



America

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Faith and the Cosmos

ILIA DELIO

True Confessions
FRANK MOAN

Rock Your Faith
DAVID NANTAIS

OF MANY THINGS

Several years ago a former anti-Mafia fighter stopped at America House for a visit. He wanted to chat about a program he was undertaking to establish communication between Democratic politicians in the United States and Vatican officials. At a time when withholding Communion from pro-choice politicians was stirring heated controversy, it seemed a bold and welcome, though quixotic, move. Then he explained to me that fostering unity was the charism of Focolare, the lay religious movement to which he belonged.

I had met Focolarini, as the members are called, around the world. My friends who were members had never spoken to me about their life and mission. My visitor's quiet consultation about an under-the-radar series of encounters between U.S. politicians and Vatican officials, including the pope, suggested why. As competent and connected as they are, Focolarini work quietly and humbly, without drawing attention to themselves. In addition, my visitor's mention of unity as their cause also gave the first hint I had received of Focolare's spirituality and mission: to foster unity in church, society and the global community.

Focolare takes its name from the wartime refuge shared by several young women who remained in an apartment in Trent, Italy, in 1944 after their families had fled the city to avoid Allied bombing. The women stayed in the city to minister to the victims of the war. *Focolare* means hearth in Italian, suggesting the warmth of home but also the warmth of love that makes a home. Praying over the Gospels in Trent's bomb shelters, the roommates made their own Jesus' love command, "Love one another as I have loved you."

Understanding that not all would die as Christ had, wrote Chiara Lubich, the principal founder of the movement, they determined that they could share everything else, "our worries, our sor-

rows, our meager possessions, our spiritual riches."

Bound to one another, they found their life gained new vitality. "Someone came into our group," Lubich wrote, "silently, an invisible Friend, giving us security, a more experiential joy, a new peace, a fullness of life, an inextinguishable light." Later their palpable sense of Christ's presence in the neighbor would make Focolare's work for unity uniquely effective. Where others find adversaries, enemies and infidels, they find God coming toward them. "We live for the sole aim," wrote Lubich, "of being one with [God], one with each other, one with everyone."

In a time of religious and political polarization, Focolarini in the United States see the spirituality of unity playing a special role in channeling what they call America's grace, the acceptance that grows for religious, racial and ethnic differences with the intermingling of people in our heterogeneous country. Instead of stimulating indifference and hostility, the intermingling, when imbued with Focolare's spirituality of unity, becomes a way to better understand and accept others and ourselves.

The movement has befriended Muslims, for example, at a time when they are often held suspect. In 1997, after Chiara Lubich, dressed in a chador, addressed the followers of Imam W. Deen Mohammed at the Malcolm Shabaz Mosque, he told them, "The idea that is in Focolare is something our soul knows and wants. For this reason I embrace them as my friends."

This year Focolare celebrates its 50th anniversary in the United States. To mark the occasion, Thomas Masters and Amy Uelmen have prepared an introduction to the movement and its work, *Focolare: Living the Spirituality of Unity in the United States* (New City Press). On April 5 the community will hold an all-day symposium at Fordham University, Lincoln Center.

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ON THE WEB

Michael Leach, right, talks about his book *Why Stay Catholic?* on our podcast, and Maurice Timothy Reidy reviews the HBO miniseries "**Mildred Pierce**." Plus, weekly video commentary from the editors. All at americamagazine.org.



Debt, but No Diploma

For-profit colleges, which are set up by entrepreneurs to benefit investors, have come under federal scrutiny after a rash of lawsuits alleging unethical recruiting, misleading advertising and fraud. Educational quality is another concern. In an exposé on “Frontline,” three nursing graduates of a for-profit school claimed that their program’s on-site training with patients fell far short of employer expectations. A doctoral student of psychology said recruiters told her when she enrolled that the school would be accredited by the time she graduated, but it was not.

Students at for-profit schools also pay high tuition relative to that of state and community colleges, and most need federally sponsored loans. The loans come due, of course, whether or not the students graduate or land a job. Many do neither. Graduation rates at for-profit schools are low, and default rates are more than twice those of other schools, accounting for nearly half of all defaults on student loans.

The U.S. Department of Education is about to curb some of these abuses. New rules would prohibit basing the compensation of recruiters on the numbers they enroll, and colleges with default rates above 30 percent for three consecutive years would lose eligibility for federal student aid. The rules should be tougher and broader. Why let one-third of students default without penalty, when the average rate of default is less than 10 percent? Why should taxpayers subsidize colleges with low graduation rates? Since commercial colleges profit from new student enrollment, regardless of the quality of the education they offer, the percentage of graduates or the rate of student loan defaults, eligibility for loans should be tied directly to improvement in these areas. Outside stakeholders may profit now, but students and taxpayers, who are a different kind of investor, deserve equally high returns.

Japan’s Sorrow

First came the stories, blunt facts. On Friday, March 11, an earthquake of 9.0 magnitude struck northeastern Japan. Soon after, a tsunami carried away lives and property, neighborhoods and towns. And soon after that came the threat of disaster at a nuclear power plant.

Images quickly followed: first amateur cellphone pictures and then professional news images. Office workers grasp at tottering file cases. A wall of water crashes in that whirls recreational vehicles around like sticks in a stream. A woman looks at the rubble that was her home, hoping for news of her missing daughter. A father holds tight to his children.

Then come explosions at a nuclear power plant—chunks of construction material blasting out, white steam carrying radiation into the sky, black smoke forming a haunting cloud.

The Japanese were not ready for the tsunami that created disaster at the nuclear power plant. Why were they not ready? How bad would the meltdown be? How can adequate cooling water be delivered to the six reactors? How far will the contamination spread?

And pictures kept coming: Japanese people helping their neighbors, rescuing and feeding them; plant workers bundled up against radiation, going back in to fight the deadly fire. These people got on with the tasks of surviving, calmly, steadily, not without tears, not without passion, not without questions for their leaders, but always with the quiet dignity of a nation that has been through much suffering before and has survived and flourished.

The Irish Question, Again

“Through a general election Ireland has clearly demonstrated her will. The Irish people are thoroughly capable of taking immediate charge of their national and international affairs.”

The year was 1919; Eamonn De Valera, the first president of the Republic of Ireland, was writing in the pages of **America** after a key election in modern Irish history. Some 90 years later, in another momentous vote, the Irish people issued a rebuke to Fianna Fáil, Ireland’s longtime ruling party, in the wake of the country’s economic collapse. In February, a coalition led by the center-right party Fine Gael won a majority in the Irish Parliament.

The election did not represent a sharp turn in Irish politics. Both Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael tilt right and hold far more sway than the weak parties on the left. That the Irish people did not choose a more radical path following the collapse of the housing bubble is a sign of how conservative they really are. As Fintan O’Toole writes in *Ship of Fools: How Stupidity and Corruption Sank the Celtic Tiger* (PublicAffairs), it was government policies that helped fuel the crisis, including the ill-conceived decision to pay the debts of Irish banks with taxpayer money.

The crowning humiliation was the bailout forced upon Ireland last fall by the European Union and the International Monetary Fund. In light of the size of the loan (85 billion euros) and the steep interest rate (5.8 percent), it is fair to ask whether Ireland is still in charge of its affairs, or are European bondholders now in control?

Once again Ireland finds itself on the brink of change; this time change will not be welcome.

Fracturing Logic

A classic conflict between science in the public interest and science for private profit appears likely as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency prepares for a comprehensive study of the ecological hazards of the method of extracting natural gas called hydrofracturing. “Fracking,” as the practice is informally known, is a horizontal drilling procedure that includes the injection of millions of gallons of pressurized water, sand and industrial solvents into the earth to release pockets of natural gas from shale that has trapped it for millennia. Even as proponents of expanding natural gas drilling—particularly in the Marcellus shale formation under Pennsylvania and New York—protest that the procedure is safe, more evidence has been emerging that this may not be so.

A gas rush in Pennsylvania has resulted in hundreds of new fracking sites, but many people at the surface are not sharing in the wealth being generated by the natural gas boom. Instead, they are dealing with illnesses and contaminated water supplies they attribute to the chemicals, gases and other contaminants churned up by fracking. Local residents say fracking has brought a variety of ailments for well-water users, including headaches, dizziness, memory loss, gastrointestinal complaints and worse, and serious injury to cattle that have drunk waste water from drill sites. Long-term health effects are uncertain. Some of the chemicals injected into the earth to “loosen up” shale are known carcinogens and endocrine-system disruptors.

Other well-water users say leaking gases from improperly installed or maintained drill-site casing has resulted in exploding wells and flaming water faucets. In Arkansas, two natural gas producers voluntarily agreed to cease operations as evidence mounts that the disposal of vast quantities of fracking water by injecting it back into the ground has triggered a “swarm” of earthquakes in the state.

E.P.A. scientists are being pressured by industry lobbyists and politicians indebted to natural gas producers to withhold evidence of possible harm from fracking or simply to refrain from fully investigating the many ways the technique could produce an ecologically damaging or carcinogenic result. In fact, over the last 25 years a number of critical E.P.A. findings on fracking have been kept hidden or proposed studies restricted to keep potentially critical findings from being disseminated. A 1987 determination that

the practice was indeed hazardous and required strict regulation was simply dropped from an E.P.A. report under pressure from the Reagan administration; and last year the E.P.A., bowing again to political pressure, abandoned a call for a moratorium on fracking in the New York City watershed. But what is not known about fracking can indeed harm the environment and local communities. Among areas of greatest concern are how to treat and dispose of, or safely reuse, the millions of gallons of contaminated water fracking produces. At risk is the drinking water of millions of U.S. residents, which could become contaminated with solvents, salts and radioactive debris produced by fracking at well water sites. Contaminated water can also pass through inadequate treatment processes and then be dumped into vital waterways.

