

America

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Dorothy Day in Love

ROBERT ELLSBERG

Revisiting the McBride Case

KEVIN O'ROURKE

OF MANY THINGS

With another milestone birthday fast approaching, I find myself waxing nostalgic these days. This is especially so during the month of November, one of my favorites—except for the part about raking leaves—a time to recall and honor the memory of the souls and saints who have gone before us. And above all, as we are reminded at gatherings on Thanksgiving Day, it is the season for expressing gratitude, recognizing and appreciating our treasures, what we have, the favors we have received during our lifetime.

Most especially we remember family and friends, without whom our lives might well have taken a different turn. And then there are traditions, both large and small. I remember on the eve of the feast of St. Nicholas every year how the four Kossmann kids hung socks over the fireplace for good St. Nick's treats; I always snatched one of my father's socks from his drawer—it was larger and longer than my own. But that didn't matter: there were never favorites in our family.

As for birthdays, the person of honor got to choose what kind of cake he or she wanted, which was shared with as many friends as our basement could hold. Ours was a home with wide open doors and wider hearts (in the persons of Mom and Pop). In addition to gifting the honoree, of course, my parents had a small gift for all the siblings. It may have been just a rubber high bouncer, a coloring book, a paddle or some other small item, but each of us received something. (After all, kids don't like being left out.)

And then there was the annual family vacation at a place called Brandt's Pleasant View in the Catskill Mountains. My mother packed for an army (the girls wore starched dresses to dinner every night), and a huge trunk was shipped upstate a few days before our arrival. One year we arrived late (I can't remember why), and the Railway Express Agency at the local train sta-

tion was closed for the day. We could see the trunk through the window, there in the middle of the room. No problem: there was another family whom we knew well, and they graciously loaned us apparel for that evening.

Our home had only one television, but (miraculously) we seldom argued over viewing choices. My parents instilled in us the importance of sharing. Every Tuesday evening, however, the program choice was clear: "Life Is Worth Living," with Bishop Fulton J. Sheen. My father was a deeply religious man and never missed seeing "Uncle Fultie." But he never insisted that the kids watch with him. The booming voice and stirring words emanating from the television set were enough to bring us into the living room, where we too got caught up in the cape!

Looking back over the years, I realize the enormous sacrifices both my parents made for our family in so many areas. My mother was a stay-at-home mom. My father was an attorney in private practice, so income fluctuated from week to week. No matter what she was given, my mother was a budget balancer par excellence. Even in lean times, Pop made sure we had gifts under the Christmas tree; sometimes I could see a small tear well up in his eye; no doubt he was offering thanks and praise to the Lord for making it all possible.

Our home, too, was blessed with the gift of laughter. And music. Early on, my Irish great-aunt played the concertina, my oldest brother the accordion, my father the wooden "clappers." Later came the guitar and organ. But then those in-home concerts during large family gatherings—Thanksgiving Day, for one—were missing a member. My father passed away in 1964 and the younger of my two brothers in 1992.

But the beat goes on...and on. That's because we hold on to our memories, we re-live them, we cherish them. And because blessings are forever.

PATRICIA A. KOSSMANN

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Cover: Dorothy Day outside her bungalow in Staten Island, N.Y., in 1925. Photo: Marquette University Archives.

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Leo J. O'Donovan, S.J., reviews "The World of Khubilai Khan" at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Sir Gilbert Levine discusses his book **The Pope's Maestro**. Plus, Tim Reidy reviews the film "127 Hours." All at americamagazine.org.



Homeless Soldiers

Homelessness is an enduring scourge of the veteran community. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs estimates that over 200,000 veterans spend at least part of the year living on the street. Lack of a residence address has exacerbated the unemployment rate among veterans, which is now close to 20 percent. The majority of homeless veterans served in Vietnam, but the number of former soldiers from Iraq and Afghanistan is growing at a steady rate and is now close to 9,000, according to one estimate. Of all homeless veterans, 7,000 are women, a reflection of the growing number of female soldiers.

The V.A. has pledged \$500 million to help eliminate homelessness among veterans within five years. It is an ambitious goal at a time when the problems facing returning veterans are quickly multiplying. Veterans of today's wars are hitting the streets much sooner than their counterparts from the Vietnam War. (It took close to 10 years for observers to recognize the problem among Vietnam vets.) The reasons are wretchedly familiar: addiction and post-traumatic stress disorder wreak havoc in many veterans' lives. The frequent redeployments of soldiers to Iraq and Afghanistan have also played a large role. Adapting to home life can be daunting when the specter of additional service hangs in the air.

The proposed infusion of government funds will provide much-needed services for all veterans. Yet the nation's obligation to the troops cannot end there. The decision to wage war must weigh the long-term burden it places on soldiers, both on and off the battlefield. The lessons of Vietnam have yet to be learned. For how long will the veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan walk our streets, like their Vietnam brothers, faceless and ignored?

Rights Prize for Cuban

The European Parliament has again awarded its Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought to a Cuban dissident, Guillermo Farinas. He learned of the award in late October and is the third Cuban to receive it. Previous honorees there have been Orlando Zapata Tamayo, who died in prison in February, and the women's group Damas de Blanco, who protested in 2003 against relatives' imprisonment. Begun in 1988, the worldwide prize is named after the late Soviet dissident Andrei Sakharov.

A psychologist and journalist, Farinas spent 11 years behind bars, participating in two dozen hunger strikes on behalf of others who, like himself, had been jailed for criti-

cizing the government. He began his final hunger strike in February after the death by starvation of his fellow dissident Mr. Tamayo. But after collapsing in March, Farinas was removed to a hospital, where he accepted intravenous feeding that saved his life. He ended his hunger strike in July, when the Cuban government released dozens of political prisoners. Most fled to Spain. Their release was largely due to three-way talks between Havana's Cardinal Jaime Ortega, Cuba's president Raul Castro and the Spanish foreign minister, Miguel Moratinos. On ending his hunger strike, Farinas commented, "I think the situation in Cuba has changed...because the pro-democracy movement has fought for the freedom of political prisoners." But with some 190 dissidents still in jail, real freedom in Cuba remains an unrealized goal.

Deepwater Clean-Up

The oil spilling into the waters of the Gulf Coast because of the Deepwater Horizon explosion was an inescapable presence in the national consciousness last summer. And then, suddenly, it disappeared—from the 24-hour news cycle and, supposedly, from the waters as well. The federal climate czar, Carol Browner, even announced that "the vast majority" of the oil was gone. A closer look at the situation has made it clear that—surprise!—4.9 million barrels of oil (at least) do not just disappear overnight.

Oil continues to wash up along 576 miles of the Gulf Coast. Greenpeace scientists have found oil 3,200 feet below the surface of the Gulf Coast waters, and they believe that the oil also has contaminated sediments from the ocean floor and affected oxygen levels in the water.

As part of its Operation Deep Clean, British Petroleum is digging deep into the sand to extract tar balls; BP must move quickly, but the company also must take a closer look at the long-term effects of its efforts to restore the land and waters.

BP's next stage of clean-up must be more deliberate and thorough than its earlier efforts. Then the company spread dispersants to break up and sink the oil, despite the fact that these substances contain compounds known to cause cancer, genetic mutations and harm to the growth of embryos. Many Gulf Coast residents are now facing major health issues, including respiratory problems and internal hemorrhaging; and chemicals present in crude oil have even been found in the blood of clean-up workers. The story of the damage caused by the oil is not over. It is just beginning.

Two Peoples, One State

What began in September as hope for a two-state solution between Israel and Palestine has fizzled. Palestinians will not negotiate while Israel builds settlements on the West Bank and in East Jerusalem, which in international law are occupied territory; Israel will not extend the “moratorium” on construction, during which Israel continued to build settlements and segregated highways and to demolish Palestinian homes.

The United States offered Israel concessions to renew the moratorium, but Mr. Netanyahu proposed a law demanding that all would-be Israeli citizens, including Israeli Arabs (20 percent of Israel’s population), swear allegiance to Israel specifically as a Jewish state—in effect, a forced commitment to beliefs they do not hold. Now Palestinians should consider alternatives. Should they unilaterally declare themselves a state and ask for U.S./U.N. recognition? Merge with Jordan? As the situation deteriorates, it is time for new ideas.

Hostility throughout the Arab world and within Israel mounts. Even if the West Bank and Gaza were to become a state, settlers already in place would refuse to budge. As Hanan Ashrawi, a representative of the Palestine Liberation Organization, said to *The Washington Post*, “How can you have a two-state solution if you are eating up the land of the other state?”

Many Israelis, particularly in Tel Aviv, distracted by prosperity, seem not to realize that within a few years an Arab majority will emerge and “Greater Israel” (Israel, West Bank and Gaza) will not be Jewish. If Arabs are not given full citizenship rights, Israel will not be a democracy either.

In this context, Israel must choose. It must either: (a) dismantle the settlements and return to the 1967 borders; (b) try to remain in the occupied territory as a ruling minority, which is in effect apartheid; or (c) drive out the Arab population, which would be ethnic cleansing.

But Israelis might also consider an alternative, one with roots in history and recently developed by Jewish, American and Palestinian intellectuals: a one-state solution.

A nation state built around one religion might have worked in the unique, post-Holocaust context of the years after World War II; but today Israelis must ask, Has the idea of an ethnic state become an anachronism? Furthermore, a pre-historical promise to Abraham of a land for his descendants does not give any 21st-century ethnic or religious

group a legal right in modern international law to a particular territory.

Once there was a “Christian Europe.” But today’s great Western cities—London, New York, Paris, Geneva—teem with Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus: people of every land and color. Israel’s self-definition as a one-religion state sealed off by a 28-foot-high wall, a network of settlements and segregated highways, projects an image that is disturbing to many, including younger generations of American Jews alienated by Israel’s policies. Palestine has always had a multi-ethnic identity; and early Zionists, including Hannah Arendt and Martin Buber, saw Palestine as a spiritual center promoting Jewish culture, not as a nation state.

A plan for a single-state solution might include the following: (1) With Belgium and Switzerland as models, a new constitution would set up either a binational state or one unified with a one-person-one-vote structure. (2) With its combined army and police forces, the more secure state of Israel-Palestine would join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. (3) A law of return would apply in some way to both Jews and Arabs. (4) A new school curriculum would teach accurate history to both peoples. (5) A truth and reconciliation commission would be set up.

