personal, communal and social transformations are real possibilities. This conviction is rooted in her background in American pragmatism and the social psychology of G. H.



much so that much of Christian piety has been, as Paul Tillich once said, “practically docetic.” In the fifth century, the humanity of Jesus was not in dispute, but his relation to Yahweh was problematic. Today that is not the case, and hence there has been a recovery of Spirit Christology. Word Christologies tend to be abstract, whereas “Spirit christologies bring us back to history, the humanity of Christ, the concrete ecclesial texture of the experience of God, and empowerment for God’s reign. Contemporary Spirit christologies also have ecumenical and interreligious appeal.” But, for Cahill, the two Christologies should be seen as complementary rather than in opposition, since they both affirm that it is God who is embodied in Jesus. Ultimately, that relationship remains mysterious, and no formulation is adequate to it. In evaluating new formulations today, Cahill argues, we would do well to put more emphasis on orthopraxis as a criterion of truth and validity.

Since all experiences of Christ in history are mediated by the Spirit, the author devotes a chapter to the “Spirit of Christ in the church as the power that draws Christians together and unites them to Christ in practice, belief, and hope. The power of the Spirit is essential for Christian ethics as enabling ongoing personal conversion, community solidarity, and the practical enactment of the Kingdom of God—the reconciling politics of salvation.” Cahill then explores how Aquinas and Luther and some contemporary theologians offer resources for a Spirit-inspired ethics and politics. The following chapter takes up the question of how Jesus’ death on the cross can bring about the reconciliation of humans to God and neighbor or, in other words, how is his death salvific? She finds the substitutionary atonement theory of Anselm unsatisfactory and concludes that it “should be tied to resurrection and incarnation, and complemented by an ethics of the reign of God.”

In the concluding two chapters, Cahill offers her reconstructed vision of Aquinas’s natural law theory, which has a more dynamic and relational understanding of human nature and accepts the reality of change while still maintaining that “human beings have characteristics that perdure within change,” what Edward Schillebeeckx terms “anthropological constants.” Her version of natural law theory includes the “objectivity of some basic goods...their amenability to reasonable yet inductive inquiry, and their appeal across cultures despite local variations.” This makes possible a global ethic of shared values and human goods to promote greater equality, human rights, women’s rights and the environment. The final chapter tries to show how hope can be engendered from within human suffering by human actions on behalf of justice. “The virtue of eschatological hope is in fact contingent on practices that bring us existentially nearer to the end of union with God.” As a concrete historical example she offers the transformation that took place in Liberia by the women who organized mass protests in the early part of this century.

This is a rich and rewarding, though sometimes dense, volume. Cahill demonstrates breadth and depth of scholarship and a command of a wide range of sources. She achieves her goal of showing the interdependence of theology and ethics, each of which serves as a criterion of the other.

Because of the book’s ti-

tle, I was expecting a fuller treatment of the possibilities and problems with a truly global ethic. Given the well-known difficulties of intercultural communication and how deeply em-

## Naming

My name streams from your mouth—  
an adagio with indentations and  
a scent of sacrifice.

I see my name  
written in  
grass style calligraphy.

I want to slide into each stroke  
and swim with each stroke.

I am a dolphin swimming,  
bobbing up and down  
along the Wai’anae coast

I am afraid of drowning.  
The dolphin in me says,  
I love you.

Listening to my name is listening  
to a command.

It is the act  
of emptying out—  
decanting the purification water  
from a cruet.

### STELLA JENG GUILLORY

**STELLA JENG GUILLORY** *lives in Washougal, Wash. Her poetry has appeared in Bamboo Ridge, the Hawaii Writers’ Quarterly; Sister Stew: Fiction and Poetry by Women; La’ila’i and VoiceCatcher, the Winter issue, 2013.*

bedded our forms of thought, ideals and values are in our cultures, simply to assert that ideals and values can be shared across cultures or that some human goods can be universally known seems a bit too facile. While I believe it may be true, a much more in-depth

treatment is needed. Can we hope that this eminent scholar will take this up in the future?

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TOM DEIGNAN

## WHAT WOULD GEORGE DO?

### BLOOD OF TYRANTS George Washington & the Forging of the Presidency

By Logan Beirne  
Encounter Books. 440p \$27.99

During a much-discussed speech at The National Defense University earlier this year, President Obama cataloged the dreadful conditions at Guantánamo Bay, and then asked: “Is that who we are? Is that something that our Founders foresaw?”

The question was obviously rhetorical, though as Logan Beirne outlines in his new book, *Blood of Tyrants: George Washington & the Forging of the Presidency*, the first commander in chief was not above treating prisoners harshly.

“Washington’s arguments justifying [prisoner] abuse sharpened further as the war went on and the Americans’ desperation increased,” writes Beirne, an attorney who is also currently an Olin Scholar at Yale Law School. Beirne’s point is not that torture is good or bad, but instead that Washington’s approach to this vexing issue was “pragmatic” and “case by case.”

