

America

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Where Do We Go From Here?

MARGOT PATTERSON
C. C. PECKNOLD
CECILIA GONZÁLEZ-ANDRIEU
KEVIN E. STUART
AND MORE

OF MANY THINGS

For 107 years **America** magazine has led the conversation about faith and culture in the United States. Thanks be to God, the decisions we have made in recent months will allow **America** to continue to prosper, well into this century and beyond. After several years of discernment and planning, I am pleased to report that in 2017 we will realize the greatest transformation of this ministry since the 1960s.

First, we will completely redesign and relaunch our print and digital products, giving them a fresh look and feel while preserving their historic voice: the smart, Catholic take on faith and culture you rely upon. Second, we are recruiting a new stable of writers and contributors, emerging Catholic voices who will lead the conversation in the decades ahead. At the same time, we will continue to provide the award-winning analysis and opinion that have been the hallmark of our work.

Third, America Media will move to a new state-of-the-art \$3 million headquarters in Manhattan, one better suited to a 21st-century multiplatform media ministry. This project has been made possible by the successful sale of our current headquarters building in New York, the proceeds from which have established a sizable fund to support our future operations.

Most important, we have decided that starting in January 2017, we will reduce the number of annual issues of **America** in print from the current 39 to 26. You will also receive biannual print supplements of the new **America Review of Books**. I have directed our business department to extend the subscriptions of all our current subscribers for six months to honor the investment you have already made in **America**.

Why are we making this change in print frequency? This change is not the result of commercial or financial pressures. Thanks to the foresight of our forebears and the generosity of current readers and benefactors like you,

America has a sizable operating fund. And we are not making this change because we no longer believe in print. We deeply believe in the singular power of print. We will not stop printing **America** magazine. But it will arrive in your mailbox less often and here is why.

First, **America** has not been a true weekly magazine for many years. During the major Christian holidays and during the summer, we publish in print every other week. So this is not a switch from a weekly to a biweekly schedule but rather a reduction in the total number of print issues evenly spread across the year. We have, moreover, heard from many of our readers that, while you cherish the content we provide in print, it can be hard to keep up with the amount of material owing to the demands of modern life. Second, while America Media now publishes most weeks in print, we publish every day online and every hour on social media. The vast majority of our content is now published first and primarily in digital format. In 1909, the Jesuit founders of **America** chose to print a weekly magazine because that was the best way to reach a new generation of Catholics. We believe that the best way to reach the current new generation of Catholics, without abandoning our older readers, is to print fewer but longer and, most important, even better issues in print.

When the Jesuits appointed me editor in chief four years ago, they charged me with transforming **America** into a 21st-century media ministry while preserving its unique and excellent voice. I asked then for your guidance and your support. I am deeply grateful for your generous response. We could not do this work without you, simply because we do it for you. I believe that the coming changes will provide you, the reader, with an even better experience, one that will continue to nourish your minds and hearts.

From my heart, thank you. Now, on to 2017 and beyond—for the greater glory of God! **MATT MALONE, S.J.**

America | **MEDIA**
A JESUIT MINISTRY

106 West 56th Street
New York, NY 10019-3803
Ph: (212) 581-4640; Fax: (212) 399-3596
Subscriptions: (800) 627-9533
www.americamedia.org
facebook.com/americanmag
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PRESIDENT AND EDITOR IN CHIEF

Matt Malone, S.J.

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Valente (Chicago)

MODERATOR, CATHOLIC BOOK CLUB
Kevin Spinale, S.J.

EDITOR, THE JESUIT POST Michael Rossmann, S.J.

EDITORIAL E-MAIL
america@americamedia.org

PUBLISHER AND CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

Edward G. Spallone DEPUTY PUBLISHER
Rosa M. Del Saz VICE PRESIDENT FOR
ADVANCEMENT Daniel Pawlus ADVERTISING
SALES MANAGER Chris Keller ADVANCEMENT
COORDINATOR Timothy Bouffard PROGRAMS
AND EVENTS COORDINATOR Nicholas Sawicki
BUSINESS OPERATIONS STAFF Glenda Castro,
Ryan Richardson, Anastasia Buraminskaya
ADVERTISING CONTACT ads@americamedia.
org; 212-515-0102 SUBSCRIPTION CONTACT AND
ADDITIONAL COPIES 1-800-627-9533 REPRINTS:
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Cover: President Obama with President-elect
Donald J. Trump in the White House on Nov. 10,
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CONTENTS



ARTICLES

14 AFTER NOVEMBER

Catholics respond to the unexpected election of Donald J. Trump.
Margot Patterson • Kevin E. Stuart • Jane Sloan Peters
Cecilia González-Andrieu • C. C. Pecknold • Jim McDermott

20 THE FACES OF COURAGE

Fortitude requires endurance and patience.
Raymond A. Schroth

COLUMNS & DEPARTMENTS

4 Current Comment

5 Editorial All the News That Causes Fits

6 Reply All

8 Signs of the Times

12 Washington Front In the Time of Trump John Carr

24 Vatican Dispatch Francis the Preacher Gerard O'Connell

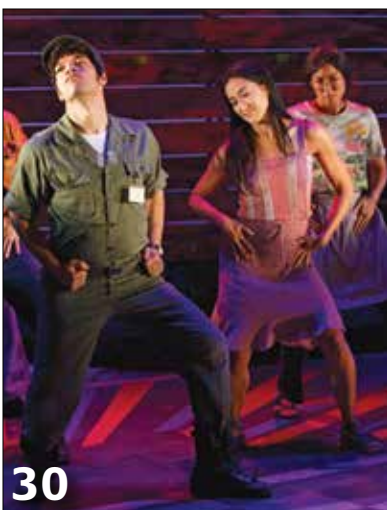
27 Faith in Focus Exploring God's Call Ann Marie Brennan

41 The Word Tell Me Who You Are; Encounters With Angels Michael R. Simone



BOOKS & CULTURE

- 30 **THEATER** Finding refuge in the stage's wisdom **OF OTHER THINGS** Field Trip to Rikers **BOOKS** *The Berrigan Letters*; *Liberal Learning as a Quest for Purpose*; Peter O'Toole **POEM** Not Jumping



ON THE WEB

America reports from the consistory of the **College of Cardinals** in Rome, where three Americans were given the red hat. Plus, Los Angeles pledges to protect its **undocumented immigrants**. Full digital highlights on page 16 and at americamagazine.org.



A United State

At the end of 2016, the nation continues to grapple with police violence toward unarmed black men, unprovoked attacks on police officers, the threat of mass deportations and the re-emergence of white nationalism as a political force. Tensions are high across the country, but many Americans, the U.S. bishops included, are eager to work against racial injustice and inequality and toward healing and reconciliation. The urgency of this issue was conveyed at the recent gathering of the U.S. bishops in Baltimore. Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory of Atlanta recommended that the bishops “expedite” their planned pastoral statement on racism and issue a shorter version immediately, “particularly in the context of post-election uncertainty and disaffection.” He also urged action “to promote community development and peace” through the Catholic Campaign for Human Development.

Archbishop Gregory’s desire to address the injustices of racism and division emphasizes the need for American Catholics in the pews to do the same. And while encouragement by the bishops is admirable, no one needs to wait for a letter from the bishops to act. The church, in its diversity and commitment to service, should strive to reach out to people across class and racial lines in an effort to unite neighbors in solidarity, foster dialogue and offer support. Prayer, love and charity are sorely needed today. We must learn to love one another both in spite of and because of our differences.

Spotlight on Refugees

“Serving and welcoming people fleeing violence and conflict in various regions of the world is part of our identity as Catholics,” Auxiliary Bishop Eusebio Elizondo of Seattle said at the bishops’ annual meeting in Baltimore on Nov. 15. With more than 65 million displaced people in the world today, the head of the bishops’ migration committee pledged that “our 80 dioceses across the country are eager to continue this wonderful act of accompaniment.”

In the wake of the election of Donald J. Trump, it is a message worth repeating. On the campaign trail, the president-elect put Syrian refugees on notice. “If I win, they are going back,” he said in September 2015. While Mr. Trump would not have the authority, even as president, to send back Syrian refugees who are already here, it is within his power to bring the number of refugees admitted down to zero.

This has refugee advocates worried. Chris George,

executive director of Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services in New Haven, Conn., told Deborah Amos of National Public Radio that popular support for a refugee ban is based on “a fundamental lack of information.”

The State Department, he said, is partly to blame. It has insisted that resettlement programs like his keep a low profile in their communities. Now is the time to lift up the stories of asylum seekers, which more often than not are success stories of individual resiliency and communal solidarity. But it is also incumbent on those who have demonized and stoked fear of refugees to listen. Before Jan. 20, Mr. Trump should meet with Syrian refugees to hear about what drove them from their homeland and what they hope for their families. That should assuage his concern that “they could be ISIS,” and it could help to reassure the refugee population that they need not live in fear for the next four years.

Signs of Change

While the number of women in the U.S. Congress is not expected to change significantly once all the votes are counted from last month’s election, several women will make history by joining that body. The U.S. Senate will add Catherine Cortez Masto, the first Latina senator; Tammy Duckworth, the first female senator to have seen combat and only the second Asian-American senator; and Kamala Harris, the first Indian-American senator and the second African-American woman to serve in the Senate. The House of Representatives will also welcome Pramila Jayapal and Stephanie Murphy, female members of South-Asian descent.

Other election victors include Kate Brown, Oregon’s new governor, and Ilhan Omar, elected to Minnesota’s state legislature. Mrs. Omar, who spent four years at a Kenyan refugee camp before migrating to the United States, will be the country’s first Somali-American lawmaker. Describing her win, she said, “This was a victory for that 8-year-old in that refugee camp.... This was a victory for every person that’s been told they have limits on their dreams.”

According to the Center for American Women and Politics, women will make up less than 20 percent of the next Congress, with 21 of the 100 Senate seats and 83 of the House’s 435 seats. While these latest additions will not erase the gender disparity, they are welcome and a step in the right direction. At a time when many see Hillary Clinton’s loss as a setback for women in politics, these women, all Democrats, serve as symbols of hope within the party. In coming elections, we hope to see more women leaders emerge—on both sides of the aisle.

All the News That Causes Fits

W as a report that Pope Francis had endorsed the Republican nominee, Donald J. Trump, enough to lock down your vote on Election Day? Maybe you changed your mind after hearing that the pope had endorsed the Democratic nominee, Hillary Clinton? Were you startled to learn that Wikileaks “confirmed” that Secretary of State Clinton put U.S. weapons into the hands of Islamic State terrorists? If so, well, you have been had by fake news, and you were likely not alone this past November.

Pew researchers report that more than 60 percent of adults in the United States now use social media for some or even most of their news consumption. That viral spike of false reporting at the end of the race is a grave concern. A well-informed voting public is an essential component of a functioning democracy.

No version of the truth about the 2016 election will be complete without some attention to the outsized influence of fake news. Conspiracy theories and fabricated news stories were shared wildly by partisans across the social mediascape. But in the crucial final three months of the campaign, according to BuzzFeed News, such digital tall tales actually surpassed mainstream news sources in readership.

With citizen distrust of mainstream media at an all-time high, more people are getting their daily news from these mutant sources. Some are click-bait websites that produce profitable bursts of web viewers with baldly manufactured stories. Others have more demonstrated staying power but have not matured much beyond ideological ranting thinly veneered as news reporting.

The fundamentals of basic journalism are not practiced at such outlets. Facebook's algorithms are designed to keep eyeballs on content and increase active users. That profit-driven goal is coming into a critical conflict with the medium's role as an information outlet for a wide swath of Americans. Site visitors end up with highly distorted news that is often little more than a near-fact or two wrapped up in yards of speculation and conspiracy-spinning. Yet judging from miles of comments on Facebook and Twitter feeds, too many voting citizens accept content emerging from these sources as actual reporting.

The much derided mainstream media is not without bias or flaws, and it has gotten some big stories completely wrong. The 2016 election is itself a standout example. Though imperfections will persist, professional journalists hate to get their facts wrong.

That is not the case at anti-news outlets. Their

ascendancy can no longer be treated as a passing cultural fad or a more or less harmless entertainment. What happens in the media's Bizarro World does not stay there; it informs decisions made by voters and can even encourage hurtful policy.



Many fact-checking and meme-vanquishing sites have arisen alongside the ideological news site phenomenon, and they are welcome. But the truth-trackers are only as effective as the number of people who bother to read them. Something like a Charity Navigator for the media seems warranted, a transparently managed site that rates the integrity of news outlets.

In the aftermath of the election, Twitter and Facebook executives acknowledged that their algorithms, designed to surface the stories users are most likely to engage with regardless of accuracy, have been at times a public disservice. The social media giants took measures to isolate or remove some purveyors of fake news, but the industry needs to do much more to combat the dissemination of fake news at the source.

That self-policing is not without hazards. Parody and satire sites could be vulnerable to over-enthusiastic self-regulation. Calling for government intervention would also be an unwholesome development. Ultimately it will be up to individual members of the body politic to better police their personal newscape. Is the nation's education system helping them do that? Considering the enveloping presence of traditional, digital and social media in contemporary life, media literacy should be part of basic, ongoing instruction from elementary school up.

Fraternal corrections from friends and family should discourage the tendency of many to push along “news” without checking the source. Remember your Facebook account is not exempt from the Eighth Commandment, even when you are only bearing false witness by hitting the share button

Rumor-mongering and the spreading of false, ruinous tales have been among the crimes against charity often cited by Pope Francis. Early in his papacy he admonished the church to avoid such occasions of sin. “Calumny destroys the work of God in people, in their souls,” he said. “Calumny uses lies to get ahead.” Do not doubt, he warned, that “where there is calumny, there is Satan himself.”

This time the devil is just working a keyboard.

REPLY ALL

Fruitful Dialogue

Re “Answering Our Daughters,” by Helen M. Alvaré (11/14): The author leaves us with much to ponder and the beginnings of a fruitful dialogue that could lead to meaningful change. Some will overinterpret her message and call for immediate clerical changes, while others will abhor the author for even suggesting that the change in women’s societal role requires a response from the church. What is clear from the article, I hope, is that prayer dialogue must help us to no longer exclude women from “significant collaboration.”

The beauty of Mrs. Alvaré’s piece lies in her concluding sentence. Let us bring everyone to the table to see what these “new forms of witness, dialogue, and representation” might be. And let us not limit what is served up at that table.

Saying that certain forms of ministry are off limits at the beginning of the dialogue necessarily limits full participation at the outset and condemns another generation of women to be judged by their “hotness” and not their ministerial ability to bring Christ to us.

BARRY FITZPATRICK
Online Comment

Complementarity

I found Mrs. Alvaré’s article woefully inadequate, mainly because she was trying her best to defend the institutional church’s position in refusing to ordain women, and she came up short because the institutional position cannot be defended.

Here’s the problem: The institutional position is based upon an anthropology known as complementarity. This system defines male-only roles and female-only roles. It does not take into account this reality: The Holy Spirit doles out gifts to men and women alike. The Holy Spirit calls people to serve others as ordained leaders be-

cause of those gifts. Women, as well as men, have been so gifted. Women, as well as men, have responded to this call, have become formed in seminaries to serve as ordained leaders and have been affirmed by their communities to do this. Therefore, I ask the institutional leaders of our church: What human being, even the pope, has the authority to overrule the Spirit? Until that question is successfully answered, the system of complementarity cannot possibly be defended.