Natural gas is touted as a responsible energy option during a time of anxiety about climate change and spiking international oil costs and heightened awareness of the risks from nuclear power; and indeed the United States has reserves of natural gas in abundance. But is this presumably cheap alternative energy source really so inexpensive? Or is the current generation of energy users merely passing on the true cost of natural gas drilling to their children and grandchildren? Someone will have to pay to mitigate environmental damages left behind by fracking; someone must pay to clean the water and restore the drill sites and to heal the people whose land and bodies are contaminated by fracking.

Good stewardship of creation and the call to protect human dignity sound like weak concerns—to some—when the hard challenges of the current energy dilemma are brought up. The public can put aside moral obligations to the people and the property left behind when the natural gas boom ends and can ignore the ethical issues involved in one generation’s squandering the fossil fuel wealth of creation in a few short decades. But can the nation not at least agree that the science should be objective and trustworthy when looking into a practice with such complex repercussions for today and for the future? The E.P.A. should produce a thorough and unbiased analysis of the dangers and economic threats of this emerging industry. That way when we citizens make decisions and commitments about energy production and use, we will clearly understand what we are paying for now and what we are costing the future.



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kings, bishops and local lords, fought to control the church even as it rediscovered the very human Jesus of the Gospels in the church's pews and plazas.

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About Your Presenter

Professor Christopher M. Bellitto is the author of eight books and the co-editor of five others. His writing has been honored by the American Catholic Historical Association and the Catholic Press Association.

Dr. Bellitto currently teaches history at Kean University in Union, NJ. He is also a frequent public speaker and media commentator on church history and contemporary Catholicism. He is a former church history professor at St. Joseph's Seminary (Dunwoodie) and its Institute of Religious Studies in Yonkers, NY, where he served as the Institute's Associate Dean. In addition, he was a Fellow at Fordham's Center for Medieval Studies. He is also an editor for Paulist Press and for Brill.

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JAPAN

Disaster Prompts Questions About Ethics of Nuclear Energy

The radioactive peril emerging from the badly damaged Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear energy facility in northern Japan showed no sign of abating on March 23 as Japanese officials reported that dangerous levels of radioactive iodine-131 were appearing in Tokyo's water supply. Parents in Tokyo were warned not to allow infants to drink tap water as efforts continued to contain radiation leaks at the plant. Fukushima Daiichi was fatally crippled during the historic devastation caused by the earthquake and tsunami on March 11 that ravaged Japan's northeastern coast. Food shipments from Fukushima Prefecture and the neighboring Ibaraki Prefecture were also halted after radioactive contamination was discovered in vegetable and milk samples.

The ongoing crisis at the Fukushima facility raises not only environmental and health issues, but also ethical questions about energy use and the future of global nuclear power. The accident could be a "huge wake-up call" that would "give impetus to jump-starting massive research" in other energy technologies, such as solar and wind power, said William French, director of the Center for Ethics at Loyola University Chicago. Accidents at Three Mile Island in Pennsylvania in 1979 and at Chernobyl, Ukraine, in 1986 triggered "deep fear" about nuclear energy, French said. In recent years, however, concern about climate change and calls to reduce the use of fossil fuels like oil and coal, which emit greenhouse gases that contribute to global warming, have led

some policy makers to take another look at nuclear energy.

Critics argue, however, that if the entire fuel cycle of nuclear energy,



from mining through processing, is evaluated, the industry's carbon footprint increases significantly. So does the cost. A single plant can cost more

LIBYA

Questions After Coalition Assault

Air strikes launched by a coalition that included the United States, France and Great Britain have turned back an advance of forces loyal to Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi near Benghazi, Libya, that seemed on the verge of obliterating the North African state's nascent rebellion. But the matter of what comes after the conclusion of an air campaign intended to precede the enforcement of a no-fly zone over Libya has quickly become a political football in the United States. Critics from both sides of the aisle charge that the Obama

administration has entangled the nation in a third military adventure with no clear end in sight.

David Cortright, director of policy studies at the University of Notre Dame's Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, said analyzing the coalition's use of force through Catholic just war principles "yields a mixed opinion." The campaign was launched with appropriate multilateral authority that included endorsement by the Arab League and approval from the U.N. Security Council. And the air strikes, he said,

have prevented a threatened "mass killing" of noncombatants. "The cause of protecting civilians is certainly just," said Cortright. Where the decision to intervene breaks down, he said, is on the tradition's prohibition against the use of force when the "probability of success" is doubtful. Regarding the current campaign against Qaddafi, "No end game is in sight," said Cortright. "And it is not clear how the use of military force will contribute to a stable political settlement."

The dangers for the United States, he warned, are huge. "If the campaign does not produce quick results, the intervening forces will face pressures to escalate," Cortright said. "If the operation falters and the rebels are not able

A chapel in front of the cooling towers of a nuclear power plant in Dukovany, Czech Republic



than \$5 billion. And the industry has been notoriously reliant on hefty government subsidies, tax breaks, loan guarantees and limits on liability,

to oust the regime, the U.S. and its allies will be blamed for a failure that was not theirs in the making.”

Cortright said that other options remain for saving Libyan lives, including the establishment by the Security Council of protected humanitarian corridors near Libya’s borders. “This would help the delivery of humanitarian aid and would provide a location where defectors could safely qualify for amnesty from future criminal prosecution.” He said the Obama administration could also work to strengthen newly imposed sanctions targeted against the regime.

Church leaders from the region were more critical of the decision to use force. Bishop Giovanni Innocenzo

whose combined value sometimes is more than that of the power the plants produce, according to a 2011 report by the Union of Concerned Scientists.

The U.S. Government Accountability Office reports that between 2002 and 2007 nuclear programs in the United States received \$6.2 billion in government funding for research and development. That compares to \$3.1 billion for fossil fuels and \$1.4 billion for renewable energy. When subsidies are factored in, nuclear power ranks with solar energy among the least cost-efficient sources of electricity, according to the U.S. Department of Energy (behind, in order of efficiency, natural gas, hydro, conventional coal, wind, geothermal and biomass). Some experts say that if renewable energy sources, which do not raise long-term safety concerns, received the same subsidies as nuclear power, they would quickly become more competitive.

Nevertheless, Edward McAssey, professor emeritus of mechanical engi-

Martinelli, O.F.M., apostolic vicar of Tripoli and president of Caritas Libya, said on March 21 that he was shocked by the coalition campaign, which “has proved devastating for civilians and risky on the level of political consequences.” He said undoubtedly there was a serious risk of “collateral damages.”

The archbishop said, “I cannot approve this type of violence against what until yesterday was a friendly nation, particularly as far as Italy is concerned.” Bishop Martinelli said the coalition campaign has seriously complicated Caritas Libya’s

neering at Villanova University in Pennsylvania, believes nuclear energy remains a viable option. Public reaction to the accident in Japan “is going to be a big hurdle to get over,” he said, but he believes plants can operate safely as long as countries avoid the design and engineering flaws that contributed to the crisis at Fukushima Daiichi. The facility’s fate was essentially sealed when the tsunami on March 11 washed away diesel fuel tanks intended to provide emergency power for the plant’s elaborate cooling system. Its battery-powered backup system operated for only eight hours.

But increasingly complicated technology can multiply risks, said Adam Briggie, assistant professor of philosophy at the University of North Texas. “The danger is to pretend that we can tame this complex technical beast by making it even more complex,” he said. One solution is to reduce energy consumption, he said, recognizing that “our individual lifestyle choices have public ramifications.”

efforts to assist 2,500 Eritrean migrants still in Libya. “Our hope is to soon be able to transfer them toward the border with Tunisia.”



Residents converge on a downed U.S. Air Force F-15E fighter jet after it crashed near the city of Benghazi, in eastern Libya, on March 22.

Beijing Clampdown?

Is China, fearing a copycat phenomenon as popular uprisings sweep the Arab world, beginning a crackdown on advocates for human rights and religious freedom? China Aid reports that on Feb. 23 police in Yangdang, Hubei Province, raided a Christian legal center. They fired tear gas, assaulted those present and smashed the center's equipment. And reports from China Human Rights Defender indicate that the whereabouts of several Chinese activists—last seen being hauled off by police in February—remains unknown. According to Human Rights in China, anonymous “netizens” in mainland China, inspired by the “Flower Revolutions” in Tunisia and Egypt, broke through official Internet censorship to call for a “Jasmine Revolution” in 13 different cities. In response, H.R.I.C. reports, Chinese authorities “launched a concerted, large-scale crackdown on rights defense activists around the country, subjecting them to interrogation, house arrest and detention, with a severity rarely seen in the past few years.”

States Diverge On Immigration

The Arizona Senate voted down five immigration bills on March 17 that proponents argued would crack down on illegal immigration even further than last year's S.B. 1070, which is still suspended by court challenges. Meanwhile, Utah's Gov. Gary Herbert on March 15 signed a series of bills that have been described as a state equivalent of the comprehensive immigration reform being sought at the national level. The measures step up enforcement but also create a guest worker program that itself is likely to

NEWS BRIEFS

Aid to the Church in Need reports 75 percent of global religious persecution is being carried out against Christians. • With the world's attention fixed elsewhere, local church officials in Africa warn: “**Côte d'Ivoire** is sliding into civil war.” • The Catholic Coalition on Climate Change has trained a new group of **Catholic climate ambassadors** ready to give presentations about the church's teaching on climate change to schools, parishes and dioceses. • **Ireland's bishops** pledged an additional 10 million euros (\$14.2 million) to provide support services for victims of clerical abuse and announced plans for spiritual support to people whose faith has been damaged, acknowledging that “the inadequate response” by some church leaders “has left a deep wound that may never be fully healed.” • Pakistani Christians allege that **Qamar David, a Catholic businessman imprisoned** for life for blasphemy, was tortured and murdered and did not die of a heart attack on March 15 as stated in a medical report. • The Vatican has welcomed the European Court of Human Rights' decision on March 18 to overturn a ruling that would have banned the **display of crucifixes** in Italian public schools.