Look at the map. Erase the lines setting off the West Bank and Gaza; imagine highways connecting the whole territory with Jerusalem, the shared capital. Every citizen has the same right to vote, the same access to water, land, education, marriage, health care, employment, property, and freedom of speech and religion. Walls disappear. Settlements may remain, but Palestinians will build beside them. An emerging leadership class will shepherd Israel-Palestine into a peaceful future. The Jews are a gifted, energetic people. Even if in the future they become a numerical minority in Israel-Palestine, they will still demonstrate leadership in the new Promised Land.

About 25 years ago, when I was swimming in the Dead Sea, two young men who saw my camera asked me to take their picture. As I wrote down their address to send them the shot, I couldn’t help asking, “Are you Israelis or Arabs?”

They replied: “What difference does it make? We are all brothers.” Where are they now?

RAYMOND A. SCHROTH, S.J.



SIGNS OF THE TIMES

IRAQ

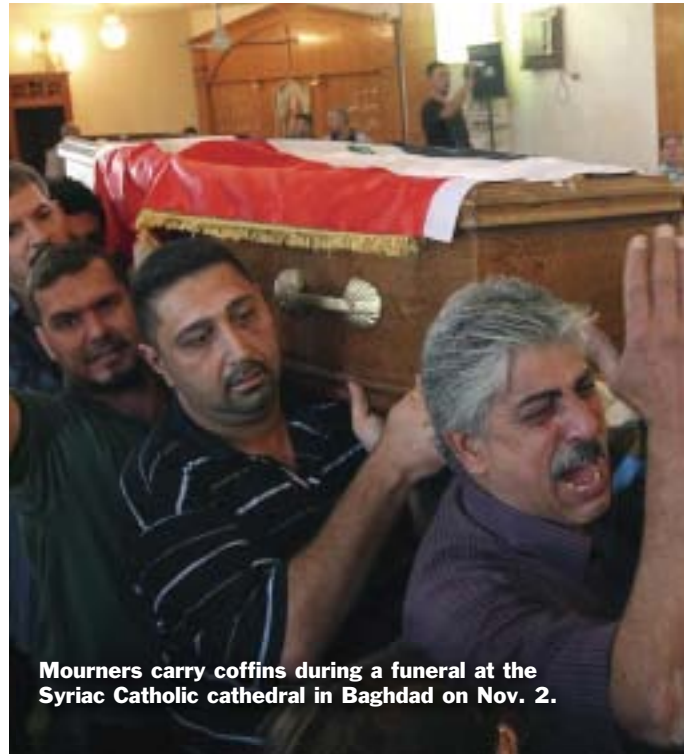
Mayhem in Baghdad; No Change in U.S. Policies

Baghdad residents were still trying to make sense out of an orgy of violence at the city's Syriac Catholic cathedral of Our Lady of Salvation, when just 48 hours later mortar attacks and bombings again rocked the nation's capital. In the church attack on Oct. 31, 78 were wounded and 58 killed, including two priests and women and children. A spokesperson for the U.S. Department of Defense said that 18 explosions were reported during a 45-minute period on the night of Nov. 2, mostly in Baghdad's Shiite neighborhoods. The latest reports count at least 64 dead and 360 wounded. The spokesperson said, "There was a chaotic period last night, but the situation calmed down by midnight and the Iraqi Security Forces have control of the city. Reports of police abandoning their posts or widespread chaos are false."

The bloody resurrection of violence in Baghdad has so far not been enough to move the U.S. Operation New Dawn force in Iraq to consider emergency adjustments to its current deployment or its long-term schedule for withdrawal from Iraq. "The attack on the church was tragic, and our deepest sympathies are with those who lost loved ones," the defense spokesperson said. But "in accordance with the Security Framework Agreement we signed with Iraq, we will withdraw all of our

troops by the end of 2011 in a responsible manner. That is a legally binding agreement between our governments."

He added, "Despite recent attacks, the important thing to recognize is that [overall violence has] been on a downward trend, and we have yet to



Mourners carry coffins during a funeral at the Syriac Catholic cathedral in Baghdad on Nov. 2.

see sectarian retribution. Violent extremists are still intent on conducting high-profile attacks but do not have a strategic impact.

"The U.S. has drawn down, but we have not disengaged," he added. "Iraq is an important strategic partner, and

ARMS CONTROL

Cluster Ban Quickly Saves Lives

Millions of stockpiled cluster submunitions have been destroyed years ahead of deadlines mandated by the Convention on Cluster Munitions—a treaty banning the weapon that went into force in August. Seven states that have joined the convention have already completely demolished their stockpiles of cluster munitions, destroying more than 13.8 million submunitions contained in 176,000 cluster munitions.

That this milestone was reached so

rapidly demonstrates the treaty's effectiveness in saving civilian lives, according to Cluster Munition Monitor 2010, a report released on Nov. 1. "There is real momentum behind the ban on cluster munitions," said Steve Goose of Human Rights Watch, a contributing editor to the report.

But one holdout is significant enough to dampen any long-term success of the drive to rid the globe of cluster munitions. The United States remains one of the nonsignatory states

to the convention and one of the world's leading producers and deployers of cluster bombs. Ironically it is also one of the world's most generous funders of efforts to clean up the lethal materials left behind. The United States has been the largest contributor to clearing cluster munitions in Laos, for example, where it dropped more than 270 million submunitions between 1964 and 1973.

The United States has shown little interest in multilateral efforts to ban cluster bomb munitions and is a major supplier of such weapons to Israel, which put them to use in Lebanon in 2006, where unexploded "bomblets"



we are committed to a long-term partnership. The [Iraqi Security Force] is very capable, and we still have a strong security presence to support them.”

Responding to the violence, the Syriac Catholic patriarch, Ignace

Joseph III Younan, said that the security being provided at Christian places of worship by Iraqi forces is “far less than what we have hoped for and requested.” He added, “Christians are slaughtered in Iraq, in their homes and churches, and the so-called ‘free’ world is watching in complete indifference, interested only in responding in a way that is politically correct and economically opportune, but in reality is hypocritical.”

Asked if the upsurge in violence might encourage the State Department to accelerate its efforts to resettle Iraqi Christians, thousands of whom wait in Amman, Jordan, for an opportunity to be relocated to the United States and Europe, Leslie Phillips, a spokesperson for the State Department said, “I’m not aware of any plans to change the number of refugees brought to the United States from Iraq.” She added, “Obviously we continue to be concerned about religious freedom in Iraq and the protection of all its minorities.”

In each of the last two years a little more than 18,000 Iraqis have been accepted for resettlement in the

United States. Since 2007 the State Department has admitted altogether only 53,689 Iraqis into the United States. Of that four-year total only 22,729 Christians of all denominations have cleared State Department and Homeland Security Department hurdles and been admitted to the United States. That total includes only 171 listed as Chaldean Catholics and 6,017 as Catholic; 1,579 were described as Orthodox.

In a statement on Nov. 2, Cardinal Francis George of Chicago, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, said that while the U.S. bishops welcomed the end of U.S. military operations in Iraq, “we share the Iraqi bishops’ concern that the United States failed to help Iraqis in finding the political will and concrete ways needed to protect the lives of all citizens, especially Christians and other vulnerable minorities, and to ensure that refugees and displaced persons are able to return to their homes safely. Having invaded Iraq, the U.S. government has a moral obligation not to abandon those Iraqis who cannot defend themselves.”

remain a significant menace. The United States was not expected to participate in a cluster munitions conference held from Nov. 9 to 12 in Laos. Other convention holdouts and producers of cluster ordnance include China, India, Pakistan, Israel and Russia.

Cluster bombs open when deployed, releasing hundreds of lethal anti-personnel “bomblets.” Unfortunately, long after hostilities cease thousands of unexploded bomblets remain scattered behind, which can maim or kill farmers, children and livestock years, even decades later. The convention obliges

signatory states to end use, production and transfer of cluster munitions, destroy stockpiled cluster munitions within eight years of joining the convention, clear land contaminated by cluster munitions within 10 years and assist the victims of these weapons. Among the 108 countries that have signed the convention are 38 former users, producers, exporters or stockpilers of the weapon.

Cluster munition contamination remains in at least 23 states and three disputed areas. In 2009, there were 100 new confirmed cluster munition casualties. Half of these casualties occurred in

just two states, Laos and Lebanon.



Members of an all-woman battle area clearance team search for cluster bomblets in a field in south Lebanon.

Fewer Interfaith Catholic Marriages

Religiously mixed marriages are becoming more common among those who practice Reform Judaism but have shown a significant decline among American Catholics in the past 20 years, speakers at the semiannual consultation of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and the National Council of Synagogues said. Forty-six percent of married Reform Jews have spouses who identify themselves as having another faith, while 26 percent of Catholic marriages involve partners who are not Catholic. The consultation, chaired by Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan of New York and Rabbi Alvin Berkun, president of the (Conservative) Rabbinical Assembly, took place on Oct. 19 in New York. “Whereas 30 years ago a Christian-Jewish couple might have approached a rabbi with embarrassment about their intentions to marry, today they’re asking about spirituality programs in which the both of them can feel comfortable,” said Rabbi Charles Kroloff, who chaired a task force on intermarriage for the Central Conference of Reform Rabbis.

U.S.: Sudan Must Vote

The U.S. State Department made it clear that it wants the independence vote in south Sudan set for January 2011 to be held as scheduled, despite talks by northern officials about a postponement and a fresh push by Egypt for the same. The referendums in southern Sudan and the oil-rich region of Abyei were a centerpiece of an accord in 2005 that ended two decades of civil war, in which about two million people died. Preparations for the key votes have proceeded haltingly amid political and logistical

NEWS BRIEFS

Noting that more than a third of registered Irish births occurred outside marriage in the first three months of 2010, Patricia Casey, a professor of psychiatry at University College Dublin, called for a national debate on the benefits of **raising children** in a married setting.

• Though supporters of the initiative could not cite a single case of Shariah law being used in Oklahoma, voters there approved a ballot measure on Nov. 2 that blocks judges from considering **Islamic or international law** when making a ruling. • **Thomas P. Gaunt, S.J.**, executive secretary for the Jesuit Conference in Washington since 2001, was named executive director of the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University on Oct. 27. • A group of **survivors of sexual abuse** were prevented from observing a moment of silence in St. Peter’s Square by Italian police on Oct. 31, but their representatives were allowed to leave letters for Pope Benedict XVI. • **Israeli legislation** proposing that community boards be allowed to reject new residents who do not suit “cultural and social perspectives” provoked a walkout of the Knesset’s Arab members on Oct. 27.