GLORIA ULTERINO
Online Comment

Hope for Women

The whole question is complex. One aspect of the movement of women into the community has been to devalue the feminine. A dialogue alone would offer women young and old some hope and some sense of their own value in the world. The men in the church hierarchy need to help women develop a leadership structure for the good of the church, but neither the men in the church hierarchy nor the women of the church seem to be able to develop any initiative toward a dialogue. Thanks for raising the questions in this article.

LISA WEBER
Online Comment

Multi-faceted God

Perhaps the starting point is to consider whether the hierarchical church truly believes this part of your argument: “God’s image [is] two-sexed.” The dominant theology of the body claims that the differences of women’s bodies from male bodies signal fundamental differences in the humanities of women and men.

If one accepts that position, then what conclusion would an intelligent young woman find in the church? Bodies are important, she is told, but she will not see a single body image that looks like her. The closest would be the androgynous angelic images of the Rublev icon. Where does she find

herself in this Catholic God?

Elizabeth Johnson and other feminist theologians have written about the need to resurrect those feminine images of God that have been especially neglected by the western church. Pope Francis has said that we need a theology of women. Perhaps what we need is a theology that fully accepts a multi-faceted image of God, and not so much emphasis on bodiliness.

JULIANA BOERIO-GOATES
Online Comment

From the Spirit

Your Signs of the Times article, “Unprecedented Teaching” (11/14), reminds me of the 35 years during which women were allowed to preach in the Diocese of Rochester, N.Y. I looked forward to having a woman homilist because they spoke with wisdom and intelligence and grace, both in deportment and, more important, from the Spirit. While my parish is blessed with two priests who are excellent homilists, I miss the perspective and insight women bring to us in the pews.

ART MAURER
Penfield, N.Y.

Prohibitive Cost

Re “Spiritual Costs of Debt,” by Sean Salai, S.J. (11/14): The prohibitive cost of access to Catholic education at any level mirrors the inequality in secular society, where the gap between the rich and the poor is ever growing. The virtue of prudence prevents many from availing themselves of the wonderful opportunity of a Catholic education. Particularly suffering are families where parents have been “generous” with God by giving life to more than one or two children. The Cristo Rey model for high schools seems to be a way forward. I wonder whether a university could work on a similar model?

While Alicia Torres found a way to clear her debt and enter religious life—and is now without future financial

worries—her brothers and sisters called to the vocation of marriage will take on mortgages and educational costs for their families, and will grow in debt throughout their lives.

MAUREEN O'RIORDAN LUNDY
Online Comment

Heartbeats to Follow

Re “The Heart Beat,” by Elizabeth Dias (11/14): I found the text of this lecture by Ms. Dias, given as she was awarded the George W. Hunt, S.J., Prize, an excellent pinpointing of Scripture’s assertion, “You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free!” The poignancy of her lecture was at times gripping.

The last line of the lecture speaks directly to my experiences of living the Catholic faith. She points out that “there are heartbeats to follow, humans to meet, a world to approach, stories to be told.” This sounds to me exactly like what redemption is all about; this is precisely what the Gospels say.

I like Ms. Dias’s “heartbeat” imagery. I like to believe and trust that my heartbeat (and everybody’s, I hope) is somehow in sync with the heartbeat of Jesus. This explains Jesus’ words to St. Faustina Kowalka, “Tell aching humanity to snuggle close to my merciful heart.”

BRUCE SNOWDEN
Online Comment

Loans Blight Cities

Re: “Payday Predators,” by Bishop Edward J. Weisenburger (11/14): I wish all our bishops were as concerned as this bishop is. This blight is in every city in the United States. But as the article noted, most public officials don’t realize how criminal this practice has become. And there is little doubt that organized crime runs a large part of it. Catholics should write their local newspapers and bring this to the attention of the public. It is a little thing, but something we all can do.

ROBERT HARRISON
Online Comment

Choose in Conscience

Re Of Many Things (11/7): I agree with the comments of Pope Francis: “The people are sovereign. I will only say: Study the proposals well, pray and choose in conscience.” Afterward, whatever the outcome, as Father Malone says, we must come together and work to build a better society, a better nation, as hard as that might seem to be from our narrow perspectives.

VINCENT GAGLIONE
Online Comment

Creative Dialogue

Re “An Open Invitation,” by Superintendents and the National Catholic Educational Association (Reply All, 9/26): Both this letter and Charles Zech’s “Reinventing Catholic Schools” (8/29) stimulate thought and, hopefully, creative dialogue. Both reach questionable conclusions.

Mr. Zech proposes a single solution for all situations, by “replacing parochial schools with a system of charter schools.” Pope Francis is trying to break us all of that one-decision-fits-all habit, trusting local bodies to find customized solutions for even deeply sensitive issues.

The N.C.E.A. superintendents argue that “if Catholic schools disappear in great numbers, parishes will not be

far behind.” As pastor emeritus (as of last July) of a parish, St. Nicholas, with a school that had 1,600 students in 1960 and 118 in 2014, it is far more likely that dogged determination to sustain a school as a parish school would have led to closing the parish.

Today my school, St. Nicholas School, has 162 students because of a creative combination of two factors: collaboration of our area’s surviving parish elementary schools through a regional system and dogged recruiting of students. This recruitment is supported by state subsidies to the poor and children trapped in nearby failing public systems.

There is no need (given the downsides the superintendents identify) to go the charter route, as Mr. Zech suggests, and no need to throw the parish into crushing indebtedness hanging on to the old model.

The old parish-based model is indeed broken, seemingly everywhere, but the solution is not a single new model that will fit all. Rather we need to stimulate development of various models created to fit each situation. Key to that future is passion and commitment with dialogue and creativity among all concerned.

(REV.) BERNARD R. (BOB) BONNOT
Struthers, Ohio



CONSISTORY 2016

New U.S. Cardinals Condemn Polarization Inside the Church

Three American bishops inducted into the church's most exclusive club—the College of Cardinals—say that the division and polarization present in civil society is infecting the church and that it must stop.

“The problem that we have today, not only in society but also in the church, is that we’ve become too polarized,” Cardinal Kevin Farrell, an Irish-born prelate who was bishop of Dallas before taking over a Vatican department on family life earlier this year, told *America*. “We’ve believed that we’ve become gods on both sides, on the left and on the right, and neither one of them are correct.”

The days-long celebration in Rome was centered on a solemn ceremony inside St. Peter's Basilica on Saturday morning, Nov. 19, during which Pope Francis elevated 17 men to the rank of cardinal. They will advise the pope, and 13 of them are eligible to vote for his successor.

The service, called a consistory, was bookended by numerous celebrations and prayer services. In the days leading up to the event, four cardinals, including Cardinal Raymond Burke, of the United States, made their disagreements with the pope public—and even threatened a public rebuke if he ignored their questions.

At issue, they said, are ambiguities in one of the pope's pastoral letters, “*Amoris Laetitia*.” The letter is the pope's summary of a two-year discussion of family issues held by bishops from around the world, including hot-button topics like divorce, homosexuality and a breakdown in societal support for families.

Some bishops have said the document's emphasis on conscience, reconciliation and discernment opens the door to Communion for divorced and remarried Catholics, a view the pope himself seemed to endorse. The four cardinals opposed to such an interpretation sent a letter to the Vatican in September asking for yes or no answers to five questions they had about the document. The pope chose not to respond, leading to threats of a public rebuke from Cardinal Burke.

Cardinal Blase Cupich, the archbishop of Chicago who was among those made cardinals at the Nov. 19 consistory, dismissed such concerns and said that those raising them may have to look inward for clarity. He pointed to an interview with Pope Francis published on Nov. 18 by the Italian Catholic newspa-

per *Avvenire*, in which the pope spoke about individuals who want the world to be “black and white.”

“But life is full of ambiguity,” Cardinal Cupich said at a press briefing at the Pontifical North American College following the consistory. Cardinal Cupich, who was handpicked by Pope Francis to lead the church in Chicago, also downplayed the notion that there exists widespread opposition to the pope or that Francis should be forced to defend his teaching.

“I think there are enough voices out there in which the Holy Father doesn't have to in any way defend a teaching document of the church,” he continued. “It's up to those who have doubts or questions to have conversions in their lives.”

In an interview with *America*, Cardinal Joseph Tobin agreed, pointing to people like Cardinal Christoph Schönborn of Vienna, who have said



A CARDINAL FOR CHICAGO. Cardinal Blase J. Cupich greets Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel on Nov. 20 at St. Bartholomew on Tiber Island.

the pope's teaching is magisterial. Cardinal Tobin said that some cardinals not on board with the pope are taking advantage of Francis when he encourages free and open dialogue. “I think it's arguable that in previous pontificates there wouldn't have been the freedom to express this sort of stuff,” said Cardinal Tobin, who will leave his post in Indianapolis in January to lead the Archdiocese of Newark. “The pope teaches,” he said. “How it's interpreted is done by somebody else.”

He also said that those opposed to the pope's reforms are sometimes guided by a strong sense of legalism. “I think some people get it and understand that what he's talking about is not just a sort of catechism of questions and answers but rather a recognition of the sanctity of conscience, as well as the obligation to form it, in the Catholic population.”

**MICHAEL O'LOUGHLIN
WITH JEREMY ZIPPLE, S.J.**



ELECTION 2016

Bishops Await President Trump

The U.S. bishops met in Baltimore in November for their annual fall gathering. The bishops chose as president the current vice president, Cardinal Daniel DiNardo of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston. Archbishop José Gomez of Los Angeles was picked for the number two spot, which means he will probably take the top job in three years.

Of course, given that just days before the bishops met, the United States wrapped up a bizarre election season, one that resulted in the win of an unorthodox candidate, there were some sparks in Baltimore about what to expect under President-elect Donald J. Trump. Some bishops expressed opti-

mism—albeit with a healthy dose of caution.

Archbishop William Lori of Baltimore, the U.S. hierarchy's point man on religious liberty, said he is hopeful that the Trump administration might roll back some parts of the Affordable Care Act that bishops find objectionable. But he said he found other proposals from Mr. Trump to be worrying.

Archbishop Thomas Wenski of Miami noted the recent softening of Mr. Trump's rhetoric on immigration, and he expressed hope "there will be some doors in that wall he wants to build."

For his part, Cardinal DiNardo, the new president of the conference, hedged a bit, saying it was too early to tell what the country would face in the coming years. Still, he promised that church leaders would be willing partners with the new administration in areas of shared concern.

Some commenters on Facebook and Twitter have slammed "the bishops" for among other things, not denouncing Mr. Trump, not standing up to racism and for placing their trust in a perceived autocrat intent on subverting the U.S. Constitution for personal gain. Several said they wished the bishops would be more like Pope Francis.

But using too broad a brush to paint any group of people is rarely a good idea, including a hierarchy composed of hundreds of individuals.

Indeed, at the same meeting, the head of the conference, Archbishop Joseph Kurtz, did not mince words when he told

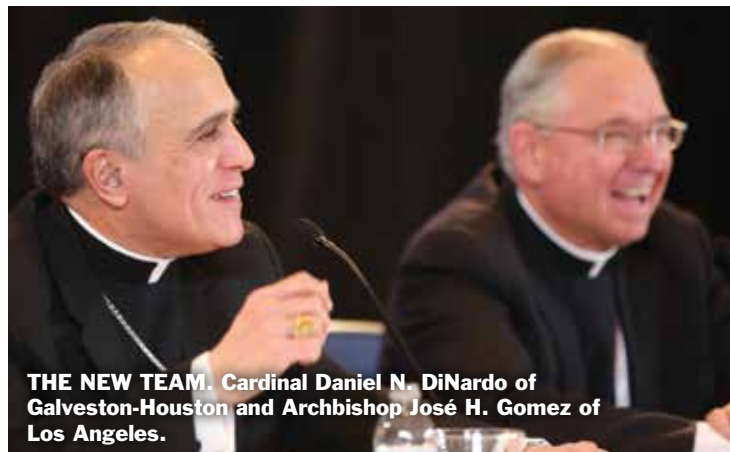
families worried about deportation under President Trump that the church stands with them.

Archbishop Joseph Tobin, who will soon take over the Archdiocese of Newark, urged his brother bishops to promote the pope's message on climate change more robustly given Mr. Trump's sour views on environmental regulation. On another front, Archbishop Wilton Gregory of Atlanta said the bishops must denounce racism in the election's wake.

Just days after the meeting, Archbishop Blase Cupich was in Rome to become a cardinal. Handpicked by the pope himself to serve as archbishop of Chicago, Archbishop Cupich talked to a gaggle of reporters outside the Vatican on Thursday afternoon. He was asked by one to talk about the pope's video message to U.S. bishops, in which the pope urged U.S. Catholics to get out of their comfort zones.

"We really have to make sure that we don't organize our lives, or the church, for our own comfort, for our own needs," Archbishop Cupich said. "But rather we have to be willing to be those missionary disciples and the kind of church that is a field hospital for the world."

The image of a field hospital has been used frequently by the pope,



THE NEW TEAM. Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston and Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles.

and it is one that Archbishop Cupich thinks might be starting to get through to the U.S. hierarchy.

"I know that many bishops did take that to heart as we spoke in the conference following that message," he said.

MICHAEL O'LOUGHLIN

Mercy Continues

In an apostolic letter released at the close of the Holy Year of Mercy on the feast of Christ the King, Nov. 20, Pope Francis called on the Catholic Church worldwide "to promote a culture of mercy in which no one looks at another with indifference or turns away from the suffering of our brothers and sisters." In this 19-page text, called "Misericordia et Misera," ("Mercy and Misery"), the Argentine pope issued a call "to set in motion a real cultural revolution, beginning with simple gestures capable of reaching body and spirit, people's very lives." He sees the urgent need for this in today's world, badly marked by polarization, violence, exclusion and the pathology of indifference. In a decision aimed at healing the grave wound caused by abortion, Francis has given priests worldwide the faculty to pardon the sin of abortion. Pope Francis said "Mercy cannot become a mere parenthesis in the life of the church; it constitutes her very existence, through which the profound truths of the Gospel are made manifest and tangible. Everything is revealed in mercy; everything is resolved in the merciful love of the Father."

'Bad Spirit' in the Church?

The church is not a prop for one's ego, a soapbox for ideas or a suit of armor protecting a sad life, Pope Francis said in an interview published in the

NEWS BRIEFS

As intersecting **international interests collide**, what is unfolding in Syria is a veritable "workshop of cruelty," Pope Francis told governing members of Caritas Internationalis on Nov. 17. • An outspoken priest in Veracruz, Mexico, who had been reported missing on Nov. 11, the Rev. José Luis Sánchez Ruiz was **found alive** by Mexican police two days later, but with injuries consistent with torture. • The Supreme Court of the State of New York ruled on Nov. 17 in favor of the family of **Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen**, allowing the transfer of the remains of the candidate for sainthood from St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York to Peoria, Ill., where he was raised and ordained a priest. • Protests erupted in the Philippines after reports that the remains of former **President Ferdinand Marcos** were flown from Ilocos Norte province on Nov. 18 and secretly given military honors before burial at the nation's Heroes' Cemetery. • The vulnerability of the poor and of future generations to the **impact of climate change** creates a "serious ethical and moral responsibility to act without delay," Pope Francis said in a written message to the conference of the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change in Marrakech, Morocco, on Nov. 15.



A "workshop of cruelty" in Aleppo

Nov. 18 edition of *Avvenire*, an Italian Catholic newspaper. "The church exists only as an instrument for communicating God's merciful plan to the people." While most of the lengthy interview's questions touched on ecumenism and the meaning of the Year of Mercy, the pope's responses revealed his vision of the church and the "bad spirit" or psychological defects that foster division. He said some reactions to his apostolic exhortation, "The Joy of Love," continue to reflect a lack of understanding about how the Holy Spirit has been working in the church since the Second Vatican Council.

