

# America

THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC REVIEW

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## Re-enchanting the World

THE POSITIVE  
POWER OF PROTEST  
PATRICK GILGER



FALL BOOKS 1:  
BOBBY KENNEDY  
AND MORE

The recent grand opening of the National Museum of African American History in Washington, D.C., was a much-needed moment of national unity and self-reflection. In the highly partisan capital of an increasingly polarized nation, Americans of every race, creed and party paused to acknowledge and celebrate a part of our history that, in the words of President Obama, “has at times been overlooked.” That will be much harder to do now given the fittingly prominent position the museum occupies on the National Mall and in our national imagination. “This national museum helps to tell a richer and fuller story of who we are,” the president said during his opening remarks. “It helps us better understand the lives, yes of the president, but also the slave, the industrialist but also the porter, the keeper of the status quo but also the optimist seeking to overthrow that status quo, the teacher, or the cook, alongside the statesman. And by knowing this other story, we better understand ourselves and each other.”

It is no secret that mutual understanding is in short supply. In spite of our common progress, the country is still beset by the consequences of our original sin: lingering racial prejudice and outright bias, and deep distrust between Americans of different races and between large swaths of our citizenry and those charged with protecting and serving them. Still, in spite of it all, Donald J. Trump’s claim that African-Americans “are absolutely in the worst shape they’ve ever been in before” belies the hopeful and prosperous reality. While we may not have reached the mountaintop, we are a long way from the deepest valley. That much was obvious during the opening ceremonies for the museum, when the first African-American president of the United States was joined onstage by the 99-year-old daughter of a Mississippi slave. Ruth Bonner, her back arched by age, her heart filled with youthful determination, joined the

president in ringing a bell to inaugurate the museum, reminding every teary-eyed observer of Martin Luther King Jr.’s injunction to let freedom ring from every mountainside.

The occasion also afforded an opportunity to see that endangered species, bipartisanship, in its natural habitat. The photo of a tender, affectionate embrace between George W. Bush, who signed the legislation creating the museum, and Michelle Obama, the first lady, went viral. “It’s a great photo that demonstrates genuine bipartisanship,” said Larry Sabato, director of the University of Virginia’s Center for Politics. “At one time they were political enemies, but they came together for a good cause. In the midst of a nasty election season, people are hungry for anything that can unify us.”

The truth is that people are always hungry for anything that can unify us. That is, in fact, the story that the new museum tells. This is especially important to remember during those times when the social fabric seems especially frayed. “Politics is an expression of our compelling need to live as one,” Pope Francis said on Capitol Hill last year, “in order to build as one the greatest common good: that of a community which sacrifices particular interests in order to share, in justice and peace, its goods, its interests, its social life.” In other words, *e pluribus unum* is not simply a motto. It is our reality as well as our common destiny.

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The editors and staff of **America** mourn the passing of Dennis M. Linehan, S.J., an associate editor of this review from 1995 to 2009, who died on Sept. 23 at the age of 74. Father Linehan’s byline did not often appear in these pages, but his dedication to his work informed every issue he helped to edit. He was a thoroughly decent soul whose quick wit and encyclopedic mind made him a valued and cherished colleague. R.I.P. **MATT MALONE, S.J.**

106 West 56th Street

New York, NY 10019-3803

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EDITORIAL E-MAIL

america@americamedia.org

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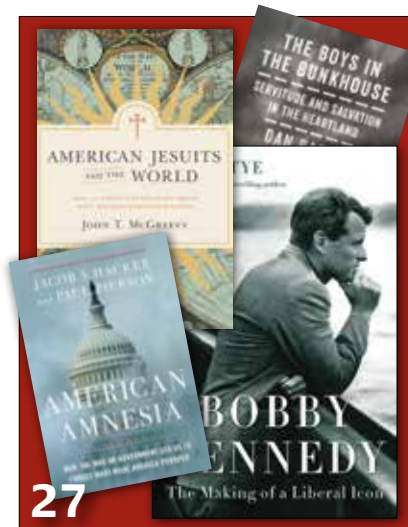
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## ON THE WEB

Are Catholic leaders jittery about protests and **exercising free speech**? A report from **Michael O'Loughlin**. Plus, Nathan Schneider offers six ways for **parishes to enter the digital age**. Full digital highlights on page 18 and at [americamagazine.org/webfeatures](http://americamagazine.org/webfeatures).



### High Rents Freeze Inequality

The cost of housing is making it increasingly difficult for families to move up the economic ladder. Andrew Flowers of FiveThirtyEight reports that 52 percent of renter households below the poverty line spent more than half their income on housing in 2013, up from 42 percent in 1991. One reason is that few households receive government assistance in the form of public housing or rental subsidies. Housing aid is rarely mentioned in presidential campaigns and is perpetually underfunded; about three-quarters of renter families who qualify for aid do not get it because Congress simply has not appropriated enough money.

Another problem is that there is not enough housing where it would do the most good: in places with economic opportunity. Historically, if you were unable to find a good job, you could move to a place where your skills were more in demand. With a more efficient distribution of labor, the states “converged,” and the income gap between poorer states like Mississippi and wealthier states like New York began to narrow. During the past three decades, this convergence has stopped and may even be reversing. The economists Peter Ganong and Daniel Shoag offer an explanation: Thanks to restrictions on land use, we are not building enough homes in areas with strong job markets. As a result, all but the highest paid workers tend to remain where housing is relatively affordable—even if unemployment is high and there is little wage growth.

During this election year, it is important to uphold the American tradition of welcoming newcomers from other nations (*Am.*, 9/19). Americans in economically thriving areas must also welcome citizens from other states, and that means tearing down legal barriers to affordable housing.

### Well Done, Faithful Leader

The Thirty-Sixth General Congregation of the Society of Jesus began in Rome on Oct. 2. Gathering Jesuit delegates from around the world, a general congregation is the highest authority in the order. But these worldwide assemblies are rare, convoked only “for matters of greater moment.” This congregation, like the one that preceded it in 2008, has first to accept the resignation of the current superior general, Adolfo Nicolás, S.J., who at age 80 wants to step down, and then elect his successor.

The job of the general involves a lot of time in the office, reading reports, deciding issues presented for his approval, appointing local superiors and writing letters. He attends many meetings, visiting with groups of regional superiors and other significant gatherings, talking, encouraging and

supporting. He is not involved in the everyday running of schools, spiritual centers or media work, but his oversight helps these Jesuit missions succeed. Father Nicolás did all this with grace and skill. He was born and grew up in Spain, later went to Japan as a missionary and was named provincial there in 1993. Father Nicolás has delivered significant addresses on education and has been involved in refugee issues among many other initiatives.

The Society of Jesus owes Father Nicolás a great debt of gratitude for his careful leadership. We at **America** have been graced with his guidance during these years of rapid change. We ask our readers and viewers to join us in praying for the success of this general congregation, and in saying, “¡Gracias, Adolfo Nicolás! Thank you very much!”

### ‘Nanny’ Was Right

Critics roundly mocked Michelle Obama’s “nannyism” for her attempts to improve the exercise habits of young people, but new data gathered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggest the first lady’s concerns are not misplaced. The C.D.C. reports that in just over 20 years the average weight of U.S. men rose 15 pounds—from 181 lbs. to 196 lbs.—and women went from 152 to 169. Eleven-year-old girls gained seven pounds, and 11-year-old boys packed on an astonishing 13.5 more pounds.

The personal toll from obesity in terms of illness, lowered life expectancy and higher risks of diabetes and heart disease are well known, but the problem also produces vast social costs. Obesity is one of the biggest drivers of preventable chronic diseases and related health care expenses. Scolding and shaming campaigns appear no longer sufficient. Sugar taxes, particularly on soft drinks, have achieved results in other nations. Longer and more frequent recess breaks in schools, facilitating employer- or community-based exercise programs and demanding a critical review of labeling laws and food and beverage advertising, especially when aimed at children, are just a few aspects of what should be a comprehensive and persistent campaign against obesity.

Addressing the crisis is not just a matter of good health but also of social fairness. Many people who struggle with obesity reside in low-income communities with the least access to affordable, healthy food and exercise options. And too much of what has passed for science on diet has been the result of heavy lobbying by the food industry. Truly independent research must more honestly scrutinize the U.S. diet. Churches can surely do their part by sponsoring parish-based exercise programs and serving as clearinghouses for reliable information on diet and healthy living.

# Freedom to Serve

When the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights began research for its report on the “uncertain boundaries” of religious freedom in 2013, Hobby Lobby was just a craft store and Obergefell was hardly a household name. Three years later, landmark decisions by the Supreme Court to recognize both the religious liberty claims of closely held corporations and the right of same-sex couples to marry have given new urgency to the question at the center of the report. How should we as a country balance the sincerely held religious beliefs of people and institutions with the potential for unjust discrimination on the basis of gender, sexual orientation and other markers of identity?

Unfortunately, the findings of the commission’s report, “Peaceful Coexistence,” published on Sept. 7, leave little room for middle ground or dialogue. Most of the authors instead paint a zero-sum world, where antidiscrimination laws are “of pre-eminent importance” and where religious exemptions from such statutes are seen to “significantly infringe upon” civil rights and are used, in the words of Martin S. Castro, the chairperson of the commission, as “both a weapon and a shield by those seeking to deny others equality.” No credible rationale is offered to explain why sexual autonomy should be given primacy of place over religious liberty, despite the latter’s explicit protection under the Constitution.

Further, anyone concerned to preserve the robust religious liberty protections in the U.S. constitutional tradition will be taken aback by Mr. Castro’s charge that the term “religious liberty”—the scare quotes are his—has become a code for “discrimination, intolerance, racism, sexism, homophobia, Islamophobia, Christian supremacy or any form of intolerance.” This is a shockingly confident dismissal of a fundamental American value. Religious liberty is hardly the exclusive purview of Christians and is in many ways most vital for religious minorities with less political clout. And Mr. Castro’s implicit condemnation of views on gender identity and the meaning of marriage held by millions of Christians, Jews and Muslims—and shared by most Americans not so long ago—as beyond the bounds of acceptable public discourse is incendiary and counterproductive to the report’s stated goal of reconciliation. That is a shame because taken as a whole, the report, while nonbinding, advances vital questions about how to balance competing rights and worldviews that will require the good-faith engagement of everyone interested in building a just, pluralistic society.

Among the commission’s recommendations are that courts and lawmakers should tailor religious exemptions to

civil rights protections “as narrowly as applicable law requires,” that Congress should clarify the federal Restoration of Religious Freedom Act so that it applies only to individuals and religious institutions and that where R.R.F.A. and equivalent state-level laws do not apply, exemption laws should “protect religious beliefs rather than conduct.”

While a clearer framework for understanding when and to whom religious exemptions apply would certainly be helpful, the commission’s neat separation of “belief” and “conduct” is misguided. The Catholic faith does not end with the sacrifice at the altar or the recitation of the creed but is lived out in schools, hospitals, homeless shelters and countless other ministries of the church. As Archbishop William Lori of Baltimore said in response to the report: “Catholic social service workers, volunteers and pastors don’t count the cost in financial terms or even in personal safety. But, we must count the cost to our own faith and morality.”

Recent experience shows where the commission’s hollowed-out understanding of the Constitution’s “first freedom” leads. Starting in 2006, branches of Catholic Charities USA around the nation had to choose between violating their institutional consciences by placing children with unmarried and same-sex couples or losing their government contract—without which they would shut down. In Boston, San Francisco, Washington, D.C., and Springfield, Ill., the adoption agencies indeed closed their doors. Today, there are activists and politicians who would gladly see Christian universities with traditional morality codes or Catholic hospitals that refuse to perform abortions suffer the same fate.

But if Catholics are to make a full-throated defense of robust religious liberty, we should also acknowledge the ways the church itself has contributed to the atmosphere of distrust around this cause. Asserting religious liberty primarily on “culture war” issues draws attention only to the church’s policing of moral lines, to the detriment of its proclamation of the good news and service to those in need.

For generations, the church in the United States has provided succor and support for millions of Americans, regardless of religion. This is not a historical accident but the result of the good works of myriad Catholics and an American context that allows believers to freely practice their faith in all spheres. This tradition must continue.



## REPLY ALL

### Asylum versus Immigration

Re “Step Up on Syrian Refugees” (Current Comment, 9/19): The editors’ comment on the Syrian refugee issue is certainly needed and welcome, but America continues to miss the important distinction between asylum and immigration. Thus the statement that “few immigrants to the United States will be as thoroughly vetted as these Syrians seeking asylum.” If what they are seeking and need is asylum, why assume that necessarily implies immigration?

Equating asylum with immigration may well be the surest way to limit the number of people helped, at least in the United States. Immigration necessarily involves a permanent relocation to a new country. It poses challenges like language barriers, employability, domiciling, education and—today especially—whatever vetting is necessary to determine compatibility of values and ideals and absence of criminality.

Asylum need not concern itself nearly as much with these matters. Asylum means protection from the ravages of war or political or religious persecution and temporary relocation to some safe haven, preferably not halfway around the world, along with food, clothing and shelter.

Since the requirements for asylum are more easily met and financed than immigration, its benefits will reach far

more needy victims than immigration to the United States ever could.

PAUL A. BECKER  
*Bluffton, S.C.*

### Not Comparably Flawed

I appreciated “Confessions of a Solidarist,” by John Conley, S.J. (9/19), which calls attention to the American Solidarity party. It was thought-provoking, encouraging and refreshing. I must take issue, however, with the tendency in his column and elsewhere in America to treat the two major party candidates as comparably flawed. That does not stand up to the facts. One is a career politician with a familiar set of faults. The other has no relevant experience or interest in learning and is, as America notes, unprepared—not just for press conferences. One could expand the list of particulars on either candidate; but by any accounting, they do not carry shortcomings of similar gravity.

It would be a historic mistake for us as Catholics to think our vote should hinge on these candidates’ peccadillos or on their supposed positions on gay marriage, abortion, immigration or war. We are well advised to reflect on whether a candidate is actually ready, willing and able to carry out the grave responsibilities of the office.

JOEL NIGG  
*Portland, Ore.*

### Midwest Values

Thank you for “Hillary Clinton’s Gospel,” by Michael O’Loughlin

(9/19). As a fellow Chicagoan, it has saddened me that so many do not know about Hillary Clinton’s deep faith and her Midwest values. As someone who has been educated by the Jesuits, I have been grateful for America’s focus on social justice issues. Hillary Clinton’s life has, too, been focused on social justice issues. It is time for people to learn about the goodness of Hillary Clinton, and this article will help to open the eyes of some who had a distorted impression of her because of those who do not want to see her succeed.

ROSEMARY EILEEN McHUGH  
*Online Comment*

### Define Social Justice

I will preface my comment by saying I am a Republican who is adamantly opposed to Donald Trump, and if the election were today, I would probably vote for Mrs. Clinton (or simply not vote).

I have to say I find it very hard to re-read this article and its description of Mrs. Clinton’s Methodist commitment to social justice in light of the news that, when many thousands here in Louisiana were afflicted by floods and lost so much, she embarked on a three-day fundraising tour with billionaires and celebrities—beginning with a \$100,000-a-plate fundraiser in Nantucket, while she stalled before making public comment. Under what definition of social justice—Methodist, Catholic, liberal, conservative—is this prioritization justified?

While I am inclined to vote for her in view of the unprecedented nominee of my own party, I thus remain deeply, deeply suspicious of the choices she makes to prioritize her values. It just seems to me that when push comes to shove, Mrs. Clinton chooses to prioritize money and access to money over many other values. I am disappointed that a person of faith would do the same. This seems why many people remain skeptical of Mrs. Clinton—not, as

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the author suggests, because of an alignment of religion with conservatism.

JOSHUA DECUIR  
*Online Comment*

### The First Stone

Re *Of Many Things*, by Matt Malone, S.J. (9/12): I applaud Father Malone for addressing a concern that brings out the spite and even the smallness of some believers. The Catholic Church is a big tent, and to belong to it is to strive to live the life and teachings of Jesus Christ in today's world. The moral issues of abortion, capital punishment, racism, bigotry, intolerance, hatred, poverty and same-sex marriage define our position in the world. For personal, political, legal or unclear reasons, some choose not to accept the church's clear stance on these moral issues. Are they bad, evil people who should be thrown out in the cold? Should they be ignored and scorned as if they did not deserve to belong in the same pew? Who of us should cast the first stone?