Thomas P. Gaunt, S.J.

obstacles. Southerners have accused the northerners of stalling and warned of violence if the referendum is delayed. The U.S. special envoy to Sudan, Scott Gration, told reporters: “We are committed to on-time referenda in both Abyei and in southern Sudan. And it is really up to the parties to take the decisions and to take the actions that will make this a reality.” The Sudanese government and leaders of former rebel groups have yet to agree on contentious post-referendum arrangements for south Sudan, including issues of border demarcation, wealth sharing, water and national debt.

Death Toll Mounts In Double Disasters

A double dose of natural disasters led Catholic agencies working in

Indonesia to mount multiple efforts to provide emergency services to victims. The disasters—a magnitude 7.7 undersea earthquake on Oct. 25, which triggered a tsunami that swamped coastal villages in the remote Mentawai Islands, and the eruption of a volcano on Java beginning on Oct. 26—claimed more than 400 lives and displaced thousands. Authorities reported at least 400 people remained missing as of Oct. 29, four days after 10-foot waves washed away homes and other structures up to 2,000 feet inland. “Entire villages were swept away,” said Silvano Zulian, a Xaverian priest who lives in the Mentawai Islands. Local priests and women religious were among the first to reach the affected communities.

From CNS and other sources.



Bad Judgment

My desire to offer some post-election commentary has been thwarted by bad timing. My submission deadline falls just before the Nov. 2 voting. Possessing neither crystal ball nor much confidence in pre-election polling data, I will have to settle for something other than detailed analysis of the mid-term election results. I will take the long view regarding a perennial concern within U.S. politics.

One of the most closely watched Senate races this season unfolded in Delaware. The Democrats nominated New Castle County Executive Chris Coons (full disclosure: I was once on a college debating team with him). His Republican opponent was the Tea Party-supported consultant Christine O'Donnell. Luckily, the campaign soon moved on past O'Donnell's dabbling in witchcraft to more substantial topics.

For those outside Delaware, the primary opportunity to assess the candidates was the CNN broadcast of a debate on Oct. 13 (interrupted, to the dismay of few, by breaking news of the rescue of 33 Chilean miners).

As surely as Nascar enthusiasts secretly yearn for multi-car pileups, people watch candidates' debates to gawk at gaffes. After this debate the moderator, Wolf Blitzer, opined that O'Donnell must be judged the winner simply because she made no major missteps, a solid accomplishment for a less experienced candidate like her.

I strongly disagree with Blitzer's assessment. The candidate in fact

made an egregious gaffe. When asked to name a recent Supreme Court decision with which she disagreed, O'Donnell inexplicably drew a complete blank. Obviously flustered, she promised to post on her Web site right away her answer to that question.

Now we all live in dread of being flummoxed by "gotcha" questions like this. I have been there myself, unable to recall a single title of a favorite novel when a live radio interviewer was making small talk with me on air some years ago. I even tell my students facing job interviews to keep on the tip of the tongue answers to casual questions like "Who is your favorite theologian?" or "What is the best Catholic weekly magazine in the United States?"

By the time you read this, Christine O'Donnell is either a Senator-elect or is looking for work. I nevertheless wish to offer her some advice on this aspect of campaign debate preparation.

If you favor a broad interpretation of the word *recent*, then consider citing *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the 1896 case that cemented the principle of "separate but equal" into U.S. law for generations. Or go with *Roe v. Wade*, the horrific 1973 decision that allowed legal abortion in all states. O'Donnell's public record attests to her opposition to that Supreme Court blunder.

If the word *recent* means only this year, there are still many decisions from which to choose. I would identify two that are particularly objectionable. In January the court reached a much criticized decision in the case

Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission, which overturned many previous restraints on political advertisements. This raises fears that corporations and special-interest groups can bankroll a range of political activities with little regulation or transparency. Foreign donors seeking to influence American politics are freer than ever to engage in stealth spending.

The other disastrous ruling was in the case *Holder v. Humanitarian Law Project*. That decision, on June 21, defined all contact with any of the hundreds of groups classified by the State Department as terrorist organizations as constituting material support for enemies of the United States. Maintaining such a broad

The
Supreme
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interpretation of material support precludes constructive initiatives like the creative Track II diplomacy, which has led to peace settlements in Northern Ireland and elsewhere.

While both decisions cite lofty principles (free speech, national security), I predict that the effects of these two rulings will be intolerable. While people of good will might well disagree, I am convinced that each will seriously damage the common good.

Supreme Court decisions have a way of trumping electoral politics and reshaping the structure of the entire political system. A bad ruling may tilt the playing field in ways antithetical to democracy. Every candidate should be poised to identify and oppose decisions with harmful effects that will last long beyond a given election cycle.

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St. Thomas Aquinas, O.P. (1225-74)



EXAMINING THE PHOENIX CASE
IN LIGHT OF CHURCH TRADITION

From Intuition to Moral Principle

BY KEVIN O'ROURKE

The excommunication in March of Sister Mary Margaret McBride for having participated in a decision to terminate a pregnancy threatening the life of the mother has precipitated widespread discussion on the morality of her action. (Sister McBride, a member of the Sisters of Mercy, was vice president of St. Joseph Catholic Hospital in Phoenix, Ariz.) The discussion has been reflected in *America* articles, letters to the editor and in the media at large. In the following article, Kevin O'Rourke, O.P., continues a discussion he began in "Complications" (*Am.*, 8/2/10).

—The Editors

Shortly after the case of Sr. Margaret Mary McBride became news, the Committee on Doctrine of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a statement concerning abortion. The statement was occasioned by the Phoenix case (see sidebar, p. 12) but did not declare that a direct abortion had been performed and said nothing concerning the canonical penalty of excommunication. The statement did reaffirm the traditional Catholic teaching that "nothing can justify a direct abortion." The purpose of this article is not to comment on the facts or decisions of the people involved in the Phoenix case, but rather to investigate whether there is a foundation for determining that termination of a pregnancy in such circumstances is an indirect abortion rather than a direct abortion.

Since the Phoenix case became public, I have asked scores of people involved in Catholic health care—doctors, nurses and hospital administrators—whether they would approve terminating the pregnancy of a nonviable infant if a competent medical team stated that "both mother and child will die unless the pregnancy is terminated, but the mother will live if the pregnancy is terminated." As far as I could judge, the people questioned did not approve of abortion. Without hesitation, however, all said they would approve the procedure in order to save the life of the mother. One veteran nurse practitioner said, "That wouldn't be an abortion." An experienced administrator said, "Would you expect me to just sit there and let the mother die?" The responses were spontaneous, with no one ask-

PHOTO: GINS/NANCY WIECHEC

KEVIN O'ROURKE, O.P., is a professor of bioethics at the Neiswanger Institute of Bioethics and Public Policy, Stritch School of Medicine, at Loyola University Chicago.

ing for time to make a moral analysis. It seems there is an intuition that such an action would not be morally forbidden, would not be a direct abortion.

Intuition as a Moral Instrument

Intuition, when it is the apprehension of a particular good by an informed conscience, is a legitimate source of a justified moral decision. Christians believe such intuitions are often the result of virtue and the influence of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, it seems that many of the good actions people perform are the result of intuition, typically defined as a subconscious way of knowing. Some philosophers claim this is the only source of moral action. In the Catholic tradition, however, intuition alone is not a sufficient explanation of moral probity. Intuition must be supported by principle in order to provide a firm basis for moral action and application to similar cases.

In the history of Catholic moral theology, there is a famous case in which intuition led Catholic theologians to approve transplants of organs from one living person to another. When transplants between living persons first seemed possible 60 years ago, some Catholic theologians did not approve of such transplants. They maintained that the principle of totality, typically used as the basis for such transplants, allowed one to remove an organ to preserve one's own life but not the life or well-being of another. A statement of Pope Pius XII confirmed this interpretation

and thus ruled out transplants based on the principle of totality.

In 1956, however, Gerald Kelly, S.J., a pioneer in the field of bioethics, stated "that it came as a surprise to physicians that theologians should have difficulty with procedures which are performed with the purpose of helping others." Kelly maintained: "By a sort of instinctive judgment we consider that the giving of a part of one's body to help a sick person is morally justifiable." Following this intuition, Kelly and other theologians searched for a principle that would support transplantation of organs between living people. They realized that the principle of charity, in this case a desire to help other people prolong their lives or at least live with fewer complications, would justify the transplants if functional integrity of the donor's body were maintained. Functional integrity, as opposed to anatomical integrity, allows continued homeostasis of the body, even though an organ is missing. For example, one kidney from a donor could be transplanted to another person, provided the donor's remaining kidney continued to function. The principle of charity is the basis for the Holy See's encouragement over the years of the gift of life-prolonging transplants from one living person to another.

What if Both Mother and Child Will Die?

There seems to be an intuition that terminating a pregnancy that exacerbates pulmonary tension to such an extent

THE PHOENIX CASE: A SUMMARY

In the fall of 2009, woman patient 10 weeks pregnant was diagnosed with severe pulmonary arterial hypertension. Pulmonary hypertension impairs the function of the heart and is exacerbated during pregnancy by increased hormonal activity of the placenta. In this case the medical records state that the mother had right heart failure and carcinogenic shock. The medical team caring for the woman informed her and the ethics committee of the hospital that both the mother and the child would probably die unless the infant were taken from the mother's womb. The mother originally did not wish to lose the infant but consented to the surgery when she heard the pregnancy was life-threatening.

The ethical code for Catholic hospitals allows the early delivery of a viable infant for a proportionate reason. At 10 weeks, the infant is far from viable. The code also allows an indirect abortion, that is, when the direct effect of a procedure is the cure of a serious pathological condition, for example removal of a cancerous uterus, and the infant dies as a result of the procedure. The code does not allow a direct abortion, however, in which "the sole and

immediate effect of the procedure is termination of a pregnancy before viability." Thinking that both mother and infant would die if nothing were done, Sister Mary Margaret McBride, speaking for the ethics committee, gave permission to the medical team to terminate the pregnancy.