Washington, Beirne argues, was such a singularly influential figure that his handling of torture and other matters during the Revolutionary War profoundly shaped what Americans came to expect from all subsequent presidents. More broadly, Beirne argues that “America’s current challenges in the ongoing War on Terror mirror those General Washington faced.”

*Blood of Tyrants* is, to say the least, a positive rendering of Washington’s leadership skills, though Beirne also humanizes the famed leader, stressing, for example, that Washington’s poor handling of the Jumonville Affair in 1754 “sparked” the Seven Years (French and Indian) War. Some of Beirne’s extensive analysis of Washington and key Revolutionary events will seem familiar to readers of recent books by Richard Brookhiser or Joseph Ellis, for example.

Beirne’s main message, however, is that we must look back before we look ahead, since Washington was able to “formulate principled approaches to dilemmas that are eerily similar to those we face today.

“Does the president have a constitutional power to torture foreign enemy combatants? Overrule Congress on war tactics? Deny formal trials to enemies? Trample on the rights of American citizens? At least consider our first commander in chief’s principles when searching for an answer.”

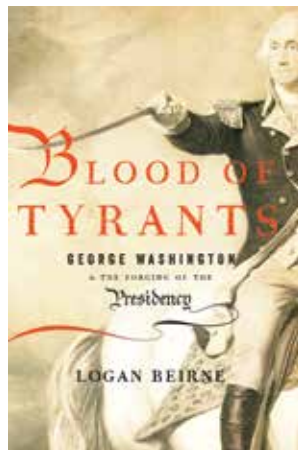
As Beirne himself acknowledges, however, Washington’s answer to these questions was occasionally a not-so-resounding “sometimes.” Beirne lauds Washington (as wartime commander in chief, though obviously not yet president) for wresting control of wartime tactics from a distant, meddling

Congress. In recent decades, however, many scholars have come to feel that the pendulum of wartime power has (unconstitutionally?) swung too far in the direction of the executive branch. Beirne, for example, stresses the importance of the Constitution’s “original intent.” It does, however, seem fair to wonder if at least some framers—given Congress’s power to “declare war” (Article I, Section Eight) not to mention their inherent mistrust of excessive executive power—would have serious questions about the way presidents have kept Congress at such a distance while managing military operations in Korea and Vietnam, or even Kosovo and Libya.

Furthermore, while Beirne convincingly argues that Washington was indeed “forging” the presidency on the battlefield, it might have been useful if *Blood of Tyrants* had also explored why it took a full decade for the Articles of Confederation to be proven so grossly inadequate. What, if any, “forging” was done during those crucial, intervening years?

Beirne sensibly argues that Washington’s practical decision-making allowed, for example, that torture had its place sometimes, though not always. Then and now, however, it is also necessary to ask what role morality—religious, cultural, ethical—should also play in these debates. As president, for example, Washington himself supported aid to the French when Haitian slaves revolted, in part because this placated America’s slaveholding class. Pragmatic, sure. Also, in retrospect, highly regrettable.

Ultimately, Beirne believes “that historical understanding should at least be a starting point for interpreting the Constitution,” and he opposes “allowing judges to discover new meanings in old laws, thus aggrandizing their own role



at the expense of the political process.” Though he strives for nonpartisanship, it is hard not to see Beirne here channeling his inner Scalia.

Certainly it remains astonishing that nearly 250 years ago several dozen (affluent, white, male) Americans created a document as durable and far-sighted as the Constitution. Nevertheless, just as its creators were not infallible, neither is the Constitution above criticism—even its much-beloved “original intent.” There is no need to focus solely on farcical tragedies like the infamous “three-fifths compromise.” Tongue only slightly in cheek, the comedian Colin Quinn, author of the recent Broadway show “Unconstitutional,” has suggested we conduct constitutional conventions every 10 or 20 years, a proposal surely horrifying to purists, who loath altering this venerable document. But are regular constitutional conventions really any crazier than believing Madison and his pals could possibly have conceived of AK-47s, gay marriage and the Internet when they crafted the Constitution and the Bill of Rights?


*Blood of Tyrants* is at its best locating provocative parallels between the Revolutionary War and the War on Terror. Arguing that these parallels somehow make a decisive case for originalism, however, will not convince the likes of, say, Professor Louis Michael Seidman of Georgetown Law, whose new book *On Constitutional Disobedience* argues that the Constitution is so outdated we should do away with it entirely. Professor Garrett Epps of the University of Baltimore, meanwhile, recently argued that originalism itself is a product not of 1787 but the Reagan Era, when Attorney General Edwin Meese “elevated originalism to a legal and political movement.” Perhaps we can take comfort in one thing: The war over the Constitution may well outlast even the interminable War on Terror.