We must confront such conflicts not by calling a U.S. senator, or anyone else, evil but by opening our hearts and minds to the mercy and love revealed to us in Jesus Christ. One is not evil because he or she takes a position that differs from the official position of the church. If that were so, how many "evil" ones are in the pews today because they have not followed the official church position on birth control as put forth in "Humanae Vitae"?

We are confronted with major social evils today, and we need to leave our smallness behind and open ourselves to the grace, mercy and love of God as shown in Jesus Christ.

(REV.) PATRICK CAWLEY  
*Vanderbilt, Mich.*

### What About the Locals?

In "Weigh the Cost" (8/29), John W. Martens challenges us to think of a saint dear to us and mentions the more famous saints. It seems we often focus on the more famous and well-known saints rather than the many saint-like

people we see in our daily lives. It would be wonderful if Catholic commentaries drew our attention to the people in our midst who inspire us to be holy and to live the Gospel more fully.

Those "saints" abound: parents of disabled children, dedicated men and women serving our country, teachers, local clergy, dedicated sisters and health care workers and some of our own peers. The list is endless. I feel that holiness is all around me. It would be wise to draw attention to this holiness that surrounds all of us by mentioning the local "saints" rather than the usual list of canonized saints. The routine list of canonized saints does not do it for me any more; I prefer to use the flesh and blood all around me as my inspiration. We are all called to holiness by virtue of our baptism, and there are many people out there answering that call and inspiring others to holiness.

ANNE KERRIGAN  
*West Islip, N.Y.*

### Better Understanding

Re "Saint of the Darkness," by James Martin, S.J. (8/29): This interview with Brian Kolodiejchuk, the promoter of Mother Teresa's cause, was very helpful to me because I have had a hard time understanding Mother Teresa.

On the one hand, she was doing all this profound work with the poorest of the poor; on the other, as a person she seemed so bland—almost grumpy. Knowing of the dimensions of Mother Teresa's journey, and of her own spiritual darkness, helps me to understand her better. She certainly was not faking piety, and she dared to enter a very sacred space. She made a bridge between the inner and the outer worlds.

BETH CIOFFOLETTI  
*Online Comment*

### Success of SPRED

I am dismayed that Kevin Clarke omitted mention of the SPRED (Special Religious Development) program in "Out of the Shadows" (8/15). Having begun in the 1960s, SPRED is now in 160 parishes in the Archdiocese of Chicago, as well as in 20 other dioceses in the United States and eight other countries. SPRED provides the experience of God's love to developmentally disabled Catholics at the parish level, in small groups. If Mr. Clarke had made America's readers aware of SPRED's efficacy in providing inclusion to these often neglected Catholics, he would have represented the church's efforts in this area more fully.

BERNICE LERACZ  
*Chicago, Ill.*

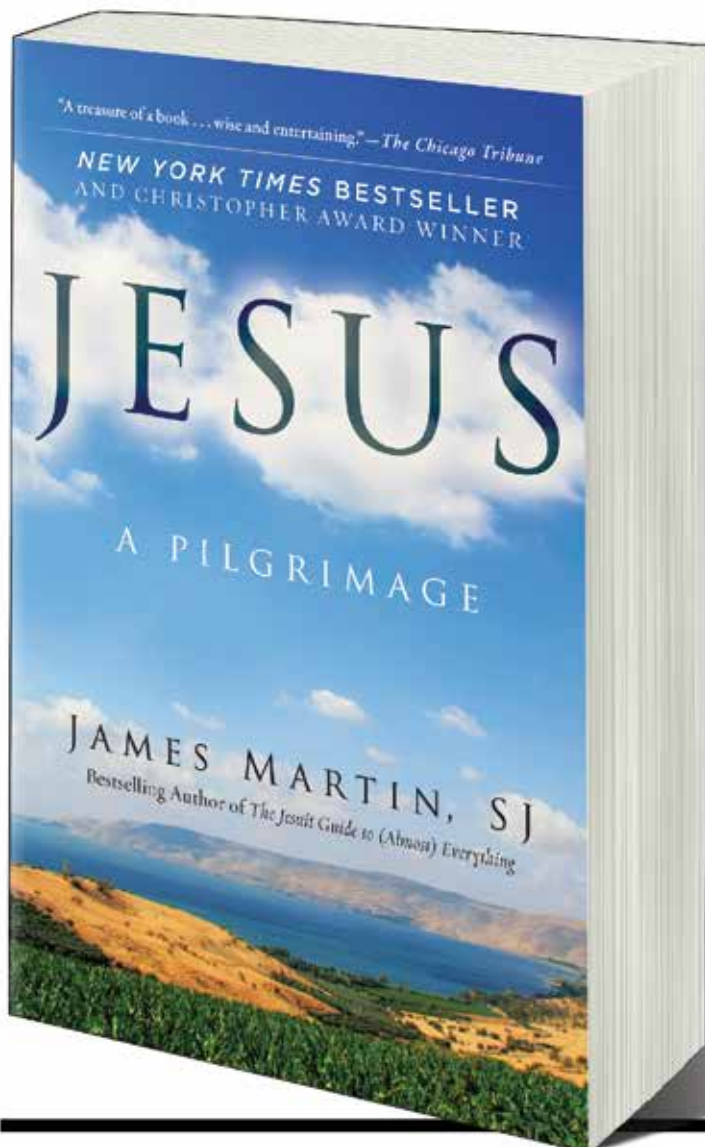


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# SIGNS OF THE TIMES

## HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

### U.N. Summit Seeks New Strategy On Global Migration Crisis



**THE REFUGEE TRAIL.** A makeshift camp for migrants at the Greek-Macedonian border sprung up along railroad tracks near the village of Idomeni, Greece.

**H**igh on the agenda for the September meeting of the U.N. General Assembly was the revision and reinvigoration of the global community's approach to the treatment of displaced people and refugees. The global community has attempted, by fits and starts, to deal with an unprecedented humanitarian crisis, the worst since the end of World War II, as more than 65 million people around the world have been forced on the move by conflict, crime, poverty and climate.

Evidence of the urgency of the crisis came even as the high-level dialogue continued in New York on Sept. 23. Scores of bodies were pulled from the waters off the Egyptian coast three days after a boat carrying hundreds of migrants capsized in the Mediterranean while attempting to reach Europe. By Sept. 26 the death toll had reached 170. Many of the dead were women and children who were unable to swim away as the boat sank.

At the opening of the first-ever summit on Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants, world leaders approved a document on Sept. 19 meant to create the foundation for a more coordinated and humane response to the crisis. The agreement seeks to standardize responses to refugee situations and provide better education and jobs to refugees. It also encourages resettlement and includes plans for a campaign to combat xenophobia. That may prove an uphill struggle, however, as the document is not legally binding and comes at a time when refugees

and migrants have become a divisive issue in Europe and the United States.

A number of countries rejected an earlier draft of the agreement that called on nations to resettle 10 percent of the refugee population each year. The United States and a number of other countries also objected to language in the original draft that said children should never be detained, so the agreement now says children should seldom, if ever, be detained.

"Instead of sharing responsibility, world leaders shirked it," Amnesty International's secretary general, Salil Shetty, said in a statement. Shetty complained that the agreement merely kicks the can down the road by calling for the adoption of separate global compacts for refugees and migrants within two years.

Eighty-six percent of the world's 21.3 million refugees are currently living in developing countries, and it is particularly hard for those countries to meet refugees' needs and provide them an education and a livelihood, according to Jill Marie, a senior policy and legislative specialist at Catholic Relief Services. Before the summit, C.R.S., the U.S. bishops' overseas relief and development agency, joined 30 other nongovernmental organizations in pledging a total of \$1.2 billion to help address the refugee crisis over a three-year period.

Marie added that in addition to its monetary pledge, C.R.S. hopes the U.S. Congress would "put more pressure on the U.N. to update its humanitarian architecture," which currently is more the model addressing what World War II refugees faced than what today's refugees confront. "Refugees are no longer in camps but move into cities, with an uncle or a brother," Marie explained. Some are "paying rent to put a tent up in somebody's front yard and paying for their

facilities," she said, which means it is "much harder to get access to these people, harder to find them" to assess their needs and help them.

"That's where the Catholic Church comes in," using its networks to find

people, Marie said. Coordination and implementation of assistance to refugees is "better left to agencies like C.R.S.," she added. "We have the agility. We work with local partners and we can move with them."

demonstrations around the country.

"I think we're seeing a new low point in the relationship between the church and the PRI," said Andrew Chesnut, chairman of Catholic studies at Virginia Commonwealth University, referring to Peña Nieto's ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party. "I think the overarching picture is that...the open-season on priests has just proliferated with the intensification of the drug war."

The killing of Fathers Nabor and Suárez brought to 14 the number of priests slain in Mexico since Peña Nieto took office in late 2012. At least 30 have been killed since 2006. What exactly happened to them, and why, remains murky.

Veracruz state prosecutor Luis Ángel Bravo cited robbery as the apparent motive and said the priests had been drinking with their killers before they were abducted. That allegation infuriated the church, which saw it as the latest example of state authorities smearing victims in cursory-at-best investigations. Bravo dismissed suggestions that a drug cartel may have been involved, although the Zetas and the Jalisco New Generation gangs are battling for control in Veracruz, including in Poza Rica.

Locals have gotten accustomed to hearing about grisly murders. The city of 195,000, has recorded 41 killings in the first eight months of this year—more than three times the toll for all 2015. Only this time it wasn't faceless strangers assumed to be cartel operatives, they were priests, respected community leaders.

"In the newspaper there are two or three dead every day," said a man who runs a business with a clear view of Our Lady of Fatima church, where the priests lived. "Usually you say, 'If they killed them, it was for a reason.'"

## MEXICO VIOLENCE

### Three Priests Killed Over Two Days

A missing priest was found shot dead off the side of a highway in western Mexico days after he was kidnapped from his parish residence, state prosecutors said on Sept. 25. He was the third Roman Catholic priest to be slain in Mexico in the last week.

The Michoacan state Attorney General's Office said in a statement that the Rev. José Alfredo López Guillen's body was found Saturday night, Sept. 24, in an area called Las Guayabas on the highway between Puruandiro and Zinaparo. López was kidnapped on Sept. 19, the same day authorities in the Gulf coast state of Veracruz found the bodies of two priests who had been abducted from their parish residence the previous day.

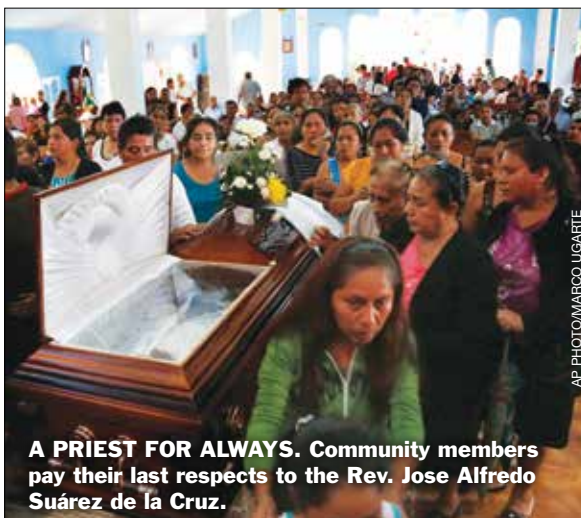
Mourners packed a church on Sept. 21 for a funeral Mass in memory of one of the murdered priests in the community of Paso Blanco while others outside listened through the windows, huddling under the eaves as a steady rain fell. A large banner on the front of the church bore a photo of the young Rev. José Alfredo Suárez de la Cruz, who was ordained only a few years ago and arrived at his post in the city of Poza Rica just a month before he was murdered.

"You are a priest for always," the banner read.

Suárez and the Rev. Alejo Nabor

Jiménez were last seen in Poza Rica on Sept. 18. Their bullet-ridden bodies were discovered the following day on a roadside miles away. One had been shot nine times.

In this eastern Mexican oil town already weary of rising gangland violence



and extortion, the abduction and murder of two priests this week sank many residents only deeper into despair. The killings also came at a moment of heightened tension between the Roman Catholic Church and Mexico's government.

Church leaders are increasingly frustrated by authorities' inability to protect their priests under President Enrique Peña Nieto's administration, and the church is openly opposing his proposal to legalize gay marriage by encouraging the faithful to join

## Saving Christians

Speakers addressing the Helsinki Commission, a Congressional advisory group that monitors global human rights conditions, on Sept. 22 called upon the United States to step up efforts to provide financial support to nongovernmental organizations that serve thousands of displaced people in northern Iraq. William Canny, executive director of Migration and Refugee Services at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, implored a comprehensive approach, including robust aid to private organizations and host governments. Such action could result in the safe return of the displaced communities, including Christians, to their traditional homelands when the conflict ends, he said. Canny also welcomed the resettlement of 10,000 Syrian refugees to the United States. He expressed concern, however, that only an extremely small percentage of those resettled—about 0.53 percent—were Christians. He urged the U.S. government to create a new “Priority 2” classification in the U.S. refugee admissions program’s priority system for religious and ethnic minority victims of genocide so they can be relocated more quickly.

## Demand for Justice

Building on the one-year anniversary of Pope Francis’s historic address to Congress last September, over 120 alumni of Jesuit law schools delivered a letter on Sept. 21 to Congressional leadership and the offices of Jesuit-educated members of Congress, calling for passage of bipartisan criminal justice reform legislation. The signatories noted deficiencies in the current system, including disproportionate sentences as a result of mandatory minimums, individuals returning from jail and prison inadequately prepared to re-enter soci-

## NEWS BRIEFS

The Nigerian government reported on Sept. 22 that President Muhammadu Buhari is seeking U.N. assistance in negotiations to **exchange the kidnapped schoolgirls** from Chibok for captured leaders of Boko Haram. + Catholic Extension officials announced on Sept. 19 that **Melva Arbelo**, director of the Santa Teresita of the Child Jesus Children’s Home in Arecibo, Puerto Rico, will receive its Lumen Christi Award in recognition for her work on behalf of abused and neglected children. + After outbreaks of violence provoked by the **police shooting of Keith Lamont Scott**, Bishop Peter Jugis of the Diocese of Charlotte, N.C., called on Sept. 22 for prayers for “peace and justice” for all victims of violence and for law enforcement personnel who have been victims of “unjust violence.” + Archbishop Savio Hon Tai Fai, the special investigator appointed to look into sexual abuse allegations against **Archbishop Anthony Apuron of Guam**, said in a letter read to parishioners on Sept. 18 that he was urging the Vatican to remove the archbishop after he refused to step down voluntarily. + **Dennis Linehan, S.J.**, a former professor at the University of Scranton and Loyola University Maryland and from 1995 until 2009 an associate editor at **America**, passed away on Sept. 23.



ety and the nation’s reliance on the justice system to respond to problems of drug addiction, poverty, mental illness and joblessness. The United States currently represents 5 percent of the global population but 25 percent of the total global prison population.

## Clashing Theologians

In August, the Wijngaards Institute for Catholic Research, based in the United Kingdom, published a report in anticipation of the 50th anniversary of “*Humanae Vitae*,” the papal encyclical that upheld the ban on the use of contraceptives. The statement, signed by more than 150 Catholic scholars, argues, “The choice to use contraceptives for either family planning or prophylactic purposes can be a responsible and ethical decision and even, at times, an ethical imperative.”

On Sept. 20, another group of theologians released their own statement, signed by more than 500 scholars, which was presented at a press event at The Catholic University of America. It argues that those who are pushing for the church to lift its ban on artificial contraception have failed to take into account findings from the past five decades that show contraception harms women and destabilizes relationships. “The widespread use of contraception,” it continues, “appears to have contributed greatly to the increase of sex outside of marriage, to an increase of unwed pregnancies, abortion, single parenthood, cohabitation, divorce, poverty, the exploitation of women, to declining marriage rates as well as to declining population growth in many parts of the world.”

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

DISPATCH | CHICAGO

## Budget Fight Bruises the Needy

For decades, Chicago State University on the city's South Side has offered a chance for bright, talented students from financially struggling families to earn a college degree. Funding problems meant the university had to cut short its academic year last spring. Whether it can make it through the current school year appears doubtful.