Côte d'Ivoire civil war?

face court challenges. Among the bills Arizona's legislators rejected were some that would have required hospitals to verify patients' legal status before admitting them for nonemergency care, required schools to collect data on immigration status and challenged the 14th Amendment's provision for birthright citizenship. “All of the most problematic bills were defeated soundly on the Senate floor,” said Ron Johnson, executive director of the Arizona Catholic Conference.

Sub-Wage Little Help

A new report by the Economic Policy Institute and the Center on Wage and Employment Dynamics evaluates the subminimum wage for tipped workers—72.9 percent of whom are women. The federal tip credit allows employers to pay tipped workers just

\$2.13 per hour as long as this wage, combined with the workers' tips, reaches the federal minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour. But most tipped workers are unaware of this requirement, and the Department of Labor found that it was frequently ignored by employers. Tipped workers are more than twice as likely to fall below federal poverty lines, and women tipped workers earn on average \$0.50 less per hour than male tipped workers. Waitresses earned on average \$0.83 per hour less than waiters. The report's authors endorse the WAGES Act, which would incrementally increase the minimum wages for tipped employees over the next three years to 70 percent of the regular minimum wage.

From CNS and other sources.

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING AND ISSUES OF JUSTICE

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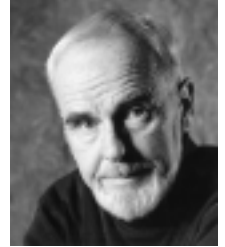


The goal of the workshop is to promote the incorporation of Catholic social teaching into existing course syllabi and the development of new courses with a significant Catholic social teaching component. The workshop is open to all teaching faculty. We welcome scholars without regard to religious belief, particularly junior faculty and younger scholars to whom Catholic social teaching may be unfamiliar.

<p>Workshop Content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical and Social Contexts for Catholic Social Thought: Pre / Post Vatican Council II • Theological and Anthropological Foundations for Catholic Social Thought • Theories of Justice and the Common Good • Service Learning: Scholarship for the Common Good • The Role of the Church in Public Life and Issues of Justice • Catholic Social Thought and <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Economic Justice ○ Ecology ○ Human Work ○ Morality of War and Peace ○ Racism ○ An Ethic of Life <p>Application deadline is May 13, 2011.</p>	<p>What Participants Say:</p> <p>"The workshop was helpful for me, both academically and spiritually, to examine these topics anew in such a constructive setting. It's been a while since I systematically studied CST and I really appreciated the competent look at the texts. It's a credit to the workshop that such a rich learning environment was created and that the goal of experiencing CST as a living tradition was achieved. "</p> <p>"It is an excellent program. Teaching was clear, challenging and geared for adult learners. There were opportunities for informed and provocative discussions. I, personally, was given hope and courage during this present climate in the Church to keep on keeping about the work of renewal. I was heartened by the faith as well as the intellectual prowess of all the presenters."</p> <p>"The workshop was not only well delivered, but well conceived. The structure of the workshop - the organization of topics and their sequencing - was excellent. It was very conducive to curriculum development or course re-design and has given many other academic possibilities for use of the material.</p>
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Into Your Hands

As Lent got underway in this year of 2011, the rite of ashes seemed somehow more appropriate than usual. After two weeks of heightened expectation and hope in Libya, the egomaniacal Colonel Qaddafi announced, “I am Libya”—an omen that the country itself would share the fate of his vaunted selfhood. The murderous counter-offensive of his forces has since moved inexorably to silence the cries for freedom and justice as the mighty of the world looked on in helpless confusion.

By week’s end, we experienced a greater helplessness yet. An earthquake shifted the planet’s axis and tottered Tokyo’s skyscrapers. Its tsunami churned homes and automobiles like matchsticks. And the world wondered whether the thousands of lives lost to the raging waters would be surpassed by a nuclear catastrophe.

“Remember you are dust and to dust you will return.” The ashes on our foreheads reminded us of our creaturely condition. The experience of human iniquity and untrammelled nature embedded the fact in our brains. There are inescapable limits to our control of nature and of our very kind. Can we accept that fact?

Adam and Eve could not. That is why their story haunts every Lent. The fall in the first garden would have to be corrected by the rise from the second garden, Gethsemane, and the cross of Golgotha.

Over the ages, much has been written about the original sin. Amid all the variations played on this theme, one

JOHN F. KAVANAUGH, S.J., is a professor of philosophy at St. Louis University in St. Louis, Mo.

abiding motif recurs: they wanted to eat of the tree of limits, of the “knowledge of good and evil.” They did not want to obey the one command: do not go there. Their limitedness ate at them. They had some control; they could name the kinds and elements; but they did not have unlimited control. Godly, they were not God.

So it is with all of us. We humans have always had problems with limits on our control: of nature, of others, of evil, of our very humanity.

The aspiration to control all of human evil is patent enough: it is the history of our wars among families or nations. Might, we think, will make right. And our victories as well as our defeats are dust—ashes of men and women and cinders of cities from Troy to Dresden and Nagasaki.

More complex is our desire to control nature itself. We have harnessed seasons and soil, navigated oceans and escaped, at least for short periods of time, our very planet. And this is good. What is not good is our yen to have no limits on our control of nature. Every act of colonization has its colonized, whether peoples or plots of land. When we want no limits on our control, we enslave peoples and devastate the earth.

Our recent aspirations have targeted the atom, human reproduction and the human genome. The returns are not yet in. Atomic energy may destroy us as well as the earth. By our reproductive techniques we may render our very sexuality useless. And by our con-

trol of the genome we may eliminate our major problem: ourselves.

This is the reason for the counter-narrative of Lent, the return to and reversal of the “Garden.” The story of the life and death of Jesus is not an instruction booklet on the renunciation of power or even control. But it is a repudiation of our false dreams of control without limits or power without constraint.

The ashes
on our
foreheads
remind us
of our
creaturely
condition.

The authentic power that Jesus offers is none other than the power of love, but such power does not and cannot control the beloved. It is a yes to the truth of the human condition.

That is why God did not magically change what we are. God became what we are in

Jesus and thereby revealed to us the only way we can deal with our radical contingency: embrace it.

Indeed, God has entrusted this fragile but awesome universe to us. And with the high gifts of heart and mind that mark our nature, we work. But in the end, if we accept our limits, especially when daunted by the mystery of human iniquity and the fragility of life, we can only entrust it all to God.

Having entered the narrative of Lent, maybe by the time we reach its end, we can pray with the one we call the Way and Truth, “Into your hands...”

We commend, yes, our spirits. But, more courageously, we entrust our loved ones, our nation, our hopes and our very world.

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Pope Benedict XVI, right, greets the British cosmologist Stephen Hawking during a meeting of science academics at the Vatican on Oct. 31, 2008.



CAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITIES FOSTER
DIALOGUE BETWEEN RELIGION AND SCIENCE?

Faith and The Cosmos

BY ILIA DELIO

When I started teaching in 1996, I was hired by Trinity College in Hartford, Conn., to teach a course on science and religion. With degrees in both areas, I felt well prepared; but I soon learned that the amount of literature on the relationship between these two topics had swelled enormously. The growth rate of scientific progress in our time is astounding. Rapid advances in technology make it difficult to keep abreast of progress in such areas as genetics, robotics, molecular biology and neuroscience. Discoveries in cosmology, astronomy and physics continue to disclose a universe that is ancient, dynamic, interconnected and expanding.

As technology advances at an exponential rate, it drives other areas of modern life to accelerate exponentially as well. The rapidity of technological change, writes the philosopher Nick Bostrom, suggests that continued innovation will have an even larger impact on humanity in future decades. With these changes come new moral and religious questions, and the Catholic Church needs theologians willing to address them. Unfortunately, few Catholic universities have devoted resources to educating theologians willing to engage with the scientific world. This is a loss for both academic disciplines.

If the secular, scientific culture behaves like a rabbit, leaping across vast areas of discovery and invention, the Catholic Church too often behaves like a turtle, crawling up from behind, hesitant to accept new scientific discoveries. The slow pace of the church's embrace of science is not because of a hesitant pope. Benedict XVI has worked to connect the two

ILIA DELIO, O.S.F., is a senior fellow at Woodstock Theological Center, Georgetown University, where she concentrates on the area of science and religion.

disciplines, establishing within the Vatican, under the Pontifical Council of Culture, a department dedicated to dialogue between science and theology. The pope has issued various statements on the sciences and their impact on humanity and the earth and has expressed to Catholic youth his support of new computer technologies, when used correctly, to connect with others. Overall, though, many theologians are reluctant to engage developments in science. It does not help that within the universities theology has been isolated from the sciences.

The mechanization and specialization of higher education has rendered the university a multiversity. Instead of educating students to know the universe and stars “turning together as one,” academic disciplines, including theology and philosophy, have become highly specialized, competitive fields. If the modern church is reluctant to embrace insights from modern science as integral to revelation, part of the hesitancy may be due to the place theology holds within the academy.

In his book *The Soul of America*, the historian George Marsden recounts how and when higher education in general became hostile to religion. By the 1920s many universities, despite their religious roots, had grown increasingly secular, sidelining or even scorning religion. The separation of science from such humanistic fields as religion, history and literature created a model of university life that did not

allow any positive role for religious people, institutions or ideas on campus. One had to leave religion at the door or privatize it. As a result, students did not learn how to connect science with areas of meaning and value. Elaine Eckland, a sociologist at Rice University and the author of *Science vs. Religion: What Scientists Really Think*, suggests that by separating religion from the rest of university education, the American university lost its soul.

An Uneasy Relationship

The church has been a patron of the sciences throughout the ages, although not consistently. Major events like the Galileo affair and the rise of Protestantism “caused a psychic trauma for the church,” write Peter Hess and Paul Allen in their excellent book, *Catholicism and Science*. Although the church did not shut the door to scientific research, events like these also stifled openness to scientific innovations.