Within a few months Bishop Thomas J. Olmsted of Phoenix, after learning that this procedure had been performed in the Catholic hospital, interviewed the chief executive officer of the hospital and Sister McBride, who had given permission for the surgery that terminated the pregnancy. The bishop declared that the sister had incurred an excommunication because she had cooperated in procuring a direct abortion.



that both mother and child will die unless action is taken to remove the source of danger would result in an indirect rather than a direct abortion. Is there a moral principle to support this intuition?

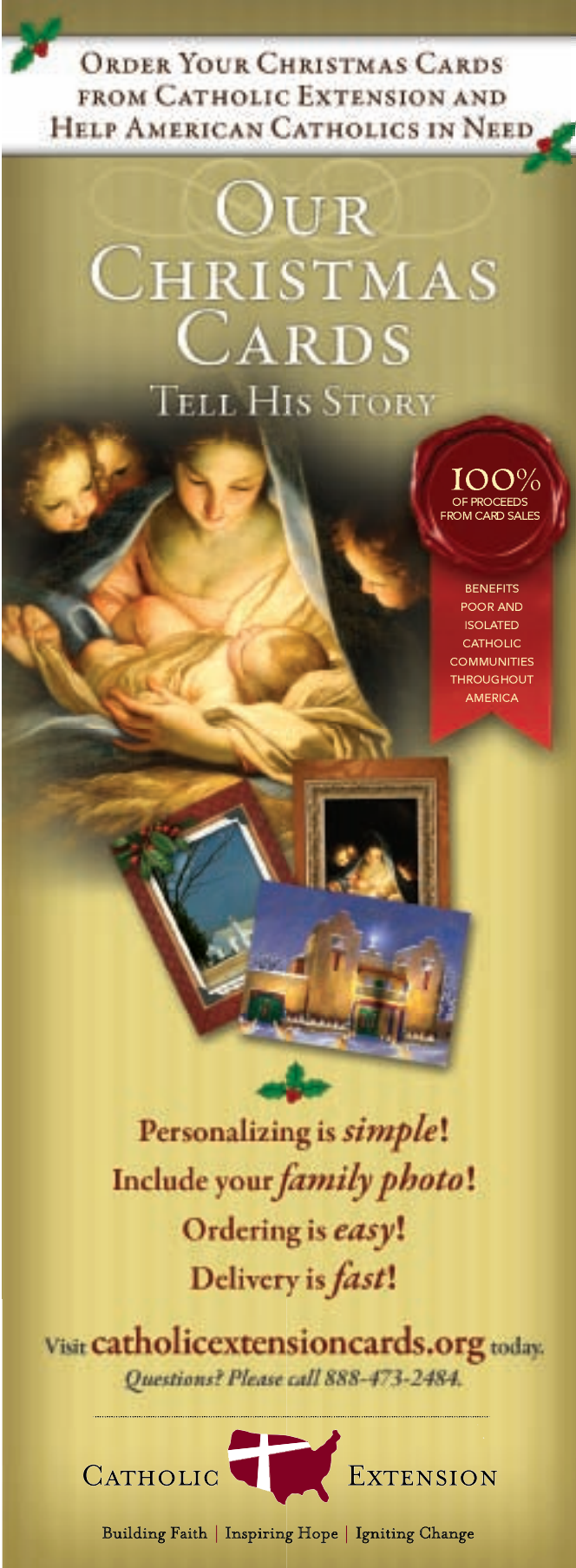
The eminent Catholic philosopher Germain Grisez has written that in some circumstances what seems to be a direct abortion may be performed if both mother and infant would die if nothing is done. In *The Way of the Lord Jesus*, Grisez lists four conditions that would justify removing a nonviable infant from the womb: 1) some pathology threatens the lives of both a pregnant woman and her child; 2) it is not safe to wait, for waiting will result in the death of both; 3) there is no way to save the child; 4) an operation that can save the mother's life will result in the child's death. Grisez uses as an example of a licit application of these conditions the case of craniotomy: "In such cases the baby's death need not be included in the proposal to remove the child with an oversized head from the birth canal. The baby cannot remain where it is without ending in both the mother's and the baby's death."

While Grisez's opinion is not without merit, it does not seem to have carried the day. It has not been cited widely in papal statements or standard textbooks as an example of indirect abortion. Perhaps it is because the example he considers when applying the four principles, a craniotomy, does not occur frequently in the United States. Advanced imaging and caesarian-section deliveries enable physicians to circumvent the danger that might occur if the infant has an oversized head. At any rate, Grisez's opinion cannot be rejected out of hand.

Fetal Death and Self-Defense

Another principle, perhaps more helpful in justifying the intuition in question, is that of self-defense. In his *Summa Theologiae*, Thomas Aquinas justifies the act of self-defense and in so doing explains the conditions that are the basis for the principle of double effect. (It seems Aquinas conceived of self-defense as an application of the principle we now call double effect.) Over the centuries a more explicit set of norms for this principle has been developed, but Thomas presented the essentials. When considering self-defense, he points out that one act may have two effects, one of which is intended and the other not. The intended effect is the preservation of life or well-being of a person in danger of attack; the unintended effect is the harm, even death, that is inflicted upon the person threatening grave harm. Aquinas adds that moral acts take their specific character from what is intended; the unintended effect is accidental and does not determine the morality of the act. Such acts of self-defense are morally acceptable because it is natural to keep oneself in being (alive).

In moral reasoning the person threatening serious harm



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to another is often called “an unjust aggressor.” Is it possible to consider an infant in the womb as an unjust aggressor in regard to the mother? Ordinarily no. But usually pregnancy is not an illness; with proper neonatal care, pregnancy is not life-threatening. But in the Phoenix case the effect of the pregnancy upon the mother is not “ordinary.” The activity of the placenta threatens the mother’s life.

Elsewhere in the *Summa*, Aquinas maintains that in some situations, factors that are usually circumstances of an act are no longer accidental. They become the principal condition of the moral object. In the case in Phoenix, the moral object no longer envisions a problem-free pregnancy but one that seriously endangers the life of the mother. Something that in most cases of pregnancy is a circumstance, namely the activity of the placenta, has become an essential element of the moral object.

Considering an infant who cannot reason to be an unjust aggressor seems to be an overstatement, but there is no thought that in analyzing the act of self-defense the aggressor must be rational. An irrational person or force of nature (a disease, for example) that attacks a person may still be resisted. The moral act in self-defense does not depend upon the personal qualities of the cause of danger. Perhaps

it would be better to concentrate on the pathology as the aggressor rather than to consider the infant as an unjust aggressor.

If the cause of the harmful activity were localized in the placenta, the removal of the placenta could be a means of overcoming the danger to the woman. In the present day, of course, removal of the placenta also causes the death of the infant.

Finally, invoking the principle of self-defense is not a case of using an evil means to procure a good end, as prohibited by the statement from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ doctrinal committee. In the act of self-defense, there is one human act, one moral object. True, the act has two effects; but there is only one intention. That intention is morally good: the prolongation of the mother’s life. The act of self-defense, as Aquinas explains, is a good, moral act. Avoiding personal harm becomes the principal condition of the act and thus specifies the human act in question.

As a result of this discussion it seems there is sufficient moral argumentation to support the intuition voiced at the beginning of this article. In cases similar to the Phoenix case, it seems reasonable to maintain that only an indirect abortion is involved. ▲

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Sisters in Faith

Finding renewal—and a dose of irreverence—in a women’s prayer group

BY KAYA OAKES

For months after I completed the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults in my parish, I would often crane my head around during Mass, looking for the 15 or so other candidates who had become fully initiated Catholics along with me at Easter. But somehow they had all vanished. As a returning Catholic who had come bearing a lot of doubts and questions after a 20-plus year ramble through the fields of punk rock and Berkeley politics, I was hungry for spiritual community, but I never quite found it in the RCIA. With five different Sunday services to choose from, perhaps my class partners were just scattered among them. A priest told me, “God will know when to send you companions.” While he had been right about everything else so far, I suspected he might be wrong about that.

Every week I drifted to Mass in a bubble until I got an e-mail message from my confirmation sponsor, who is a feminist, a liberal and a social justice activist. We had been introduced by our parish priest and had hit it off in

our short conversations. She asked if I’d like to join her prayer group—a once-a-month gathering of a few like-minded Catholic women. “We pray together,” she wrote, “and complain

greater commitment to helping others.

Often we talk about our problems with the big-C church. It’s not “blasphemy and a nice cup of tea,” but it is a chance to hash out frustrations we feel as lay people, and particularly as lay women, in a church that too often fails to include our voices. My own decision to come back to the church was one fraught with difficulties about the patriarchal structure of Catholicism and the backpedaling from the reforms of the Second Vatican Council. I feared that the church was cultivating a culture of secrecy. The priests and nuns I met shared some of these doubts and concerns, but here is the funny thing: they



about the church.” It took me about five seconds to reply, “How soon can we meet?”

The prayer ladies may be a little irreverent, but they are also the best Catholics I know. Two are single, one is married with kids, one has a long-time partner, and they are all actively involved in ministries. From their work—from giving spiritual direction to teaching theology to running the parish monthly dinner for homeless guests—they are role models as modern Catholic women, especially to me. They are all feminists, and they are all liberals in the best sense. We often talk about the desire we share for social equality, a solution to poverty in our communities, more people to make a

believed anyway. So do my friends. Catholicism at its best allows us to think critically, to examine things from multiple angles. That is what we do together. Their faith helps me hold on to my own, however tenuous it might sometimes be.

Our small community harkens back to the oldest days of the Catholic Church. When the pastor of our sprawling parish recently asked people to give him feedback on what the parish could do to cultivate community, the answer came back clarion clear: more intimate connection with others, smaller group gatherings, a chance to finally learn the name of the person you have been sitting behind for 15

KAYA OAKES is the author of *Slanted and Enchanted: The Evolution of Indie Culture* (Henry Holt, 2009), and a poetry collection, *Telegraph* (Pavement Saw, 2007). She teaches writing at the University of California, Berkeley and is writing a nonfiction book about radical faith.

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years. Most of the people who came to that meeting were women, and their desire to forge lasting relationships within the parish came from a very human need: the need to be recognized, the need to be heard, the need to be understood.

That is what Jesus did for his disciples, including the women who stood at the foot of the cross as he died and the women who went to the tomb when he rose to live again. At a time when the church often behaves as though it is combating its own death, it is not surprising that lay people are crying out for greater knowledge of one another. If Jesus taught us to recognize God in the poor and the out-cast, it is up to us to learn to minister to one another's spiritual poverty and social rejection.