In Bloomington, a sexual assault victim was told by the city's main rape crisis program that she must return to the apartment where the assault occurred once she leaves the hospital. There are no longer funds to temporarily relocate rape victims to a safe location.

At Mid-Central Community Action, a large program for domestic abuse survivors, the homeless and disabled, Deb White, the director, has been forced to lay off about a third of her staff. "Many of the staff in social services have now become the people who need services," she says. "Without an adequate state budget, we've created a situation where more people need the social safety net."

Illinois has the dubious distinction of being perhaps the only state ever to have gone a full fiscal year without a state budget. Social service agencies with state contracts have continued to provide services as best they can while waiting to receive reimbursements the state owes. Unlike businesses, these not-for-profit organizations cannot simply refuse services to people who cannot pay. In many cases, they are

mandated by the state to provide them.

The budget crisis is the result of a standoff between Gov. Bruce Rauner, a Republican, and the Democratic-controlled legislature. Rauner will not sign off on a budget unless legislators back his so-called Turnaround Agenda for the state. That includes renegotiating labor contracts, lowering taxes, cutting regulation and making Illinois a right-to-work state. A majority in the

The crisis has given social service providers a chance to publicly defend what they do.

legislature say those goals should not be achieved on the backs of the most vulnerable. Neither side has the nerve to suggest higher taxes.

The Illinois budget battle raises broader questions about whether the state has a moral obligation to care for its citizens in need. But the crisis has given social service providers a chance to publicly defend what they do.

Stories like this one from Melissa Breeden, head of early childhood programs at the McLean County YWCA, abound. "We had a four-year-old boy come to us, struggling socially and emotionally. He was extremely violent. He couldn't express himself; he had suffered trauma in his life." Breeden says that after two years in an early learning program, the boy went from being "a lost, violent child to a successful child that loved school." Then state subsidies for that program stopped coming. "It was a heart-wrenching decision, but we had to dismiss that boy.... That's a child

I think about all the time and have lost sleep over. I have no idea where he is now."

Karen Zangerle heads an agency called PATH, which serves as a clearinghouse for services to people in crisis. "When a woman gets put off a train at the transportation center because she has fleas and is delusional, we're the ones called," Zangerle says.

Zangerle says private foundations and volunteers cannot handle the work that government-funded not-for-profits do. "There just aren't enough of them."

Perhaps the strongest argument for these agencies is that they actually save taxpayers money in the long run. Gail Kear heads Life Centers for Independent Living, which helps people with developmental disabilities to find jobs and live independently. Kear says it costs Life Centers about \$20,000 a year to help people live on their own, compared with the \$53,000 to \$130,000 a year it would cost to house a person with mental disabilities in a nursing home or related facility.

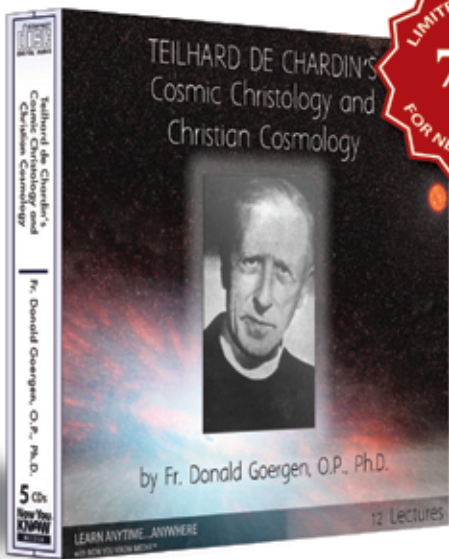
Just as several agencies were threatening to close their doors this summer, the governor and legislators agreed to provide \$600 million in stop-gap funding. By their own admission, it might take until 2018 to finalize the budget for fiscal 2017, which began on July 1.

Increasingly, Illinois citizens are calling on state officials to do the job for which they were elected. Breeden suggests legislators might personally explain to the people she sees why their services have been cut. "The state representatives aren't there to have these conversations, so it falls to us to have to keep repeating over and over, 'I'm sorry. We've done all we can.'"

And, as Breeden points out, there are only so many times a person can apologize.

**JUDITH VALENTE**

JUDITH VALENTE, *America's Chicago correspondent, is a regular contributor to NPR and "Religion and Ethics Newsweekly." Twitter: @JudithValente.*



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# Georgetown Steps Up

The United States is looking for leadership. Donald J. Trump was finally forced to admit that President Obama was born in this country and is a legitimate commander in chief. Hillary Clinton regrets calling “half” of Mr. Trump’s supporters “racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic, Islamophobic,” now suggesting that fewer are “deplorable” and “irredeemable.” Mr. Trump makes deplorable racist, sexist, xenophobic and Islamophobic comments, but it is unwise to assign the sins of a candidate to Americans you hope to lead. These depressing developments reveal character and judgment to consider along with crucial differences in temperament, experience, knowledge and policies.

In searching for leadership, I have found it not on the campaign trail but, ironically, one floor away from my office at Georgetown University. I had known that Jesuits owned slaves in Maryland, but that realization went from a footnote to a headline when I read last April on the front page of *The New York Times*:

The human cargo was loaded on ships at a bustling wharf in the nation’s capital, destined for the plantations of the Deep South. Some slaves pleaded for rosaries as they were rounded up.... But no one was spared: not the 2-month-old baby and her mother, not the field hands, not the shoemaker and not Cornelius Hawkins, who was about 13 years old....

---

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

[T]his was no ordinary slave sale. The enslaved African-Americans had belonged to the nation’s most prominent Jesuit priests. And they were sold, along with scores of others, to help secure the future of the premier Catholic institution of higher learning at the time, known today as Georgetown University.

This was personal. Slavery was no longer a vague national shame but involved 272 particular human beings sold at a particular time for a particular purpose. We now know they were sold by the Jesuits to help meet financial needs of the institution I am a part of today. This is a powerful and personal example of “white privilege.”

America has covered Georgetown’s response. Students protested and organized. Others researched and shared the stories. The Working Group on Slavery, Memory, and Reconciliation, with members of diverse backgrounds and perspectives, acted quickly and conscientiously to develop a comprehensive set of recommendations for action.

These efforts were matched by principled and courageous moral leadership by the university’s president, John J. DeGioia. Mr. DeGioia spent part of his summer meeting in Spokane, Wash., and in New Orleans, Baton Rouge and Maringouin, La., with descendants of the 272 who were sold. He called those encounters “one of the great privileges of my life” and humbly acknowledged “our shared history” and “shared membership in our Georgetown community.”

Our nation desperately needs moral leadership.

On Sept. 1, Mr. DeGoia not only offered a comprehensive and passionate response, accepting and advancing the recommendations of the working group; he also called on Georgetown to continue to confront racial injustice. This kind of leadership is exceptional. I was working at the U.S. bishops’ conference when the sexual abuse scandal broke. I know the difference between denial, delay and institutional protection on the one hand, and leadership that acknowledges fundamental failures, accepts institutional responsibility and takes concrete steps to make things right on the other. This leadership flows from Georgetown’s Catholic mission and Jesuit identity. Sadly, it was Jesuits who owned and sold the slaves, but it is the Jesuit values of discernment, dialogue and a faith that does justice that are guiding this search for a moral response.

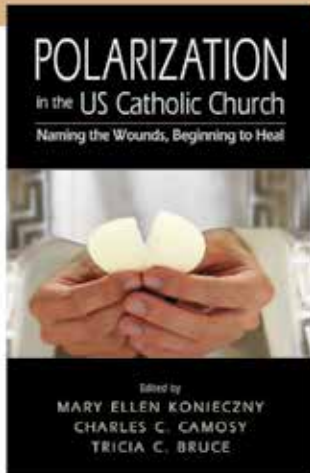
Mr. DeGoia rightly insists this is just a beginning and more discussion is needed, especially on right relationships with the descendants. But almost all acknowledge that this is an unprecedented effort by a major institution to own up to and act on its participation in and benefits from slavery.

Our nation desperately needs moral leadership. In a demoralizing election year, I take hope in watching from up close faithful, bold leadership on a fundamental American challenge: addressing the reality, legacy and continuing impact of slavery, not only at Georgetown but across our nation. There are lessons here for the candidates and for all of us.

**JOHN CARR**

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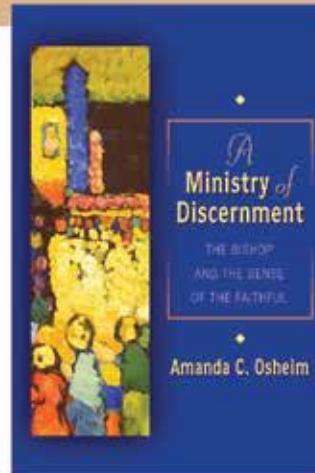
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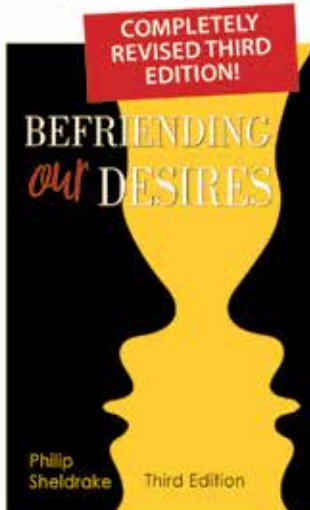
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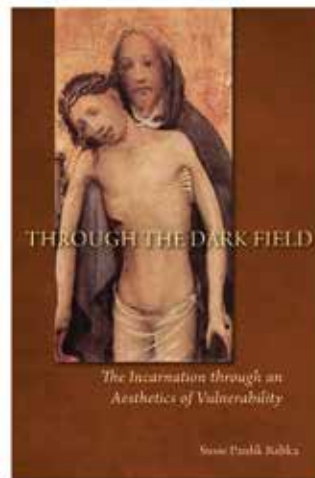
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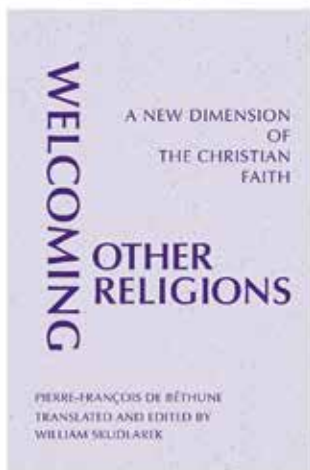
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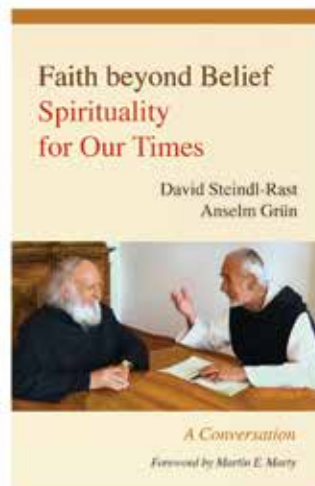
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# Re-enchanting the World

Why protest must go beyond refusal

BY PATRICK GILGER



“I think one of the common reasons for everyone to be here,” the man said, “is that our societies prevent most people from making sense of their lives.”

“Here” is Paris’s famed Place de la République. The man is a member of *Nuit Debout*, a loose collection of students and activists who have filled this French plaza with tents and booths, food and wine, and conversation for each of the past 100 nights. Initially coalescing to protest a government attempt to change the country’s labor laws, *Nuit Debout*—which means “Night, Standing Up” or “Night Uprising”—quickly expanded. Each night since March 31, talk in the plaza has ranged from labor laws to climate change and from the current refugee crisis to the roles of the police and the media.

Both *Nuit Debout*’s inclusiveness and its lack of focus are due to its radical horizontality—it has no official leaders and has made no demands. Anyone can speak at each evening’s general session. *Nuit Debout* has an aim more fundamental than a policy agenda: the revitalization of democracy. Or, as their manifesto puts it, to show that “politics is not a matter for professionals, it is everyone’s business.” This ought to

sound familiar on this side of the Atlantic. After all, we’re not five years removed from Wall Street being similarly occupied, and, thanks to Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump, our own political parties are only too familiar with the upheaval political outsiders can cause.

A few weeks after the movement began, an engineer at the French housing ministry explained his enthusiasm for *Nuit Debout*. “They are attempting another way of doing politics,” he said. “It’s stimulating, it’s a taking-hold of conscience. A sort of vitality, a will to re-enchant the world.”

An engineer who talks of re-enchanting the world? “Only in France,” we might shrug. But is his sentiment really so foreign? Plebian French philosophers or not, we all know what it is to long for a re-enchanted world, the kind of world in which our lives and what happens in them makes sense not just because we insist on it, but because the world does.

Of course we can only try to make our lives make sense again if they don’t at the moment. We can only re-enchant something disenchanted.

## The Meaning of Disenchantment

Once upon a time we didn’t have these kinds of conversations. There were protests and rebellions, yes, and efforts to change the social order, but those didn’t happen because the world didn’t make sense. Once upon a time the world already made sense, we just needed it to function properly.

*PATRICK GILGER, S.J., is a graduate student at The New School for Social Research where he studies the sociology of religion and culture. The founding editor-in-chief of The Jesuit Post, he now serves as America’s contributing editor for arts and culture.*





**SHOUT OUT.** Supporters of the social media-driven movement *Nuit Debout* (“Up all Night”) protest over a labor law on the Place de la République in Paris, May 15, 2016.

That world made sense because we knew where we stood, below the angels in their heavens and God on his throne, and at the center of the celestial spheres turning in their cycles. We found our place in the order, above and distinct from the animals, under our rightful rulers, and set upon our appointed tasks. The links in the great chain of being were tightly fit. We had a place in that order and we knew what it was because our social roles emerged from our common understanding of the world. Once upon a time the world was charged with meaning. And we no longer live then.

Nostalgia for that world is no cure. All the necessary meanings of that world were purchased at enormous price, and that price was freedom. That was a settled time, yes, but it was also immensely constraining, racist and sexist and viciously unequal. There are good reasons that people fought to open this world up, exhilarating to discover the scientific method, to finally control a world that for so long controlled us.

It was exhilarating to leave it behind, to leave once upon a time for modern time. *Entzauberung*, Max Weber famously named this leaving: disenchantment. “It means,” he wrote, “that principally there are no mysterious incalculable forces that come into play, but rather that one can, in principle, master all things by calculation.” It meant that we had broken free of the great chain of necessary meaning. It meant becoming free to give the world a new meaning, a meaning we chose ourselves.

But this freedom makes meaning both more difficult to achieve and more fragile once found—which is not to say that our lives are meaningless now. It is to say, rather, that no one particular meaning, no common meaning, guides our understanding of the world any longer. It is to say that meaning is now an act of freedom rather than the foundation for it. It is to say that we have to construct consensus precisely because it’s not given to us.

For better and for worse, in a disenchanted world we make our own lives meaningful. Even while we enjoy the many blessings of this newfound freedom, we also feel the threat that the center may not hold. It’s because, lacking the meaning that the world once gave us, the only center that remains is the one we give ourselves. And how can we all be persuaded to create something together?

No wonder *Nuit Debout* aims to re-enchant the world. They rightly see that something is broken, and while that something includes French labor law, this crack in the roof runs all the way through the foundation.

### **The Dilemma of Re-enchantment**

Every effort at re-enchantment is an effort to tell the story of the world and of our place in it. This is what lies behind our voraciousness for, say, *The Lord of the Rings* or *Harry Potter*. (Haven’t we all felt like there’s another world just behind this one in which even our scars are signs of chosenness?)

We're ravenous for something—even as distraction, even as fiction—that can tell us both who we are and how we belong together, and we are deeply resistant to it at the same time.

Here is our dilemma. Like our nameless protester in the Place de la République, we want to build a society where our lives make sense not just personally, but collectively. But in a disenchanting world nothing—no person or institution, not even nature—can tell us how to do it. Nothing can take away the burden of freedom, of our having to make meaning ourselves. The dilemma we face is how to connect these two live wires, how to hold tight to both ends of the rope so as to preserve the freedoms we have gained while building a re-legitimated social world in which our lives can make sense. This is the dilemma of re-enchantment.