Theology, however, entered the 20th century as a closed set of neo-Thomistic discourses with questions and rules set by neo-scholastic philosophy with few, if any, other intellectual or cultural sources, says Paul Crowley, S.J., the chair of religious studies at Santa Clara University, that did not cohere with existing papal efforts to support scientific research. Still, in the 1930s the Vatican had moved its astronomical observatory out of the city of Rome to Castel Gandolfo and outfitted it with modern equipment and in

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THEATER AND THEOLOGY SHARE THE STAGE?

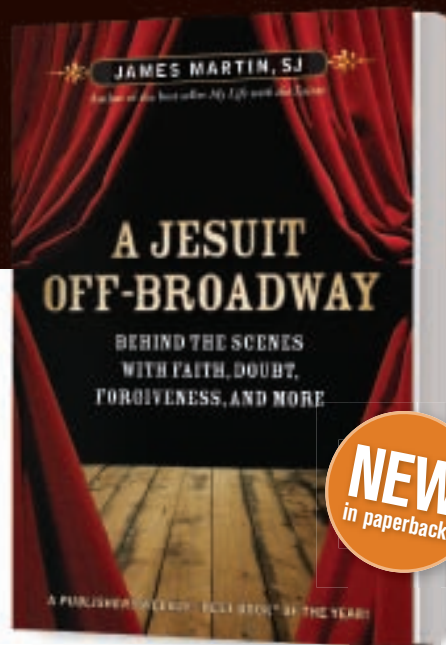
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1979 established the Pontifical Academy of Sciences to demonstrate the church's commitment to scientific research. "The Pontifical Academy," declared Pope John Paul II, "is a visible sign, raised among the people of the world, of a profound harmony that can exist between the truths of science and the truths of faith."

Some theologians have worked to connect these truths. Karl Rahner, S.J., did not shy away from exploring connections between matter and the soul or from considering the theological implications of life on other planets. Another Jesuit priest, Bernard Lonergan, drew on the scientific method to develop a method of theology. Today, some Catholic theologians (like John F. Haught) engage the sciences to illuminate areas of systematic theology like divine action; others (like Denis Edwards) are trying to deepen theological insight on questions in ecology, such as climate change. But on the whole, Catholic theology remains a product of Augustinian, Thomistic and Aristotelian ideas. Few Catholic theologians are grappling with the sciences on their own terms as a means of theological reflection.


While the church recognizes the importance of science for the development of faith, it also recognizes the limits of science as the ultimate horizon of meaning.

In the late 20th century, as theology entered into dialogue with the cultural pluralities of gender, race, history and philosophy, it nonetheless settled into the university system as an academic silo, just as the sciences sequestered themselves into specialized disciplines. Religion and science grew more estranged.

Theology students are trained in departments independent of a broader integration with the sciences in the university. As a result, according to William Stoeger, S.J., of the Vatican observatory, "there are few theologians or theologically interested philosophers at universities where the most significant scientific work is done." Even the annual meeting of the Catholic Theological Society of America, where attention is given to major currents in theology, does not show much engagement with the sciences. Of its 16 topical areas of discussion, only one is devoted to theology and the natural sciences.

In his book *Religion and Science*, Ian Barbour laid out four types of relationships between science and religion: conflict, independence, dialogue and integration. While sci-

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entists tend to see the relationship between the two disciplines as one of either conflict or independence, theologians, when they are interested, tend toward dialogue and integration. Undoubtedly, science and religion are independent disciplines, each with its own language, methods and tools of analysis, but the academic structure has kept them intellectually as well as spatially apart.

Reforming this structure to promote dialogue is key, since scientific language is technical and objective, and the descriptions of scientific findings do not readily invite theology-minded students into discussion without a teacher. Both disciplines present unique challenges, but it is not difficult to see why a theologian may more readily delve into the familiar theses of St. Thomas Aquinas over the unfamiliar formulas of Albert Einstein, or why the reverse might be true for scientists. Scientists who are interested in religion or express religious belief often have little opportunity in the academy to discuss religion as it relates to their work. Some universities, like Santa Clara, are making a concerted effort to engage scientists and theologians in discussion on meaning and value, but such initiatives are rare.

The Role of the Catholic University

The term "Catholic sacramental imagination" has long been used for the typically Catholic view that the material world can bring people into intimate relationship with God. The term captures the heart of the Catholic intellectual tradition, which is rooted in the richness of the material cosmos as a fit dwelling for the divine. While the church recognizes the importance of science for the development of faith, it also recognizes the limits of science as the ultimate horizon of meaning. The value of science, Pope John Paul II wrote, is that it can "purify religion from error and superstition," just as "religion can purify science from idolatry and false absolutes."

Although the church continues to bridge science and religion, the significance of this dialogue for the life of faith cannot be left to the institutional church alone. Theologians are needed to reflect on the big questions of meaning and purpose in light of evolution, ecology and technology, as well as to comment on the moral questions raised, especially by the biomedical sciences. Science and religion make their best contributions when each can speak to the other of the truth of reality. As Paul Crowley, S.J., observes, "If theology cannot engage a culture that has been framed by the paradigms of science, then theology itself risks self-marginalization." It has "no voice at the table concerning the significant issues facing humanity today" and becomes an exercise in history and hermeneutics. On the other hand, unbridled science can become "scientism," making broad philosophical claims without the development of philosophical foundations.

Catholic universities must become leaders in integrating science and religion. John Haughey, S.J., writes that the Catholic intellectual tradition is one of making wholes. Yet few Catholic universities offer courses or programs in science and religion, and those that do attract relatively few students, not all of whom are adequately prepared for such discussions.

Several years ago, a colleague and I initiated a certificate program in religion and science at Washington Theological Union, a graduate school of theology and ministry in Washington, D.C., but the program was eventually discontinued for lack of student interest. At the Gregorian University in Rome, Gennaro Auletta and colleagues have developed a program called Science and the Ontological Quest, which is responsible for coordinating science and religion courses in six Roman pontifical universities. Although only a small number of seminarians are taking such courses, the engagement of seminarians in the dialogue between science and religion may be one of the most crucial pastoral needs of our time.

Catholic universities need an invigoration of the Catholic imagination, for which dialogue between science and religion is a rich source. Theology cannot continue to develop apart from 21st-century cosmology and ecology, nor can science

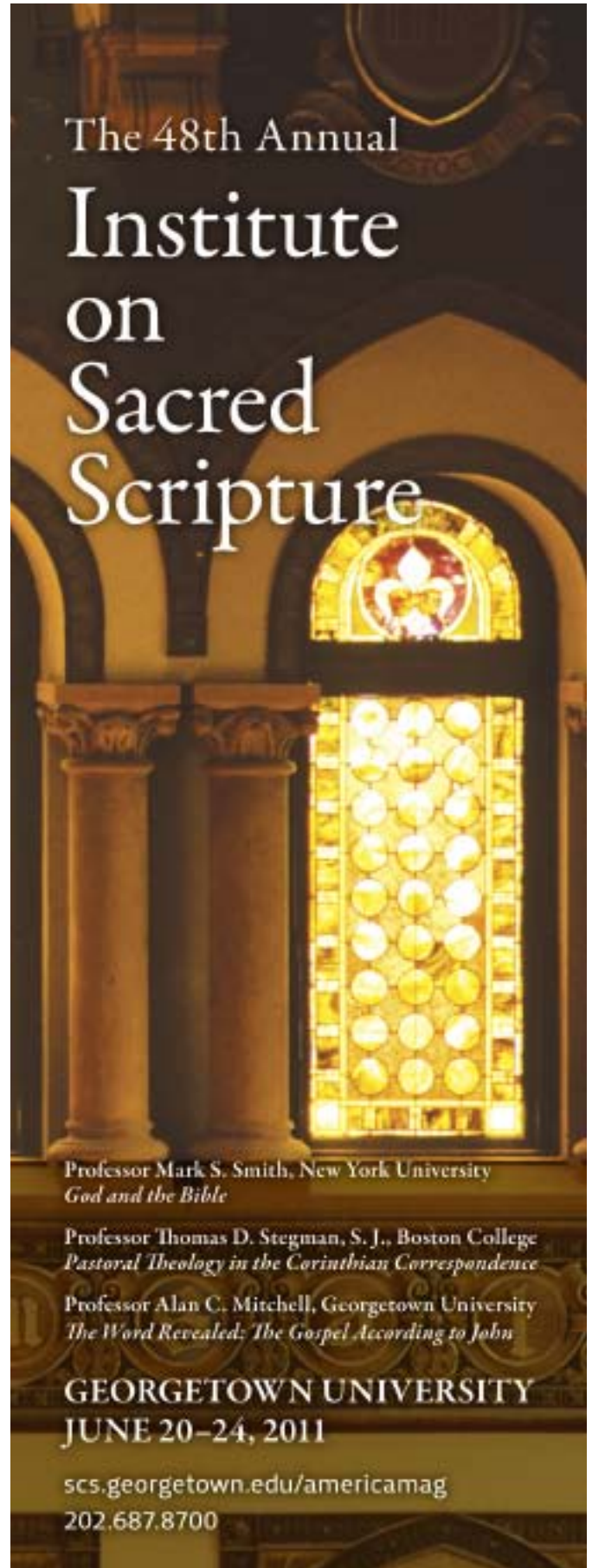
substitute for religion. The dialogue between science and religion has been developing in the last few decades, but Catholic universities

have been slow to support this mutual enrichment. Developing collaborative structures of interaction between science and religion on the university level can benefit students and faculty alike, not only academically but also spiritually. While the current structure of academic specialization makes dialogue difficult as an integral part of university life and thought, universities must support existing centers of dialogue, like the Woodstock Theological Center at Georgetown University. Centers like these serve as bridge-builders and integrators, bringing together faculty, students and professionals across the disciplines.