On the evenings when our group gathers, we learn what parts of our lives require nurturing and healing, then we read a short Scripture passage or prayer. We talk about whom we want to hold in prayer that evening, and we meditate together. It is in that time of silence that I most often sense the spiritual bond these women have cultivated for more than a decade. A Poor Clare nun I met last year explained her understanding of God as "relational energy"—the mutual exchange of compassion and love that our faith lives should provide. When our contemplative group concludes meditation and recites a psalm, that energy not only lingers in the room, but sustains us until we gather again.

I am the youngest member of the group. I feel I have gained not only four sisters but four spiritual directors, each of whom in her own way helps me to find my place in this faith, even if that place will always be on the fringes. Our ministry may be a tiny one in this vast, often impersonal church, but we try to carry the small light of our faith into our secular lives. Knowing my friends, I have no doubt that others can see it. **A**

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IDEAS | ROBERT ELLSBERG

DOROTHY IN LOVE

New letters reveal the frank sexuality of a possible saint.

Generally speaking, there is not much to say about the sex lives of the saints. Yes, they were great lovers of God, and if Bernini's famous sculpture "St. Teresa in Ecstasy" is any evidence, one can appreciate that such love was not merely platonic. But what about passionate, erotic, physical love between flesh-and-blood humans? Even if one looked carefully at the lives of the virgin martyrs and the celibate monks, priests and religious who dominate the religious calendar, it would be hard to fill a page on the subject of sex and holiness.

There is St. Augustine, who writes about his youthful search for "some object for my love." In different forms and persons, including his mistress of many years, he evidently found it. But in every case Augustine wants to show

how the "clear waters" of love were invariably spoiled by the "black rivers of lust." Augustine describes his relationship with his unnamed mistress, the mother of his son, in these unflattering terms: "In those days I lived with a woman, not my lawful wedded wife, but a mistress whom I had chosen for no special reason but that my restless passions had alighted on her."

Dorothy and Forster

It is striking to compare Augustine's treatment with a similar passage in *The Long Loneliness*, the memoir of Dorothy Day, the American-born co-founder of the Catholic Worker. There she introduces the story of her love affair with Forster Batterham, and the role he played in hastening her spiritual journey: "The man I loved, with

whom I entered into a common-law marriage, was an anarchist, an Englishman by descent, and a biologist." They met at a party in Greenwich Village in the early 1920s and soon thereafter began to live together—as she put it, "in the fullest sense of the phrase"—in a house on Staten Island.

Among their bohemian set there was nothing scandalous about such a relationship. It was evidently Dorothy who liked to think of it as a "common-law marriage." For Forster, who never masked his scorn for the "institution of the family," their relationship was simply a "comradeship." Nevertheless, she loved him "in every way." As she wrote: "I loved him for all he knew and pitied him for all he didn't know. I loved him for the odds and ends I had to fish out of his sweater pockets and for the sand and shells he brought in with his fishing. I loved his lean cold body as he got into bed smelling of the sea and I loved his integrity and stubborn pride."

Wait a minute! Day is here describing, without any hint of Augustine's obligatory shame or regret, her physical relationship with a man to whom she was not married. Needless to say, she was not yet a Catholic. Yet her point is to show how this lesson in love, this time of "natural happiness," as she called it, awakened her thirst for an even greater happiness. She began to pray during her walks and started to attend Mass. This religious impulse was strengthened when she discovered she was pregnant—an event that inspired a sense of gratitude so large that only God could receive it. With that came the determination that she would have her child baptized, "come what may."

As a dedicated anarchist, Forster would not be married by either church or state. And so to become a Catholic, Dorothy recognized, would mean sep-

Dorothy Day and Forster Batterham in Staten Island, N.Y.



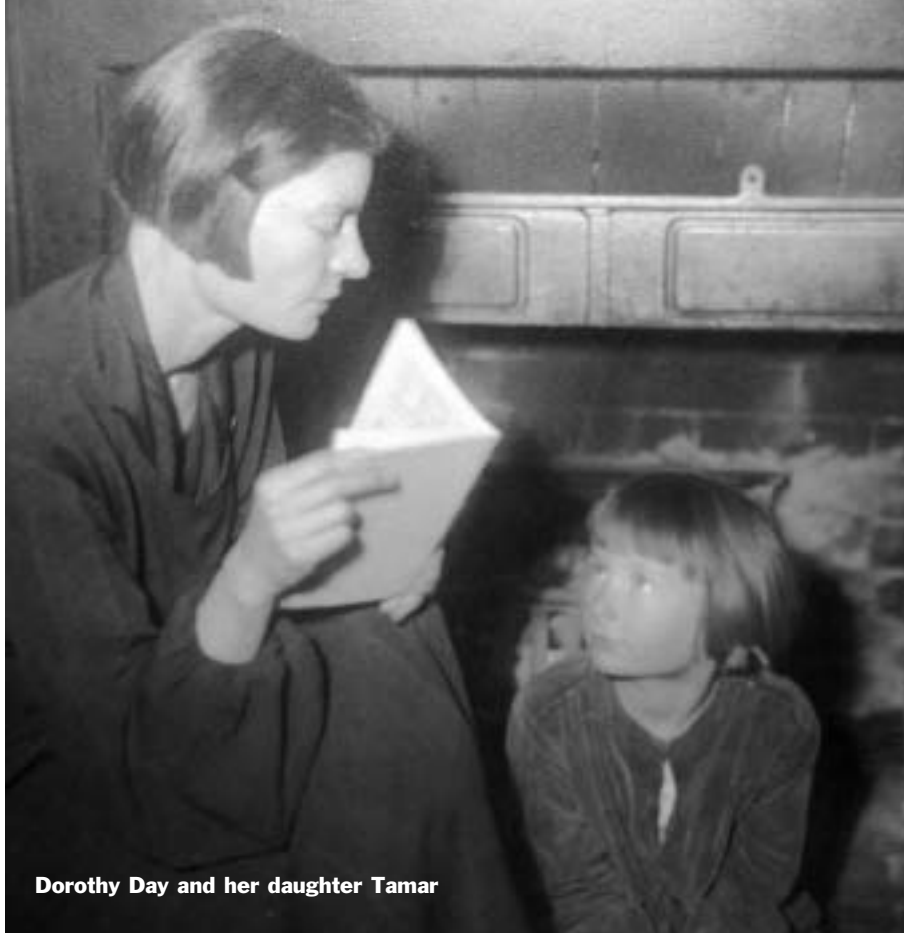
arating from the man she loved. "It got to the point where it was the simple question of whether I chose God or man." Ultimately, painfully, she chose God. In December 1927 she forced Forster to leave the house. That month she was received into the church.

The New Letters

So goes the familiar story recounted in her memoir. But it is not the whole story. In editing Day's personal letters, *All the Way to Heaven*, I was astonished to read an extraordinary collection of letters to Forster dating from 1925, soon after their first meeting, until December 1932, the eve of her new life in the Catholic Worker.

The early letters certainly reflect the passionate love described in *The Long Loneliness*. In her first letter she writes: "I miss you so much. I was very cold last night. Not because there wasn't enough covers but because I didn't have you." In the next, "I think of you much and dream of you every night and if my dreams could affect you over long distance, I am sure they would keep you awake." Separated for some weeks, she writes Forster: "My desire for you is a painful rather than pleasurable emotion. It is a ravishing hunger which makes me want you more than anything in the world and makes me feel as though I could barely exist until I saw you again...I have never wanted you as much as I have ever since I left, from the first week on, although I've thought before that my desires were almost too strong to be borne."

The letters skip over the time of Tamar's birth and Dorothy's conversion, but after her parting from Forster they resume with poignant intensity. Despite the implication in Dorothy's memoir that her conversion had marked an end, once and for all, to their relationship, this was far from the case. In fact, the letters continue for another five years, as Dorothy pleaded, cajoled and prayed that Forster would give up his stubborn-



Dorothy Day and her daughter Tamar

ness and consent to marry her.

In vain, she assured him that he would be "involving [himself] in nothing" if he married her. "Religion would be obtruded on you in no way except that you would have to see me go to church once a week, and five times a year on various saints' days. I would have nothing around the house to jar upon you—no pictures and books. I am really not obsessed as you think I am."

At times she could not hide her frustration: "Do I have to be condemned to celibacy all my days, just because of your pig-headedness? Damn it, do I have to remind you that Tamar needs a father?" Her tone fluctuated between tenderness and bitter reproach: "I am not restrained when I am lying in your arms, am I? You know I am not a promiscuous creature in my love.... But it is all so damned hopeless that I do hope I fall in love again and marry since there seems to be no possibility for a happy outcome to our love for each other."

By the fall of 1932 Dorothy was liv-

ing in New York. In December she traveled to Washington, D.C., to cover the Hunger March of the Unemployed. There on the feast of the Immaculate Conception, she offered a prayer that God would show her some way to combine her Catholic faith and her commitment to social justice. Immediately afterward she would meet Peter Maurin, the French peasant philosopher who would inspire her to launch the Catholic Worker and whose ideas would dominate the rest of her life. Whether there was any relation between the opening of this new door and the decision finally to close the door on her hope of marrying Forster, Dorothy's letter to him of Dec. 10 would be her last for many years.

After describing her strong commitment to the prohibition of sex outside of marriage, she writes: "The ache in my heart is intolerable at times, and sometimes for days I can feel your lips upon me, waking and sleeping. It is because I love you so much that I want you to marry me." Nevertheless, she

concluded: "It all is hopeless of course, tho [*sic*] it has often seemed to me a simple thing. Imaginatively I can understand your hatred and rebellion against my beliefs and I can't blame you. I have really given up hope now, so I won't try to persuade you anymore."

But even this did not mark the end of their relationship. Over the years they remained connected through Tamar. There would be friendly notes, the exchange of gifts and visits in the hospital. In Dorothy's final years Forster took to calling every day. He was present at her funeral in 1980, and later at a memorial Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral.

More Fully Human

So what, in the end, do these newly published letters reveal? They certainly confirm the deep, passionate

love described in Dorothy's memoir, thus underscoring the incredible sacrifice she endured for the sake of her faith. That sacrifice lay at the heart of her vocation; it was the foundation for a lifetime of courage, perseverance and dedication. It marked her deep sense of the heroic demands of faith. But in no sense did it represent a conflict in her mind between "merely" human love and "higher" religious aspirations. "I could not see that love between man and woman was incompatible with love of God," she wrote. And if she had had her way, she would have embraced a happy family life with Forster and the many children she dreamed of.