We react to this dilemma in all kinds of ways. For many, the tension is too great and they let go of the rope, opt out of either freedom or community. Very often in our increasingly isolated and isolating world, it is the latter that is let go. It is not that the desire to belong to a community in which our lives make sense goes away, it is that it's easier to disappear into our phones and make the world go away.

Pokémon Go is easier than reforming the tax code.

Opting out is attractive for two reasons. Some opt out as a way to reject institutions they feel have betrayed them. How many Brexit supporters voted "leave" because they were angry that the European Union advocated a reshaping

of society they felt they had never signed on for? Others opt out because having to choose from among so many goods is exhausting. After all, should we devote ourselves to Black Lives Matter or the New Evangelization or ending tuberculosis? It is the endless varieties of re-enchantment on offer that inhibit our commitment to one.

Responding to the dilemma of re-enchantment by opting out is nothing new: in 1835 Alexis de Tocqueville called it the American tendency toward a "soft despotism" that leaves individuals "enclosed in their own hearts." It's still with us today. For many, the centrifugal forces pushing us apart are too strong, the price of holding freedom and communal meaning together is too high, and so we let go of the rope and allow ourselves to be governed by a system in which we do not participate.

This is the dilemma. But dilemmas do not necessitate despair. In addition to letting go of the rope there are two other responses, "options for re-enchantment" that are being taken up, and each has a gift and a fragility peculiar to it.

## The Re-enchantment of Refusal

We might call the first such option the re-enchantment of refusal.

As in *Nuit Debout*, the re-enchantment of refusal begins by refusing either in part or in toto the structures and meanings provided by the reigning social system. While the thing

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being resisted (and the diagnoses as to why it is broken) varies from movement to movement, this resistance to a coherent, often oppressive, system gathers into a loose unity what would otherwise be separate groups with differing interests. A look around the occupied plaza in Paris, a day spent in Wall Street's Zuccotti Park with the Occupiers, shows the beauty and brokenness of re-enchantments of refusal.

It is the prioritization of the pole of freedom, rather than belonging, that determines both the gift and the fragility of re-enchantments of refusal. Freedom from constraint not only motivates such re-enchantments but also provides their vision of the good: a world free of all oppressions. This is just what drives Nuit Debout's version of democracy—one that is so radically horizontal it refuses to name spokespeople, much less leaders. Even Frédéric Lordon, a French economist and one of the organizers of Nuit Debout, has refused to be called a leader of the movement. After all, he says, that "would be claiming a position of authority, and that's ridiculous." We can see a similarly horizontal organization in the Black Lives Matter movement, which gives the authority to protest itself rather than to any participants.

At their best, re-enchantments of refusal can be amazing, freeing things. They help to catalyze change in static, decayed, constricting systems. They make space for people to reject the tendency to opt out. We need Occupy and Nuit Debout because they help us resist the soft despotism of a democracy that reduces political action to walking into a voting booth.

The fragility of re-enchantments of refusal is their tendency to fly apart. The pursuit of freedom that is their gift can all too quickly turn into an allergy not only to oppressive structuring authorities but to any at all. They pull too hard on the pole of freedom and can unintentionally drop community altogether in a refusal to collaborate with another group's agenda, and can insist on dissolution so strongly that no coherent system of meaning can ever be constructed.

We have already seen this tendency to fly apart in Occupy and Nuit Debout. Similar efforts would do well to learn from the difficulty these movements have faced: once the unity provided by opposition dissolves—and it always dissolves—re-enchantments of refusal are ill-equipped to build a positively oriented community. Freedom-from-something does not provide long-term unity. Re-enchantments of resistance must be supplemented by a positive vision, a freedom-for-something, so that they are not ripped apart by the very desire for freedom that brought them together. And this is where the second option for re-enchantment today emerges: the re-enchantment of belonging.

## **The Re-enchantment of Belonging**

More effective at preserving community, and more dangerous in the kind of community preserved, re-enchantments

of belonging hold tight not to the pole of freedom but to the pole of stable meaning. This kind of re-enchantment is attractive because it responds to our desire to live in a coherent culture. It provides us a way out of the exhaustion of having to cope with pluralism and all the voices of resistance by reinstating a stable community of meaning within which we can know who we are and who we are meant to be.

Such re-enchantments of belonging include all the efforts we see today to re-embed ourselves in local communities—from Brooklyn to the Benedict option. These are efforts to build local places and micro-spaces where political and religious practices are, as Charles Taylor put it, "embedded in a way of life, in a culture, in a set of political institutions, in a civilization." Knowing the ways in which we struggle to make sense of our lives, there is something deeply desirable about the re-enchantment of belonging. But along with its gift, this option also has two exceptionally dangerous fragilities.

The first is that re-enchantments of belonging can easily slip into re-enchantments of the strong man. Gentler versions of this look like our attraction to people like Presidents Obama and Reagan, or even Pope Francis. The danger here is not that our freedoms will be stripped from us or that everyone will be forced into a uniform mold. The danger is that we tacitly hope that another, a strong man, a superman who knows what we need, will save us. The danger is that we want somebody else to resolve the dilemma of disenchantment for us so that we can remain immersed in the solipsistic joys of a consumer culture. (It is notable that this kind of failing is impossible within the radical democracy practiced by Occupy or Nuit Debout.)

The harsher versions of re-enchantments of the strong man are much more dangerous, much more totalitarian. This is in the direction in which Marine Le Pen in France leans, in which Boris Johnson tugged the United Kingdom before the Brexit vote and toward which Donald Trump is leading America with his xenophobic rhetoric about Hispanics and Muslims. These harsh re-enchantments of the strong man create stable communities by exclusion and scapegoating. They create meaning by putting the blame on an other and promising that everything will be alright if "they" were just gone—or kept in their place. Spoken aloud in the light of day many of us see these tropes for the lies they are, but we also know that human beings have not outgrown our self-mutilating tendency to slip into the darkness of totalitarianism. Re-enchantments of the strong man remain a danger for us even in an Enlightened age.

The second fragility toward which re-enchantments of belonging can tend is less totalitarian than nostalgic. Here we can place the many efforts being made to return society to a time when the dilemma of disenchantment wasn't felt so strongly. In terms of belief this tends to look like the



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less-well-thought-out versions of the Benedict option, or the fantasy that more precise liturgical rubrics will fill the pews—and the seminaries. This is not to dismiss the Latin Mass or the construction of radically coherent Christian communities as unworthy practices (in fact, I think the deep versions of the Benedict option are not only laudable but necessary). Instead it is to note how often re-enchantments of belonging operate from an unspoken desire to return to a time when we all didn't live, as Talal Asad puts it, as a "minority among minorities."

So is this all there is? Are we doomed to remain locked in an interminable tug of war between freedom and meaning, the resolutions to which are no resolutions at all? Are these understandable, laudatory, deeply flawed re-enchantments of refusal, of the strong man, of nostalgia, all that remain?

### A Catholic Re-enchantment

A confession: there are times when I think the answer is yes, that this is all there is. There are times I am gripped by the hand of doubt and I can see little but the unending dilemma of our fractured re-enchantments. But these are not the only times.

One of these other times came this past spring at the Church of St. Francis Xavier on 16th Street in New York. Along with hundreds of others I was there to celebrate the funeral Mass of one of the great and holy prophets of our time, Father Daniel Berrigan, S.J. As a young Jesuit I had met Dan more than once, and he was unflinching kind to me—and, like all true prophets, unflinching challenging.

During his lifetime Father Berrigan called me, called his brother Jesuits, his country and his to church to refuse to participate in injustice of racism or sexism or war, and his funeral was true to the prophetic re-enchantment of refusal that was his life. But Dan himself, like a true prophet, was always more than refusal, or maybe it was this: even in his refusal he knew that he needed more, needed belonging. Regardless, there was more than refusal in the liturgy we celebrated that day—there was belonging. In the prayers that were voiced and the voices that were heard, refusal and belonging were held close together.

The re-enchantment of the world may never be global, but perhaps it can be Catholic. Here are three clues as to how we might help our world look more like Father Berrigan's funeral.

First, we have to build a society in which it is easier to opt into institutions than to opt out. We have to learn from the re-enchantment of belonging how to overcome the centrifugal, individuating forces that isolate and push us apart and instead build a society capable of resisting soft despotism. This would mean creating ways for Catholics to more intentionally bear the costs of the structures and practices that provide the benefits and goods we enjoy, and to share both

costs and benefits in solidarity with those on the margins. But these practices of solidarity have to be offered as invitations, not issued as commands; they have to be spoken more in the voice of Pope Francis than Pio Nono.

Second, we have to build a society that is genuinely cosmopolitan, plural but not relativistic. In gratitude to the re-enchantments of resistance we have to learn how to make space for difference and to foreclose upon all tendencies to monopolize, manipulate and control bodies of people.

As Jose Casanova has argued, the Catholic Church is uniquely suited to this task because, well, that is exactly what we are. From the multiple spiritualities we have practiced to the saints we have named to the variety of parish cultures found under our banner, the church is an interiorly plural institution. The key to making this inner plurality a social model is to learn to celebrate the different ways human beings have learned to live kenotic lives of self-sacrificing love. This includes, especially in our hot-take culture, learning to disagree without threatening schism or denunciation.


Third, we have to build a society that is interiorly self-critical, *semper reformanda*. We must resist the temptations either to nostalgically imagine that any former society was the perfect one or to push responsibilities onto a strong man. As America's own Nathan Schneider put it, we must build "a politics in which politicians are less important."

And this entails reclaiming, individually and corporately, the doctrine of original sin. It means owning our personal and communal identity as loved sinners. It means knowing that, as Pope Francis' episcopal motto says, someone has had mercy on us and chosen us.

That was what it was like in the body of the Church of St. Francis Xavier, standing there amid the people and the protest signs, the singing and the preaching and the crying. It was a moment where the hand of doubt lost its grip and the warring re-enchantments stood side by side, peaceful for a moment.

It must not be said that there is no place for prophets of refusal. Structures of injustice remain and so does the need for resistance. But today, on its own, the re-enchantment of refusal is not only insufficient, it is dangerous. Our social fabric is so thin that it takes not a knife to pierce it, but a fingertip.

This does not do away with our need for prophets, it highlights our need for prophets of a different kind. It means we must have prophets of belonging. It means that we stand in need of more than freedom. It means that we must have prophets of belonging who stand alongside our prophets of refusal, who help us to thicken the weave of our social order.

Re-enchanting our world means not settling for critique, not being satisfied with refusal. It means relearning that we belong to one another. 

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# A Virtual Faith

## Looking at the world through Pokémon Go

BY ELIZABETH DRESCHER

**P**ugilistic politics notwithstanding, it was a magical summer for millions of Americans, a season of rapt engagement with unseen forces throughout seemingly endless pilgrimages toward the ultimate. I am writing here, of course, about the summer's hottest digital gaming phenomenon, the augmented reality extravaganza that is Pokémon Go.

In case you were happily unplugged on a tropical island as the game rolled out in July, Pokémon Go is a smartphone and tablet application that combines the thrill of finding an alternate reality hidden in plain sight with the nostalgic bliss of encountering a bevy of Pokémon characters that were popular in the 1990s and early 2000s. The game requires that players explore neighborhoods, towns and cities by following a GPS-generated map to locations—often parks, historical landmarks or cultural sites—where players use the smartphone app to “catch” cute little Pokémon monsters.

The more Pokémon monsters you capture, the more power you have in the game and the more opportunities there are for interaction with others. Throughout, players post screenshots of their various captures and accomplishments on Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter and other social networking platforms. All of this makes the game multidimensional and digitally integrated as few before: virtual and real, local and global, socially networked and adventurously mobile.

The game quickly drew players around the world—to the tune of 45 million per day at its peak. That number dropped somewhat through the dog days of August, but tech and business analysts predict that the leveling off no more presages the end of the craze than did the normalization of Facebook as a central mode of communication and social connection. The introduction of Pokémon Go has highlighted the potential for more augmented reality games and other apps for sports, education, commerce and, almost certainly, spiritual and religious life. Imagine, for instance, an augmented reality Stations of the Cross mobilizing pilgrims of diverse denominations with and without congregational affiliations moving throughout a city in search of the dig-

ital overlay of Jesus meeting his mother or Veronica wiping his face—the Via Dolorosa digitally manifest across the globe. All of this suggests that the integration of things seen and unseen in the digital world—and the technologies and practices that draw them enticingly together—promise to be more and more a part of our lives in the future.

At perhaps the most basic level, this promises to change how people encounter religious sites in local communities. Indeed, as Pokémon Go skyrocketed in popularity, many churches found themselves swirling with Pokémon creatures because they had been designated PokéStops, locations where the Pokémon can be found. Blogs and Wikis for the game have reported, for instance, that a Wild Jinx Pokémon has been hovering around St. Augustine Catholic Church in Barberton, Ohio. The statue of Mary at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Lakeland, Fla., is a PokéGym, where players can train their Pokémon. Even Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris hosts the Pokémon Mega-Gardevoir. And so on. If your church is in a reasonably populated area, odds are that there is some sort of unseen Pokémon action in your midst.

Not a few church leaders have seen the uncommon influx of Pokémon Go players—especially young adults and kids—as an opportunity to connect with digital pilgrims who would otherwise be unlikely to darken their doors. Churches across the United States and around the world have welcomed Pokémon players on church signs, set out water and other refreshments, stationed human greeters at stops and shared the Good News in old-school printed form. Some congregations have been less enthusiastic, of course, complaining of profane interlopers on sacred space, insisting that the game brings people to churches for “the wrong reasons” and even arguing that Pokémon critters are demonic. But in an age when religious affiliation is declining, most religious leaders and communities see that



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ELIZABETH DRESCHER is an adjunct associate professor at Santa Clara University, Calif., and the author most recently of *Choosing Our Religion: The Spiritual Lives of America's Nones* (Oxford).



random encounters with Pokémon players are spiritual opportunities.

More digitally sophisticated churches have used a paid Pokémon feature—the Lure—to draw players to their churches. The more people who show up at a Lure site, the more Pokémon become available for potential capture. For example, while Pokémon pilgrims wait for other players and Pokémon to arrive, St. Mary's Church in Haverhill, England, invites visitors to join in common prayer, share refreshments and enjoy fellowship. Christianity Today reports that more than a hundred people have taken the bait at St. Mary's since August.

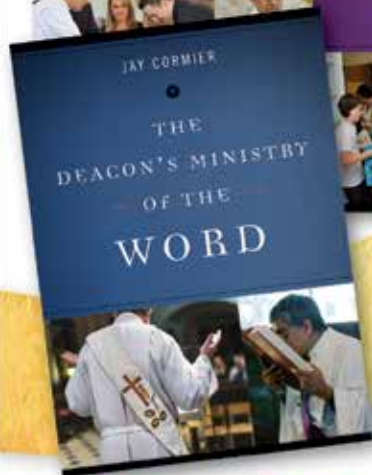
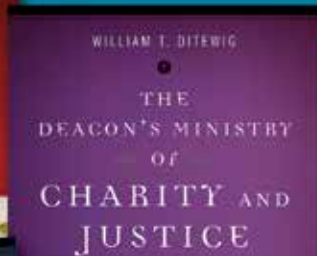
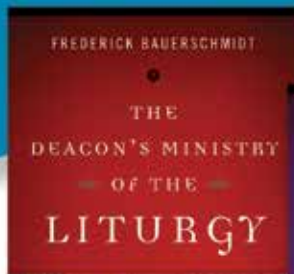
One would be hard pressed to argue that it is a bad idea to offer hospitality to anyone who ambles onto the church lawn or meanders through the narthex, for whatever reason. According to a report from the Pew Forum released in August, nearly 80 percent of Americans who find their way to a new church (for reasons other than augmented reality conquests) settle in precisely because they “feel welcomed by leaders.” So, of course, it is a good idea to share the love when someone new comes along, even if they are looking for the Poliwig, the Poliwhirl and the Poliwrath rather than the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. But the same Pew data also reminds us that the majority of the unaffiliated—the nones—are not seeking a religious community. Churches' Pokémon outreach seems no more likely than the summer carnival to

draw in new members or fortify connections among current parishioners.