Myanmar's Three 'Cs'

Yangon Cardinal Charles Bo said it was time to "reverse the trend" of a 60-year decline in Myanmar, designated the "least-developed country" by the World Bank. At the opening of a na-

tional conference on Nov. 15 aimed at creating a more equitable distribution of wealth in the impoverished country, Cardinal Bo demanded justice from "the three Cs: cronies, companies and countries nearby. Myanmar resource wealth belongs to Myanmar people," said Cardinal Bo. "It does not belong to looters who save money in Singapore and Geneva. We have gathered here to bring the thieves and robbers to accountability." The cardinal spoke at a conference called Myanmar's Resource Wealth: Toward People-Centered National Savings, Benefit Sharing and Social Protection. Among its organizers was a locally based transparency group that has pushed for greater openness in following revenue streams, particularly in the extractive industry, which international agencies have called "infamously opaque."

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

True Stories

The final heart-thumping, made-for-Hollywood-ending to the World Series that handed the fabled Chicago Cubs their first series win in 108 years boosted the spirits of a city thirsting for good news. Just a few days before the “loveable losers” became the nation’s best-loved winners, the city experienced yet another sad marker: 17 people were lost to gun violence in a single weekend.

If you love this city as I do, it would be easy to sink into despair over a statistic like that. But I don’t. That’s because every day, ordinary people are engaged in efforts that add to the soul of the Chicago.

One of them is the sound engineer and videographer Grant Buhr. Mr. Buhr, 37, is the creator of Story Squad, a project of the Youth Safety and Violence Prevention Office of the Y.M.C.A. of Metro Chicago. Story Squad helps young people between the ages of 8 and 19 write, edit and record the stories of how violence changed their lives and how they struggle to heal. Mr. Buhr calls it narrative therapy. He says young people learn and grow through storytelling and that their stories help the rest of us “gain insights all too often missed by adults.”

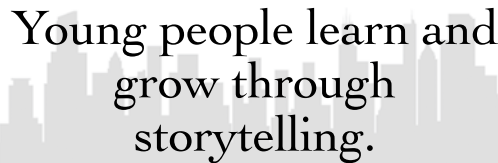
Make no mistake, these narratives are tough to hear. “I was about 7 the first time I got caught in a crossfire,” says one boy. “I didn’t know what to do, so I just stood there.”

The students express themselves in

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

a variety of forms. In a hip-hop poem, a teen named Hakeem raps: “Did you shower last night? Was the water cold as usual?”

A young boy named DeAngelo tells of the night his mother opened their apartment door expecting a visit from friends, only to have robbers force their way in, aim a gun at her head and threaten her children. After the rob-



Young people learn and grow through storytelling.

bery, DeAngelo says, “I was scared to ever go back to sleep.”

In a story called “Girl A, Girl B,” 14-year-old Kayama tells of two very smart girls who both go to a school where “the teachers really don’t want to be there.” One girl is labeled “a good kid,” but the other has a bad temper and she is labeled “a poverty child.”

“Which one do you think I am?” Kayama asks. “I am both.”

She ends her essay with the warning, “Society wants you to think Girl B is a bad person who won’t have a good future. That’s not true.”

A future that is not like their present lives is something Mr. Buhr says he encourages students to envision. The storytelling project includes counseling as well.

Youths explore their emotions, learn to recognize their stress level and practice “self-anchoring skills” that he says will help them avoid committing the kind of violent acts they have wit-

nessed. He points to studies that show 90 percent of the youths in Chicago’s Juvenile Detention Center had experienced some kind of violent trauma.

Mr. Buhr, who grew up in Minneapolis, had a promising career ahead of him as a sound engineer in Los Angeles but took a detour to help make videos of arts programs in Uganda. When he returned to the States, he studied social work at the University of Chicago. An internship led him to the Violence Prevention Office and what has become his ministry and life’s work.

Mr. Buhr says he hopes the stories the youths tell can serve as a springboard to creating the policy changes and programs sorely needed in Chicago’s most troubled neighborhoods. The people with whom students share these stories at public events, he says, are often profoundly affected.

It is perhaps because there is usually a thread of hope in each story. Despite their personal struggles, the teens remind us that Chicago is indeed a beautiful city, both structurally and in spirit. “If you demean Chicago, if you put your city in a negative light, it puts you in a negative light,” one student says in her narrative.

Story Squad is not going to end the violence, but its stories are like the *luminaria* at Christmastime that line the front walks of many homes in Chicago’s Latino neighborhoods. Each adds its small beam of light to the sum of light in parts of the city too often overshadowed by sorrow. “These are small individual efforts, but when taken together,” Mr. Buhr says, “they make a larger ripple in healing the pain of our city.”

You can listen to Story Squad’s young people tell their own stories at <https://soundcloud.com/ysvp>.

JUDITH VALENTE



In the Time of Trump

The pundits and columnists, including this one, got it wrong. A nation deeply divided by race, class, ethnicity, education and sex gave Hillary Clinton the most votes and Donald J. Trump the presidency. Mr. Trump's behavior and Mrs. Clinton's campaign convinced Americans that he lacked the temperament to be president, but they did not trust her or believe she would bring needed change. Mr. Trump got fewer votes than did Romney, but Mrs. Clinton got fewer among African-Americans, Latinos and young people than did Obama in 2012. Donald Trump beat the Bushes, the Obamas and the Clintons. He is our president, needs our prayers and should not be underestimated.

This is the most improbable election since a Jesuit from Argentina was elected pope. President Trump and Pope Francis are both improbable outsiders, but could not be more different. Francis began by calling himself a "sinner"; Donald Trump campaigned as a "winner" who had never asked God for forgiveness. Francis brought his humble ways; Mr. Trump boasted about everything, including his predatory sexual behavior. Francis brought Syrian refugees to the Vatican; Mr. Trump promised to ban them from America. Mr. Trump is a convert on abortion but advocates the use of torture and the death penalty.

Francis came to Washington calling for prioritizing the poor and vulnerable, welcoming immigrants and caring for creation. Mr. Trump will come to Washington in two months pledging

to cut taxes mostly for the rich, deport immigrants and repeal environmental protections. When asked about Mr. Trump's immigration wall, Pope Francis said Christians build bridges, not walls. After the election, Francis said, "I do not pass judgement on... politicians, I just want to understand what are the sufferings that their way of proceeding causes to the poor and the excluded."

These different visions create divergent choices and challenges for American Catholics. How we deal with these contradictions will test our faith, identity and integrity. Some divisions are already clear. Sixty percent of white Catholics supported Mr. Trump, and 67 percent of Latino Catholics supported Mrs. Clinton.

These conflicts challenge Catholic leadership, whether Republicans or Democrats, in different ways. If Mr. Trump keeps his commitments, bishops will not need to defend the Hyde Amendment or federal conscience clauses. They must protect human life and dignity in other ways if the new administration tries to undermine the safety net or access to health care, reinstate torture or abandon environmental protections. Mr. Trump has demonized immigrants and refugees and called for massive deportations and bans based on religion. Archbishop Gomez offers an example of how the bishops need to defend the lives and dignity of immigrants, refugees and Muslims as clearly as they have defended the religious freedom of the Little Sisters of the Poor.

Catholic Republicans need to ensure

that Mr. Trump honors his pledges on abortion and religious liberty at home and abroad. They should resist other policies that would hurt the poor or threaten global solidarity and peace. They especially need to address the vulnerability and anxiety generated by a campaign that fanned racial fears, scapegoated immigrants, demeaned women and won with mostly white, mostly male voters. Can they persuade their party to act on poverty and criminal justice reform, voting rights and compassionate immigration policies?

President Trump and Pope Francis are both improbable outsiders.

Catholic Democrats need to take on the liberal identity politics that failed to respond to the pain of working-class families and a Clinton campaign that called voters "irredeemable" and rarely even said the word *poor*. They should make clear that a party that makes "reproductive rights" a centerpiece and overcoming poverty an afterthought does not appeal to Catholic values and hopes. Can they help their party recover its voice and refocus its priorities on workers and poor families, on environmental and economic justice over culture war issues?

All Catholics, whatever their party or ideology, should remember that the moral test of our nation is how the weakest are faring. We should recall Pope Francis' moral challenge in our Capitol "to defend and preserve the dignity of your fellow citizens in the tireless and demanding pursuit of the common good."

JOHN CARR

JOHN CARR is director of the Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life at Georgetown University.

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After November

Catholics respond to the unexpected election of Donald J. Trump.

In the early hours of Wednesday, Nov. 9, Donald J. Trump was elected the 45th president of the United States. Despite polls throughout the campaign showing Catholics breaking for his opponent, Hillary Clinton, come election night, a majority of Catholics—52 percent—voted for Mr. Trump. Here are some Catholic reactions to the Republican candidate's upset victory. Additional commentary can be found at americamagazine.org.

Hillary Clinton's Legacy

I never thought Hillary Clinton would be a shoo-in as president. Coming after two terms of a Democratic president in the White House, she was always a long shot. What has surprised me about the presidential election is not her losing it but my own strong reaction to it.

I was not a totally enthusiastic Clinton supporter. I thought her too cagey and political to ever be forthright about what she really believed and, worse, too hawkish. Her secretiveness and lack of trust in other people were constantly boomeranging on her, creating unnecessary problems. The private server to handle her email as secretary of state seemed typical of other incidents that generated suspicion and sprang from an unwarranted need to control.

And yet I liked Hillary Clinton. I never understood why more people didn't or why they said they could not warm to her.

There has been a lot of talk this year about the grievances of white working-class men. They have them, surely, and they deserve attention, surely. But the economic discontent of the white working class does not explain why Donald J. Trump will be our next president. He did not offer any realistic policy proposals that would improve their circumstances, and millions of people who are not disadvantaged blue-collar workers voted for him rather than for Mrs. Clinton.

I do not think most people who voted for Mr. Trump did so because they are virulently racist or Islamophobic or hateful, although they may not mind his shout-outs to that crowd. I think they voted for him because Mrs. Clinton was the establishment candidate and he promised change, and they were sufficiently mesmerized by the mantra of "change" to take a flying leap into the unknown. Even more important, I think they voted for him because, presented with a choice of the smart, capable, well-spoken girl in the class who gets straight A's or the loudmouth boy who makes outrageous, offensive remarks and serves as class clown, they chose the boy. They chose him because he was the boy. Millions of men, and no doubt some women too, do not want a woman as president and are uncomfortable with a woman as boss. The election results say more about the enduring presence of sexism in our society than about policies or even populism.

Hillary Clinton's concession speech spoke to both the high ideals expressed in our Constitution and the aspirations of women and girls. It was thoughtful; it was gracious; it was moving; it was inspiring. I know I am not the only



CNS PHOTO/PATRICK T. FALLON, REUTERS

woman who teared up when reading it. I wish she could have given more speeches like that during her campaign. Would it have changed anything? I don't know that it would have. Too many American men are not ready for a female president.

MARGOT PATTERSON is a writer who lives in Kansas City, Mo.

Trump Has Given Us an Opportunity

Donald J. Trump's election is a jolt, one that presents a rare opportunity to lay aside the worn pages of our ideological script, see our problems afresh and shift old political alignments.

The alt-right has cast a pall over Mr. Trump's victory, and it is tempting to dismiss his entire coalition as rotten to the core with racism, sexism and nativism. But that would be a mistake. Both data and anecdote reveal voters who supported President Obama previously and Mr. Trump this time. We can learn from Mr. Trump's coalition, even if some in it really are "deplorable." We can especially learn from the men and women of the Midwest, where Mr. Trump's most surprising victories occurred, where voters fled the liberalism of the Democratic Party but did not necessarily do so for conservative reasons. The American electorate gave us a populist president. Seeking the best of what is possible, my hope is that if we heed the lesson of Nov. 8, the next four years might make America greater by renewing the centrality in our national life of the poor and the family.

The family, nuclear and extended—not the individual—is the fundamental social unit, and its health is an index for society. Hyper-focus on individuals has for too long made us blind to enormous problems in our society. Isolation and disconnectedness may well be the public health crisis of our time.

Signs are everywhere. Even as material well-being increases, suicides are rising across nearly all demographic categories and life expectancy among some groups, particularly white men, threatens to fall, a development without precedent. Less than half of children are raised in a home with both their parents. Last year saw over 47,000 deaths from opioid drug overdose and the numbers are rising, especially in places such

as Michigan, Ohio, Indiana and Pennsylvania. Homelessness bedevils our cities even as some theorize that its root cause is not mental illness or drug use but the breakdown of the family. And, of course, more unborn lives are lost through abortion

than from any single cause of death for those outside the womb—and in many cases abortion is an act of desperation that comes from a feeling of helplessness and despondency.

Beneath the surface of the populist wave are the cold waters of diminished life prospects. Both parties tell us that globalization ultimately benefits everyone. The Rust Belt disagrees, and so a Republican won Pennsylvania for the first time since the 1980s by calling for economic nationalism over free trade. My view is that the nationalist reaction is less an argument about trade policy than it is about whole communities feeling used and abandoned. While I doubt the jobs can be brought back, I do not doubt that the plight of workers in this region is real, and my hope is that President-elect Trump—having won because of them—will earnestly work to respond to the very real problems of entire communities hollowed out by the vicissitudes of global trade and technological advance. He has made promises to do what Democrats and Republicans have not been able to do, and all of us should hold him accountable.

KEVIN E. STUART is the executive director of the Austin Institute for the Study of Family & Culture in Austin, Tex.

Meeting Our Neighbors

The political left is ashamed to share the same homeland, let alone neighborhood, with Trump voters. In response, they resolve to protect those made vulnerable by a Trump presidency. They vow support for racial and religious minorities and victims of sexual violence.

Rolling up our sleeves for the least among us is at the heart of Catholic social teaching. If we are not yet exercising a preferential option for those made vulnerable by a Trump presidency, we must absolutely do so now. If we voted for Donald J. Trump, our responsibility is even greater.

Yet we must recognize that many Trump voters do not fit, or even endorse, the categories laid out for them. It's necessary to ask the hard question, "What moves them?" This is the work of solidarity, which recognizes our common humanity in Christ in spite of every kind of difference. Solidarity is bound to the preferential option for the poor and vulnerable. It must be, since both are rooted in love of neighbor.

In the case of President-elect Trump, solidarity means seeking to know the undesirable neighbor, and this search will certainly end in a *mea culpa*. In particular, we must be open to acknowledging that Mr. Trump's election delivered a condemnation of the intellectual and cultural elitism that has incensed many voters.

Intellectual elitism contents itself with dismissing beliefs without unpacking them. One example is the assumption that traditional views on marriage, sexuality and life are so outdated and irrelevant that they do not deserve engaging.



Opposite, top: Ernesto Vega of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles listens as Archbishop José H. Gomez leads an interfaith prayer service for the immigrant community on Nov. 10 at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels in Los Angeles.

Left: People protest outside Trump Tower in New York City on Nov. 9 following Donald J. Trump's election

Sociocultural elitism manifests itself in the term “flyover states,” in classist jabs that pass as jokes and in conclusions we draw about Associated Press photos of people at Trump rallies. Most of all, elitism asserts that those who think differently have nothing to contribute to the development of the society, and they are better off if enlightened progressives decide what is good for society, at least until they get on board. We need to call this elitism what it is: a failure of charity that, much like the worst of the Trump campaign, communicates that the “other” is unwelcome and undesirable.