To restore soul to the university may require a re-imagining of education, including a search for new ways to develop dialogue between science and religion. Development of this relationship can enrich personal life, community life and the life of the planet. As John Paul II wrote, "The things of the earth and the concerns of faith derive from the same God," for it is one and the same Love "which moves the sun and the other stars." Both the light of faith and the insights of science can help humanity evolve toward a more sustainable future. **A**

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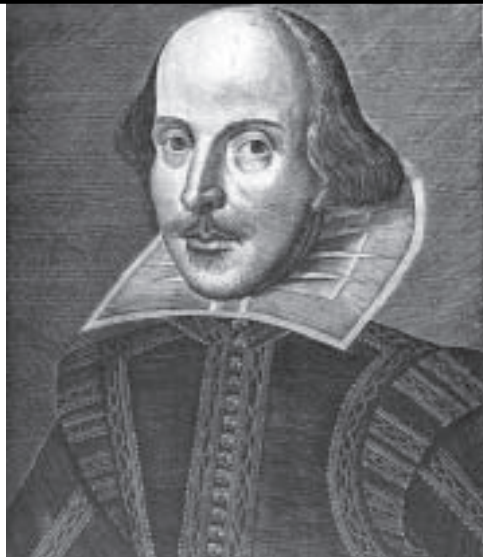
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Bless Me, Father...

BY FRANK MOAN

After hearing confessions for 53 years, I began to ask myself what I have learned from that experience.

As for sin, I haven't heard anything new for decades. As for the occasions of sin, new technologies have introduced new occasions. Over the last 15 years I have heard a great deal, for example, about pornography on the Internet. That has made me realize how naïve I am. I'm not interested in encountering it but am puzzled about how much pornography is available and how one is introduced to it. Many people are absorbed by online pornography; porn magazines were around in my youth. Now Blackberrys, iPads and phones that transfer pictures are also, for some, occasions of sin—the offense being not in the device, but in the use.

Some Catholics express surprise that I am still hearing confessions. Use of that sacrament has fallen off considerably. When I was a teenager, I worried that I wouldn't be able to finish my Saturday job and get to confession, the practice that allowed me to receive Communion on Sunday morning. In those days, the three or four priests living in our parish rectory heard confessions for an hour or more each Saturday afternoon and again on Saturday evening, so it was probable that I could get to church before confessions were over. Today a parish is lucky to have one priest hearing confessions for a half-hour or an hour on a Saturday afternoon. Many parish bulletins announce that confession is

available only by appointment with a priest.

For over a century, the blossoming of psychiatry and psychotherapy has made inroads into the confessional. Recently, there has also been an increase in pastoral counseling. These developments have been for the good. The penitent who has been overcome by a habit—like stealing, gambling or abusing another person—needs to see a professional healer over a considerable period of time. If I am in a parish only occasionally as a visitor, I can forgive a person's sins, but I cannot help cure his pathology.

Of course, those who are poor cannot afford a psychiatrist or a psychotherapist or perhaps even a pastoral counselor. So they may choose to tell their pathologies to a priest. Is that confession? This may take place in the context of the sacrament, but still the sacrament is not a cure for a pathological condition.

The Damage Done

Pathologies aside, sin damages an individual personality. I have learned from the confessional that despite the laws and freedoms guaranteed by the society in which we live, those who obtain an abortion or persuade a woman to



have an abortion or do nothing to prevent an abortion they know is about to take place are often scarred for life. Even in today's liberal society, sexual activity outside of marriage often leaves irreparable damage on one or both of the participants. Habits of stealing or gambling and addictions to alcohol or drugs can mitigate individual responsibility for a sinful act, but the scars are already there and the road to a cure is long and painful.

The worst offenses, however, are those against the basic law of charity.

FRANK MOAN, S.J., who worked for many years with refugees, was ordained in 1957.

Few penitents realize how destructive offenses against charity are. A penitent who cannot or will not shed animosity toward another individual because of a long-ago unresolved “hurt” multiplies that animosity, knowingly or not, in other relationships.

I have made a few changes in the way I hear confessions. Though I was brought up in an era when “five Our Fathers and five Hail Marys” were dished out as penance for mortal sins, in recent years I often ask a penitent what he thinks should be the penance. If he starts to say “an Our Father, a Hail Mary and a Glory be...,” I know what he has been used to hearing. But I, however, prefer to connect the penance to the sin. So if he has been vocally abusive to his children (not physically, which calls for something completely different), I like to suggest, “O.K., the next time you do that, you will apologize to your child. Will you do that? If you will, that is your penance.” If a penitent confesses a long-

standing grudge against a parent, I propose that the penance be an attempt to repair that gap. I can impose only the attempt. I cannot hold her responsible if the parent will not meet her halfway.

Sometimes I have to interrupt a penitent. Some penitents like to confess the sins of others. A woman wants to report the sins of her mother-in-law, or a young man wants to list the sins of fellow workers at his place of employment. “Hold on,” I say. “Just tell me *your* sins.”

Just Listen

I remember the first day I heard confessions. I had been assigned to weekend work in a large urban parish. As I was about to leave the rectory for the church, an elderly, experienced pastor stopped me with, “Are you about to hear confessions for the first time?” When I assented, he continued, “Don’t give any advice today. Just listen.” It was excellent advice. I observe it often 53 years later.

Do penitents prefer to hide behind a screen or sit face-to-face with the confessor? In my experience, neither option alters what is said. I have encountered the scrupulous, who will confess day after day if they see a priest in a confessional. I have heard penitents who go to confession regularly once a week, once a month or once a year. I still encounter some who have not been to confession for 10 or 20 years. They offer a multitude of reasons for returning. Once I was entreated by a third party to hear the confession of a person with multiple personalities (Which did I hear?). In another large city parish, a stranger came in just to see “what this bizarre practice of the confessional box” was all about. I have heard the confessions of Catholics, Protestants and Jews.

What do penitents confess? I would say that 80 percent of what is related in confession is not really sinful. Yet I would not discourage people from saying what they actually say in the con-

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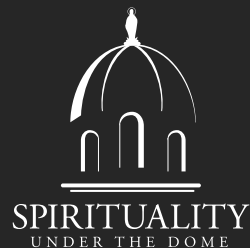
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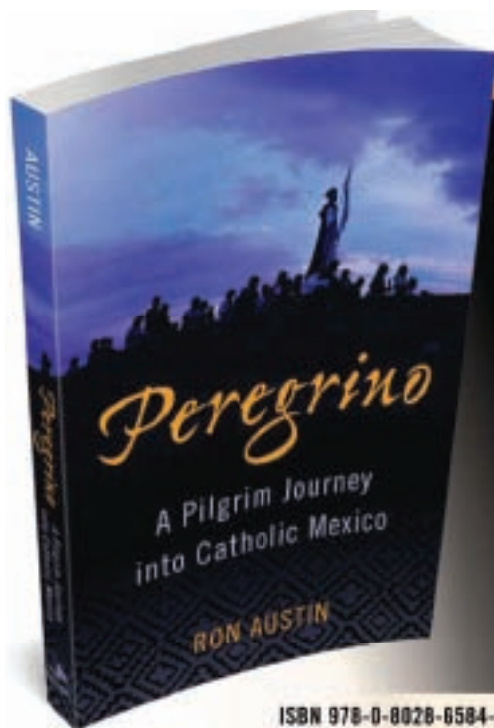
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fessional. For what they admit to is their membership in this imperfect world where we all live. They would like it to be better. And since they are not as good as they want to be, they remind themselves to hope for a better world. Three cheers for that.

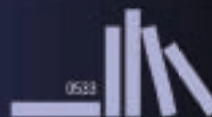
To me, the most redeeming aspect of confession is the humility it takes for a person to confess personal sins to another human being. This is the outstanding grace of the sacrament. This is what leads to forgiveness for sin. This, more than any words a penitent says, makes a reality of the concluding prayer the priest utters: "God the Father of mercies, through the death and resurrection of his son, has reconciled that world to himself and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins; through the ministry of the church may God give you pardon and peace, and I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father and the of Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen." A



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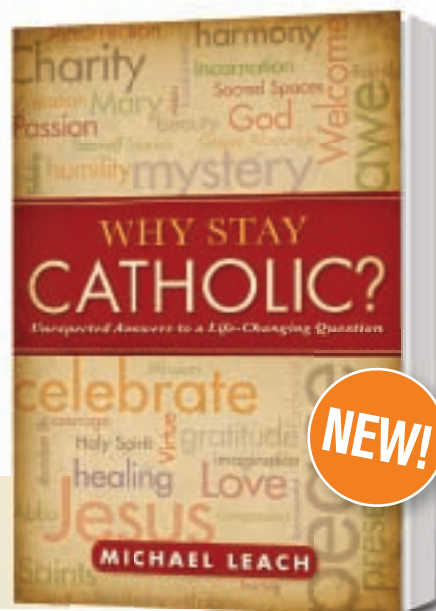
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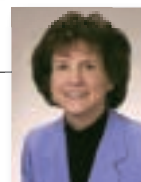
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MUSIC | DAVID NANTAIS

ROCK YOUR FAITH

Elvis Presley, Keith Moon and St. Ignatius

In 1956 the Jesuit editors of *America* lambasted Elvis Presley for the sexually provocative performance style he exhibited on television. Now, almost 60 years later, I am writing for the same magazine on the spiritual significance of rock and roll music. Clearly, the way society looks at rock music has changed dramatically. Rock music has also changed significantly, evolving through multiple permutations, expanding globally and splitting into more subgenres. Rock as

a musical form also has become sacred to many people, not just to those of the younger generations.

In its relatively short life, rock has been unfairly criticized. Some forms of rock may sound obnoxiously loud and brash, and the lyrical content of some songs promotes less-than-virtuous behavior. But to criticize all of rock for the sins of a few is unfair. Christian Rock, which emerged in the 1970s, was an attempt to “baptize” rock music and make it palatable to people of reli-

gious faith. This subgenre has grown enormously popular and has millions of fans. But does “secular” or mainstream rock music have spiritual value aside from the lyrical content?