Still, the app does remind us of the growth in new modes of spiritual gathering—in yoga classes, local pubs and coffee shops, loosely organized hiking collectives, dinner and discussion groups, environmental and other social justice mobilizations—that are extensively mediated through digital social networks. My research with nones across the United States shows that coming together with others in ways that are often seen by participants as “spiritual” or “religious” is mostly driven by the desire to share experiences with many different others of compatible, if not entirely common, values rather than an insistence on shared beliefs and similar religious backgrounds. The idea of the church as a force for spiritual and social cohesion grounded in sustained, durable commitments to a particular community, affirmation of its professed beliefs, reasonably regular participation in its rituals and general adherence to its moral and behavioral norms has largely fallen away for these seekers.

In its place we often find practices of coming together that are more networked and provisional, oriented toward a valuing of difference over sameness and thus more cosmopolitan than communitarian or tribal. The arrival of so many Pokémon pilgrims at a local church or other landmark participates in this new way of organizing what is arguably a primordial, human desire for connection with others, but not one

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that builds community in ways we believed in the past were essential to human thriving—spiritual or otherwise.

The game may also offer insight into another recent Pew finding that shows an increasing number of Americans experience "wonder about the universe" and feelings of "spiritual well-being and peace." Joshua Landy and Michael Saler, editors of *Re-Enchantment of the World: Secular Magic in a Rational Age* (Stanford 2009), see shifts in what counts as spiritual in the creative use of imagination; expressions of awe at "miraculous" new technologies; experiences of self-transcendence that do not necessarily engage a supernatural other; and gathering with others around such activities and experiences. They argue that popular entertainment is a key venue for this re-enchantment, with movies, television shows, books and video games chock full of fairies, zombies, ghosts, werewolves, vampires, elves, hobbits and so on. Pokémon Go extends this secularized enchantment beyond fantasy into the material world and everyday life. It offers active, imaginative, embodied mystery, adventure and delight to players, drawing them into at least temporary relationship with others, including more traditionally religious others they might encounter in the course of their digital pilgrimages.

There is much more, it seems, to the Pokémon Go phenomenon, and augmented reality technologies in general, for churches to consider than the opportunity to scratch an often unrelenting itch to fill pews. What does the app teach us about the desire for everyday enchantment and engagement with a reality beyond ordinary sight? How, if at all, might that connect to more traditional religious understandings of the transcendent, of the numinous and of the spiritual wonders of everyday life all around us? While most modern people understand "the secular" as being devoid of religion, church people know that the deep history of the word is inherently ecclesial. The "secular clergy" were (and are) those outside of enclosed, monastic life, whose ministry is focused on "this time" and life "in the world" rather than solely on eternity and the world to come. It is the role of the secular minister (clergy or otherwise) to help people to recognize and experience the divine, the mysterious, the transcendent or the holy in everyday life.

We do this not so much by evoking ghosts and gremlins as by inviting people to see ordinary spaces, relationships and practices in new ways that open us to the spiritual. Gardens, for instance, as the Stanford professor Robert Pogue Harrison has shown, help us to enact a "vocation of care" for landscapes we might otherwise ignore. Cemeteries and other memorials evoke the continuing presence of the dead in our ordinary lives. Social and political action—as in the Occupy Wall Street and Black Lives Matter movements—insist on the embodied practice of literally standing with and for others, risking individual bodies to redeem



a collective body. Banal though it surely is, Pokémon Go can remind us of the potential for the unexpected, the enchanted, in our everyday life; it can remind us that these other, deeply spiritual dimensions of everyday reality and experience always exist and have the potential to intermingle with what we think of as “ordinary” lives.

It should be said that plenty of commentators have noted the religious fervor with which Pokémon Go aficionados take up the game, pointing to religion as a matter of mindless, ritualized obsession and belief in imaginary otherworlds and supernatural beings. Critics have referred to the game as cult-like in its ability to override players’ wills by leading them in directions they had not intended to travel for durations well beyond what they had planned. Many have complained of the annoyance—and sometimes danger—of players’ attention to their smartphone screens as they walk through neighborhoods in search of a Pikachu or Charmander. Players are painted as mindless zealots of the worst sort of religious caricature.

But perhaps the game allows us to see religion and spirituality otherwise, pressing against Max Weber’s cold, modern insistence on “the progressive disenchantment of the world” by calling on modes of digitally integrated imagination that embrace mystery and wonder all around us, elevating ordinary landscapes from their profane existences and gathering diverse strangers into periodic experiences of shared discovery and delight. People of faith know such experiences deeply—however different the embodied technologies of contemplation, prayer, worship, service and the like may be. As Pokémon Go players turn up at local churches, secular ministers have the opportunity to share experiences of spiritually rather than digitally mediated awe and wonder that are woven through the Christian tradition with people who are perhaps a bit more primed to understand that there is much to be gained by looking at the everyday world with new eyes. **A**

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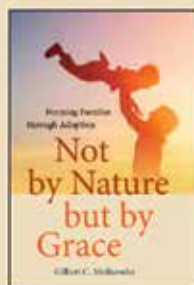
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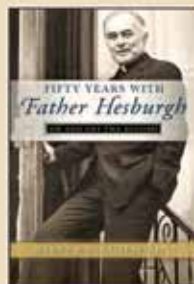
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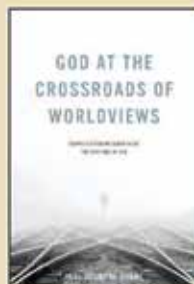


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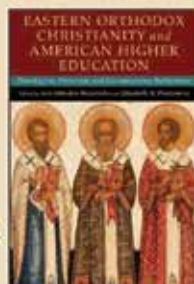


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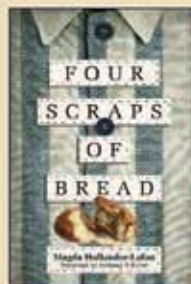
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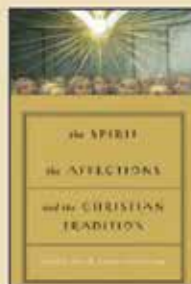
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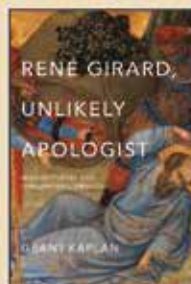
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## KEEPING THE FLAME LIT

### BOBBY KENNEDY The Making of a Liberal Icon

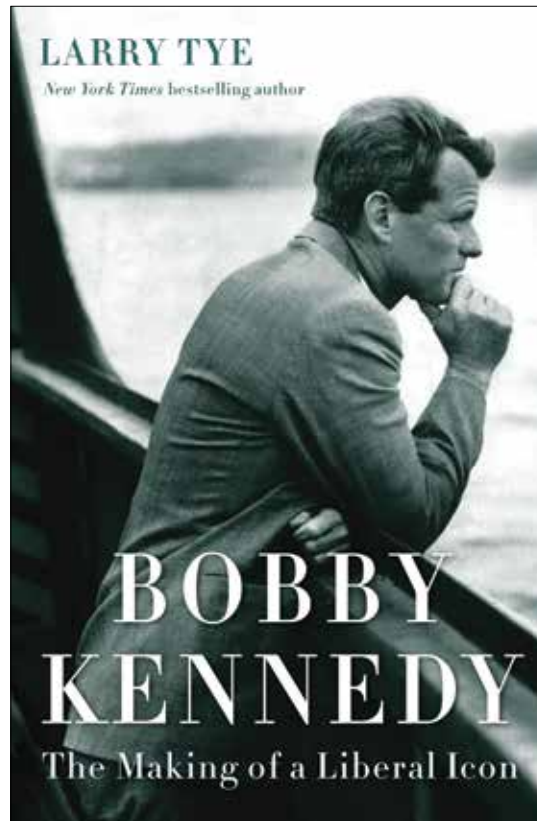
By Larry Tye  
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Robert Kennedy, if he had lived, would now be 91. When he was assassinated in 1968, he was a young man who had been with us for a long time, or so it seemed. He was chasing Communists with a family friend, Joe McCarthy, and then, with other senators, chasing mobsters and, at enormous cost, the Teamster boss, Jimmy Hoffa. Along the way his brother Jack won the hearts of my Notre Dame class of 1960. Bobby was there, beside our first Catholic president, at each dramatic event of Jack's not-quite-three-year presidency. Then he stood, broken it seemed, with his parents and Jackie, as the Kennedy we all loved best, murdered, was laid to rest.

There were hard days for Americans and for Robert Kennedy in the years that followed: cruel violence aimed at justice-seeking African-Americans and at Mexican-American farm workers, summer riots in major cities, an unjust and seemingly never-ending Vietnam war. Robert Kennedy moved through those days with us, sharing our anger and anxiety. He showed us a way, if not the way, his heart touched by suffering and injustice and his love poured out to children, to peacemakers and justice-seekers like Cesar Chavez and Albert Luthuli. He seemed at times liberal, at others conservative, but mostly he seemed to share our uncer-

tainty about what should be done.

The next steps, for him and for us, grew a bit clearer when in spring 1968 he finally campaigned for president—for a short 85 days. In April we wanted to be with him as he told an inner-city community in Indianapolis that Martin Luther King Jr. was dead,



then shared his own pain at the loss to violence of "a member of my family." He was, we wanted him to be, our voice, our presence, a sacrament making real something of the love we had, or wanted to have, for our American family. Then, suddenly, he was gone, and a piece of ourselves went with him. "When Robert Kennedy was as-

sassinated," Congressman John Lewis said, "something died within America. Something died within all of us who knew him."

So it may be a bit risky for Americans of a certain age to read this excellent new biography, *Bobby Kennedy: The Making of a Liberal Icon*. The book is enriched by firsthand interviews with Bobby's wife, Ethel, some of his children and his big circle of staffers, friends and "seduced" reporters who "fell in love" with him. Reading about Bobby is hard for older Americans, especially Irish Catholic Democrats, for whom Kennedy family stories are memories more than history. Younger readers, who have lived in our post-1960s world, may find it hard to understand the Kennedys—or to share the emotions of readers who recall the days when the country, our country, really mattered, its graces personal gifts to our families, its sins our sins, its future our responsibility.

Norman Mailer, who knew Bobby, said a few years after Bobby's murder that "in America the country is the religion." Perhaps only people who have experienced religious conversion can understand what it meant when Jack Kennedy, "the Brother," told us to "ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country."

Some among the courageous young African-Americans who stood up to injustice, like John Lewis, invited the rest of us to consider that they acted, and sometimes suffered and died, for us. With Martin Luther King's help they made present American promises of liberty and justice for all, to say nothing of the virtues of the Christian

Beatitudes. In 1963 Dr. King pointed to the object of civil faith, the beloved community still to come; then, five years later, tired and discouraged, he bore witness to undying hope for that dream the night before he was murdered in Memphis. Some Americans, black and white, thought Bobby carried on that flame: "I felt this was a guy that I could give my life for, like I would have for Martin," King's acolyte Andrew Young said. For a few months he did, until he too was taken.

And we, the rest of us, with saints and prophets gone, were left behind. Our civic religion went back to its church, fully armed; and the beloved community, with its promise and responsibilities, faded from our common life.

So Larry Tye's *Bobby Kennedy* might find a place in American saint studies, not as hagiography, though there is some of that, but as one of those critical but loving accounts given by truth-tellers when asked about sainthood for people like Dorothy Day and Thomas Merton. Robert Kennedy's biographer recalls the cartoonist Jules Feiffer's report on a "bad Bobby" (Joe McCarthy protégé; anti-Jimmy Hoffa zealot; John Kennedy campaign capo; go-slow adviser to civil rights heroes) and a "good Bobby" (loving son, brother, husband, father; advocate, eventually, for children and poor people; dreamer of democratic dreams). Bad Bobby measured all by, and would risk everything for, the good of the Kennedys. Good Bobby would do the same, with the same tough-minded realism, for the whole human family, especially its most vulnerable members. He seemed to be transcending his internal contradictions when, too early, he was gone.

Catholics with their "sacramental imagination" might

make sense of what this man meant to some of his contemporaries.

Other politicians might represent us, other public figures might speak for us, but at times John F. Kennedy and, for a moment, Bobby, were us. Irish chieftains, divine right kings, ordained priests were once like that, leaders who embodied, were at one with, the people they served. We make light of such old-fashioned images of solidarity until, all at once, we experience something like that: Dr. King on the Mall, Bobby Kennedy in that Indianapolis neighborhood, Barack Obama singing "Amazing Grace" at a funeral in Charleston, S.C., any of us at a funeral for a fallen soldier or first responder. Bobby Kennedy's "we" expanded, step by painful step, from the Kennedy family to the American people, our people, then, first steps, to the world. Martin Luther King's "we" did the same, with more pain and deeper reflection. Who, we all ask, are "my people"?

## Autumn Day

Lord: it is time. Bright summer fades away.  
Let sundials darken as your shadows grow.  
Set loose your winds across the open fields.

Let the last fruit still ripen on the vine,  
And give the grapes a few more southern days  
To warm them to perfection, and then press  
Their earthy sweetness into heavy wine.

Whoever has no house now never builds one.  
Whoever is alone now stays alone.  
Now he will wake and read, writing long letters,  
Aimlessly wandering the empty lanes,  
Restless as the leaves swirling round his feet.

(after R. M. Rilke)

DANA GIOIA

DANA GIOIA's collection of poetry *Interrogations at Noon* (2001) won the American Book Award. His critical collection *Can Poetry Matter?* (1992) was a finalist for the National Book Critics Award. He served as chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts from 2003 to 2009.

Readers of *Bobby Kennedy* will learn a lot about Bobby, his family and the politics of America during a span of just over 20 years. They will be reminded that while politics and policies are shaped in part by economic and social forces, individuals do make a difference. In the famous "Ripple of Hope" speech to young people in South Africa (excerpted below), Bobby said that even the smallest effort to help others or combat oppression could help change the world. Closer to home he knew that some people, for a full spectrum of motives, seek power, and political power always has some measure, large or small, of discretion. On the brink of nuclear war J.F.K. could have ordered an attack on Cuba; later Bobby might have apologized to Lyndon Johnson; or he could have chosen to run for president before Eugene McCarthy. His choices made a difference.

So the Bobby story may reopen imaginations about the trajectory of our American history, and our place in it. For those for whom it is not a memory, Bobby's life may provide a clue or two to responsible re-engagement with American civic life. Larry Tye thinks Bobby became a "liberal icon" though he worked with conservatives and had little use for most liberals he knew. He bridged emerging gaps between suburban liberals and urban bosses, between black and Latino and white workers, even between ideological divisions of right and left. Most of all, what set him apart was not his familiarity with the knotty fabrics of American politics but his unique capacity to learn from experience and move beyond ordinary political categories to speak at times, without embarrassment, of love. Once that love opened minds and hearts to the common good based on an almost religious

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devotion to the American people. That prophetic Americanism, once the seed-bed of historic reforms and brought to new life by Dr. King and the maturing Bobby Kennedy, remains the missing ingredient in American politics and culture.

Few will have the greatness to bend history itself, but each of us can work to change a small portion of events, and in the total of all those acts will be written the history of this generation.... Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lives of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope and, crossing each other

from a million different centers of energy and daring, these ripples build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.... Only those who dare to fail greatly can ever achieve greatly. It is this new idealism, which is also I believe the common heritage of a generation which has learned that while efficiency can lead to the camps at Auschwitz, or the streets of Budapest, only the ideals of humanity and love can climb the hills of the Acropolis.

---

DAVID O'BRIEN is an emeritus professor of history at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Mass.

WILLIAM BOLE

## DISABLED AND BETRAYED

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### THE BOYS IN THE BUNKHOUSE

#### *Servitude and Salvation in the Heartland*

By Dan Barry  
HarperCollins. 340p \$26.99

Through the centuries they have been known as “cretins,” “simpletons,” “morons,” “idiots,” “imbeciles” and “feeble-minded,” among other classifications. These labels at various times have enjoyed the status of proper names, among them the Massachusetts School for Idiotic Children and Youth (a progressive organization founded in the mid-19th century) and the Virginia Colony for Epileptics and Feeble-minded (which followed in the early 20th century).

Dan Barry's disturbing yet beautifully told story begins in the mid-1960s, when a few dozen men from Abilene, Tex., are called “mentally retarded.” Along the way they and others like them are upgraded in public discourse to “retarded citizens” and even-

tually become the “intellectually disabled.” The new language does not reflect a change in circumstances, however. For several decades, the men's lives revolve around grueling labor at two turkey-processing plants, initially in Texas and mostly in rural Iowa after they are contracted out as a collective. Their sub-minimum wages all but evaporate after deductions for expenses, real and spurious, including room and board in conditions that become increasingly uninhabitable.