**TOM DEIGNAN** has taught American studies at City University of New York and Bowling Green State University in Ohio.

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## Seek Wisdom

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America (ISSN 0002-7049) is published weekly (except for 13 combined issues: Jan. 7-14, 21-28, April 8-15, June 3-10, 17-24, July 1-8, 15-22, July 29-Aug. 5, Aug. 12-19, Aug. 26-Sept. 2, Sept. 9-16, Dec. 9-16, 23-30) by America Press, Inc., 106 West 56th Street, New York, NY 10019. Periodical postage is paid at New York, N.Y., and additional mailing offices. Circulation: (800) 627-9533. Subscriptions: United States, \$56 per year; add U.S. \$30 postage and GST (#131870719) for Canada; or add U.S. \$56 per year for international priority airmail. Postmaster: Send address changes to: America, P.O. Box 293059, Kettering, OH 45429.



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# The Coming of the King

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT (A), DEC. 8, 2013

Readings: Is 11:1–10; Ps 72:1–17; Rom 15:4–9; Mt 3:1–12

*“Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you” (Rom 15:7)*

The Greek word that refers to Jesus’ arrival, most often translated as “second coming,” is *parousia*. The term was adopted by Christians from the common Greek usage and imperial Roman ideology of the day, in which a city prepared for and eagerly anticipated the arrival of a major political personage. This ancient data became known among students of the Bible through the groundbreaking study of ancient Hellenistic papyri by Adolf Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, published a century ago. If the arrival was that of the Roman emperor, the preparation of the city and the people would be magnificent and fitting for a person of such rank. Preparation would be made for great feasts, and all the leading citizens of the city would be arrayed in their finest to meet the emperor. It was a matter of great importance.

*Adventus* is the Latin equivalent of *parousia*. Advent is for Christians a similar process of anticipation and waiting, but it must also be a time of preparation. How do we prepare for the coming of the king? In Rom 15:2 Paul asks the Christians in Rome to seek the good of their brothers and sisters, writing that “each of us must please our neighbor for the good purpose of building up the neighbor.” The church in Rome in the first century exhibited divisions between Jewish and Gentile Christians and the “strong” and the “weak,” and Paul instructs the church to imitate Christ, who “did not please himself.”

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Paul prays for the Romans that “the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to think in harmony with one another, in keeping with Christ Jesus.” The New American Bible translation, cited above, captures best the meaning of the verb *phroneo* in this context as referring to the need of the Roman Christians to “be of the same mind” or to “think harmoniously.” To prepare for the coming of our king it is essential to seek harmony.

Christians today exhibit various divisions that mimic those of Paul’s ancient church. Our divisions are between those of different liturgical or political commitments, not between Jew and Gentile; but they threaten our ability to “be of the same mind” or to “think harmoniously” as we prepare to welcome Christ. Yet we await and prepare for the *parousia* of the same king, the source of harmony. Paul’s call that we “welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God” is not a simple proposal or suggestion, but the way of life that ought to set Christians apart as we prepare for Christ’s arrival. It is our task to prepare for the coming of Christ by inviting all into the kingdom, by making room in the house for those once excluded, which certainly includes our brothers and sisters from whom we might feel estranged or excluded.

Isaiah foresees the time after the arrival of the king, after the *parousia*, when the king has judged the poor with righteousness and “with equity for the

mEEK of the earth.” This will be a time when harmony resonates through all creation, inaugurating a kingdom in which “the wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them.” At root, this kingdom destroys expectations that life in creation must be “red of tooth and claw” and offers a new way of living together. Isaiah says we “will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.... On that day the



## PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Imagine Jesus’ arrival in your city today. How would you want to welcome him?

root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.”

Harmony in the household of God is preparation for the kingdom, and our duty begins now. For there was another aspect of the *parousia* found in the Roman empire. The New Testament scholar Brent Kinman asked in an article in 1999, “What would happen if the customary greeting were not extended?” He answers that it happened rarely because of the dire repercussions; but on one occasion when that happened, the Roman magistrate in question besieged the city “because it did not receive him properly.” Our ability to welcome each other in harmony is a necessary preparation for welcoming Jesus at his *parousia*.

**JOHN W. MARTENS**

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**Vatican II: Past, Present, Future**

Massimo Faggioli, University of St. Thomas. Following the lecture Faggioli will sign copies of his book, *Vatican II: The Battle for Meaning*.

**SATURDAY, MARCH 15, 9:30 A.M. - 3 P.M. | O'KEEFE COMMONS**

**Renewing Memory: Mystical Seeds of Reform**

Elizabeth Dreyer, Fairfield University. Author of *Holy Power*, *Holy Presence* (2007) and *Passionate Spirituality* (2005)

**Francis of Assisi and Ignatius of Loyola: Two Ways of Reforming**

C. Colt Anderson, Fordham University. Author of *Great Catholic Reformers* (2007)

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