Keeping Theological Time

Rock fans know that when a favorite song blares from the car speakers it does not take long before they are tapping on their steering wheels or singing along. Because rock music engages the body so deeply, we listeners feel the beat in our bones and muscles and “lock-in” with a song, allowing it to take us on a journey. Listening to rock requires a modicum of surrender to its unfolding in time.



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/LIA KOLTYRINA

A rock song unfolding in a time-lapsed photo

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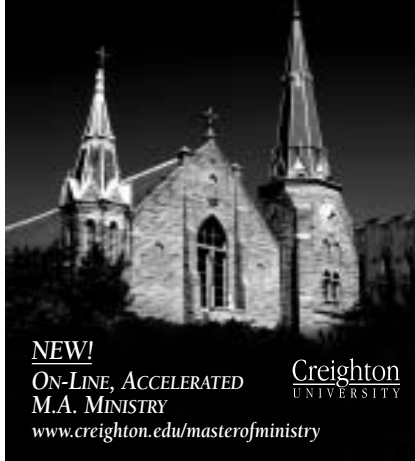
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You have probably heard the phrase “live in the now.” It has been co-opted and marketed by some self-help gurus, but the phrase reflects a theological tenet of many faiths—the importance of being aware of the present. Anthony De Mello, S.J., an Indian Jesuit, once put it this way: “Spirituality means waking up.” This implies paying attention to the world, emerging from under an avalanche of anxieties to savor being alive. Music can help listeners reclaim the moment. Rock music is especially good at this. Because it is so visceral, listeners become more attuned to their bodies in space and time.

The world is becoming faster-paced every day. We may be tempted to think we can conquer time by speeding up our lives, but this is impossible with music. Music works by leading listeners through a number of experiences; tempo, tensions, releases and subtle volume changes in songs all unfold in the time that God created. As the theologian Jeremy Begbie points out in his book *Resounding Truth: Christian Wisdom in the World of Music*, “The character of a piece of music is not given in an instant, or even a near-instant, but can be discovered only in and through time, and in some pieces only when it reaches a climactic gathering together, the end toward which it travels.”

Since music must unfold in time, it can help us appreciate that we are creatures of God held within God's time. We cannot skip over the uncomfortable tensions in a piece of music and experience only the powerful “release,” because it is impossible to have one without the other. The same can be said about the spiritual life. We will undoubtedly go through what St. Ignatius Loyola termed “desolation” or perhaps even what St. John of the Cross termed the “dark night.” Those times can help us grow spiritually. When we find our way back to equanimity and a sense of

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God's closeness, we better appreciate the darkness.

Take the interplay between tension and release in the song "Won't Get Fooled Again" by The Who. Three-quarters of the way through the song, the guitar, bass and drums cease and are replaced by the droning sound of a synthesizer. The electronic sounds lull the listeners, providing a brief respite from the wild musical anarchy that precedes it. Suddenly, Keith Moon's drumming comes charging out like a bull at Pamplona. It sounds as if he is hitting his tom drums with six arms, in a machine-gun frenzy of notes. As the drums build, so does the tension in the listeners. Just as the tension has built to a pinnacle, listeners are rewarded with one of the most gratifying releases in rock music—a boisterous explosion of sound punctuated by Roger Daltrey's barbaric howl that seems to come from another world. "Won't Get Fooled Again" is lengthy for a rock song, but when a listener surrenders to the song and allows its time, tensions and expressive elements to unfold, the reward is extraordinary.

Music can also help accentuate the beauty of the physical world by highlighting the wonder and importance of time. Listening to rock music can be a theological exercise because it reveals something of God to us. The joys and disappointments, consolations and desolations of life unfold in time.

As a creation of God, time is blessed. If we allow God's communication to us to unfold in real time, over a lifetime, it will affect how we embrace life. We will not live in constant anticipation of something better (although some anticipation is a necessary, blessed part of living in time) but will instead grow in appreciation of our role as creatures in time and of the wonder of time itself.

Rock and Roll Prayer

Rock music also can evoke a wide range of emotional responses. If you

watch footage of Elvis or the Beatles performing live, you will hear thousands of teenagers screaming in ecstasy. Rock fans know that there are songs that have accompanied them through a variety of experiences. Certain songs evoke important memories, stir up emotions and invite deeper reflection on our spiritual life.

About 15 years ago, during a retreat, I discovered the power of rock music to aid my prayer. I embarked on the retreat feeling emotionally drained and exhausted. I explained to my spiritual director, Mark, my lack of desire to pray. He asked me if anything in my life was enjoyable, if there was something for which I was particularly grateful. I told him about the great rock music I had recently discovered during a six-month stint leading retreats for high school students. The students introduced me to

several new bands, which tapped into a joy and playfulness within me that I found invigorating but all too infrequent.

Mark recognized that the excitement with which I spoke about rock music appeared absent in the rest of my life. He suggested that I spend time praying within that excitement and trying to meet God there. His simple recommendation forever altered the way I approach my spiritual life.

I had never before thought of my love of rock music as a way of growing closer to God. Prayer, I thought, was meant to occur in silence. But Mark suggested that I find God within the passion I feel listening to rock. For the rest of the retreat I prayed this way and, eventually, after working through my preconceived notions of what prayer was supposed to be, found great peace. Now I realize that the euphoria I expe-

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Maurice Timothy Reidy reviews HBO's "Mildred Pierce." americamagazine.org/culture



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rience when listening to rock is a gift from God for which I should express gratitude. That retreat also helped me discover a new sense of how “big” God is: God truly can be found, to borrow St. Ignatius’ maxim, in all things.

What else do we bring to God in prayer but the stuff of our lives? Insofar as rock music elicits emotional responses and memories, it enters our hearts at those moments in life we most need to hold up to God. Increasing our awareness of the present moment and savoring it is of great import to the spiritual life. Rock music can enhance our appre-

ciation of God’s work in our lives, not just in retrospect but as we experience it, whether on the radio or from a wall of amplifiers at a live show.

St. Irenaeus said it best: “The glory of God is the human person fully alive.” When I listen to rock and roll music, I taste life’s fullness. Rock provides a landscape in which I can meet God authentically.

DAVID NANTAIS is director of university ministry at the University of Detroit Mercy. His new book, *Rock-A My Soul: An Invitation to Rock Your Religion* (Liturgical Press) appeared in February.

BOOKS | DANIEL J. HARRINGTON

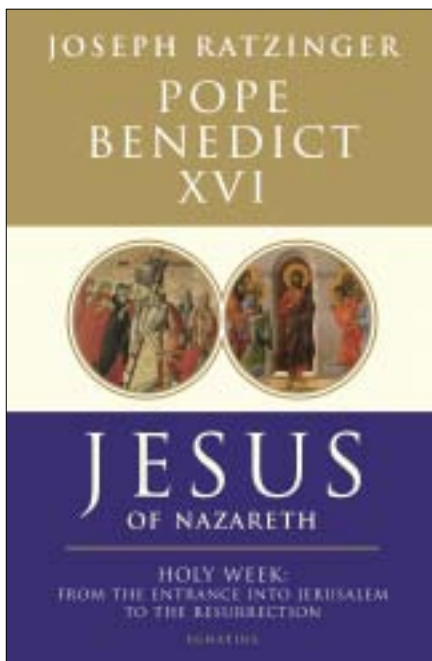
BENEDICT’S PASSION

JESUS OF NAZARETH

Holy Week: From the Entrance Into Jerusalem to the Resurrection

By Joseph Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI
Ignatius Press. 384p \$24.95

This volume is a sequel to *Jesus of Nazareth: From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration*, in which Pope Benedict covered the baptism of Jesus, the temptations, the kingdom of God, the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord’s Prayer, the disciples, the parables, images of Jesus in John’s Gospel, Peter’s confession and the transfiguration, and the titles of Jesus. He also made clear his principles of biblical interpretation: The portrait of Jesus in the Gospels is trustworthy, and so it (and not some modern historian’s reconstruction) is the proper object of study and devotion. Jesus is the key to the Scriptures, and so the Bible as a whole may and should be read from a Christological/canonical perspective. The historical-critical method is foundational and indispensable for this kind of study but is not completely adequate for understanding Jesus and



the Scriptures.

The pope’s first volume (reviewed in *America*, 6/4/07) was favorably received by most exegetes and theologians. He was, however, criticized by some for his excessive reliance on John’s Gospel and some antiquated biblical scholarship, selective use of patristic material, a too-easy assumption of the hermeneutic of acceptance or generosity regarding the Gospels,

and a somewhat narrow and conventional theological outlook. Whatever else it may have accomplished, the pope’s first volume illustrated both the positive value and the difficulties of doing theological exegesis.

In his second volume the pope continues his project to integrate the historical hermeneutic practiced in much biblical scholarship today and a properly developed faith or theological hermeneutic and thus to restore biblical study to its identity as a theological discipline. Focusing on the Gospel accounts of the events of Holy Week, he treats Jesus’ entrance into Jerusalem and the cleansing of the temple, the eschatological discourse, the washing of the feet, Jesus’ high-priestly prayer, the Last Supper, Gethsemane, the trial of Jesus, Jesus’ crucifixion and burial, his resurrection from the dead and his ascension. To complete the project, the pope intends to write soon a small monograph on the infancy narratives.

This volume carries on the methodology, format, tone and style the pope developed in the first *Jesus of Nazareth*. However, he does seem to make even more (and very effective) use of Old Testament texts as a means of understanding Gospel passages. Thus he takes seriously the traditional method of interpreting Scripture by Scripture, known today as intertextuality. He also offers more explicit engagement with the works of contemporary biblical scholars. His exegetical dialogical partners are mainly German Catholic and Protestant professors, though he seems to have grown some in his positive appreciation for the work of the Rev. John P. Meier of the University of Notre Dame. And he does much more with the sacramental (especially eucharistic) and liturgical implications of his interpretations of biblical texts, which has long been one of his special interests. The theme of Jesus replacing or superseding worship at the Jerusalem temple runs through the book.