Most striking about this gothic injustice is the timeline. The group first caught the eye of authorities in 1974, when a social worker filed a report declaring they lacked “most basic human rights,” including access to their

wages and the choice of where to live. Higher-ups at the Iowa Department of Social Services concluded otherwise, deciding that the employees of Henry's Turkey Service were fed well enough and noting that they were allowed weekend excursions into town.

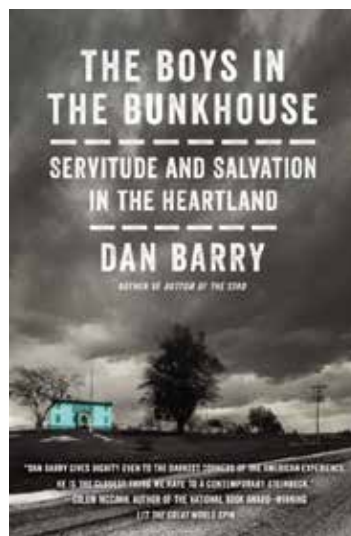
Afterward, the plant came sporadically to the attention of social agencies and newspapers in Texas and Iowa, as well as the federal Department of Labor. All the while, “the boys,” as they were known by one and all, kept toiling. They were not rescued until 2009, after The Des Moines Register published a series of investigative articles. Henry's Turkey Service had become an anachronism in an age when the intellectually disabled are usually able to enjoy a decent measure of dignity and independence.

*The Boys in the Bunkhouse: Servitude and Salvation in the Heartland* is a gentle though ultimately damning exposé. Barry's reports on the plant in Atalissa, Iowa, appeared originally in The New York Times, for which he has traveled the country writing the “This Land”

column, and his book is a work of narrative nonfiction. The topic lends well to remonstrance and judgment, but he approaches it, before all else, as a storyteller.

Barry introduces Willy Levi, one of the Texans trafficked to Iowa. (“You'll know Levi when you see him: a wild-haired, white-bearded black man in his late 60s who walks as if in fear of falling.”) Like

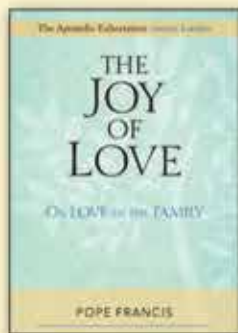
the other men, Levi's nasty job was to eviscerate turkeys and inseminate the female ones: “Chasing and grabbing the toms [male turkeys]. Stimulating them. Catching their semen in little bottles. And running it like the track





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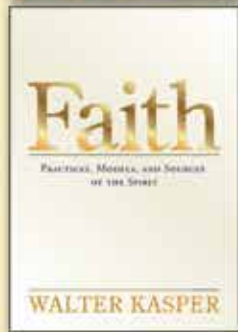


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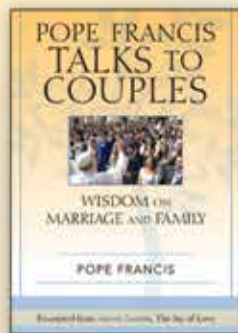
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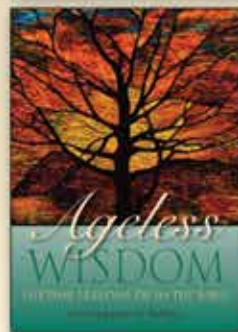


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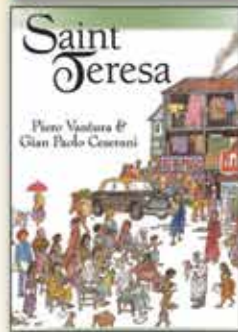


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star he was, over to the hen pen.”

The Texas rancher who, for all practical purposes, owned the men was T. H. Johnson. “He often wore khaki pants that he’d scribble on, calculating the costs of running a ranch,” Barry tells. In the mid-1960s, Johnson was looking high and low for cheap labor right when the Abilene State School for the “mentally retarded” began experimenting with the concept of deinstitutionalization—releasing the disabled back into the community. He started acquiring men with I.Q.s between 35 and 70. “Like a gruff den mother, he’d do bed checks at night to make sure they were safe and well” in the bunkhouse, Barry writes. With its veneer of paternalism, Johnson’s operation drew plaudits. In 1968 he was honored as “Outstanding Employer of the Year” by the National Association of Retarded Children.

The story darkens as the veneer is peeled off. “The boys” are physically and emotionally abused at the Iowa plant and in the roach-infested former schoolhouse that functions as their living quarters. Injuries and medical conditions go untreated. Encountering townspeople, they speak giddily of the day when they will retire to a home that Johnson (still in charge) is building for them in Texas with money deducted from their pay. No such place ever materializes. Take-home pay lingers at barely \$65 a month, due in part to a federal law (since repealed) that allows below-minimum wages for the disabled. To qualify for the exemption, the plant has to show that the disabled workers are less productive than their nondisabled counterparts. They are not. Johnson underreports the productivity of the men.

Some asked, why didn’t the men complain? “It is the same facile question that arises in cases of domestic violence, workplace harassment, and schoolyard bullying,” the author comments. “The question comes from a position of doubt, at a safe distance....

One answer could be that the bunkhouse boys believed they had nowhere else to go.” They had reason to fear retaliation as well.

Among other glimpses into human nature and society, Barry turns a light on the charitable impulse, so elevated and yet so often skewed in our culture. The citizens of Atalissa showed many kindnesses to the men, involving them, for example, in parades and other civic events. Church ladies dubbing themselves the ABCs (Atalissa Betterment Committee) rustled up Christmas presents and other items for the migrants from Texas. Alert to charitable opportunities, townspeople nonetheless had little eye for the exploitation and injustice in plain sight. Those paid to have keener eyes, including social workers, journalists and government investigators, kept missing the mark as well.

In the end, the authorities—galvanized finally by investigative re-

porting—descended upon the former schoolhouse and shut it down on the spot. The disabled workers who had by necessity learned the habits of solidarity and mutual support wound up in group homes and suitable jobs with social services that helped them lead dignified lives in community. A tireless government lawyer won a symbolic victory in a civil lawsuit on behalf of the men and recovered a slight fraction of the money stolen from them. Worth adding: A roving New York Times reporter decided to “go to the periphery” (to use Pope Francis’s words) and spend a year writing a book about these men on the margins.

All that is part of the “salvation” highlighted ultimately by Barry, in a story that is, in equal measure, salvific and sad.

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**WILLIAM BOLE** is a senior writer and editor at Boston College and an independent journalist.

ROBERT EMMETT CURRAN

## JESUIT MIGRATION

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### **AMERICAN JESUITS AND THE WORLD** **How an Embattled Religious Order Made Modern Catholicism Global**

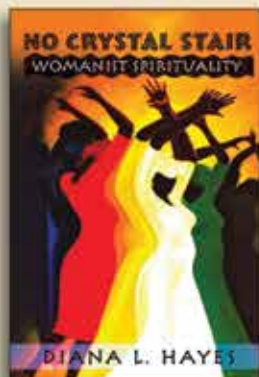
By John T. McGreevy  
Princeton University Press. 300p \$23

If immigration has been a key factor in the development of the United States since its colonial origins, arguably immigration has played an even greater role in the growth of the Society of Jesus in the United States. In a study stunning in the breadth and depth of its international contextualization, John T. McGreevy, through a focus on five emblematic developments in the late 19th century, has deftly captured this remarkable growth of the Jesuit institutional presence in the United

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Of the six jurisdictions that constituted the Society of Jesus in the United States in 1900, five of them owed their origin to Jesuit immigrants of the mid-to-late 19th century. Four of the five benefited from Jesuits seeking asylum in America from oppression in Europe. Only one of the provinces (Maryland; after 1879 called the Maryland-New York Province) had missionary beginnings that long antedated the extraordinary Jesuit migration that transformed Jesuit history in the United States. Even in Maryland, by the 1850s, thanks to the Jesuit influx from





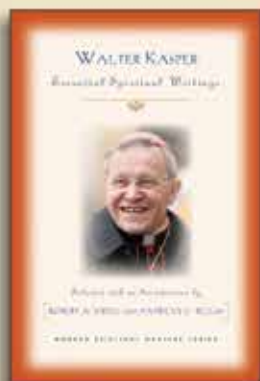
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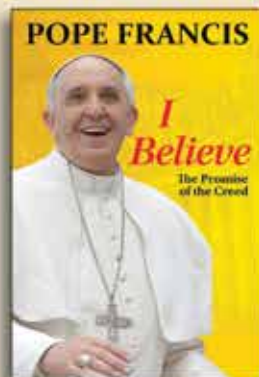
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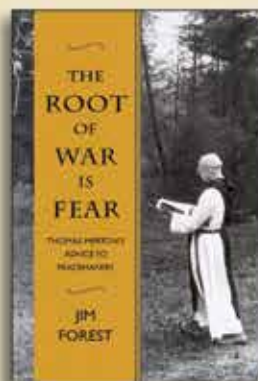
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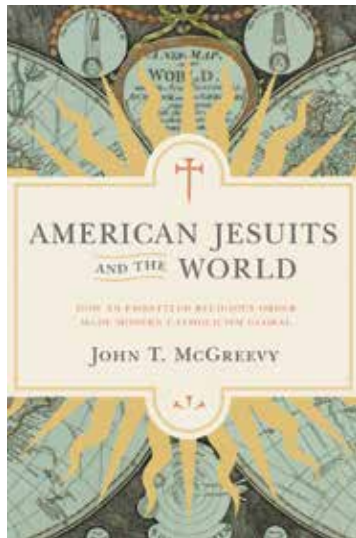
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the European revolutions of the late 1840s, Europeans made up a full third of the province. More important, when the majority of the displaced Jesuits returned to Europe after the old political order was restored, many of the best and the brightest of the asylum seekers were allowed to remain in America. That cadre formed an intellectual critical mass that set the direction and character of the province over the next half century.

This influx coincided with the revival in the United States of an anti-Catholicism that centered on Jesuits as the chief threats to the country's republican well-being. The Swiss Jesuit John Bapst (1815-87) was tarred and feathered for his criticism of the (Protestant) Bible-based public education in Maine and for his audacity in starting his own school for those seeking an alternative. Five years before his harrowing evening in Ellsworth, Me., Bapst had decried the "infidel country" that gave Catholics the choice of surrendering to its false values or being destroyed. What to non-Catholics was a sacred right of religious liberty was to Catholics just another form of ersatz autonomy, no better than that of the unregulated marketplace as the engine of economic success. To the Belgian Jesuit Ferdinand Helias, ministering in Central Missouri on the eve of the Civil War, American liberalism was inseparable from anti-Catholicism. Distrust of government followed.

That many of the Republicans had roots in the Know-Nothing movement only deepened the animus of most Jesuits against the Lincoln administration. An arms-length relationship with the government, at best, tended to mark Jesuit-state relations for



the rest of the century. At Woodstock College near Baltimore, the theologate that became the American intellectual center of ultramontane Catholicism, the émigré faculty barred celebration of the patriotic holidays (Washington's birthday and the Fourth of July) that had been a staple at Jesuit colleges in the antebellum period and allowed neither faculty nor students to vote.

Five years after Appomattox, American Jesuits became major promoters of papal infallibility as a counterweight to the "acids of modernity" infecting the Western world. The First Vatican Council's definition of papal infallibility as an article of faith in 1870 helped complete the ultramontane position of the American Jesuits and most of their lay constituents.

Another consequence of the Jesuit émigrés' coming to America was the growth of a devotional culture that privileged the miraculous and focused on suffering as a crucial sharing in Jesus' redemptive life. Benedict Sestini, of Woodstock College, was a key promoter, through his publication *Messenger of the Sacred Heart*, of this new devotionalism that was increasingly put into the service of papal primacy and infallibility.

To appreciate the vital role that immigrant Jesuits played in the creation of the network of colleges that spanned the nation, one needs only to know that they founded 23 of the 25 Jesuit institutions begun in the 19th century. By the late 19th century, this meant uniform, Rome-centered education, symbolized best, perhaps, by the Gesu Church that Burchard Villiger built contiguous to St. Joseph's College in the 1880s, modeled after its Roman namesake and

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proclaiming the fundamental Roman allegiance of those who built it and worshiped in it.

“The construction of a vast Catholic subculture of parishes and schools,” John McGreevy notes, “the cultivation of a global Catholic sensibility centered in Rome, the widespread adoption of devotional practices like the Sacred Heart and architectural styles like the baroque, and a renewed fascination with the miraculous did not depend solely on exiled Jesuits. But they are unimaginable without them.”

If McGreevy has brilliantly captured the main lines of this extraordinary, refugee-shaped history, it seems to this reviewer that he has truncated one important stream of this development. There is an implicit assumption that the really significant Jesuit history begins with the waves of Jesuit exiles who found refuge in America, literally from coast to coast; that America was pure and simple mission country for the Jesuits throughout most of the 19th century. Tellingly, he points to the general raising of Jesuit jurisdictions in the country from the rank of mission to the level of provinces in the last decade of that century.

But in 1892 when several missions were formally made provinces, there were already two provinces (Maryland and Missouri) in the country, one of which (Maryland) predated the mass migrations by more than a decade. The Maryland Province, in fact, had in the early part of the century developed a strong national identity that valued the separation of church and state, proudly proclaimed its patriotism (including exuberant celebrations of the nation’s feast days) and had a close relationship with government and a wary attitude about the miraculous. James Ryder, S.J., Irish born and American raised, gave a testament in stone to this republican vision when, in his second term as rector of Georgetown College, he erected Trinity Church, with its neoclassical exterior and stark interior. The year he commis-

sioned it was, ironically, 1848.

From its restoration as a mission of the Society in 1806, Maryland had benefitted immeasurably from a steady stream of immigrants from continental Europe. But there quickly developed conflicts over the issue of the relationship of the Society and the church in America to the nation and Rome. The massive influx of refugees in 1848 proved a decisive turning point in that contest. When the next Jesuit church was built in the District of Columbia, a decade after Trinity, it was Gothic, with multiple altars and sacred paintings and busts richly adorning its interior, all the design of Benedict Sestini and named in honor of a Roman Jesuit saint, St. Aloysius Gonzaga. By 1870, a Maryland provincial, Joseph Keller,

a native of Bavaria, could proclaim that the pope’s loss of his temporal power had “made ultramontanes of us all.” In Maryland, the triumph of that ghetto- and Rome-centered mentality had been one that was slow and long in coming against formidable competition.

Fittingly, McGreevy sees the beginning of a change in this worldview in the experience of a band of Jesuits of the Maryland-New York Province sent to work in, and eventually take over, the international Society’s mission to the Philippines. In a new land, they recovered an old tradition.

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**ROBERT EMMETT CURRAN** is professor emeritus of history at Georgetown University and author of many books, including *A History of Georgetown University*.

LANCE COMPA

## THE BETTER DEAL

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### **AMERICAN AMNESIA** **How the War on Government Led Us to Forget What Made America Prosper**

By Jacob S. Hacker and Paul Pierson  
Simon & Schuster 455p \$28

In *American Amnesia*, the political scientists Jacob Hacker and Paul Pierson mount the barricades crying: “What Do We Want?”—“A Mixed Economy!”—“When Do We Want It?”—“Now!”

It is hard to get the juices flowing for a mixed economy, compared with “A Political Revolution!” or “Build That Wall!” But Hacker and Pierson have written a compelling argument for restoring a vital role for government in economic and social policy. They start cleverly by evoking Adam Smith, an eloquent advocate of government intervention in the market, notwithstanding his “invisible hand” metaphor. Taxes are “a badge of liberty,” Smith said. And “regulation in fa-

vor of the workmen is always just and equitable,” while unregulated business “ends in a conspiracy against the public.” *American Amnesia* is an extended argument for reviving and applying Smith’s insights.