Although, as Dorothy reported, some of her radical friends insinuated that her turn to God was because she was "tired of sex, satiated, disillusioned," her true feelings were quite

different. "It was because through a whole love, both physical and spiritual, I came to know God."

If Dorothy Day is one day canonized, these letters will provide a fairly unusual resource. They serve to remind us, if that were necessary, that saints are fully human—perhaps, as Thomas Merton put it in *Life and Holiness*, more fully human: "This implies a greater capacity for concern, for suffering, for understanding, for sympathy, and also for humor, for joy, for appreciation for the good and beautiful things of life."

Dorothy considered her love for Forster to be one of the primary encounters with grace in her life, one for which she never ceased to rejoice. That insight and that witness are among her many gifts.

ON THE WEB

Read selections from Dorothy Day's letters to Forster Batterham. americamagazine.org/culture

ROBERT ELLSBERG, publisher of *Orbis Books*, is editor of *The Duty of Delight: The Diaries of Dorothy Day and the recently published collection of her letters, All the Way to Heaven*, reviewed in *America* on Nov. 8.

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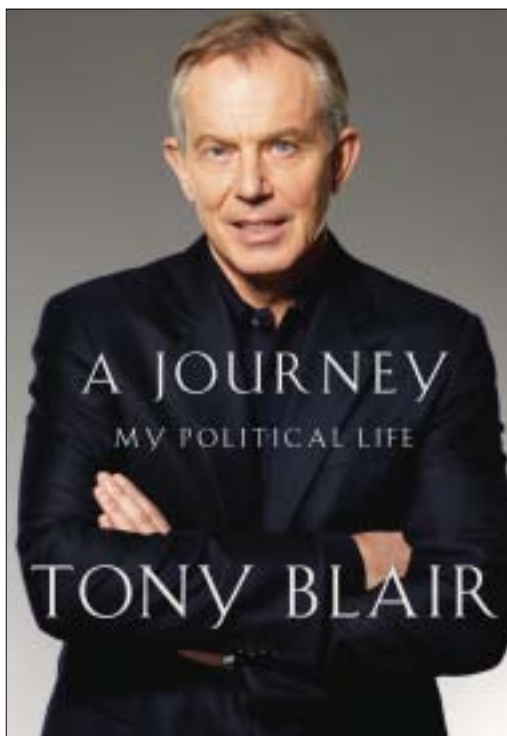
A JOURNEY My Political Life

By Tony Blair
Knopf. 720p \$35

This fascinating and frustrating memoir by one of the great modern statesmen is full of good things. But there is a great gap in it. “I had always been fortunate,” says Britain’s former prime minister (1997–2007), a Catholic convert and the founder of the Tony Blair Faith Foundation, “in having a passion bigger than politics, which is religion.” He says this on p. 663, just before the postscript, having mentioned his faith almost not at all. He says it again a page before the end, where he declares that in the work of his foundation, religion and politics “overlap.” But not so in his memoir. Faith is put in a drawer marked “private.”

This is immensely annoying. Blair spends more time recalling his (inconsequential) supper with French premier Nicolas Sarkozy than his (momentous) visit to Pope Benedict in 2007, when he discussed his forthcoming reception into the church after resigning as prime minister. (“I saw the Pope at the Vatican in the middle of June...it all passed in a bit of a blur.”) His conversion raised many questions, which he has never answered—and which his memoir carefully avoids.

Why did he not convert while in office? Did he wrestle with church teaching on embryonic research or on same-sex partnerships before passing the laws that enabled these? My guess is that this *cordon sanitaire* is the result of a political calculation: both he and his foundation would have lost from opening up his faith to flack both from conservative Catholics and radical secularists. But the book suffers for this silence—as does, necessarily, our judg-



ment of him. Blair remains, as *The Guardian* once described him, “a man without a shadow.”

A Journey is, however, highly readable, and as a manual of contemporary politics, insightful. It will stand among the classic political memoirs, rising above self-justification to capture the drama and constraints of contemporary politics and the immense, fateful responsibility of governance in the 21st century. Blair shares the lessons on peacemaking he drew from

Northern Ireland and discusses why resentment is so corrosive in politics and why politicians end up in sex scandals. He is dazzlingly intelligent and often witty; and readers quickly see where his leadership qualities lay: he is scanning the far horizon while others remain trapped in ideology or narrow self-interest. He was always an outrider, sitting lightly to party and ideology, alive to the addictions and comforting myths the Left was attached to, weaning his party away from them and on to electoral victory. This is the story of the first few chapters, and it is fascinating.

Blair won a landslide election in 1997 and two more—an unprecedented record for a Labour leader—because of his powerful intuition of where public opinion stood on a range of issues. Blair reached over a news media driven by impact and sensation because, like his mentor Bill Clinton, he had a visceral, even mystical, connection with “the people.”

He was a far better prime minister in 2007, when he stepped down, than he was in 1997. But by then the people were out of love with him. The marriage eventually broke down, by Blair’s account, because over time he intuited better what was right than what was popular.

The falling-out was over Iraq. Blair’s decision to take his country to war—and the carnage that followed, but above all the controversy surrounding the evidence used to justify

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that decision—led people to stop trusting him. He does not try to persuade the reader that he was right, but to show what was involved in the decision: his reading of history after 9/11; his conviction that removing Sadaam

was a moral necessity; the terrifying responsibility—which haunts him still—of sacrificing lives; and the loneliness of a decision of this magnitude, in which decision means division and the loss of many friends.

A Leper on Molokai, 1880

To the Father and to the sea
I confess my gross being,
embrace with withered arms
our rank God
here at Kalaupapa.

My eyes dull moons,
I know the sun by its smell.
More corrupt than Lazarus
I live this death before death,
live the reciprocity of flesh.

The death of our death stuns even the sky,
wailing birds reel in the unclean air.
The cemetery at Kalawa'o
vomits our pitted bones,
and the blind sun stares.

Kalaupapa is an open tomb—
three walls of water, one of rock.
When Lazarus died, Jesus wept.
With corrupt voices we sang
Mozart. The bishop wept.

JOSEPH SOLDATI

*JOSEPH A. SOLDATI, of Portland, Ore., has published numerous poems and essays, most recently in *New Millennium Writings*. (Note: Under the direction of Father Joseph Damien de Veuster, the patients sang a Mozart Mass for the visiting bishop on June 8, 1875.)*

But he had counted the cost. “At that moment, the fear of history’s judgement was not the fear that came with action, but with inaction,” says Blair of 9/11, like Churchill faced with the Nazis. “How to change the world was a tough challenge to answer; not to answer it, to be paralyzed in indecision, was deemed the greater risk, by a large margin.” As Iraq descended into sectarian carnage—“we had not counted,” confesses Blair, “on the deep hold this extremism could exercise on the imagination, will and way of life of its adherents”—there were “dark moments” when he pondered Jesus’ words about the man proposing to build a tower needing first to consider the cost.

The war made Blair heavier and sadder, put lines in his Peter Pan face, grayed his hair and skin. His life now has an element of atonement. “I cannot, by any expression of regret, bring to life those who died,” he writes. “But I can dedicate a large part of the life left to me to that wider struggle, to try to charge it with meaning, purpose and resolution...in the actions of a life, my life, that continues still.”

The final chapters show Blair most clearly as a reforming politician: expanding and restructuring public services, modernizing the state much as Thatcher had modernized the market. But his increasing isolation within government and from public opinion led him, after his third electoral victory in 2005, to seek a dignified exit. He handed over his post to Gordon Brown in 2007, after 10 years fearing his chancellor would prove disastrous as prime minister (which he was).

The Blair who emerges is unquestionably impressive, not just as a politician but as a figure of moral stature willing to sacrifice his popularity for the sake of what was right. But what was right? What we (and history) make of him will hang on our judgment of where his conviction—that inner core of steely resolve—is rooted. But we never find out. His policy

agenda was essentially a liberal, social-democratic one; he never mentions Catholic social teaching or the subsidiarity principle; the star he follows is his own, mildly messianic conviction. He achieved great things, among them peace in Northern Ireland. Yet

who Blair is, what drives him, and above all the Catholic Blair, these remain, notwithstanding his relentless candor, out of reach.

AUSTEN IVEREIGH is European correspondent for *America*.

CLAIRE SHAEFFER-DUFFY KEEP IT SIMPLE

THE AMISH WAY Patient Faith in a Perilous World

By Donald B. Kraybill, Steven M. Nolt, David L. Weaver-Zercher
Jossey-Bass. 288p \$24.95

St. Francis advised, the story goes: “Preach the Gospel. Use words, if necessary.” The holy mendicant’s advice came to mind as I read *The Amish Way: Patient Faith in a Perilous World*, a thoughtful work on the beliefs, practices and affections of a people whose exacting Christianity gives significant witness.

The book marks the second collaboration for Donald Kraybill, Steven Nolt and David Weaver-Zercher, academics who have written extensively on the Amish. In 2007, the three men co-authored *Amish Grace: How Forgiveness Transcended Tragedy* in the wake of the killings in Nickel Mines, Pa. On a bright morning in October, 2006 Charles C. Roberts IV, a 32-year-old milk truck driver, entered a one-room Amish schoolhouse in Nickel Mines, armed with weapons and ammunition. Embittered over the death of his infant daughter, he tied up a dozen girls and shot them execution-style before turning the gun on himself. Roberts and five girls died; five others were critically wounded. Within hours of the horrific attack, members of the Amish community were expressing forgiveness for the man who killed their children and reaching out to his widow and family.

“Things are going to happen in life,” an Amish midwife who had delivered several of the dead girls told the media. “We are going to get hurt. But we have to forgive.... If we give it to God, he’ll take it and make something good out of it.”

Amish Grace, which became a national bestseller and inspired a movie, examined the extraordinary Amish commitment to forgiveness. The subject matter of this second book is less dramatic but equally meaningful. Discussed here are Amish origin and organization, the texts and prayers that inform their spirituality, and the beliefs and disciplines that shape their collective life. The bulk of the book is devoted to exploring Amish practice in everyday life—their views on children, family, possessions, technology, their response to evil and loss—and appropriately so. Pacifists with a strong commitment to family and rural living, the Amish are among those Christians who reject a “two-track system of salvation that separates grace from ethics,” belief in Christ, they believe, requires holy living and the directives are quite specific.