We must replace these failures of love with the understanding that half of Americans espouse political concerns that differ greatly from the ones progressives embrace. We must recognize that while some Trump voters really are terrible people, most are good people with good reasons for their values, people who are sick of being told their voices do not matter because they hum church hymns and eat at Red Lobster.

Joining the work of solidarity with the work of the preferential option is critical for people of faith. It is what people of faith can offer to a wounded country. There are some neighbors we love, and others we do not know. It is time to meet those neighbors. And maybe love them.

JANE SLOAN PETERS is a second year doctoral student in historical theology at Marquette University.

Students of Color Face a Trump Presidency

Tonight, as a tenured faculty member, I make my way to the back and find a seat, because this is their night. The organizing student group, Black Student Union, has called this emergency meeting, but it is clear that “everybody” is here, a variety of colors and faces so beautiful it fills my eyes with tears.

Some sit as they speak, their voices quiet; others stand, owning the room. Comments are sprinkled with nervous laughter and often greeted with approving finger snaps. Some weep openly as they speak; others are defiant. The adults in the room listen attentively.

This is a summary of their major concerns, which need to become our most urgent concerns, too. The country is extraordinarily divided. Is there any way back from such polarization? How can there be, they ask, when the issues dividing us are so vital and so personal? They point out the fear of exclusion of L.G.B.T.Q. people and their basic human dignity. They speak vehemently about experiences of Islamophobia and the demonizing of Muslims. One young woman speaks through tears about her experience as a survivor of sexual assault and the terror of knowing that rape culture has now been normalized. “I don’t know who I can trust anymore,” she cries.

Then the room is electrified by the testimony of young undocumented students standing in front of hundreds of

DIGITAL HIGHLIGHTS

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◀ DISPATCHES

Jim McDermott, S.J., reports on the response of police and education officials in L.A. to Donald Trump’s promised crackdown on undocumented immigrants.

VIDEO

America reports from Rome, where three Americans were made cardinals on Nov. 19: Archbishop Blase J. Cupich, Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin and Bishop Kevin J. Farrell.

PODCAST

Eileen Markey speaks to Kerry Weber and Matt Malone, S.J., about her latest book, *Radical Faith: The Assassination of Sister Maura*.

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their peers, shaking and sharing. "I am a senior, and I am undocumented." This is a student leader who two weeks ago was at the helm of a highly successful event to raise funds for breast cancer research. She explains that if President-elect Trump rescinds the Deferred Action for Early Childhood Arrivals, or D.A.C.A., there will be direct consequences for her. Her study abroad semester, the first time she would ever be out of the country in her life, will be cancelled, as will her work study and her job outside of campus, because her work permit will be taken away. More frightening still, the knowledge that they are now in a government database. The adults in the room hang our heads. A while back when the students expressed fear about going through the process we assured them to go through it, confident in the decency and fairness of our system. Now, no longer anonymous, they know the deportation force promised by the new president-elect could come for them.

Just then, one young woman stands. I was with her the night of the election. She is diminutive, an honor student, an extraordinary writer and she is also "undocu" as she calls herself, eschewing the name Dream-er because it doesn't include her family. On election night, feeling the painful sting of the country she so much loves rejecting her, she wept and wondered how quickly her family might flee. Yet, tonight, surrounded by the love of her fellow students, she stands up and declares, "I'm not going anywhere!" The applause can be heard reverberating through the entire campus.

CECILIA GONZÁLEZ-ANDRIEU is an associate professor of theological studies at Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, Calif.

Praying for an Imperfect President

As a conservative who has spent the last year opposing Donald J. Trump, I have some advice for my friends to the political left of me. Do not play the game in which you reject the legitimacy of Mr. Trump as president.

I still think he is unfit for office. But the U.S. founders knew they were building a republican system that would check executive power. In fact, were it not for the immense admiration the founders had for George Washington, the United States might not even have had a president.

Since the end of the 20th century, we have experienced the expansion of the executive power. Some have called it the cult of the presidency or simply the imperial presidency. Liberals were happy when Barack Obama was the emperor but now are beside themselves at the prospect of President-elect Trump wielding that same power. My advice to liberals is simple: Recapture a belief in limited government, separation of powers and civic responsibility to resist unjust laws.

Intelligent conservatives did an enormous amount of soul-searching this year. I really hope intelligent liberals will start doing the same. Maybe ditch the whole progressive project to transform traditional faith? Stop promoting



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abortion? Knock it off with the identity politics? Stop calling anyone and everyone who supports traditional values a bigot and deplorable. Remember that history doesn't have sides, and nothing is inevitable. Having a majority does not make something true or good.

I opposed Mr. Trump in the primaries. I opposed him in the general election. But nothing would please me more than to be wrong about him.

Mr. Trump is America's biggest gamble. It's worth remem-



Terry Mendoza and Margery Simchak in Phoenix watch as President-elect Donald Trump gives his acceptance speech in New York in the early morning hours of Nov. 9.

bering that it is really only desperate people who are willing to gamble so much. We all must address the real distress that underlies the choice for Mr. Trump. I encourage everyone to set aside thinking that the millions of Trump voters who voted for Mr. Obama twice are racist xenophobes. There are racists and xenophobes. The alt-right ethnonationalists are a small but real presence. They are not how Mr. Trump got elected. Mr. Trump was elected by ordinary Americans, many struggling in the Midwest and the Rust Belt, who have been exhausted by socially liberal elitism and by neoliberal policies that served the 1 percent better than the 99 percent.

Though a dark horse destroyer of norms and conventions, we must pray that Mr. Trump's vulgar ambition and vanity will be a check upon his excesses and that, surrounded by people better than him, his own actions will be turned to the common good. More important, we have to pray that ordinary citizens will turn to the common good as well, working to build a better life on the ground for all our neighbors so that they don't go looking for blunt instruments again.

C. C. PECKNOLD is an associate professor of systematic theology at the Catholic University of America. Twitter: @ccpecknold.

Our Election, Our President

There is a story about the "Saturday Night Live" actor Chris Farley's time as a student at Marquette University that has been running through my mind as I've thought about our presidential election.

Apparently one night he and some of his roommates went out and really tied one on. When they got home, Farley crashed hard. Meanwhile his roommates got some permanent marker and wrote on him, then followed up by wiping food all over him, stuff like butter, potato chips, leftover pizza.

The next morning, when Farley got up and came out of his room, everyone was waiting, anticipating his reaction. But Farley just poured himself a bowl of cereal and sat down with them to watch TV, like nothing had happened.

Before long his roommates started to get irritated—not only because he was not giving them what they wanted but because he was still covered in all that food. It was dripping off him. He stank of it. It was disgusting.

So someone told him he needed to get up and take a shower. But he just looked at them and smiled.

"Oh no," he said. "You made me. You live with me."

I had been using that story as an analogy to electing Donald J. Trump. You elect the guy who has said and done the things he has said and done, you had better be prepared to live in the America he creates.

But in the wash of emotion and confusion that was the day after the election, it strikes me that maybe that story is actually not about electing Mr. Trump, but about the United States—how we as a country have allowed large parts of our nation to become both more and more disenfranchised and more and more comfortable with prejudice and misinformation.

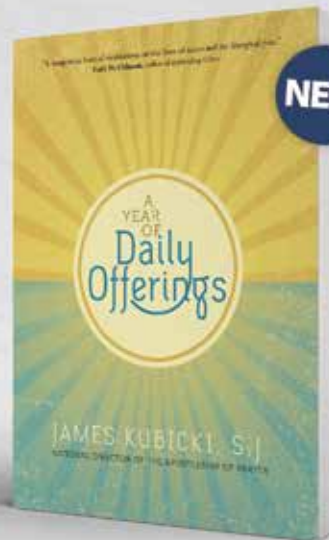
Some are arguing the election is a repudiation of "liberal elites" and their "arrogant dismissal of the common man." But to believe that is to ignore that much of what those "elite" voters fight for are things like justice for all and the protection of our weakest and most vulnerable. It is also to miss that Mr. Trump's election equally repudiates the nation's right wing.

It is the entirety of the establishment that has been condemned and what is perceived as their disinterest or just plain hostility toward the concerns of many, many Americans. And not just white male working class Americans, either. As "Saturday Night Live" demonstrated so perceptively in its recent Black Jeopardy sketch, in many ways the insights and anxieties of Trump supporters are exactly the same as those of low-income African-Americans.

Over the course of a generation at least, we have allowed this mess, if not helped to create it. Now we have to live with it.

JIM McDERMOTT, S.J., is America's Los Angeles correspondent. Twitter: @PopCulturPriest.

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The Faces of Courage

Fortitude requires endurance and patience.

BY RAYMOND A. SCHROTH

One afternoon in 1977, I was coming home from Manhattan to Fordham University in the Bronx. I got off the train at the Fordham Road station and looked for the hole in the fence that separated the station platform from the campus. Suddenly, I was attacked by two men who ran down from the trestle that crosses the tracks. One shoved a knife against my chest, the other held one to my throat.

Naïvely, I suggested that they were robbing a priest, as if that would be bad luck. They responded with one word: “Money!” They took my money, my watch and my keys and fled. I pursued them, hoping that I might catch up with them on the street where the police could intervene. But no luck. I was reduced to paging through an album at the police station but did not recognize my attackers. The next day a reporter from the student newspaper asked me if I had been frightened during this ordeal. I answered with a straight face that I thought I was “incapable of physical fear.”

This got some laughs in the Jesuit community, as if I were laying claim to superhuman powers. But I have never considered myself a particularly brave man. It is only that I have been trained to keep my cool in crises.

Fear No One

If I do have the trait of bravery, I attribute it to how my father struggled to raise my younger brother Dave and me. One day at my grammar school, a couple of classmates started shoving me around for fun; when they spotted my father coming down the street, they ran. My father was angry not at them but at me, for letting them push me around. So we went home and put the gloves on. A few months later I came home and announced that I had been in a fight, and he was very happy.

He was a World War I hero, football player, boxer, canoeist, hiker, swimmer, horseman and polo player as well as a full-time journalist, and he was raising his sons to do all those things. We had a speed bag (as well as a pool table) in the basement, and we would stand on a chair to beat the heck out of it: *bamity, bamity, bam, bam*. For our boxing skills, the

three of us would put on huge gloves, Dad would get down on his knees so we would all be the same size, and David and I would both attack him at once, swinging away madly. Dad would laugh so hard he would almost topple over. But he was accomplishing his goal and sending a message: Fear no one. Do not let anybody push you around.

I also learned self-control when, in the seventh grade on a hike in the woods with pals, playing sword fights with sticks,

I got stabbed in the eye, cutting the iris. For what seemed like weeks I had to lie immobile in a hospital bed, bricks on either side of my head to keep me still, as the stitches healed. In darkness, both eyes covered, I listened to radio soap operas.

At 15, at a summertime horse camp, I was given charge of a lively Tennessee walking horse named Dusky, who one day on a cross-country ride took off at top speed and ran away with me. As we sped down the narrow country dirt road, I saw a huge truck coming right at us, leaving almost no room for a galloping horse and rider. I thought I might die, but I do not recall being afraid. Fortunately, Dusky knew better than to crash into the truck. He just slid by on the side without breaking his stride. Eventually I took both reins in my left hand and yanked them hard enough that he stopped. We stayed friends, and today I have one of his shoes on my shelf in remembrance.

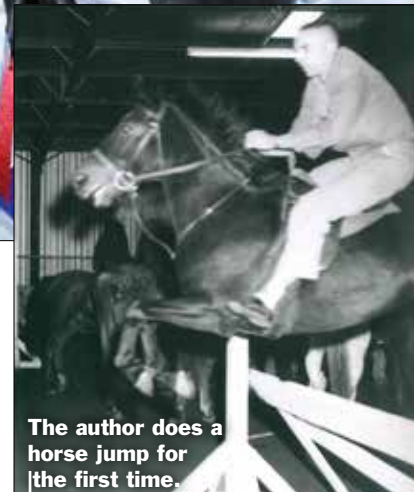
My model for courage was, of course, my father, who took the whole family to movies on Friday nights like the biopic of Woodrow Wilson or Gary Cooper as “Sergeant York.” On my own I loved the British Empire films like “Gunga Din,” “Lives of the Bengal Lancers” and above all “The Four Feathers.” That is the one in which a soldier named Harry Faversham resigns his commission rather than go with his regiment to fight an uprising in Egypt and is given four white feathers by his army comrades and fiancée as symbols of his cowardice. He then goes to the war in disguise to return the feathers as he saves the lives of each of them. As I got older I took opportunities that involved some risk—like working on the Alaskan railroad between Anchorage and Fairbanks, until I was fired for being too young (17) and later traveling alone in Europe, Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, Indonesia, Vietnam and especially Iraq right after the 1990 Gulf War.

‘Look fear in the face....
You must do the thing you
think you cannot do.’
—Eleanor Roosevelt

RAYMOND A. SCHROTH, S.J., is literary editor of *America*.



BRAVE MEN. Vietnam War veterans among other guests listen to U.S. President Barack Obama at the Memorial Day observance May 30 at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia.



The author does a horse jump for the first time.

But the more I traveled and studied—and above all the more I witnessed the politics of public life, where I saw some men and women embrace risk for the good of others, while so many turned their backs on the sufferings of their neighbors—the more I yearned for a deeper understanding of this most elusive of virtues.

What Is Courage?

Fortitude, which is what Josef Pieper in *The Four Cardinal Virtues* calls courage, is easier to describe than to define. It presupposes vulnerability. An angel cannot be brave because an angel cannot be hurt. So fortitude is the readiness to die. This often means the readiness to fall in battle. But for Christian fortitude, the ultimate achievement is martyrdom, which may be suffered but not sought. “Suffering for its own sake,” says Pieper, is nonsense.

The essence of fortitude, concludes Pieper, “is neither attack nor self-confidence, nor wrath, but endurance and patience.” Christ described his followers as “sheep among wolves,” but he and the early Christians were not meek lambs on the way to slaughter. Jesus drove the moneychangers from the temple, and when the servant of the high priest slapped him in the face, he demanded to know why the servant had done so. When the same thing happened to Paul (Acts 23:3),

the apostle snapped back, “It is God that will smite thee for the whitened wall that thou art.” In short, Christians are not passive in the face of death. They know that a life of selfless giving, of love poured out, of non-crippling fear, may be painful and brief, but they embrace it.

When I took my final vows as a Jesuit in 1976, I selected Lk 6:6-11 for the reading at the Mass. Teaching in the synagogue on the Sabbath, Jesus sees a man whose right hand is withered; he also sees the Pharisees, his enemies, watching to see whether he will cure the man and thus violate the Sabbath law. They are looking for ammunition. He invites the man to come forward, looks around at all of them and says to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” The hand is restored. And Jesus’ death warrant will soon be served.

Intellectual Voices

In Immanuel Kant’s essay “What Is Enlightenment?” the phrase “man’s emergence from his self-imposed nonage” refers to the immaturity of youth, the age before one assumes the obligations of an adult. Kant argues that because of la-

ziness and cowardice, “a large part of mankind gladly remain minors all their lives.” Karl Rahner includes courage in his reflections on hope in *The Practice of Faith: A Handbook of Contemporary Spirituality*. Like Pieper and others, he places courage in the context of other virtues. He admits, “It is difficult to say what is courage” because it is related to the totality of human existence, not to just one or another thing we might do. Courage is required, he says, when we measure the distance between ourselves and a particular goal. To bridge that distance, often we must call upon what we name the courage of hope.