The authors recall mid-20th century decades, when strong government, business and labor institutions underpinned steady growth and widespread prosperity. But starting in the 1980s, two of those legs crumpled under an onslaught of antigovernment, antiunion ideology that left business standing supreme. It was led by an alliance of right-wing think tankers and media noise-makers, frat-boy politicians who read *Atlas Shrugged* in college and arrested their intellectual development then and there, and a new generation of “malefactors of great wealth” taking their revenge on Franklin Roosevelt (and Theodore, who coined the epithet).

Rather than Roosevelt and his successors, though, the heroes of Hacker

and Pierson's account are a mix of long forgotten and still remembered post-New Deal figures from the political middle: Vannevar Bush, an architect of the National Science Foundation in the late 1940s; Eric Johnston, a head of the Chamber of Commerce in the 1940s; George Romney, a wealthy industrialist-turned-Michigan governor; the mid-century corporate heads Paul Hoffman of Studebaker and Marion Folsom of Kodak; Dwight Eisenhower; and Richard Nixon.

These were mostly Republican believers in free enterprise who also accepted a strong supporting and coordinating role for government and a role for unions, too. Hoffman said, "The personal dignity of the workman certainly encompasses the privilege of belonging to a union and dealing collectively with his employer"; Johnston said, "Collective bargaining is an established and useful reality"; Eisenhower said, "Freedom expresses itself in the right of workers to strike"; Nixon said, "Collective bargaining must be strong and effective."

Hacker and Pierson say the accomplishments of the mixed economy are hidden in plain sight: public health measures and a quantum leap in life expectancy; Social Security, Medicare and other social protections; cleaner water and air; mass education and scientific breakthroughs funded by government; hydroelectric and solar power; interstate highways and other public goods thankfully still with us. All required mobilizing, organizing, coordinating, financing and other powers of government to promote public welfare over private greed.

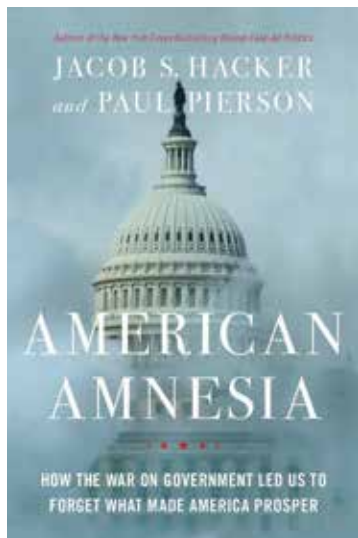
In contrast with their heroes, Hacker and Pierson present villains who

launched a concerted "forced forgetting" campaign against the achievements of the mixed economy and brought us income inequality, infrastructure decay, consumer victimization, political gridlock, even a decline in life expectancy for working class men. The perps include banking and investment magnates who won Wall Street deregulation and gave us the 2008 financial meltdown, a hyper-aggressive business lobby that replaced C.E.O. statesmen of the past, a right-wing noisemaking machine that cowed the rest of the media into a phony equivalence stance that offers the center right and the far right as competing poles, a shadowy network of tycoon-financed think tanks and phony grassroots groups, and high government officials from both Republican and

Democratic administrations who had the means but not the will to confront their erstwhile and future colleagues in corporate and financial elites.

The authors are not shy about naming names. Think Citigroup's Sanford Weill and Blackstone's Stephen Schwarzman; Chamber of Commerce boss Thomas Donohue, Big Pharma's John Castellani and Big Oil's Philip Cooney; Glenn Beck and Fox News; the Koch brothers' Freedom Works, Freedom Partners and Americans for Prosperity; Clinton administration veterans Robert Rubin and Lawrence Summers.

Peter Peterson gets the authors' special attention for his career arc. Peterson moved from being an expelled M.I.T. student to serving as an acolyte to Milton Friedman at the University of Chicago; from being Bell & Howell's C.E.O. to Richard Nixon's



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commerce secretary; from cashing out at Lehman Brothers (before its financial house of cards collapsed and the firm disintegrated) to the private equity Blackstone group. When Blackstone went public in 2007, Peterson cashed out again, this time for billions, not just tens of millions. Along with former Republican Senator Alan Simpson and the Clinton advisor Erskine Bowles, Peterson used his money to create multiple institutes and think tanks dedicated to sowing panic about federal deficits and to shrinking government—mainly by cutting Social Security and other bulwarks against disability and poverty.

Hacker and Pierson give concrete details and examples of the forced-forgetting, deliberately antigovernment offensive that has led to what they call “blanket hostility to the core policies and practices of the mixed economy that made America great.” Wait a minute. Are they saying, “Make America Great Again!”?

Yes they are, proposing policy measures that include campaign finance reform, restoring workers’ bargaining power in labor unions, enhancing democracy by protecting the right to vote and beating back efforts at voter suppression, launching large-scale infrastructure rebuilding projects, completing the move toward universal health insurance, tackling climate change and other social missions that depend on strong government alongside strong private institutions.

Hacker and Pierson have their eyes open. They recognize that their avatars of a mixed economy look like “dinosaur-like creatures” whose achievements are now forgotten—the “amnesia” of the title. The examples and lessons in their book are an attempt to recover the memory of robust government action meeting real human needs.

Unfortunately for them—like everyone else who published books on policy and politics before the 2016 presidential campaign—Hacker and Pierson now have to account for Donald J. Trump’s

putative takeover of the Republican Party. The party’s antigovernment, antimixed-economy ideologues have lost control and must now contend with Trump’s akimbo policy pitches—tear up trade agreements, restore tariffs, punish companies who invest abroad, build a 2,000-mile wall, detain and deport 11 million people. This is government intervention with a vengeance.

The 2016 Democratic Party standard-bearer and congressional candidates can learn much from Hacker and

Pierson’s book. But “Mixed Economy Now!” is not a winning campaign slogan. Candidates will have to combine *American Amnesia’s* policy prescriptions with a broader call to Americans’ better angels. Otherwise, Hacker and Pierson’s next book might well be titled *American Dementia*.

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LANCE COMPA is a graduate of McQuaid Jesuit High School, Fordham College and Yale Law School. He teaches labor law at Cornell University’s School of Industrial and Labor Relations in Ithaca, N.Y.

JAMES T. KEANE

## A LEGACY CORRUPTED

### EZRA POUND: POET Volume III: The Tragic Years 1939-1972

By A. David Moody  
Oxford University Press. 640p \$35.00

Stockholm syndrome is not a phenomenon restricted solely to hostages who find common cause with their captors over time. Biographers, too, sometimes find themselves defending or identifying with the subject of their study, historical figures who, despite their seamy side, steal the sympathy of a writer who spends years in a kind of captivity to his or her subject. The life of a biographer is by necessity one of obsession and absorption; and as the song goes, when you can’t be with the ones you love, you love the one you’re with.

The syndrome is notably visible over the course of A. David Moody’s monumental three-volume biography of Ezra Pound, the final installment of which, *Ezra Pound: Poet: Volume III: The Tragic Years 1939-1972*, was published last fall, almost 10 years after the first. Moody’s careful sympathy for his subject is not always a negative, of course, because it can be otherwise difficult to get into the life of a man whose notorious views are so off-putting as Pound’s. One doesn’t need three

volumes, after all, if the goal is simply to convince an audience that Pound was a remarkably erudite scholar who was also a sociopath, a quisling and an anti-Semite.

Most readers will likely come away from this third volume having reached exactly that conclusion, but Moody goes to great lengths to offer a cross-examination and some evidence to nuance the verdict. He does not always succeed—“tragic” is a remarkably benevolent and sententious way to describe Pound’s works and days from 1939 to 1972—but his exhaustive account of Pound’s literary and personal life does militate against an overly hasty condemnation of the poet or the man. And Moody’s range and depth of research will make any work on Pound that follows inevitably a conversation with this one.

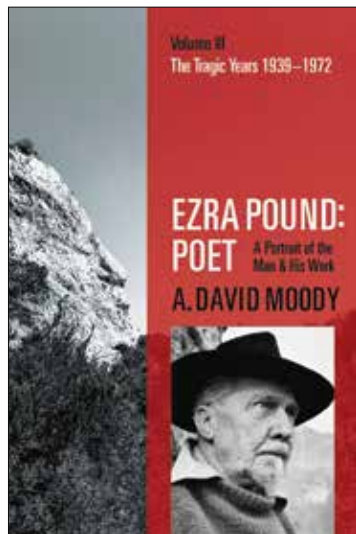
Born in 1885 in what was still the Idaho Territory, Pound moved to Europe in his early 20s after a short (and unsuccessful) stint teaching at Wabash College and soon established himself as a poet and literary critic of far-reaching influence. He is probably familiar to most Americans less for his own voluminous writings than for T. S. Eliot’s dedication of “The Wasteland” to him. Quoting Dante’s

*Purgatorio*, Eliot called Pound (who heavily edited Eliot's poem) *il miglior fabbro*, "the better craftsman." But Eliot was not the only poet who owed much to Pound; as Moody's earlier volumes showed, Pound was up in the business of almost every major figure in early 20th-century English-language poetry to a degree almost farcical. In between championing the then-unknown Eliot, serving as the best man at W. B. Yeats's wedding, bringing Ford Madox Ford and Robert Frost to European audiences, taking boxing lessons from Ernest Hemingway and funneling to James Joyce spending money and the odd pair of shoes, he spent many a malicious and gleeful hour gaslighting his erstwhile disciple, poor William Carlos Williams. All the while, he carried on extensive literary correspondence with everyone from D. H. Lawrence to James Dickey, the latter noting that "some people would know *what* Ezra Pound knows, and some people would know *that* Ezra Pound knows, but nobody but Ezra Pound knows all these things at the same time as he does."

An early enthusiast of literary modernism and of the Imagist movement (from which he later broke), the young Pound became as much noted as an editor and critic as he was as a poet. Disillusioned by World War I, he moved to Italy in 1924 and developed over the next decade an idiosyncratic political persona, blaming capitalism's usurious ways for most of the ills of modern civilization. His massive and ultimately incomplete *Cantos* poem cycle includes (among many beautifully crafted poetic triumphs) repeated references to his personal theories and bugaboos concern-

ing international finance and politics, a "Confucian ethic" that he sought to transplant into European culture, and a "social credit" economic system that would replace capitalism. He eventually found common cause with Benito Mussolini's Fascist regime, and by the peak of World War II had become one of Mussolini's stooges, broadcasting anti-American and pro-Fascist propaganda over the radio and waging a parallel campaign in his writing, both rife with crudely anti-Semitic slurs.

Moody does not shrink from any of it—Pound's praise for *Mein Kampf*, his comparisons of Hitler to Christian saints ("Like many martyrs he held extreme views"), his vicious Jew-baiting both in print and over the air—but his encyclopedic catalog of Pound's work does not serve his subject well. Such a careful historical rendering cannot help but bury Pound even when Moody wants to praise him. Sometimes Pound himself contradicts Moody's account. The claim, for example,



that Pound was not really a Fascist can hardly be reconciled with Pound's own statements ("I believe in Fascism and want to defend it") or letters (some signed "Heil Hitler").

Arrested in May 1945 and imprisoned for several weeks in Pisa (hence the *Pisan Cantos*) in an outdoor cage that he claimed triggered a nervous breakdown, Pound was eventually brought back to the United States to stand trial for treason. He was convinced by his lawyers to plead insanity instead and was eventually committed to a mental institution. There he enjoyed the regular visits of poetic and literary admirers (including a few crackpots) and even two love affairs,

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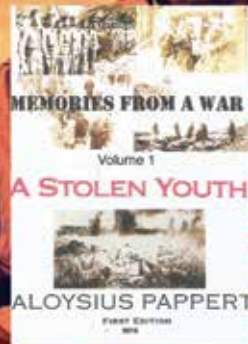
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"...a beautifully crafted remembrance that depicts an underrepresented perspective. An arresting and unusual portal into the mind of a fighter in the Nazi forces."

- *Kirkus Reviews*

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even while his wife Dorothy continued to manage his financial and personal matters. Fellows in American Letters of the Library of Congress tried to award him the first annual Bollingen Prize in Poetry in 1949 for his *Pisan Cantos*, though public outcry resulted in the award's cancellation. And though he hardly ceased his anti-Semitic screeds, a growing chorus of the literary elite argued for Pound's release. Pound's literary output made it difficult for the government to argue that he was insane (he was writing his *Cantos* all the while) but even harder to insist on a charge of treason (even the infamous Tokyo Rose was released, in 1956). He was finally released in 1958, at which point he returned to his beloved Italy and declared "all America is an insane asylum." Diminished both physically and mentally, he slowly receded from the public eye and died in 1972.

Moody makes it clear from the get-go that he considers Pound "neither mad nor a traitor," and that if he had stood trial he would have been acquitted—that he was guilty more of idiosyncratic theories than treasonable activity. But herein lies the tension present throughout Moody's account. If Pound was not insane, then he was responsible for his rhetoric and its consequences. Moody himself admits at one point that "Pound's words were his deeds." So perhaps we are more comfortable with Pound the madman because we do not want to ponder Pound the monster.

Pound's arrival in Naples in 1958 offers one more reminder that there was something far darker than insanity or idiosyncrasy at work. It was mere weeks after he had been granted release from St. Elizabeth's, and 13 years since the end of a war so unimaginably savage it almost destroyed civilization entirely.

Pound stepped ashore and greeted the waiting crowd with a Fascist salute.

JAMES T. KEANE *is an editor at Orbis Press.*

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# WELCOME TO THE BOOGIE DOWN

Raquel Cepeda describes “an infectious new force” that began taking root in the United States during the early 1970s. He writes in *And It Don’t Stop: The Best American Hip-Hop Journalism of the Last 25 Years* that this force “spawned from New York City’s concrete jungles in the 1970s to become the ultimate expression of black youth resistance to poverty and oppression.” This was hip-hop. And it was here to stay.

Hip-hop was born in the Bronx, at 1520 Sedgwick Avenue, to be exact. And its infancy is the focus of the new Netflix series, “The Get Down.” Created by Baz Luhrmann (director of “Romeo + Juliet,” “Moulin Rouge!”) and Stephen Aldy Guirgis (playwright of the Pulitzer-winning “Between Riverside and Crazy”), the 12-episode series premiered its first six episodes in August; the remaining six are to be released next year.

Set in the South Bronx during the 1970s, “The Get Down” is a hip-hop coming of age story. The protagonist is Ezekiel “Zeke” Figuero (Justice Smith), who lost both of his parents to gun violence. In one of the series’s best scenes, Zeke describes the death of his mom. “All the news that fits the print. Mama’s death went unreported. Not a whiff, word or hint. ‘They don’t care about us n\*\*\*\*s’ is how my pops explained it. But I didn’t know I was a n\*\*\*a until my dad proclaimed it.” Zeke is in love with Mylene Cruz (Herizen F. Guardiola), a church singer who dreams of being a disco star. Mylene lives with her religious parents, who throughout much of the series are opposed to her dreams. She reciprocates Zeke’s feelings, but her dreams to leave the Bronx often outshine them. It

is thanks to her uncle, Francisco “Papa Fuerte” Cruz (Jimmy Smits), that she gets to follow her dream of producing a record.

We watch as Zeke balances his relationship with Mylene and his role as a “wordsmith” or emcee for the Get Down boys with Shaolin Fantastic (Shameik Moore), a young teen who dreams of being the next Grandmaster Flash, and the Kipling brothers, Ra-Ra (Skylan Brooks), Boo Boo (T. J. Browne Jr.) and Dizzee (Jaden Smith). Relationships are formed; dreams are pursued. And all of this happens with the Bronx burning around them.

Throughout the series, the teenagers’ lives are accompanied by the sounds of artists like Earth, Wind & Fire, Donna Summer, Vickie Sue Robinson, Willie Colón, Nina Simone and many others. Luhrmann and Guirgis include Grandmaster Flash and DJ Kool Herc, two of hip-hop’s earliest pioneers, as characters. In 1982, Steven Hager wrote in *The Village Voice* that in “1977, a young DJ in the South Bronx named Grandmaster Flash began revolutionizing rap music.” Audiences first see Flash’s skills in another great scene, in which Shaolin takes the Get Down boys to a party where Flash is deejaying. In what appears to be the alley of a burned down building, we see blacks and Latinos dancing to The Sugarhill Gang’s “Apache.” We watch as Flash mixes the track: what Hager describes as “a variety of weird effects using the scratching technique” on records—

or what Shaolin calls “the get down.” Along with the executive producer Nasir Jones, Flash was also an advisor during the filming of the series, helping to educate the young actors on hip-hop’s origins.