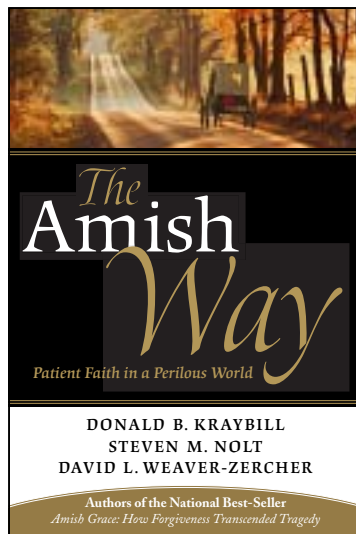
“All forms of spirituality are acts of resistance in some respect,” write the

authors, but most do not “resist the world as forcefully as the Amish do.” Amish faith is derived from the 16th-century Anabaptist movement, whose followers were burned at the stake or executed, often by Catholics, for insisting that baptism was for adults only, which was considered heretical. Like the early Christians, the Anabaptists opted for pacifism or nonresistance as their response to persecution. Their early history of persecution first engendered their sense of separateness. Stories of their martyrs, still read in Amish homes today, have helped shape Amish understanding of the world as a place of spiritual perils and given them a sense of being part of something greater than themselves.

For the Amish, separation from the world has bearing on every aspect of life. Young people are permitted a time of “running around” known as *Rumspringa*, but the adult who chooses to be baptized in the church must submit to the *Ordnung* (“order”), the collective regulations, prohibitions and expectations for an Amish lifestyle. The direc-

tives, which members ratify twice a year, vary according to each *Gmay* or church district. Some are extremely detailed, dictating, for example, the permissible construction of a buggy. The wayward are disciplined with confession, shaming or, in extreme cases, excommunication.

Exacting in their commitment to live apart, the Amish are under no illusion that their rigorous Christianity exempts them from the troubles of this life. Like the rest of us, they reckon with hateful acts, tragic loss and emotional suffering. Some of the book’s most poignant sections include



reflections from Amish parents grappling with the death of a child. Nor are the Amish distinct from other Christians in their explanations for why suffering or evil exists. What sets them apart are their responses: their rejection of violence, even in self-defense; their commitment to forgive and, remarkably, their refusal to pass judgment on others. On the subject of salvation, the Amish, in the words of

one of their bishops, “defer to God.”

God, church, family, then self are the priorities of the Amish way. The authors recognize the pitfalls of such an ordering—the potential for religious legalism and severe constraints on individual expression. They also recognize its strengths—stable, tight-knit communities where people are deeply committed to caring for one another, especially the vulnerable, and

astonishing demonstrations of faith. The Amish are a people willing to live within limits, which causes bafflement in our culture, which values the unfettered life. Their way reminds us spiritual vitality has a cost and cannot be divorced from community. We do not get to heaven alone.


This book is an affectionate critique. Years of research and Amish friendships have gained the authors intimate access to these somewhat reclusive Christians, who have shown little interest in explaining themselves to the outside world. Yet fond regard does not prohibit the authors from identifying problems and inconsistencies. Amish adherence to traditional gender roles, permitting only men to hold leadership positions in the church, has led in some instances to reluctance to deal with domestic and sexual abuse. While admiring the Amish for their “uncommon patience,” the writers question whether this much patience is “a good thing. What about working to change the world for the better?”

While I was reading *The Amish Way*, public chatter about American religious identities verged on the hysterical. A reportedly Christian pastor prepared to commemorate Sept. 11 by burning copies of the Koran. The radio talk show host Glenn Beck denounced social justice as a false gospel and was begging for a leader to come forward and tell Americans, “the TRUTH!”

In the midst of such religious tension, contemplating the Amish way gives hope. As with any mature and well-practiced faith, their example reaffirms belief in God’s presence among us. Debbie Marcocci, a diner cook, said after the Nickel Mines killing, “A lot of people say they know Jesus, but they don’t. The Amish do.”

CLAIRE SHAEFFER-DUFFY, a freelance writer, is a member of the Saints Francis and Thérèse Catholic Worker Community in Worcester, Mass.

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PAPAL OVERTURES

THE POPE'S MAESTRO

By Sir Gilbert Levine

Jossey-Bass. 456p \$27.95

Of all people, longtime *America* readers may be familiar with, if not the full story, then at least the enduring title of the American-Jewish conductor Sir Gilbert Levine's memoir of his "deep spiritual friendship" with Pope John Paul II. In November 1994, just months after Levine's celebrated collaboration with John Paul on the Papal Concert to Commemorate the Shoah and in advance of his Christmastime investiture as a Pontifical Knight Commander, this magazine ran a cover story, with Levine in his "finest summer whites," under the headline "The Pope's Maestro." The nickname stuck and has been used widely ever since—from inside the Vatican itself to a profile on "60 Minutes" in 2001 and a documentary on Polish television in 2009 called "Papiński Maestro." Even CNN's Larry King has used the phrase. Now it is Levine's turn. And with *The Pope's Maestro*, a book as full of gratitude as anything else, the focus shifts, and what we get is a thoughtful and, indeed, touching portrait of the maestro's pope.

Gilbert Levine met Pope John Paul II in February 1988 during his tenure as musical director and principal conductor, or "Chief," of the Kraków Philharmonic, a period that for Levine was artistically liberating but also, owing to the constant police surveillance in Communist Poland, personally oppressive. Summoned to Rome after a warm and courtly welcome to Kraków by then-Archbishop Franciszek Cardinal Macharski,

Levine is received by the pope in a private audience. In a way, that will become familiar as his relationship with the Vatican deepens. As the men part ways Levine is told of a concert he is to conduct—one of the many, many more that will follow in his service to Rome. He recalls: "I was dumbfounded. 'What concert?' I tried to say to the closing door."

This is Levine's Vatican. A dumbfounding series of endlessly opening and endlessly closing doors, a series of disappearing acts around the world, of introductions and permissions, "rules and customs, and lines of authority," "careful prerogatives" within a "small village" that somehow still "extends its borders all the way to the Holy Land."

At the center—or rather, the top—of all this, of course, is the maestro's pope. Yet despite the exquisite hierarchy the pope presides over, as Levine puts it, John Paul remains always "human sized," his hand rough as it rests on the maestro's to calm him throughout their entire first meeting, his "cheek...soft, and warm, and oh so human," in the moment near the end of

John Paul's life when Levine bids him farewell with a goodbye kiss. The pope even tells jokes.

But above all, there is a sacred seriousness to Levine's book. From the start John Paul is inquisitive, solicitous and attentive, particularly when it comes to matters of Judaism and the Holocaust, including stories of

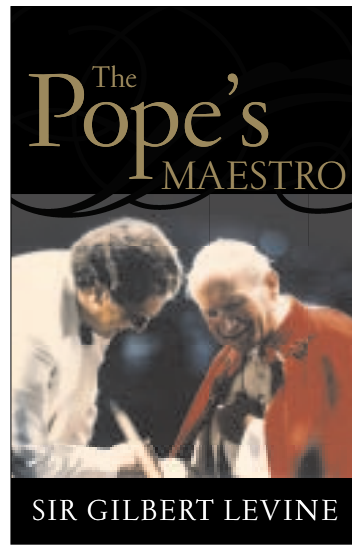
Levine's mother-in-law Margit's 18 months in Birkenau. During that first meeting, John Paul's startling youthfulness, even at 67, disappears from his face and is replaced by a pained look over "centuries of misunderstanding and of hate" between Christians and Jews.

The Pope's Maestro is Levine's account of their work together—always through music, concert after

concert after concert—to overcome those misunderstandings and move toward greater, deeper reconciliation and unity. There is the Denver World Youth Day concert in 1993, the commemoration of the Shoah in 1994, two papal concerts to celebrate the 2000 Jubilee Year, and the Papal Concert of Reconciliation in

January 2004, which brought together performers from the three Abrahamic traditions around their shared belief in resurrection. (The pope's outreach to Islam remained a bit of "unfinished business" for His Holiness and for the world after his death, Levine notes, which sadly "remains so to this day.")

The language at Levine's disposal is all religious, and his hope rests on what he calls "at-one-ment," which when shared with the pope means something more than either Jewish atonement or Christian reconciliation. It is about sharing a common humanity over all distances, all traditions and all creeds. It is about sharing one God, a lesson Levine learns one morning while praying with John Paul, which leaves him in a daze. Later that day Dziwisz asks, "Maestro, don't you know? We both pray to the same God." (The sentiment takes on even greater significance when Levine, after leaving the Great Mosque of Rome for



ON THE WEB

Sir Gilbert Levine talks about his relationship with Pope John Paul II. americamagazine.org/podcast

the first time, is able to say, "Allah is indeed great." This moment, of course, recasts and reimagines the Arabic phrase *Allahu Akbar*, which appears in his memories—and so many of ours—from 9/11.

For Levine, the credit for whatever at-one-ment he has achieved in his life, and what he aims to achieve in this book, seems mainly due to John Paul,

who for all his humanity must also be seen as a kind of supernatural force. Throughout his life and often with few words—and even those were halting near the end—the maestro's pope deepened friendships, opened doors, forged understanding and healed wounds.

Near the end of *The Pope's Maestro*, Levine reflects on his life making music: "Conductors don't often get a

chance to express themselves in words. That's mostly for the good." Any of us who care to know this maestro's pope, however, should be glad for the chance Levine took and, indeed, for that word "mostly."

SCOTT KORB is co-author of *The Faith Between Us: A Jew and a Catholic Search for the Meaning of God* (2007) and, most recently, *Life in Year One*.

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LETTERS

Disgruntled vs. Gruntled

According to your editorial "Voting Bloc" (10/25), the disgruntled folk are the more energized portion of the electorate. For sure they are the most energetic bloggers. But allow me as a reasonably "gruntled" citizen to put in a word. The Obama administration and the much despised Congress have done some very heavy lifting in the past 20 months, for which they deserve a lot of credit and my vote. Though partially hamstrung by Republicans and Blue Dog Democrats, they did what they could to stanch the economic hemor-

rhaging they inherited and to bring order to the financial markets. They brought the country kicking and screaming into the middle of the 20th century with the health care bill. My view is influenced by my experience living in European countries where universal health care has been in effect for generations; and costs are lower and medical outcomes much better. It stems from being a member of a community, of being in it together rather than every man for himself. If you want to call that socialism, that's your privilege. I prefer to think of it as Christian solidarity.