We would be lost without Shakespeare, whose old Falstaff, misguiding mentor for Prince Hal in “Henry IV, Part II,” measures the quality of battlefield courage with liquor the knight has consumed. He praises “sherris,” which “warms the blood and illumines the face.” When the king dies, Prince Hal cuts off Falstaff—“I know thee not, old man”—and transforms himself into Henry V, who at the Battle of Agincourt delivers the most stirring call to courage in literature: “We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;/ For he today that sheds his blood with me/ Shall be my brother..../ And gentlemen in England now a-bed/ Shall think themselves accursed they were not here,/ And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks/ That fought with us upon St. Crispin’s day.”

This is not the definition of courage; it is Henry’s rhetoric

to inspire his troops. And it was the definition most likely shared not only by Shakespeare’s audience but by the generations inspired by films like “The Four Feathers.” It held until a pacifism movement developed to oppose World War I, and Erich Maria Remarque’s novel *All Quiet on the Western Front* (and its film version) depicted the war’s madness and tragedy. During the Vietnam War, Daniel Berrigan, S.J., and his followers helped to redefine courage as they risked their careers, reputations and freedom to demonstrate the immorality of that particular war. Father Berrigan’s acts were dramatic and effective, as when he burned draft cards with napalm, the same weapon used to burn down villages in Vietnam. Like the ancient Christian martyrs and the early-17th-century North American Jesuits, they taught the virtues they represented by offering public witness.

Courage also is featured in modern newspapers and magazines. Men’s Health magazine (November 2015) featured three men who demonstrate that “[t]here is more than one kind of courage.” The feature included a firefighter who rescued a 7-month-old girl from a fire and rushed her to the hospital, his fifth such rescue in seven months; an Iraq war veteran suffering from battle fatigue who pulled himself together through therapy, then founded a fitness franchise focused on the physical and mental health of fellow veterans; and a 28-year-old, muscular man who transitioned from being a woman, survived a suicide attempt and founded

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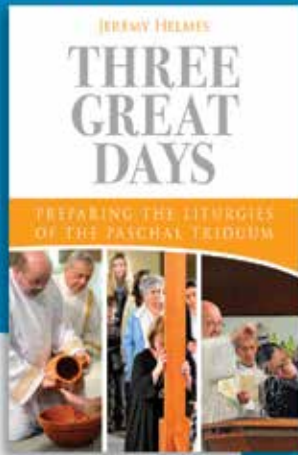


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Heroes in Battle

Perhaps the best way to define courage is to live it. In a German prison camp 71 years ago, a Nazi guard pointed his pistol in the face of U.S. Master Sergeant Roddie Edmonds and demanded that he reveal which of his fellow prisoners were Jews. "We are all Jews here," Edmonds replied. He ordered the more than 1,000 prisoners under his command to stand together before their barracks. The Geneva Convention does not require revealing one's religion, and the guard knew that if he killed them all he could be tried for war crimes. Edmonds thus saved an estimated 200 Jewish lives. He was recently honored by President Obama.

There are other examples of real heroes. Senator John McCain recently wrote a column in *The New York Times* (3/25) paying tribute to Delmer Berg, a Communist and the last known living member of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, 3,000 soldiers, mostly Americans, who fought in the Spanish Civil War in 1937 and 1938. Mr. McCain has admired veterans of that war since he was 12, when he read Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. In the novel, the hero, Robert Jordan, chooses, as Senator McCain writes, "to die to save the poor Spanish souls he fought beside and for." Then there is Hector A. Cafferata, who died last March at 86; he won the Congressional Medal of Honor during the Korean War by single-handedly defending his position and killing an estimated 100 Communist Chinese troops. Citations often refer to the number of enemy killed, but the heroic element here is that he accomplished this mission alone.

Finally, I recently discovered the story of Viola Liuzzo, a Unitarian mother of five from Michigan, who traveled to Selma, Ala., in 1965 to support the civil rights marchers there by shuttling them to and from the protest scene. A carload of four members of the Ku Klux Klan pursued her and shot her dead.

A few months ago, I turned again to John F. Kennedy's *Profiles in Courage* (1956). Kennedy demonstrated his own bravery as a P.T. boat commander during World War II, but his models were a dozen or so 19th- and 20th-century political leaders who dared to speak and vote according to their consciences, at the risk of alienating their constituencies. They would rather lose an election than compromise their principles. One example was the conservative Republican Senator George Norris of Nebraska, who was pilloried by the leadership and the voters of his own party for supporting Al Smith, a Democrat and a Roman Catholic, for president in 1928. When Norris died in 1932, Franklin D. Roosevelt paid tribute, saying, "History asks, 'Did the man have integrity?'" The man did.

During the past decade the headlines have bled. More

Americans have died by gunfire than were killed in combat during World War II. Most killings were by family members or neighbors, but the mass slaughters in schools, movie theaters, malls, churches and nightclubs by angry men with guns have terrorized the population. Yet the majority of senators and U.S. representatives have refused to control the distribution of even the most murderous of weapons. Integrity? I think not.

To be a brave man or woman, whether deliberately or not, is to touch the face of God. In a list of "Six Attributes of Courage" by the California clinical psychologist Melanie Greenberg, the last two concern standing up for what is right and facing suffering with dignity or faith. I emphasize these because those who do not fight wars, crime or fires can still risk defending an innocent person, deal with their own pain or approaching death or console a dying friend.

Each of us has faced crises in our lives and remember who stood up for us and who did not, and we have missed opportunities at meetings or in conversations to defend a victim of prejudice or misunderstanding because we were afraid. But Pope Francis once called to courage a crowd from the Focolare Movement gathering in Rome to celebrate Earth Day: "We must not be afraid to go into a desert in order to transform it into a forest." Even if it's "messy," "that's the way life is." Meanwhile, let us meet our muggers with grace—and forgiveness. **A**



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Francis the Preacher

Pope Francis responded to several questions in the fascinating conversation with Antonio Spadaro, S.J., that introduces the new 1,000-page book *Nei Tuoi Occhi È La Mia Parola*, comprising his principal homilies and talks as archbishop of Buenos Aires. Two relate to the liturgy: how he prepares his homily, and why he says it is “an error” to speak of “the reform of the reform” of the liturgy. I will focus on the first here and the second next week.

In his programmatic document “The Joy of the Gospel,” Francis devotes several pages to the homily. Describing it as an “important ministry,” he labels it as “the touchstone for judging a pastor’s closeness and ability to communicate to his people.” The faithful “attach great importance to it,” he writes, but “both they and their ordained ministers suffer because of homilies: the laity from having to listen to them and the clergy from having to preach them!” (No. 135).

Referring to this “sad” situation and speaking from decades of experience, Francis affirms that “the homily can actually be an intense and happy experience of the Spirit, a consoling encounter with God’s word, a constant source of renewal and growth.” It can “set hearts on fire,” as Jesus did when he spoke with the disheartened disciples who were leaving Jerusalem for Emmaus after the events of Good Friday and Easter morning.

As pope, Francis has shown how this can happen with his morning homilies, which he delivers without reading from a prepared text. And for the first time in history, all these closely watched homilies are recorded by Vatican Radio, frequently reported by the media and now made available in book form.

“What is the secret?” Father Spadaro asked the pope. Francis revealed his method: “I begin at midday, the day before. I read the Scripture texts of the following day, and I choose one of the two. I then read aloud the text I have chosen. I need to hear the sound, to listen to the words. And then I underline, in the notebook that I use, the words that struck me most. I circle the words that hit me. During the rest of the day, as I do what I have to do, the words and thoughts come and go. I meditate, reflect, savor the things....”

He admitted that “there are days when I reach the evening and nothing has come to mind, and I have no idea what I will say the following day.” On such occasions, he said, “I do what St. Ignatius said: I sleep on it. And then, suddenly, when I wake up, the inspiration comes. The right things come, sometimes strong, other times weaker. But it is this way, and I feel ready.”

Francis emphasized, however, that besides creativity there are two other essential elements that help a priest prepare his homily. First, “listen to the lives of people. If you do not listen to people, how can you preach?” he asked. “The closer you are to peo-

ple, the better you will preach or bring the word of God nearer their lives. In this way, you link the word of God to a human experience that has need of this word.” But, he remarked, “The more distant you are from people and their problems, the more you will take refuge in a theology that is framed as ‘You must,’ and ‘You must not,’ which communicates nothing, which is empty, abstract, lost in nothing, in thoughts. At such times we respond with our words to questions that nobody is asking.”

He recalled that Jesus was “in contact with people” when he spoke; his homilies “are direct, concrete: he spoke of things that the farmers and the shepherds knew well from experience. He did not use abstract concepts.”

Francis identified a second essential element: “To preach to people it is necessary to look at them, to know how to look and how to listen, to enter into the ebb and flow of their lives, to immerse oneself in them,” to be “in contact with them, touch them, caress them” or “in silence look into their eyes.”

He is against reading the homily from a prepared text “because if you are reading, you are not looking into the eyes of people.” He considers it important “to look into the eyes” of the people to whom one is preaching, or at least into the eyes of one person.

With these hints, Francis has shared his secret to good preaching.

GERARD O’CONNELL

“To preach
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to look at
them.”

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

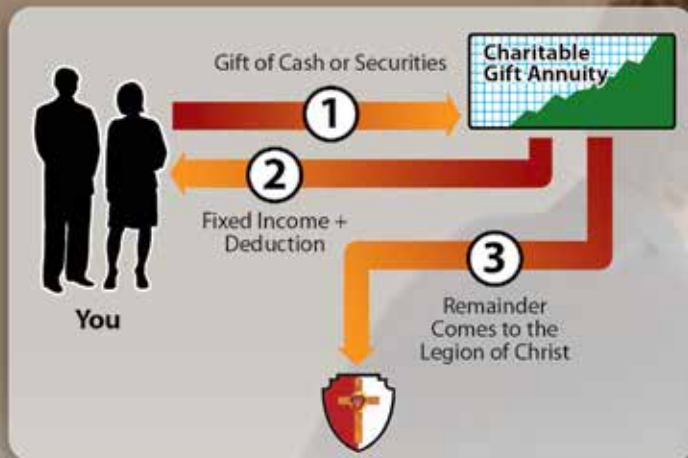
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Exploring God's Call

A journey in Christian Life Community

BY ANN MARIE BRENNAN

In 1986, as a 24-year-old recent graduate of New York University, excited by life's possibilities and just engaged to be married, I was searching for ways to be more aware of and responsive to God's call. I was seeking deeper meaning in my life, a way to tap into God's life force ("The Empire Strikes Back" was an influence here) and a way to make my faith life come alive in my daily life.

My then-fiancé, now-husband, Patrick, was highly supportive. As we explored possible ways to cultivate our spiritual lives together, we researched a few lay orders. Pat, a graduate of Xavier High School in New York City, suggested that we try to find a Jesuit third order. Shortly after that, the director of a diocesan-sponsored spirituality program recommended the

Christian Life Community. The Jesuit moderator of C.L.C. in New York City, Dan Fitzpatrick, S.J., was teaching a course in that program, and two members of C.L.C. were in my class. It was a serendipitous find.

With several other classmates, we learned about the Christian Life Community and joined our first group in Westchester County, just north of the city. The group consisted of a mix of ages and callings. There were three couples with teenage children, several single women, a couple from Italy and Pat and I in our 20s. Meeting twice a month in alternating homes, the group was a place to bring focus to the deeper meaning of daily activities, to center ourselves in God, to share where we were finding God, and to pray and celebrate Mass together.

Recognizing the call to share our wonderful experience of C.L.C. with others, Pat and I started a second group of young families in St. Margaret's Parish in Riverdale, N.Y., in 1991. The meetings were held after Sunday Mass, and we arranged child care so that young parents could attend. Group meetings served as a

refuge of sorts to regroup and nourish one another in spirit. We supported one another in our experiences related to our various ministries, jobs, raising children and the personal struggles of daily life. The group listened and accompanied members in discerning major decisions, like the adoption of a child, a transition from the corporate world to teaching or a vocation to be a permanent deacon.

I went through a few discernments in accepting leadership roles within the Christian Life Community at national and international levels as well as at my current job as a mathematics teacher at St. Joseph Regional High School in Montvale, N.J. My husband also discerned a move from a career in consulting and finance to the non-profit sector. The C.L.C. guided our lives during these moments, helping us to listen and respond to God's promptings in our lives. Through this approach, C.L.C. became a safe and supportive place to express desolations and consolations among trusted companions, holding one another's truths in great confidence.

Later, we formed our third group,

Above: The author, center, at a St. Catharine C.L.C. group meeting in May 2016.

ANN MARIE BRENNAN is a high school mathematics teacher at St. Joseph Regional High School in Montvale, N.J. She and her husband, Pat, have four children and live in Glen Rock, N.J. She currently serves on the World Executive Council for Christian Life Community.

with six couples, in St. Catharine's Parish in Glen Rock, N.J. This group has been actively engaged in all kinds of parish activities, like pre-Cana and the parish elementary school. The more I learned about C.L.C., the more on fire I felt. Everything I learned, from the daily awareness examen to the various forms of scriptural prayer to the 10-month-long 19th-annotation retreat of the Spiritual Exercises, was imbued with God's light and love and affirmation. We had found what we were searching for.

A Christian Family

Family is a big priority for the Christian Life Communities. When our children were young, it was a challenge to find child care during meetings, so we built in flexibility and support for family care. We recognized that our first mission was nurturing our children and being present to them and their specific needs. We knew C.L.C.'s three key dimensions—spirituality, community

and mission—would be a part of their upbringing.

When the Christian Life Community of the United States of America decided to prioritize fundraising for student leaders from places affected by extreme poverty, Pat and I led the sponsorship of a graduate of St. Aloysius High School in Nairobi, Kenya. C.L.C. members raised over \$70,000 to fund this student's living expenses over the four years when he attended Loyola University Chicago for his undergraduate studies. Francis, who is now studying for his master's degree in public administration at New York University and is committed to returning to public service in Kenya, has since become a dear member of our family. His stories of life in Kibera, one of the largest slums in the world, have been truly eye-opening for us. Our daughter Sarah, as part of a service project last summer, organized a splash 'n' dash with her swim team to help support another high school stu-

dent at St. Aloysius.

C.L.C. has been a gifted experience for our family over the years. With the other families, we have celebrated home Masses, Epiphany parties and Christian seders. We have participated in service projects together with organizations like the Little Sisters of the Poor and Habitat for Humanity. We have hosted international visitors from countries like Australia, Canada, Colombia, India, Kenya, Korea, Mexico, the Philippines and Vietnam. Because our C.L.C. group lives locally in the same parish, our children have known one another growing up, now for over 18 years. Two of our sons attended Regis High School in Manhattan, where they gained a deeper appreciation of the Ignatian ideas they heard about growing up with C.L.C.

Ultimately, the source of the Christian Life Community way of life is Christ and our living out of the Gospel message. I am reminded of the time when talking to my children about praying with Scripture: "Put yourself into the story—who do you see? Where are you in the story? What do you smell? What do you feel?" And as I was talking, my son Kieran, then about 12 years old, stopped me and asked, "You mean the Scriptures are alive?" And it struck me very profoundly in that same moment. Yes, the Scriptures are alive! We look back at our journey as a family and are grateful for the gift of C.L.C. that has helped us experience this life-giving force of the Gospel.