While much of “The Get Down” shines, the narrative often feels overwhelming, slightly over the top and very much like a Luhrmann film—think his “Gatsby” meets the burning Bronx. And the switch between actual footage of the Bronx in the 1970s and the acting at times feels jarring for the viewer. The pace, thankfully, becomes more focused, particularly in the last few episodes; and over all, “The Get Down” does deserve praise.

Its focus on the Bronx and characters of color is superb.

Very few shows outside of the Shonda Rhimes sphere display this kind of diversity. For the first time ever, audiences get a show about the Bronx and hip-hop starring black and Latino actors. Second, the casting of the series is well done and the actors are truly fun to watch. (My personal favorite is Yahya Abdul-Mateen II’s character, Clarence “Cadillac” Caldwell.) The young actors also deliver a variety of great one-liners, like Shaolin’s “This ain’t Disneyland. This is the f\*\*\*\*g Bronx. Either you be strong, or you be gone.”

It is refreshing to see these faces and themes on screen. And if you’ve ever wondered about the origins of hip-hop and the Bronx, “The Get Down” is a great starting point.

If you’re unfamiliar with the Bronx, ‘The Get Down’ is a great place to start.



OLGA SEGURA is an associate editor of *America*.

# LEAK, PAY, LOVE

*Oliver Stone's clichéd 'Snowden'*

**O**liver Stone's *Snowden* is an abysmal movie in almost all the ways by which we usually judge cinema. The acting is mannered; the actors are smirking; the music presumes an emotional grandeur the storytelling has not earned; the visuals include the now standard issue technological eye candy by which we are "transported" inside the high-speed circuitry of the National Security Agency's computers and data mining—a.k.a. C.G.I. blather. The movie also swaggers, oblivious to the fact that it is dull as dirt.

Alfred Hitchcock famously said the director is God; we are pretty sure Hitchcock was kidding. Oliver Stone, on the other hand, may actually believe

it. How else do you convince yourself, never mind the people who gave you \$50-odd million in financing, that the world needs your take on a story about which the definitive film has already been made? The Oscar-winning documentary "Citizenfour" of 2014, directed by Laura Poitras, is a movie with all the drama of an international thriller, because it *was* an international thriller, shot in real time, containing real urgency. With "Snowden" we get an anemic imitation along with Stone's precious affectations, tweaks of history and moral superiority. "Citizenfour" was about Snowden. "Snowden" is more about Stone.

Don't get me wrong: Edward Snowden is a hero. Administration

officials, the military and political conservatives generally seem inclined to despise him. But that may be because he presents a moral conundrum they cannot explain away. Why would a young man with a thriving career, a healthy salary and a sun-dappled life in Hawaii give it all up, if *not* because of a moral imperative he had to confront? Even the most rabid Snowden hater has not tried to argue he was a career spy or some kind of sleeper agent. Fame? He has gotten some, but he is also languishing in Russia. No, Snowden's motivation is the one thing about the case that is pretty simple: He was watching his fellow citizens' privacy made extinct by a shadow government he was helping to create. He was abetting a crime. He blew an overdue whistle.

The problem with "Snowden" is that Stone, well known for cultivating large-scale conspiracy theories ("JFK"), does not bother to make much of an intel-



Left to right: Melissa Leo as Laura Poitras, Joseph Gordon-Levitt as Edward Snowden, Tom Wilkinson as Ewen MacAskill and Zachary Quinto as Glenn Greenwald in "Snowden."

lectual argument on Snowden's behalf, despite painting him as a scratchily bearded messiah. He doesn't feel he has to. He presumes we are on his side, as he tells the story of a young man who considered himself a patriot—he enlisted in the Army Reserve, worked at the C.I.A., held points of view that were decidedly on the right—and gradually came to see the world as something else.

A coming-of-age story? What could be more tedious? Never mind unworthy of the subject.

As Poitras well knew, the story of the N.S.A.'s mass collection of information from the laptops and cellphones of private citizens is a knotty one, and there is no point trying to make it simple. But for all Stone's posturing as a filmmaking maverick, "Snowden" relies on every manner of movie convention and emotional shortcut. The film's Snowden, played by Joseph Gordon-Levitt, is an eager-seeming, vaguely cocky 20-something, not the cerebral Snowden we've become familiar with, mostly through the interview Poitras did with him in a Hong Kong hotel room in June 2013 and that went global just as the first stories by The Guardian's Glenn Greenwald (Zachary Quinto) and Ewen MacAskill (Tom Wilkinson) were being published.

The romance between Snowden and Lindsay Mills (Shailene Woodley), who now resides with him in Russia, takes up an inordinate amount of the movie's time—but of course, if what you want to do is build a conventional movie around an unconventional subject, you need brick, mortar and cliché. During a scene set amid an anti-war protest outside the Bush-era White House, Eddie says, "I just don't real-



ly like bashing my country." To which the more liberal Lindsay says, "It's my country, too...and right now, it's got blood on its hands." Snowden's ultimately enlightened conscience, as per Stone, is the product of a good woman. All that's missing is their reunion in Casablanca.

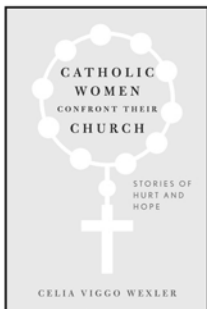
In what appears to be an effort to co-opt the factual narrative, Stone omits all the really intriguing prelude to Poitras and Greenwald's meeting with Snowden in that Hong Kong hotel; Snowden's overtures to Greenwald, who balked at the N.S.A. technician's insistence on encrypted correspondence (because he did not know how to make it work); Snowden's reaching out to Poitras, whose film work ("My Country, My Country," "The Oath") indicated a kindred spirit. Poitras declined to cooperate with Stone on the film.

The Snowden story, like the story told at Nuremberg, is about what a citizen owes his country when that country's actions are criminal. And what he owes his conscience. And his soul. Stone's filmmaking is so off-putting one is likely to forget that the issues he is dressing up with cloak-and-dagger adornments and rom-com simplicities are some of the more tormenting issues of our time. It is sad, at the end of "Snowden," to see the real-life Edward Snowden appear—sad because it is a cheap trick to play on Gordon-Levitt, who has been creating a character for two hours and 14 minutes. But also sad because we thought better of Snowden than to get mixed up with a mess like this.

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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*.

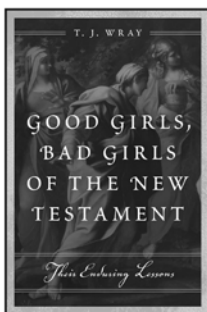
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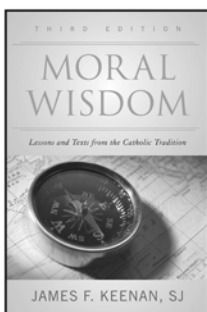
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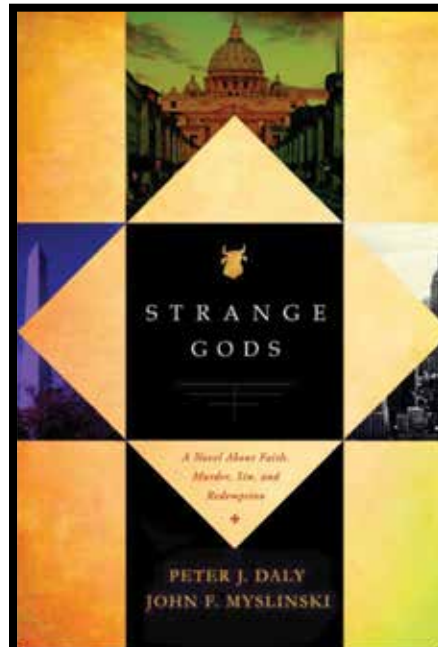
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**Events**

**CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN-JEWISH LEARNING** at Boston College. The Fifth Annual John Paul II Lecture in Christian-Jewish Relations: Rev. David Neuhaus, S.J., "Towards the Ends of the Earth: Land in the Jewish-Christian Dialogue." Sunday, Oct. 30, 2016, 4:00 p.m. in Stokes Hall S195 Auditorium; Boston College Chestnut Hill Campus; [www.bc.edu/cjlearning](http://www.bc.edu/cjlearning). David Neuhaus, S.J., is the patriarchal vicar for Hebrew-speaking Catholics in Israel. He is also the coordinator of the pastoral care for migrant workers and asylum-seekers.

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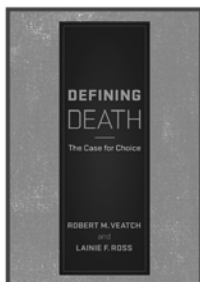
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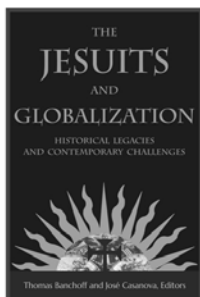
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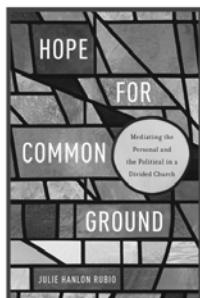
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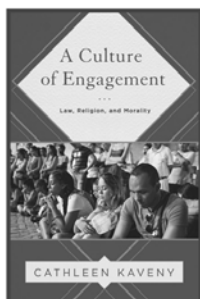
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# Prepare for Battle

TWENTY-NINTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (C), OCT. 16, 2016

Readings: Ex 17:8-13; Ps 121:1-8; 2 Tm 3:14-4:2; Lk 18:1-8

*“Yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out” (Lk 18:5)*

The spiritual life is often likened in the New Testament to a battle against foes. Jesus describes establishing God’s kingdom by tying up the strong man, Satan, and plundering his house (Mk 3:22-27), and the apostle Paul instructs the Christians in Thessalonica to “be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation” in order to be armored for the spiritual fight (1 Thes 5:8). The foes against which one fights might be external enemies, the powers of darkness or internal enemies, like the seven deadly sins or the desire to give up the fight and retreat.

The spiritual contest demands that we keep fighting and not give up. Jesus’ parable of the widow and the unjust judge highlights the steadfast stance necessary for a battle, even more than English translations suggest. When the unjust judge finally determines to help the widow, he says, “Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.” The Greek of this passage, however, is a bit more pugilistic.

Though the NRSV says “keeps bothering me,” the word translated as “bother” is *kopos*, which has as its primary meaning “beat” or “punch.” In the

same way, though the judge says he will grant justice “so that she may not wear me out” in the NRSV, the phrase translated as “wear out” is the Greek verb *hypopiazo*, which literally means “give a black eye” or “strike in the face.” It is therefore possible to translate the passage more concretely: “Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, yet because this widow keeps hitting me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not give me a black eye by continually coming.”

Perhaps this translation is a little too blunt, and the figurative meanings are certainly proper, but it evokes a more visceral response to the spiritual life as a battle in which steadfastness and persistence are essential and in which one must be prepared always to get ready to rumble. The spiritual life is not a curated Instagram account. Sometimes it gets down and dirty, and the only way to get to God is through a tremendous effort expended on fighting in times of desolation, when God feels distant, our enemies seem powerful and near, and we feel weak and defeated.

At the most practical level, the parable encourages us not to give up even when the odds seem ever against us, especially since God is not an unjust judge. But this does not mean our spiritual fight is always a lonely battle. A fascinating account from the Exodus narrative, in which Amalek comes to fight with Israel, suggests that we also need some help along the way to remain steadfast. While this passage

may be read at a number of different levels, allegorical included, we can also read it at a literal level, in which Israel is simply engaged in a military battle. Moses, whose behavior is key to Israel’s success, begins to weaken physically; and his hands, which need to be held up, “grew weary.” The support his brother and friend give to him is practical—they get him a stone to sit on and they hold up his hands—so that the battle can be won. As important as personal perseverance is in the spiritual life,



## PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Reflect on the imagery of spiritual battle. When have you needed to be steadfast in the spiritual life? How has God supported you during the battle? Which sources—friends, prayer, the sacraments and so on—have been essential for you when you have wearied of the fight?

sometimes we all need help—practical, rock-solid and supportive—to get through the battle. Human friendship and assistance in our darkest times are not superfluous but an essential component of our fight.

In the spiritual life, it is necessary to persevere and to join with friends when the battle is hard. To draw sustenance, we must continue to go to the sources that refresh us: friends, prayer, the sacraments, the Mass and Scripture, all of which equip us for the spiritual battle, and to recognize that God is always with us too, truly fighting at our side.

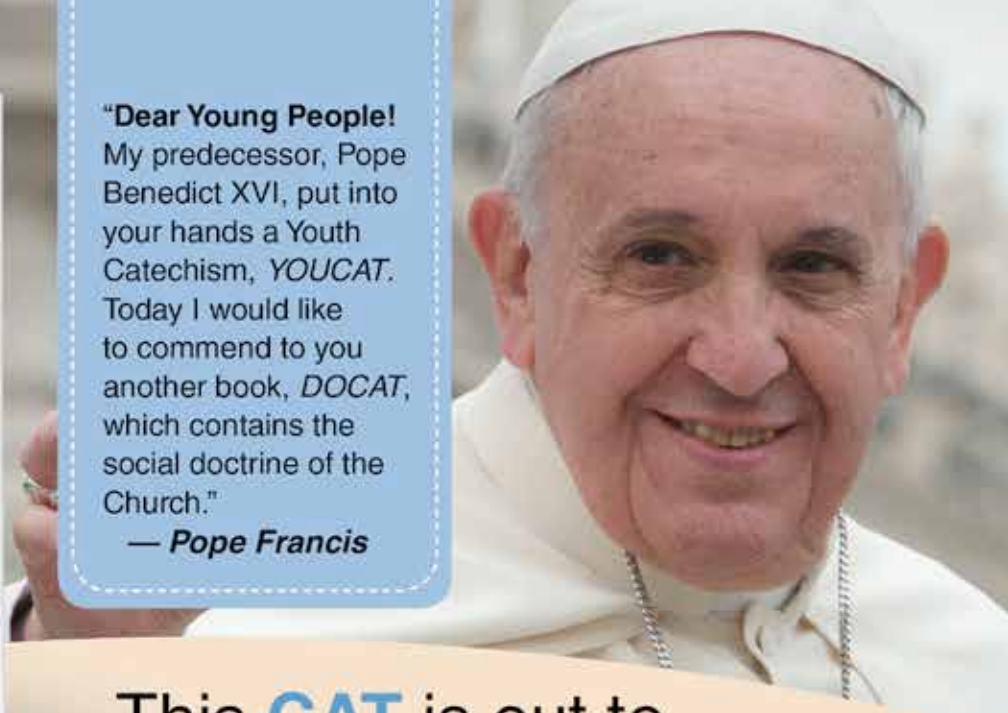
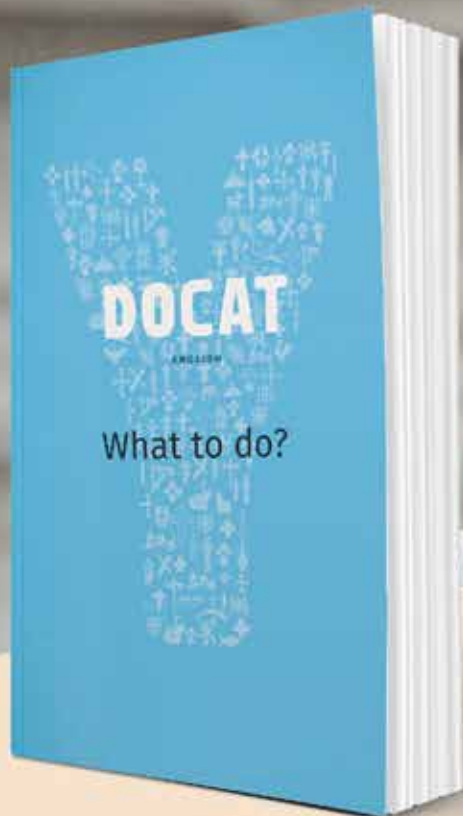
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JOHN W. MARTENS is a professor of theology at the University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minn. Twitter: @BibleJunkies.



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