RICHARD CROSS
Bethesda, Md.

The March Resumes

The column "Voting Angry," by John F. Kavanaugh, S.J., (11/1) is dead on until he reaches a conclusion not justified by his previous trenchant analysis. Pollyanna might claim that "if bad things happen, maybe bad things will draw us together," but Father Kavanaugh really knows better. Any fair analysis of our national "regress" since the Supreme Court's electoral interference in 2000 must acknowledge reality, despite a recent two-year pause in the march to the abyss. It is delusional to claim we'll soon see the light in dealing with war, poverty and justice. Does anyone expect that a brighter future awaits Iraq and Afghanistan? Prisoners in Guantánamo? The homeless and the foreclosed? The unemployed?

The list could go on. I have seen a lot in my "three score and ten," but this is as bad as it gets. I find it particularly amusing that so many Catholics are returning to the Republican party after a short flirtation with the Democrats.



To send a letter to the editor we recommend using the link that appears below articles on *America's* Web site, www.americamagazine.org. This allows us to consider your letter for publication in both print and online versions of the magazine. Letters may also be sent to

America's editorial office (address on page 2) or by e-mail to: letters@americamagazine.org. They should be brief and include the writer's name, postal address and daytime phone number. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

It must be the new-found commitment to “social justice” that the Republicans are touting!

PAUL LOATMAN JR.
Mechanicville, N.Y.

Pepsi Cola Hits the Spot

Thanks to *America* and Kyle Kramer for “The Wounds of Appalachia” (10/4). My husband and I fell in love with the beauty of West Virginia in 1994, when our son enrolled at Wheeling Jesuit University. Since then we have visited many times, becoming gradually aware of the destruction of the mountains and the lives of Appalachia.

One concrete way that those of us who live outside these mountains can help to preserve them is to write and call our elected representatives to let them know this is happening and ask them to fight for justice in the region. Mountaintop removal is not only destroying the beauty of Appalachia forever; it is destroying a treasure of the entire country.

As to the health of the people there, look no further than Pepsi Cola, which pours thousands, perhaps millions of gallons of their Mountain Dew drink into Appalachia every year, where because of poverty and the lack of nutritional education, this high-sugar, high-calorie drink is consumed even from baby bottles, causing widespread tooth decay, diabetes and other health problems.

Three years ago, a small group of us from St. Ignatius Loyola Parish in Manhattan went to Wheeling, W.Va., where the Appalachia Institute of Wheeling Jesuit University is working to bring justice to the mountains. We were encouraged to come home and

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educate our neighbors about the actions of the coal industry and companies like Pepsi Cola, which make their fortunes exploiting the poverty of Appalachia. Our sisters and brothers in the mountains need us to speak up for them. A phone call or letter is a simple but powerful tool.

MARY NAUGHTON
Bronx, N.Y.

Catholic Anti-Intellectuals

As the current comment “Halfway to Heaven” (10/18) demonstrates, lack of knowledge about the Catholic faith is surprisingly common. I’m surprised the bishops seem unaware of this. I suspect many Catholics have been trained in blind obedience concerning religion and knowledge. They are encouraged to approach the faith devotionally and not intellectually. For this reason I encourage Catholics to read the new *U.S. Catholic Catechism for Adults*, which I use in a weekly class with inmates in the state prison. The strong anti-intellectualism in the Catholic community is disappointing, and it is amazing how many Catholics hate *The New York Times*. Meanwhile many Catholics listen to provocateurs in the media, read tabloids and prefer to reside in an intellectual ghetto.

BERNARD J. CAMPBELL
Manchester, N.H.

Oasis of Syria

In your editorial “Truly Catholic” (10/4) you listed the six Catholic churches of the Middle East, and you called the last one Syrian Catholic; actually it is Syriac Catholic. Also in *Signs of the Times* you praised Jordan as an oasis for Christians. The true oasis for Christians in the Middle East is Syria, more than any other country.

NAJI ARWASHAN
Honorary Consul General of Syria
Troy, Mich.

The Mobile Eucharist

In response to your item in the *Signs*

of the *Times* on Haiti, “Bishops Present Plan for Rebuilding Church Life” (10/11), I don’t know how much control the bishops have over the disposition of real property in Haiti, but I would hope that the concentration on helping parishioners in their daily lives, to include shelter, safety and sanitation, would remain a priority for a while. As to the rebuilding of churches and cathedrals, I have been very impressed over the years with the adaptability of the Eucharist. It is a mobile sacrament, going wherever the priest goes, including under shade trees.

C. R. ERLINGER
San Antonio, Tex.

What About the Nuns?

As one of the 5.2 million Catholic school students of the 1960s referred to in “The Catholic Schools We Need” (9/13), I endorse wholeheartedly Archbishop Timothy Dolan’s argument for the extraordinary moral,

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intellectual and ecclesial value of Catholic schools.

There is one facet of the decline of those schools to which the archbishop does not refer, however. Not once in nearly 2,000 words does he mention Catholic sisters. Surely their declining numbers is the central factor in Catholic schools being unaffordable for many less economically privileged Catholic families.

Admittedly, the archbishop refers to "religious teaching orders," but the engine that made Catholic schools work was not generic teaching orders; it was Catholic sisters plain and simple. The editors of *America* get this, since the photo of a teaching sister appears on the cover of the education issue in which Archbishop Dolan's article appears. The archbishop, however, replicates the invisibility and worse that was all too often accorded sister-teachers by bishops and pastors throughout the century-and-a-half when they staffed the vast majority of American Catholic schools.

Particularly striking in this regard is

the paragraph—the longest one of the article—in which Archbishop Dolan praises a series of American bishops for having the wisdom to prioritize Catholic education, including, in particular, his predecessor Archbishop "Dagger John" Hughes. As the historian Maureen Fitzgerald documents in her study of Catholic sisters in New York, Archbishop Hughes forced the separation of the New York Sisters of Charity from their motherhouse in Emmitsburg, Md., and then engineered the election of a superior who shifted the New York Charities from their traditional ministry of direct service to the poor to the almost exclusive staffing of Catholic schools. Yet still they get no mention.

Several times in his article Archbishop Dolan mentions the essential role Catholic schools play in fostering religious vocations. Acknowledging explicitly the pivotal role that Catholic sisters have played in Catholic schools might help foster a few as well.

MARIAN RONAN
New York Theological Seminary



CARTOON BY HARLEY SCHWADRON

Royal Forgiveness

THE SOLEMNITY OF CHRIST THE KING (C), NOV. 21, 2010

Readings: 2 Sm 5:1-3; Ps 122:1-5; Col 1:12-20; Lk 23:35-43

“Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom” (Lk 23:42)

On December 1997, Las Abejas, a group of 48 indigenous communities whose name means “the bees,” came to the world’s attention when 45 of their members, mostly women and children, were murdered. They were killed by paramilitary troops while they were fasting and praying for peace in their rough-hewn wooden chapel in the village of Acteal, Mexico.

The indigenous people of Las Abejas come from the highlands of Chiapas, in the southernmost part of Mexico. They call themselves Las Abejas because they see themselves as a community of equal worker bees, striving together for peace, all serving the queen bee, which is the reign of God. No person other than Jesus and his kingdom can be the center of their hive of activity.

Several years after the massacre, a group of our students and professors were privileged to meet with their community. We asked if they were not tempted to abandon their commitment to nonviolence after they had lost so many of their mothers and sisters and brothers.

Without hesitation, they replied that they must continue to forgive their enemies and pray for their persecutors because that is what Jesus

taught. It is a powerful appropriation of the example of Christ given us in today’s Gospel.

Some people in Jesus’ day were looking for a king like David, who would reassert Israel’s independence, rid the land of the Romans and make wise decisions for the people.

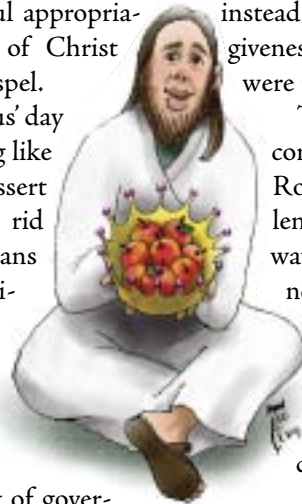
There were advantages to monarchical rule: one man invested with authority could carry the weight of governance and make decisions on behalf of the people. But there were also disadvantages. What if the ruler did not keep foremost the peoples’ best interests? What if his judgment was impaired by greed and hunger for power? What voice did the common folk have in decisions that affected their lives? What chance was there that women’s perspectives would be heard?

When Jesus appeared proclaiming God’s kingdom, he offered an antidote to imperial ways. He criticized the way the “kings of the Gentiles” lorded their power over their people and demanded recognition for their benefaction.

By contrast, he urged the leaders among his followers to be the servants of all (Lk 22:25-26), a manner of life he modeled for them, as he took up his itinerant mission with people at the lowest rungs of society. Unlike an offended monarch who imposes harsh punishments for infractions, he

instead exercised power through forgiveness and compassion when there were transgressions.

Today’s Gospel paints in stark contrast the power of imperial Rome, which brooks no challenges to its rule, and the “kingly” ways of Jesus that rest on forgiveness and love. Even as it appears that the former may win out, the Gospel makes it utterly clear that Jesus’ merciful rule cannot be extinguished by death.



PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

- Ask Christ to let the power of forgiveness rule your heart.
- How is the power of forgiveness exercised in community?
- How is Christ inviting you to be a servant-leader?

Even as he is mocked and taunted in his dying moments, Jesus continues to exercise the power of forgiveness both toward his executioners (23:34) and toward one of the criminals who acknowledges his form of power and asks to be included in his realm.

Followers of Christ the King find themselves challenged to form communities of “worker bees,” where the only royal figure is Jesus, where the only kingdom is God’s and where the power of forgiveness reigns supreme.

BARBARA E. REID

BARBARA E. REID, O.P., a member of the Dominican Sisters of Grand Rapids, Mich., is a professor of New Testament studies at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, Ill., where she is vice president and academic dean.

ART: TAD DUNNE



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