We have now been members of Christian Life Community for almost 30 years, and what an amazing ride it has been. This has involved raising our four children, developing deep friendships in God and sharing our faith with so many diverse people from all over the world—all speaking the language of Ignatian spirituality and striving to be witnesses of Christ's love and a uniting force for good in the world. **A**



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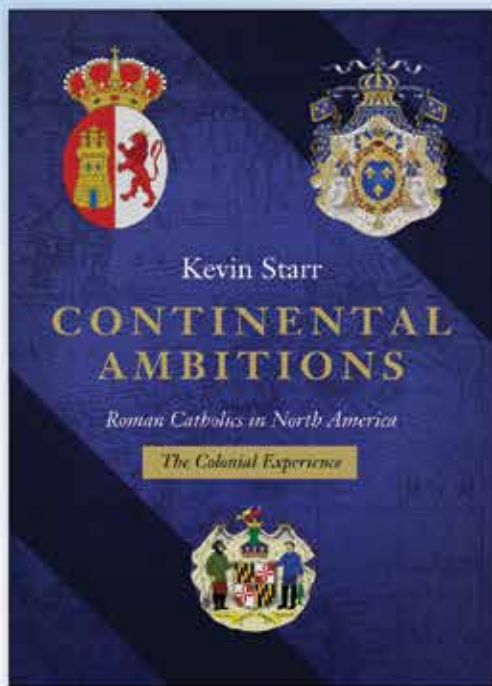
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KEVIN STARR has served as the State Librarian for California. He is currently a Professor History at the University of Southern California, where he is a director of the Institute for Advanced Catholic Studies. He is author of the acclaimed *Americans and the California Dream* series.



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THEATER | ROB WEINERT-KENDT

THEATER OF THE MOMENT

Finding refuge in the stage's wisdom

The action of a play is always happening now, no matter when it is set. The actors may be wearing 18th-century periwigs, as they are in “Les Liaisons Dangereuses,” or 1920s suits and frocks, as in “The Front Page,” or 1980s workout garb, as in “Falsettos.” No matter how transporting their performances, the actors are irreducibly human beings, living through the same moment we are.

Maybe that's why, when world events become pressing, the theater is a favorite refuge of mine. The theater is a kind of church where the roiling, uncontained thoughts and emotions of the day are brought into a room and processed, even purged, through a shared narrative experience. This was the case after the terrorist attacks of 9/11, and it is just as true now, at the sharply polarized precipice on which our republic finds itself.

Sometimes those outside forces even pierce the theater's artifice, the “fourth wall” that ostensibly separates us from a play's fiction. In the ebullient, wounding new revival of the '80s-era musical “Falsettos,” the beleaguered Trina walks to the center of the stage and sings:

*I'm tired
So tired of all the happy men who rule
the world
Happy, frightened men who rule the
world
Stupid, charming men
Silly, childish jerks*

The Broadway matinee of

“Falsettos” I saw the day after the election marked not only the ascendance of Donald J. Trump but the demise of Hillary Clinton. In this moment, the actor playing Trina, Stephanie J. Block, had to pause there for a burst of applause, and a few of what seemed like her own tears mingled with Trina's. This release of communal feeling—grief tinged with anger—was not out of place in a nervy, affecting musical about the struggle between sexual passion and family stability. “Falsettos” is continually torn between the chase for the thrill of romantic “love” and the compassionate, companionate agape love we grow into if we're lucky and wise enough to recognize it.

For all the voice “Falsettos” gives to Trina's desperation, it is the men who do the damage and most of the hard learning. The show's ostensible lead, Marvin (Christian Borle), is a selfish gay man who manages to blow up both his marriage to Trina and his relationship with his lover, Whizzer (Andrew Rannells), only to be reeled back into a sense of responsibility toward his bar mitzvah-aged son, Jason (Anthony Rosenthal), and the AIDS-afflicted Whizzer.

But the show's journey can also be read as Jason's path to manhood, and not only because he ends up in a prayer shawl warbling in Hebrew. In this brightly drawn but uniquely sobering musical—whose angsty, convivial score and brittle, New York milieu often make it sound and feel like the shaggy-dog heir to Sondheim's “Company”—a final embrace brings all the prodigals home,

and it is hard not to notice that a child has led them there.

The contemporary resonances of “Les Liaisons Dangereuses” are less salutary. Adapted in 1985 from an epistolary novel by Pierre Choderlos de Laclos, the play is a toxic roundelay of sexual gamesmanship among aristocrats in pre-revolutionary France. As we watch the rakish Valmont (Liev Schreiber, never less than interesting even when miscast) scheme with the spidery Marquise de Merteuil (Janet McTeer, likewise compelling) in the name of both purported revenge and sheer pleasure, we may feel the waste of human potential and dignity in the face of lust and avarice. Or we may simply recoil from the unedifying spectacle of people behaving badly and tragically paying for it.

“Les Liaisons Dangereuses” too often falls into the trap built into any critique of decadence: It embodies the cynicism it means to attack. In one pivotal scene, Valmont enters the bedchamber of a young virgin, forcing a kiss on her and groping her genitals before doing worse. Though he is ultimately not rewarded for his violence, the audience gains nothing from witnessing this uncomfortable turn of events.

Bad behavior in the course of a worthy profession's duty is the thrust of “The Front Page,” the 1928 comedy by Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur currently receiving a lavish, mostly satisfying revival on Broadway. A long play with a slow build, as was the order of the day, the play hunkers down with a gaggle of wisecracking male reporters in a courthouse press room on the eve of a hanging. “The Front Page” centers on the attempted retreat by the star reporter Hildy Johnson (John Slattery) from the ink-stained ranks of the fourth estate to a more respectable

COMING TO AMERICA. The cast of "Vietgone"

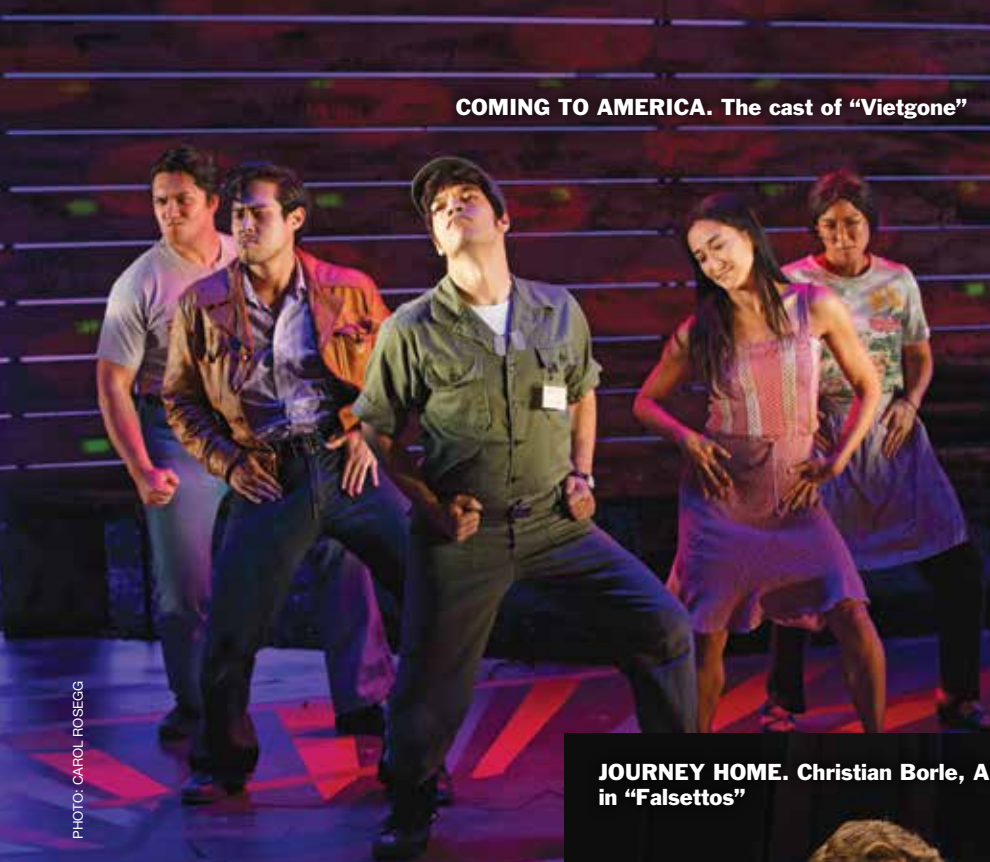


PHOTO: CAROL ROSEGG

Club, which imagines the story of his own parents' meeting at a Vietnamese refugee camp in Arkansas in the mid-'70s as an irreverent, cartoonish rom-com, replete with comic book fights, anachronistic hip-hop breaks and cinematic flashbacks. All this elaborate goofing is sneakily laying the groundwork for the most complicated and moving scene of the season: an interview between the playwright (played by Paco Tolson) and his father (Raymond Lee), in which the themes of home, family and the American promise ring with the fresh clarity of a new perspective. The story of the Vietnam War, which we too often use as a shorthand for "mistake," has sel-

JOURNEY HOME. Christian Borle, Anthony Rosenthal and Stephanie J. Block in "Falsettos"



PHOTO: JOAN MARCUS

career and marriage to a socialite.

Hecht and MacArthur both worked as reporters, and it is clear where their sympathies lie. They depict the press as holding the political machine and its craven mediocrities to blistering account, especially a dumb sheriff (John Goodman) and a corrupt mayor (Dann Florek). The director Jack O'Brien's vivid production is notable for walking the tricky line between farce and thriller, and for the late-arriving star turn of Nathan Lane as a hard-driving, impolitic editor. In the hardboiled—if slightly self-congratulatory—vision of "The Front Page," journalism is a bruising contact sport, not for the faint of heart, and certainly not for anyone with feelings so tender as love of family. Today we need clear-eyed, independent reporters more than ever, but surely they could use a good family leave policy as much as anyone else.

For plays that speak even more directly to our current moment, the seasoned theatergoer might look beyond Broadway. Lynn Nottage's "Sweat," at the Public Theater, is a hugely empa-

thetic if somewhat formulaic examination of race and class among disenfranchised workers in Reading, Pa. Anna Deavere Smith's "Notes From the Field" at Second Stage is another of her riveting civic documentary collages, in which she gives voice to a wide array of players along and around our nation's disgraceful school-to-prison pipeline.

Best of all, though, is Qui Nguyen's "Vietgone," at the Manhattan Theatre

dom been told on our stages from the point of view of the refugees and their children, actual human beings with ties to an actual place—not simply a myth of American shame. We could use more of that clarity and perspective, and not just on our stages.

ROB WEINERT-KENDT, an arts journalist and editor in chief of *American Theatre* magazine, has written for *The New York Times* and *Time Out New York*. He writes a blog called *The Wicked Stage*.

FIELD TRIP TO RIKERS

Rikers Island is not the first place you think to look for inspiration. It is a correctional facility, after all, New York City's main jail. It sits just a couple hundred feet from a runway at LaGuardia Airport, though the bridge out there from Queens is a mile or so long. Rikers buildings are drab and its fences are high. It's a pretty grim place.

I went out to Rikers three weeks ago with some high school students—that's right, and that's where the inspiration came from. The visit was a project of a young Jesuit, Zach Presutti. Zach is in the phase of formation when Jesuits take a break from formal schoolwork and serve in direct ministry (we call it regency). With a background in social work, he ministers in a number of prison settings.

Some months ago, Regis High School, a Jesuit school in New York, invited Zach to work with some students, and he brought a small number of them to meet some of the people locked up on Rikers, men just a few years older than themselves, for a different but very real experience of education.

A couple of weeks ago, in mid-afternoon, I went out to the offices of the Department of Corrections, not far from the bridge to Rikers. There I met up with Zach, and soon the Regis students arrived with one staff person and a volunteer. It was already dark as we loaded ourselves into a van that took us to the bridge, where we got ID tags. Over on the island, we entered a building that houses older teens and others up to about 23 years old. We passed through metal detectors, left phones

and packages behind, exchanged our ID tags for new ones specific to this building and passed inside.

Part of the students' mission was to bring gifts for those locked up. From fellow students they had collected 100 sets of underwear, T-shirts and socks; they also brought books of word games and puzzles. These are precious gifts for the detainees—they rarely get a gift of any kind. The students also brought cards printed with the Ignatian prayer for generosity, clearly marked "Regis and Rikers."

We went down to a gym, where the students stacked their gifts on tables at one end. Soon some guards led in a group of about 10 detainees. This group was a basketball team, and a game soon started. The team was used to playing together, but the Regis students put up an honorable fight. After the game the students headed for the tables, and the detainees lined up. Guards had cautioned the students to hand out the gifts so no one could grab more than one set. No one did.

As the line filed by, the students introduced themselves, as did the detainees. The students also signed the prayer cards and gave one to each detainee, promising to pray for him. They also asked the detainee, if he wished, to sign a card and to pray for them. After this exchange, this group was led out and another group brought in. I noted that all the detainees were black or Hispanic—no white men, no Asians.

The lines continued until the clock got close to 8, time to leave. The supply of gifts was nearly gone

I didn't hand out gifts but just watched with growing awe and amazement. As detainees passed by, they often quietly greeted me too. I read gratitude in their faces and heard it in their voices. I saw care in the students, who were learning a lot. The guards were responsible, not hostile; their job is to prevent trouble, which they did very well.

One student seemed quite taken by the experience. I asked how he was feeling, and he replied smiling shyly, "It was scarier than I thought it'd be."

The detainees returned to their cells, and we recovered our checked belongings at the security station.

The van returned us to the parking lot, and we went our separate ways, back to familiar patterns, back to everyday comforts and chores we take for granted.

I was glad I had made this visit. The detainees were clearly thankful and moved, and they don't often get asked for their prayers. The Regis students were obviously absorbing this new facet of their education and fitting it into their world of secure comfort and high hopes for the future. I kept seeing all these faces, the free and the bound, the caring and the grateful. Inspiration flows from many sources, in many directions. I found it abundant in the dark world of Rikers Island.

The students
signed the
prayer cards
and gave
one to each
detainee.



EDWARD W. SCHMIDT, S.J., is a senior editor at *America*.



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Sara is a 2005 graduate of Boston College and 2009 graduate Creighton University Medical School. After earning her medical degree she began a career that has led her to serve vulnerable children in Sub-Saharan Africa.



DANNY SWAN

After graduating from Wheeling Jesuit in 2009, Danny founded Grow Ohio Valley, a food justice initiative supporting Wheeling, West Virginia's under-served communities.



KRISTEN TRUDO

Upon graduation from Loyola Marymount University in 2014, Kristen went on to serve in the Jesuit Volunteer Corps in Saint Louis, Missouri, and has become a powerful young voice for racial and LGBTQIA+ justice.

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BROTHERLY LOVE

THE BERRIGAN LETTERS Personal Correspondence Between Daniel and Philip Berrigan

Edited by Daniel Cosacchi and Eric Martin
Orbis. 304p \$30

“How do they keep going?”

That is the hard question hanging over the decades-long public witness of Daniel and Philip Berrigan—in particular, the years of grinding punishment the brothers endured for their shocks to the conscience, whether napalming Vietnam draft files or anointing nuclear weapons with blood after symbolically disarming them with blows from a household hammer.