The genre of these volumes is best categorized as theological exegesis. This approach to biblical interpretation takes seriously the texts as not only the words of human authors but also (and especially) the word of God. The danger in relying only on the historical-critical method is that the Bible can be treated as merely another book about the past. Indeed, the pope wonders whether this approach, while fundamental and indispensable, may be becoming exhausted and thus no longer fruitful. However, his abundant and generally positive use of historical scholarship and his treatment of the critical questions it raises will have the ironic effect of introducing the general public to matters generally covered only in very technical works.

In carrying out his theological exegesis of the Gospels, the pope joins historical exegesis, patristic theological insights, more recent theological concerns, liturgical practice and contemporary experience. The dangers involved in theological exegesis include trying to do too many things at once, blurring the distance between the ancient text and life today and moving too quickly from textual study to homiletics. Following the lead of the Second Vatican Council's "Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation" (1965) and other official Catholic documents on biblical interpretation, the pope uses as his points of reference the unity of Scripture, the living tradition of the church and the analogy of faith—that is, coherence with the paschal mystery.

Joseph Ratzinger long ago wrote an excellent commentary on the council's revelation document and has maintained a lively interest in the relationship between the Bible and theology. He presided at the sessions of the Pontifical Biblical Commission that produced the 1993 document "The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church." In response to the 2008 synod on the Bible in the life and mis-

sion of the church, he has recently issued an extensive summary of Catholic documentation on biblical interpretation under the title "Verbum Domini." Clarifying and encouraging Catholic biblical interpretation is an important element in his legacy as both theologian and pope.

It is crucial to read the pope's two Jesus books for what they are. They are not a biography of Jesus, an exegetical exposition of the Gospels or a systematic treatise on Christology. Rather, they are a form of biblical theology, a series of learned reflections on various aspects and episodes of the four Gospels. The pope is well known for his love of music, and his theological method has

sometimes been compared to a symphony in which the different instruments blend together to form a pleasing and persuasive whole. My best advice is to read these books for what they are, and by all means to enjoy the symphony and learn from a great maestro. The second volume is obviously appropriate reading for Holy Week, since it breaks open the passion narratives and provides useful historical information about them, offers challenging and often fresh interpretations and makes connections with theology and liturgy.

DANIEL J. HARRINGTON, S.J., is professor of New Testament at Boston College School of Theology and Ministry and editor of *New Testament Abstracts*.

PAUL MOSES

A 'MORAL ARCHITECT'?

BOB DRINAN **The Controversial Life** **Of the First Catholic Priest** **Elected to Congress**

By Raymond A. Schroth, S.J.
Fordham Univ. Press. 432p \$32.95

Robert F. Drinan, S.J., was elected to Congress in 1970 on his promise to be a "moral architect," and in many ways he was. He steadfastly opposed the war in Vietnam, dared to be the first member of Congress to call for President Richard M. Nixon's impeachment and devoted himself to the cause of human rights in politically repressive countries like Argentina.

But the story of his decade in Congress, which came to an abrupt end when Pope John Paul II forbade him in 1980 to run again, continues to raise trou-

bling questions at a time when the role of organized religion in politics is debated as hotly as ever. For although serving in Congress helped the priest-politician to call attention to such problems as world hunger and the arms race, his moral vision did not encompass rights for the soon-to-be-born, disappointing many fellow Catholics. Nor, in the end, did he

make a convincing case that Catholic priests should hold elective office.

"Drinan seems to have been able to file away the issue of the three-way relationship between abortion, his priestly identity, and his role in Congress in the bottom drawer of his consciousness," Raymond A. Schroth,

S.J., writes in his precise, perceptive and evenhanded biography of the first Catholic priest elected to Congress.



As Schroth notes in the introduction, he admires his fellow Jesuit. They met often at Georgetown, where Schroth was doing research. Both wrote for **America**, where Schroth is now an associate editor. Both wrote regularly for The National Catholic Reporter for 30 years.

To some readers, this might sound like the introduction to a hagiography. But that is not the case; Schroth writes with a disciplined journalistic distance, carefully sifting the facts. He has produced a nuanced, engaging portrait of a man who worked prodigiously at bettering the world but who also had personal and political flaws.

Drinan was the dean of Boston College Law School when a Jewish campaign operative, Jerome Grossman, persuaded him to run for the Democratic nomination to Congress in a suburban Boston district in 1970. From the start, his candidacy was framed as a moral cause—to help end the Vietnam War by oust-

ing a Democratic congressman who had supported it. Drinan was steadfast in this and ahead of the bishops, whose positions on the war and nuclear disarmament often disappointed him.

Being a “moral architect” did not always make for effective politics, however. Outraged by the war, Drinan moved in the House for Nixon’s impeachment—not because of the Watergate cover-up but for bombing Cambodia and lying about it. As Schroth notes, House Speaker Thomas P. (Tip) O’Neill Jr. thought that although morally right, Drinan “damn near blew it” politically, since impeachment for the Cambodia campaign was unlikely.

The fact that Drinan was a priest helped him to stake out positions that other politicians might find politically unworkable, like favoring unilateral disarmament. But from the start, it was also an issue, both in the church and the political world.

Drinan tried to finesse reporters’ questions about this, but Schroth makes clear that being a priest was an essential part of who he was and how he presented himself. Drinan wore his clerical collar when campaigning and serving in Congress, and Schroth quotes him as acknowledging that it helped bring media attention to his causes. He notes that in one campaign, when Drinan’s support for abortion rights came to the fore, the congressman sent a memo telling his staff to “accentuate the Catholic background and Catholic activities in which I participate.” These activities, which included his writing for **America** and other Catholic publications, were to be “exploited.”

Drinan was not the only priest in politics during these years. Among the others was the Nixon speechwriter John L. McLaughlin, then a Jesuit and former **America** associate editor, and later host of television’s high-decibel “McLaughlin Report.” (McLaughlin

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charged that it was a “rape of justice” for Drinan to take part in the House Judiciary Committee’s Nixon deliberations because he already had proposed the president’s impeachment, Schroth notes.)

Drinan’s provincial superiors supported his foray into public office, but the Jesuit superior general, the respected Pedro Arrupe, S.J., was uneasy about it from the start. As Schroth recounts, Arrupe had written to Drinan shortly after his 1974 re-election to say he should not run again, but humbly allowed himself to be talked out of it with the 1976 campaign looming.

Criticism from other Catholics about Drinan’s support for abortion rights was no doubt a factor in the controversy over whether he should serve in elected office—particularly since Drinan argued to Arrupe that he was “a very important moral influence” in Congress.

Schroth does a good job of parsing Drinan on abortion, tracing his position through the years. He notes that one longtime adviser said Drinan had gone through “ten positions on abortion” but also reports Drinan’s view—which he spelled out at one point in a 12-page memo to his superiors—that he had been consistent in opposing abortion on moral but not legal grounds. Even after he left office, Drinan stirred controversy by defending President Bill Clinton’s 1996 veto of the Partial Birth Abortion Ban Act.

Father Drinan, who died in 2007 at the age of 86, is thus a case study for many of the issues debated today about the church’s role in politics. Written with clarity, and fair and thorough reportage, this book brings his life the attention it deserves.

PAUL MOSES is professor of journalism at Brooklyn College/CUNY. He is working on a history of New York’s Irish and Italians.

money for a pilgrimage to Medjugorje and for those who blow it at Vegas, for sinners, saints, and fools.” In that light, I thank God with renewed confidence for my own welcome.

The author—publisher emeritus and editor at large of Orbis Books—divides this fun book into three sections, around ideas, people and places that epitomize Catholicism. The ideas rise up afresh out of “the great deposit of faith”; but this “is not a limited checking account; it’s a trust fund that increases and multiplies.” His key conviction, repeated often throughout, is God’s unconditional love for every person. His central Scripture text is Rom 8:38-39, that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

The “People” section has stories of some persons well known to all and others better known to Leach who incarnate the Catholic faith. Many of his heroes are mine as well: Thea Bowman, Miriam Therese Winter, Dorothy Day, Bishop Ray Lucker, Andrew Greeley and now the author’s spouse, Vickie (for battling illness with faith and courage). Under “Places,” where the word gets made flesh again, he reviews parishes (like Old St. Pat’s, Chicago), schools, hospitals, monasteries, Catholic Charities, Catholic

Relief Services and the Los Angeles Religious Education Congress, among others.

In my view, the two best reasons for staying Catholic, as the book stresses, are the twin principles of incarnation and sacramentality. Of course, Catholicism is incarnational in its focus on Jesus. Leach is convinced that the Jesus event and his paschal

mystery is not about a God who needed to be appeased for our sins but one who came looking for us out of love. Catholicism is particularly incarna-

THOMAS GROOME

WHAT’S RIGHT WITH THE CHURCH

WHY STAY CATHOLIC?

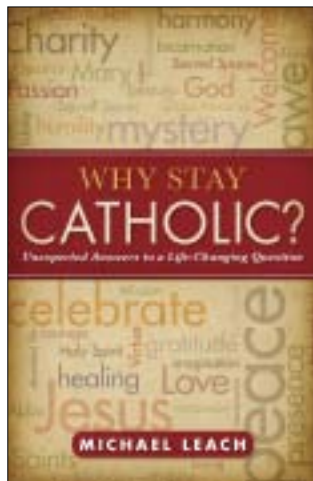
Unexpected Answers to a Life-Changing Question

By Michael Leach
Loyola Press. 224p \$14.95

I would never leave, even if they should try to kick me out. That may be as much Irish pigheadedness as genuine faith. But I have lots of friends and family who already have left or who often threaten to leave the Catholic Church. This breaks my heart. With some 30 million former Catholics in the United States alone, I meet lots of them along the way—on planes and trains, at family wakes and weddings. My first instinct always is to try to convince them, as Michael Leach advises, that instead of “throwing the baby out with the bathwater” they

might reconsider and recognize that “The baby [Catholic faith] is precious, it’s real, it never grows old, can still give joy, peace, and assurance, and it’s not dependent on people.” Now I also have a great book for them to read. *Why Stay Catholic?* might well convince exiles to return and the wavering to remain.