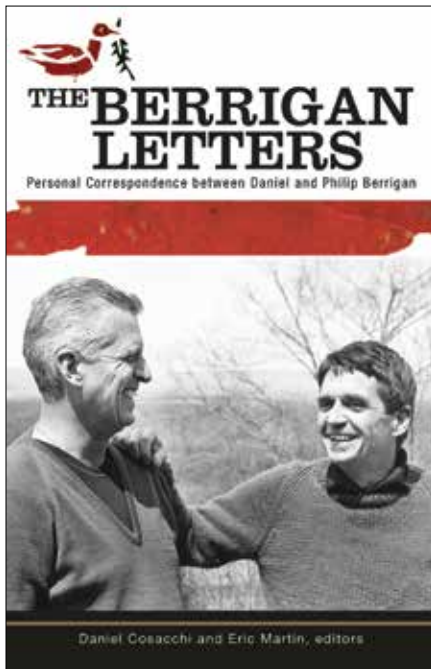
I first heard the question uttered by a Jesuit in the basement of a Washington, D.C., church as he vested for early morning Mass. This was in the mid-1990s. I cannot recall the priest's name, but I do recall how he marveled at the Berrigans' sheer endurance. Then he kissed his purple stole before adding a cryptic compliment: “The beauty of Dan and Phil, for me, is their anger.”

To help us reflect on the brothers' anger and mull the source and sustenance of their careers, we now have *The Berrigan Letters: Personal Correspondence Between Daniel and Philip Berrigan*.

From 1940 until Phil's death in 2002, the Berrigans wrote each other just about every week, often from whichever correctional facility they found themselves in after one of their peaceful protests, a return address generically rendered as “Idiot Acres” by Phil. Their “immortal patchworks,” as Dan described the letters with his trademark combo of irony and affection, were a lifeline for the brothers

throughout times they held to be mad, and so maddening.

How do you keep going when J. Edgar Hoover's agents are swarming the country, hell-bent on flushing you from “the underground” and burying you alive in a penitentiary? How do you summon the nerve to go underground in the first place, a rare sacrificial act among the more commonplace activist posturings of the 1960s and



1970s? Or in the case of Phil, while still ordained, how do you face your friends and allies after learning that an F.B.I. snitch, your cellmate, is making a gift to the bureau of your love letters to a nun, and that a prosecutor might use them to accuse you and others, including Dan, of a plot to kidnap Secretary of State Henry Kissinger?

Historical footnote: not making this up.

And how do you carry on when a majority of your own church, clerical and lay, denounces you—or worse, as

happened to Dan, you are banished to South America, minus a return date?

Now imagine the treadmill of peace work in the decades following the Vietnam War: tedious travel on a shoe-string budget; bickering over tactics and goals; the rigors of communal life, which Phil admits can leave him “sorely perplexed and torn” and includes the occasional volunteer who is, alas, a nut job; ideological sniping from all directions, like the bishop who called Phil a disgrace, and the wannabe revolutionary who denounced Dan at a late 1970s dinner party for failing to see that in the third world, as it was then known, the way of the gun was the one true path to justice. “Too bad you can't face these things!” Dan recalled as the critic's parting shot, which he shared in a letter to Phil.

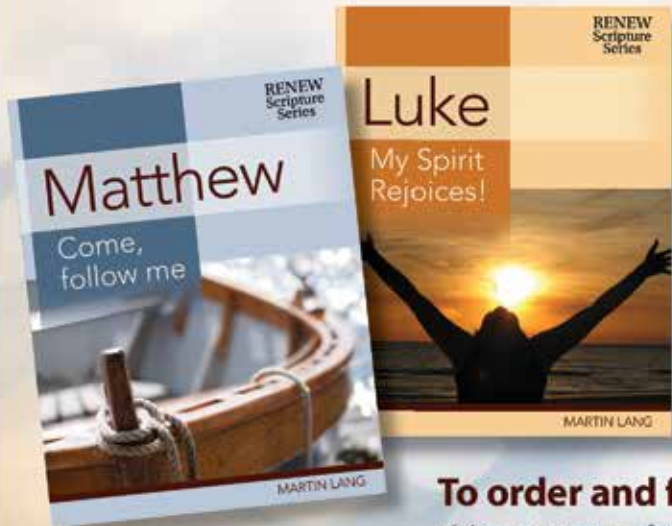
So this was one of the ways they endured: by sharing their daily trials with a survivor's eye on the long run. In the bulk of their letters, each setback described is balanced with a note of hope. Dan adds that beside that disagreeable dinner party, his recent travels had acquainted him with a number of people committed to nonviolent action, who appear to him in memory as “good faces alight in the dark.” Then he exercises the brothers' inexhaustible ingenuity at finding new ways to say to each other, “I love and admire you.” He draws a heart on the page and tells Phil that he has thanked God in prayer “4 yr. great courage.”

The strength of this collection is its detailed accounting of faithful lives entwined and its intimate look at the deepening of the brothers' bond, despite flare-ups of the family anger.

“Why do you on occasion grow so furious at me?” Dan asks Phil in a painful attempt to clear the air after a conflict over trial strategy. In another letter, Dan warns Phil that “there's a certain violence that afflicts you,” which he connects to a dark inheritance from their short-tempered father, Tom.

Previously, Phil had defended his

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father's outbursts for toughening up the Berrigan boys and preparing them for a life of public battle. But elsewhere Phil concedes his own insensitivity and failures to communicate by calling himself "the cabbage." This is illuminating stuff. Daniel Cosacchi and Eric Martin do a good job of setting up these moments, as well as placing the Berrigans' exchanges in historical context.

The book's weakness is its gaps. I wanted less minutiae about the brothers' political organizing and more coming clean about their relationship and how it survived several profoundly dramatic developments. For instance, how did they work through the bombshell of Phil's clandestine love affair with Elizabeth McAlister, who would become his wife, the mother of their three children and stalwart collaborator in the Plowshares antinuclear movement? The secrecy of the couple's beginnings was a betrayal of Dan and their friends, several of whom found themselves indicted as a result. Phil and Liz's letters gave the federal government an opening to try the so-called Harrisburg Eight on conspiracy charges that carried the threat of crushing prison terms.

We know from other accounts that one of the Berrigans' co-defendants, Eqbal Ahmad, was furious at the dangerous naïveté behind Phil and Liz's lapse, to say nothing of the breaking of their vows. (The two were excommunicated in 1973, but the ban was later lifted.) But what, of all people, did Dan think? We don't know. Was it because the editors of this volume came up empty when they sifted through the brothers' correspondence? Or did they decide not to include that kind of material? They don't say.

The trial of the Harrisburg Eight turned out to be a textbook case of prosecutorial overreach—a vindictive circus that took a careless phrase about Kissinger and spun it into the lynchpin of a (nonexistent) plot. The outcome

was a mistrial. (In a separate deliberation, Phil and Liz were found guilty of the minor charge of letter-smuggling.) The F.B.I. lost, but gained their larger goal of weakening the antiwar resistance of "The Catholic Left," a movement inspired and driven by the Berrigans.

And still, the Berrigans kept going. (Dan died in April of this year.) They hewed to their vocation, as they saw it, to take personal risks in opposing war and the resource-suck of perpetual war preparations. They also felt an un-

breakable obligation to each other, in part because their mutual project had saved them from their greatest fear: living mediocre lives. And despite the hardships produced by their actions, they deeply believed, as Dan wrote Phil, "in the old comfort that, without them, things would be even more bestial than they are."

JIM O'GRADY is a reporter for *New York Public Radio* and the co-author, with Murray Polner, of *Disarmed and Dangerous: The Radical Lives and Times of Daniel and Philip Berrigan*.

GEORGE DENNIS O'BRIEN

STUDENTS ON THE WAY

LIBERAL LEARNING AS A QUEST FOR PURPOSE

By William M. Sullivan
Oxford University Press. 248p \$35

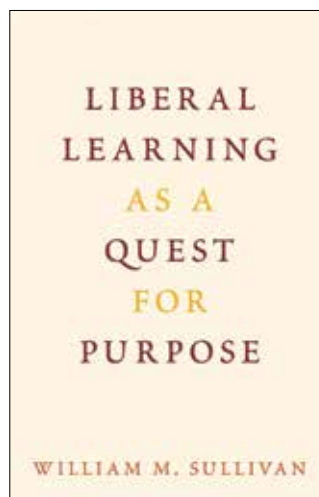
From 2000 to 2002, the Lilly Endowment undertook an ambitious program for the reform of American college education. Initiated by the religious division of the foundation, the effort was directed toward specific church-related careers and called the Program for the Theological Exploration of Vocation (P.T.E.V.). It approached nearly 400 institutions to submit proposals for the project, and it eventually muted the theological direction by broadening "vocation" to "a quest for purpose." Eighty-eight colleges and universities were selected and by the conclusion of the program Lilly had distributed \$225 million. Was it worth it the cost?

Unlike many grant programs that float on good intentions, Lilly commissioned a prominent sociologist,

Tim Clydesdale, to assess the results. A graduate of evangelical Wheaton College, Clydesdale was initially skeptical of the program's success, but he was persuaded otherwise by his own research. His book *The Purposeful Graduate: Why Colleges Must Talk to Students About Vocation* (Chicago, 2015) records how a variety of institu-

tions created successful structures making education for vocation a focal point for student learning. William Sullivan's *Liberal Learning as a Quest for Purpose* also draws on P.T.E.V. but broadens its lessons by also assessing similar efforts at institutions not in the P.T.E.V. program. Sullivan may be best known as a collaborator with Robert Bellah in *Habits of the Heart*

(University Of California)—a trenchant sociological critique of American "individualism" as withdrawal from common purpose. Beyond comparing programs, Sullivan, as befits a philosopher, proposes that vocational



studies is an educational response to the cultural challenges discussed by Charles Taylor in his magisterial study *A Secular Age* (Harvard University Press).

Vocation turns out to be critical not only for life beyond college, but for life within college. Sullivan notes a “wide-spread concern about student disengagement from academic activity.” True enough. Disengagement is encouraged by the prevailing view that the purpose of college education is the acquisition of marketable skills. Under this view, the payoff for college study is not intrinsic, it is extrinsic; the payoff is out there in the job market. But education as preparation for vocation raises questions well beyond the job. One may have a job, even a career, but no activity that has a deep personal meaning (this is how P.T.E.V. defines vocation). By bringing education aimed at vocation to the classroom, colleges help students not only to engage life beyond college, but to engage college education itself.

I want to highlight two aspects of the P.T.E.V. program: leadership and community pedagogy. Regarding leadership, a large number of the successful programs in Clydesdale’s study were not led by faculty but by “extra-curricular” staff—e.g., the campus minister or the head of the counseling service. This is not accidental. As Sullivan points out, much of the current collegiate social scene, from “hovering parents” to “hook-ups,” boils down to “a reluctance to grow up.” The most salient fact about American undergraduate education, and the most overlooked, is that undergraduate students are *on the way* to adulthood. Given the developmental state of undergraduates, it is not surprising that ministers and guidance counselors have special insight into purposeful education. Faculty members, in contrast, are focused on the discipline, not on the 18-year-old Latina in the third row. Instruction in a discipline is neutral to age, gender or race. Education for adulthood is not.

Not Jumping

The honest power of a winter-shocked sun is doing its best
but it still looks like the scarce light is coming from the blue.

The sky among the clouds is like chipped paint—
nothing is falling, though.

Face your fears, they said. I remember
trying to forget all about that but here I am,
peering over a stinging-cold rail into calm, ample water
from way up. Not too high to obscure the reflection.

I am facing my face facing my fear of death as night’s black
ambulance rushes the day off. That’s fine.

That light was painted on anyway. Now, just the false-moon
shine of the streetlamps and houseboats’ porch lights.

Can our bodies sustain this earth? The practice
of statistics reminds us that we can know nothing for certain.

An enormous fly wanders into view like a lazy eye.

We need people who cannot bear the thought of a world
without the world. So face your fears.

Everything I know. Everything I know is nothing for sure.

My face is still and deep and maybe full of fish.

It is holding all that water down, away.

I stare at me until I look away: the first tint of morning,
glowing like the afterlife. I take the stairs to get down.

A flock of geese is eating grass
and it sounds like rain.

M. NICOLE. R. WILDHOOD

M. NICOLE. R. WILDHOOD blogs at <http://megan.thewildhoods.com>. Her work has appeared in *The Atticus Review*, *Ballard’s Journal of Street Poetry* and *Seattle’s street newspaper Real Change*. She is at work on a novel and two full-length poetry volumes. This poem was a runner-up in *America’s Foley Poetry Contest*.

Though discipline-oriented faculty may not be natural leaders on the road to purpose and adulthood, it is essential that they be fully incorporated into vocational education. Sullivan notes that successful programs incorporate faculty in three “apprenticeships”: academic, social and—the link of the previous two—an apprenticeship on identity and purpose. The idea of apprenticeship suggests a relationship other than academic authority over a mere student. Learning becomes the shared task of master and apprentice.

Apprenticeship is enhanced by learning communities. Not only is academic hierarchy attenuated, but negative student competition is also transformed by learning together.

Three P.T.E.V. institutions covered in Sullivan’s account are Catholic: Marquette University in Wisconsin; Our Lady of the Lake University in Texas; and Santa Clara University in California. (Georgetown University, which has programs similar to the P.T.E.V. initiative, is also mentioned.) Santa Clara created various struc-

tures for purposeful education. For instance, academic apprenticeship is realized in a history course titled “Personal Renaissance,” in which key Renaissance figures are presented as “distant mirrors” for a student’s own aspirations. The practice of meditation in class deepens personal reflection, and social apprenticeship exists in “immersion experiences” that take students off campus, often to Jesuit centers dealing with marginal communities. Apprenticeship of purpose is represented by “Careers for the Common Good,” a course that not only addresses vocation, but demonstrates leadership from extra-curricular staff.

A final note: Sullivan suggests that religious commitment makes the pursuit of vocation “tradition enhanced” in Catholic institutions and other religiously based institutions like Earlham College (which is Quaker).

Liberal Learning as a Quest for Purpose could be of immense value to anyone interested in understanding the social dynamics of contemporary undergraduate education, and in discerning how institutional structures help or hinder sheer academic achievement and the developmental needs of the young adults. Sullivan’s prescriptions are clear, direct and deepened by philosophical reflection. The specific programs at the various

colleges should stimulate creative adaptation.

Having said that, I wonder whether the book will be as influential as it deserves.

My first administrative job involved dealing with all the undergraduates who flunked out of Princeton. There was nothing in their admission credentials that could have predicted that sorry outcome. Some personal issue was overriding their A.P. scores. Puzzled by my failing cohort, I was greatly interested in Nevitt Sanford’s intensive psychosocial study of higher education, *The American College* (1962). Sanford’s case studies offered valuable insight into “why colleges fail”—the title of his follow-up book (1967). Neither volume seemed to cause much academic reform. Sanford quipped that the books were too heavy for college presidents to carry on airplanes. Be that as it may, the problems of student engagement in college are much more acute than in my days in the dean’s office. Proof: the proliferation of counseling services on campus. Maybe the time has come to look seriously at education for vocation—and the vocation for education.

GEORGE DENNIS O'BRIEN, a philosopher, has been president of Bucknell University and the University of Rochester.

RICHARD A. BLAKE

A MERCURIAL CHARACTER

PETER O'TOOLE The Definitive Biography

By Robert Sellers
Thomas Dunne Books. 432p \$28.99

Yes, Peter O’Toole did have a life after “Lawrence of Arabia.” And before, too. But most casual moviegoers would be hard pressed to add many entries to his biography—although, with a little time to think about it, they might

come up with “Becket,” in which he played opposite Richard Burton, and “Lion in Winter,” in which he crossed verbal swords with Katherine Hepburn. His other starring performances, competent as they were, have passed quietly out of the public consciousness: “The Stunt Man,” “The Ruling Class,” “Lord Jim,” “Murphy’s War,” “My Favorite Year.” In a career of over five decades, he received sev-

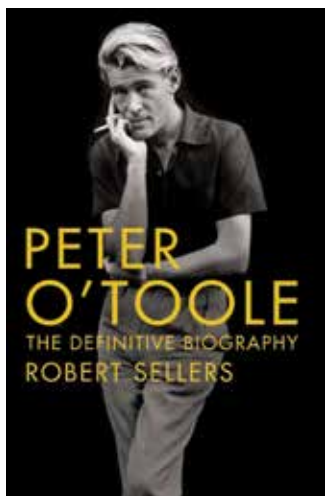
en Academy Award nominations for best actor but took home the brass baldy only for a Lifetime Achievement Award in his final years. Nonetheless, he will always be remembered riding a camel under the glaring Saharan sun with those blue eyes looking out from behind his white *keffiyeh*.

What else did he do in his nearly 80 years on earth? That is the question British biographer Robert Sellers sets out to address. The task proves far more challenging than setting out a chronology of roles and romances. O’Toole was a complicated piece of work. To begin, he adopted the persona of free-spirited, hard drinking, Irish rogue, when in fact, he was born in Leeds, albeit in a family with Irish roots, and at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts had to work on the leaden consonants and swallowed vowels of his Yorkshire accent. He had little that would pass for education in his youth and bounced around in several low-level factory jobs before a turn in the Royal Navy. One might expect that military service would help a young firebrand settle down a bit, but it seemed to have had the opposite effect. His unease with authority matured into blind rage.

O’Toole had contempt for rehearsal schedules but always managed to appear on stage on cue, one way or another. He had a photographic memory and knew his own and everyone else’s lines before the first run-through. He could throw terrible tantrums and argue about every line and interpretation of a play, but once he felt the director knew what he was doing, he took direction well. He even welcomed it. Such a mercurial character with little formal schooling would be expected to be skeptical of academic research, but O’Toole tried to learn all he could about the historical characters he was impersonating on the stage or studio set. After a successful run in the repertory company of Old Vic in Bristol, he might have settled into the comfort-

able role of a lead actor on the London stage. But then came “Lawrence.”

Robert Sellers seems fascinated by the chaotic side of O’Toole’s life. This trait runs through much of his writing, and he specializes in celebrities and contemporary culture, especially the wild side of his subjects. Nonconformity, as it spills over into anarchy, surely dominates the O’Toole narrative, as it does in Sellers’s earlier works. These include *Hellraisers: The Life and Inebriated Times of Richard Burton, Richard Harris, Peter O’Toole, and Oliver Reed* and *Hollywood Hellraisers: The Wild Lives and Fast Times of Marlon Brando, Dennis Hopper, Warren Beatty, and Jack Nicholson*. Sellers seems drawn toward self-destructive behavior like



a moth to an alcohol-fueled flame. And so the story of Peter O’Toole is woven from threads of binges, puerile pranks and mutually destructive relationships with many of the great British actors of his generation. It was all great rollicking fun, until it wasn’t anymore. As the drinking took over his life, the leading roles in film came with less frequency. He continued regular appearances on the stage: some with great success, others with less.

Sellers leaves a few loose threads in *Peter O’Toole*. As O’Toole’s body begins its inevitable journey to oblivion, he turns from drink altogether, but other drugs seem to fill the void in his life. The author is discreet about all of this—oddly so, since he describes the earlier

embarrassing escapades in rich detail. As the story turns somber, more specific information could help the reader grasp O’Toole’s life-ending ordeals. Was it cancer, cirrhosis or aggravated ulcers? After following the great actor through these many twists in his life as we try to understand the complexity of his life and talent, I would like to know more about O’Toole’s final years than the iron will that kept him on stage as his body disintegrated around him.

Sellers relates his story as a connected series of anecdotes gathered from multiple interviews and press coverage. Larger questions remain, perhaps for a more analytic biography. First, what is it that generated such outrageously self-destructive—yes, childish—behavior among this postwar generation of great actors? Why were colleagues tolerant, and even more, why were there so few apparent efforts to intervene? Was it merely some juvenile urge to show the world that its rules simply

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PAULIST PILGRIMAGES. The Spirit of India, Feb. 10-March 2, 2017. Explore the spiritual heritages of North and South India, including the Taj, St. Francis Xavier, Goa and the Christian communities of Kerala, with Thomas A. Kane, C.S.P.; www.paulist.org/ministry/pilgrimages.

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did not apply to one who has achieved celebrity status through talent and hard work?

Second, as O'Toole alternated between theater and film, he seems to have found a mutually nurturing environment for his talent. Why is such dual commitment standard in Britain, and much less frequent in the United States? Surely the 3,000 miles between Broadway and Hollywood explains a lot, but not everything. What is different about actors and the acting traditions in the two countries?

Sellers's biography provides a highly entertaining read, but only after putting it down did some of these more serious issues start to percolate. Maybe in the long run, the author achieved more than he intended.

RICHARD A. BLAKE, S.J., former film reviewer for *America*, teaches film history at Boston College.

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CHANGE THE WORLD FROM HERE

Tell Me Who You Are

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT (A), DEC. 11, 2016

Readings: Is 35:1-10, Ps 146, Jas 5:7-10, Mt 11:2-11

Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another? (Mt 11:3)

Not long ago I called an Uber. The driver's photo was striking. She had a peacock-blue mohawk, a pair of sunglasses with mirrored lenses and a barbed-wire neck tattoo. When the car arrived, I was surprised to find the driver conservatively dressed, tattoo-free and a brunette. "You're not the person I was expecting," I told her. "I keep forgetting to change my photo; that was me 10 years ago," she said. I was skeptical, so I held up my phone and compared. Sure enough, the face was the same.

Recognition takes discernment. This was the point of John's question to Jesus, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?" John was sure that a Messiah was coming, but his question suggests that he was not sure about the details.

This is no surprise, as different ideas of the coming Messiah circulated in John's day. Some expected a religious messiah who would take some action to purify the Temple. Others looked for a military messiah who would liberate Israel through warfare, and re-establish an enduring nation-state along the lines of David's kingdom.

Jesus' answer subverted these expectations. He pointed out that the works he had been performing throughout Galilee reflected the prophecy of Isaiah

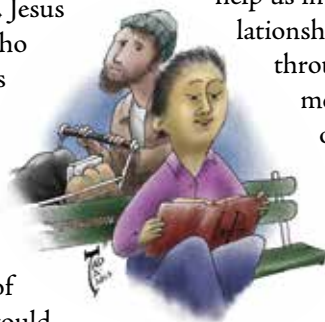
that we hear in this week's first reading. But Jesus did more than confirm John's hopes. Isaiah 35 does not speak of a messiah at all, but rather of God himself coming to Israel to heal the blind, the lame and the deaf and to free the poor from their slavery. Jesus claims that it is God who is at work through his ministry.

The openness of John's question revealed a discerning mind at work. His question was free of preconceptions. He could have tried to force Jesus into one or another model of messiahship with leading questions like, "When do you think you will act against the Romans?" or "When will you act against corruption in the temple?" Instead, John left it to Jesus, saying to him, "You tell me who you are."

Every disciple ought to approach Jesus with such openness. This can be difficult; years of learning and thinking about Jesus from one perspective can keep us from knowing him as he wishes us to know him. Too often we have a fixed image of how Jesus preached and acted, which can limit our ability to get to know Jesus at a deeper level. John's question in today's Gospel calls us to break out of this rut. John let Jesus tell him whether or not he was the messiah. Although for Christians today that is a settled question, we still hope to find Jesus at work in our lives and in our world. Like John, our relationship with Jesus should begin with the request, "Lord, tell me who you are."

In his commentary on this Gospel passage, the patristic author Theodore of Mopsuestia noted that John's question relied on his personal relationship with Christ. He loved Jesus, and knew him well enough to trust whatever answer Jesus gave. Theodore argued that this should be the case for Christ's disciples in any age: The disciple who wishes to know Christ must come to know him personally.

Our fixed images of Jesus may be out of date. They will hinder more than help us in our search for a personal relationship. Jesus is alive and at work through the Gospels, the sacraments and the church throughout the world. In addition to word and sacrament, we too must take up Isaiah's dream and perform the works of mercy as Christ did. There



PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

- What preconceived notions of Jesus have we developed?
- What can we do to get to know Christ personally?
- How can we let Jesus tell us who he is?

are still poor to be fed, prisoners to be visited, sinners to be admonished and offenses to be forgiven. When we continue Christ's ministry in this way, not only will we find him alive and still at work, but we can also share his hands and voice and heart with a world in desperate need.

Recognition takes discernment. We seek Jesus in all the places he tells us to look, but we will only find him if we are free enough to let him tell us who he is. He will almost certainly not be the messiah we expected. He will, however, be God's real presence active in our lives, and through us, in a world hungry for salvation.

MICHAEL R. SIMONE, S.J., is an assistant professor of Scripture at Boston College School of Theology and Ministry.



CATHOLIC INITIATIVES

ART: TAD DUNNE

Encounters With Angels

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT (A), DEC. 18, 2016

Readings: Is 7:10-14, Ps 24, Rom 1:1-7, Mt 1:18-24

He did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him (Mt 1:24)

Joseph was a righteous man.” Modern readers likely do not hear the ominous undertones of this description. The Greek word for righteous, *dikaios*, could also indicate that Joseph was a “law-abiding” man. This meant that he considered submitting Mary to the penalties given in Deuteronomy for women found to be pregnant before marriage. “If evidence of a young woman’s virginity is not found, they shall bring the young woman to the entrance of her father’s house and there the men of her town shall stone her to death...” (Dt 22:20-21). That Joseph may have been willing to consider this gruesome fate for his betrothed demonstrates his personal commitment to Israel’s covenant and the law of Moses.

Such zealotry was not in Joseph’s nature, as Matthew immediately points out. “Yet he was unwilling to expose her to shame, so he decided to divorce her quietly.” The existence of this legal remedy gives some sign that many Jews found the strictures of Deuteronomy too harsh in this case. Quiet divorce, however, was not a hopeful prospect; it might have let Mary and her child live, but an unmarried mother had few options for a livelihood. Most likely she and her son would have sunk into poverty.

On his own, Joseph could not recognize the right thing to do without the help of the angel. To his everlasting credit, he followed the angel’s in-

structions without hesitation. He had obeyed God’s commands all his life. Although he had always found them in the law of Moses, the lack of good options available to him there led his heart to trust God’s command through the angel. The suddenness of his transformation shows he took to heart the angel’s command, “Do not be afraid.” Joseph now understood that righteousness required him to serve the unborn Messiah, no matter the sacrifices required.

Do we pay attention to the messengers God sends us? As Joseph depended on the law of Moses, we rightly depend on a set of principles and rules for living out our faith and relationship with God. But, as valuable as these codes are, however much they communicate God’s will, they cannot cover every situation. We will inevitably find ourselves perplexed.

We can trust God to send a messenger. These messengers need not be as dramatic as Joseph’s nighttime visitor in order to speak authentically. In fact, as the first reading teaches, we can actively resist a clear message that God offers. God will send it anyway. We will know the messenger’s arrival when we hear the words “Do not be afraid.” These can be words from a friend or a stranger, a profoundly moving encounter with beauty or a subtle but deep change of heart. When we hear that message, we hear Christ inviting us to serve his mission in some new way.

Joseph trusted the messenger without hesitation. This freedom was the product of a life spent applying God’s

word to daily life. No matter what else one might say about the Law of Moses, living it out demanded a rich knowledge of sacred Scripture. If, like Joseph, we have listened for God’s voice in expected places, we too will be ready to trust an unexpected messenger from God.

Joseph had formed himself into a certain kind of righteous man, but Christ’s mission demanded something very different. Joseph handed his understanding of righteousness over to God, and received it back in a new way. Such an act reflects St. Ignatius’ words in the *Suscipe*, “You have given

PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

- When have we heard God say to us through a messenger, “Be not afraid!” Were we ready to respond with trust?
- What moral situations in our life leave us perplexed? How have we prepared ourselves to receive God’s messenger in these situations?

all to me; to you I return it. Dispose of it entirely according to your will.” Joseph’s new righteousness made him one of the first to serve the kingdom of God. Our own transformation can make us servants of Christ’s mission in our own day.

This, then, is part of the Advent message of today’s readings. Far from simply announcing the birth we celebrate next week, these readings give us a model for encountering Christ and serving his mission throughout the year. When God’s messengers arrive, if we trust their word, we can find in it the enlightenment of a new life in Christ.

MICHAEL R. SIMONE



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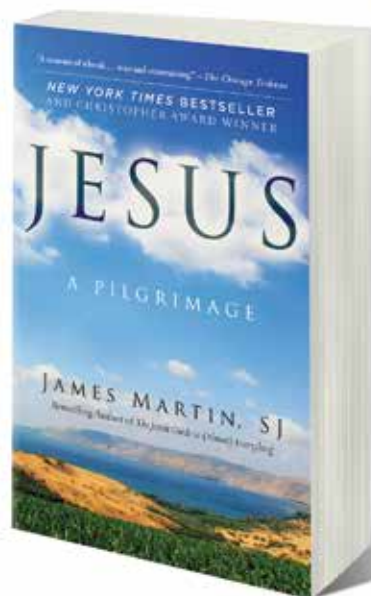
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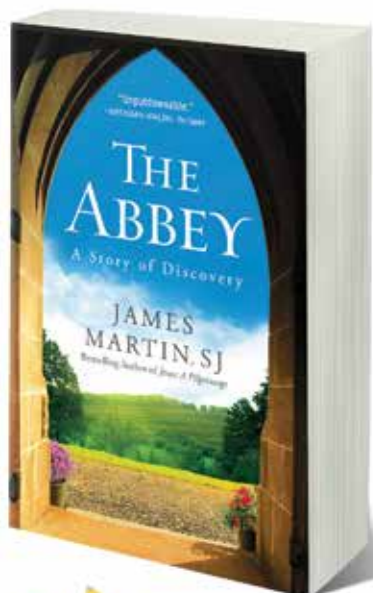
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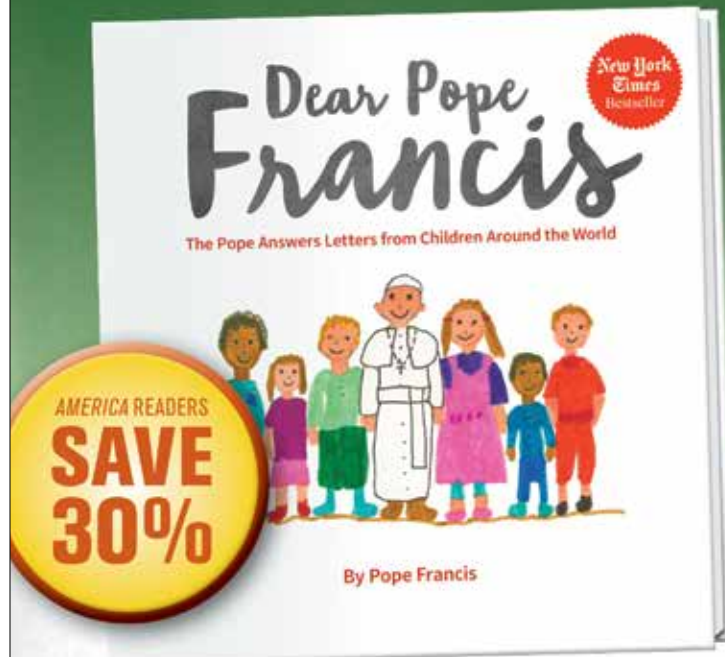
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