In the spirit of James Joyce’s definition of *catholic* as “here comes everybody,” Leach makes a powerful argument for a big-tent Catholicism: “there is room in the church for everyone, or there is room for no one...for those who save their





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tional, however, in that it encourages people to en flesh their faith, to realize it in their lives, far beyond the purely confessional. This is why he emphasizes people and places who concretize it. And even the ideas that he highlights all lead to practices of one kind or another; Catholic Christian faith must get done “on earth as in heaven.”

The other side of the incarnational coin is the sacramental nature of Catholic faith. Again, this emphasis reaches a climax in the seven great liturgical sacraments that we celebrate in church, but these arise from and flow back into the sacramentality of the ordinary and everyday of life. Because “God is everywhere,” God looks for us and we respond through our lives in the world. In the words of St. Augustine, “If you have an eye for it, the world itself is sacramental.” It is the sacramentality of Catholic faith that makes it so humane, so life-giving. “Catholicism seen through the eye of a needle is a religion of rules and regulations. Seen with the sacramental imagination, it is a unique take on life, a holy vision, a way of seeing the chosen part of things.”

These twin principles—the incarnational and sacramental—are what make Catholicism most worthwhile, why anyone can well stay, regardless of disappointments and complaints and the scandals that beset the church. Indeed, these very principles lend Catholic faith its rich spiritualities; “When it comes to spirituality, “the author writes, “the Catholic Church is a Garden of Eden.”

These principles also explain why we love to tell the stories of faith, old and new, and why Catholics can often have a little more fun. “Catholics like to get together and eat cholesterol and drink beer and have fun.” This book itself oozes with the incarnational and sacramental, providing many laughs and a few tears while reading it. I learned, for instance, that “Americans trust angels ten times more than they



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do their congressmen. That makes sense.”

Meanwhile, Leach pulls no punches when it comes to the church’s shortcomings; his book is anything but a whitewash. In fact, it is brutally honest. Yet it is also long on hope, perhaps the theological virtue most needed now. He is convinced, for

ON THE WEB
An interview
with Michael Leach.
americamagazine.org/podcast

example, that the great controversies that beset our time concerning ministry (e.g., optional celibacy, women’s ordination) will all be solved in good time, and people will wonder what all the fuss was about.

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THOMAS GROOME is professor of theology and religious education at Boston College’s School of Theology and Ministry, where he also is chair of the department of religious education and pastoral ministry.

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LETTERS

A Challenge to Stay

I found it interesting that two articles—Cardinal Wuerl's "Pass It On" and "Exit Interviews," the sampling of letters responding to the article "On Their Way Out," by William Byron, S.J.—appear in the same issue (2/28). Cardinal Wuerl's words encourage us to renew our faith and enter a new form of evangelization. The "Exit Interviews" letters give valid reasons why evangelization is destined to fail. The "elephants in the church" recognized by so many former Catholics and much of the laity are being denied, ignored and dismissed by most of the hierarchy. These articles give us a big clue about the dialogue that needs to take place so that this "new evangelization" will at least have a chance of some success. I thank **America** for publishing articles that challenge us to stay and work toward a church that does not divide its people.

MARY ALICE BABKA
Ashburn, Va.

Say Goodbye Already

It would help to be nostalgic about railroads, as in the current comment "Fast Train Coming?" (3/21), because otherwise they do not make sense in this modern world. People pay big money for vacations on square-rig sailing ships, Mississippi paddlewheelers, hot-air balloon rides, stagecoach rides and just plain horseback riding. These old modes have a compelling beauty and are fondly remembered in our collective subconscious. But they are no longer viable means of transportation. It is time to realize that the age of intercity trains, even at high speed, long ago went the way of intercity electric trolleys.

TOM MAHER
Stow, Mass.

A Free Ride for Good Reason

"Fast Train Coming?" (3/21) should remind us that the trolley was an effective and popular way of traversing cities. But it was killed by those whose economic interests were served by promoting private automobiles. Public transportation should exist, and it

should be funded in a way that the riders would not be required to scrounge for coins or paper in order to get on board. In other words, it should appear to be free. The purpose of this is ecological. In conjunction with this, automobiles, for those who must have them, should be fueled by something other than gasoline. They would pollute less and free us from having to worry about who is governing an oil-producing country.

MARIE REHBEIN
Las Cruces, N.M.

Follow the Money

Re your editorial "Just Adjustments" (2/21): Union busting is just one more step in the corporate power grab. Thanks in part to the decision in the Citizens United case, we are seeing unleashed the mammoth funds of extremely wealthy citizens and corporations to promote their every-man-for-himself style of capitalism and government.

The power of unions compared to their power is minimal. States are using their shortage of funds, caused primarily by the recession orchestrated by Wall Street, as an excuse to go after unions. Employee pension funds are bankrupting our states, they claim. Public sector workers are accused of receiving unfair wages and benefits because of their unions. Actually, two of every three public sector workers are not unionized. As for the terrible drain on the economy, public pensions amount to an average 2.9 percent of state spending, according to the National Association of State Retirement Administrators.

So what is going on here? Business as usual for right-wing politicians: the shift of money, power and dignity from the middle class to the very wealthy. Follow the money. Be informed about the philosophy behind this shift, a philosophy that is the very antithesis of love of neighbor.

ELAINE TANNESAN
Kingston, Wash.

WITHOUT GUILF



"I certainly don't like the looks of that fellow pushing the dessert tray."

'Freedom' vs. 'Justice'

After 16 years of Catholic education and eight years as a Jesuit, I am concerned that **America**, in its editorial "Just Adjustments" (3/21), has a shallow view of what is happening today. In my experience, including many years in the army, in a large corporation and my own construction business, I did not see the same dedication to hard work and customer service in government workers as in private industry.

On several jobs we were required to pay what is called the "prevailing wage" because it was a government-funded job. To my thinking, this was immoral. The "prevailing wage" was a fictional number forced on us by the unions, far exceeding what was required to obtain good, hard-working employees. Have you ever met a government agency that was proud to come in "under budget"? Probably never.

The key is "freedom" in the market, not some government bureaucrat decreeing "social justice."

JEROME RIGGS
Dana Point, Calif.

Weak Cover

I was intrigued by the cover emphasizing "History and the Tea Party" (3/14) and expected an original work with perhaps unique insights from the Catholic tradition. I was disappointed by the actual piece, an opinion-on-an-opinion, a short book review in the back of the publication. "Weapon of War," about the rape of women in the Congo, deserved the cover, an excellently researched article that also has a slideshow report on the Internet.

DEBRA BAER
Aiken, S.C.

Good Cover

I receive many magazines, but I want to comment on the cover—with the Tea Party person (3/14)—I received today, which stood out and was well composed in many respects, including lighting. I

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"The desert will lead you to your heart where I will speak" Hosea 2,14

know this is form, not content; but it is very good. Thank you.

DENNIS MCMAHON
Burlington, Vt.

You Said It, Coach

The only reference to the church in the charming column by Thomas Massaro, S.J., "Wait Till Next Year" (3/7), is the Roman collar in his picture. But he surely knew he was writing a parable for those of us who, critical or not, remain in the church. We are thankful that the owner of our team is all-powerful and all-loving and has given us each a share. Though the management and the pros who play the game regularly mess up, we still know that (if we hang in there) we will be on the right side in the Last Super Bowl!

RON NAUMANN
Hilton Head, S.C.

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Jesus and the Woman

I was very impressed by the first comments of Barbara E. Reid, O.P., in "Water From Another Well" (3/21). But I was taken aback when she wrote that the woman was not a sinner. The fact that she had had five husbands and was now living with a sixth man certainly points to a sinful disposition.

We also read: "They had to be willing to stay with each other." This suggests that Jesus was somewhat reluctant to converse with the woman. But John shows that Jesus initiated the conversation and willingly stayed with her in order to change her way of thinking and to bring her closer to God. The final sentence also suggests that, like the woman, Jesus also had "ignorance and fear." This cannot be glossed from the biblical text.

In short, I think the article identifies Jesus too much with the woman.

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John's intent in the story, I believe, was to show Jesus as the savior who comes to lead sinners like this woman back to God. Clearly Jesus and the woman are different; they are not as similar as the article seems to suggest.

JOHN SELAND, S.V.D.
Nagoya, Japan

Spare the Rod

Re "New Orleans School Paddles On?" (Signs of the Times, 2/21): In my opinion, hitting someone with an 18-inch-long wooden paddle is a sin. It is sad to think that some children are still subject to this form of physical abuse. I read the report of what went on in those schools in Ireland. The sexual abuse that many of the students were subjected to was horrific, but almost as bad were the beatings and physical abuse that some had to suffer. Remember the words of Christ: "Whatever you do to the least of my brothers, that you do unto me."

MARK DAVENPORT
Stroudsburg, Pa.

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Being There

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT (A), APRIL 10, 2011

Readings: Ez 37:12-14; Ps 130:1-8; Rom 8:8-11; Jn 11:1-45

“If you had been here, my brother would not have died” (Jn 11:21, 32)

One thing you want to be able to depend upon is that your loved ones will be with you in time of need. Therefore, the most puzzling part of today’s Gospel is that Jesus does not go right away to be with his dear friend Lazarus and his sisters after he receives word of Lazarus’s illness. Why does he delay? The text does not answer that question directly. Even after Martha says to him forthrightly, “If you had been here my brother would not have died,” Jesus does not explain why he stayed away for two more days before deciding to come to Bethany. Mary confronts Jesus with the very same complaint (v. 32). Later, the onlookers ask, “Could not the one who opened the eyes of the blind man have done something so that this man would not have died?” (v. 37). The troubling question, voiced three times, is: Where is Jesus when you need him?

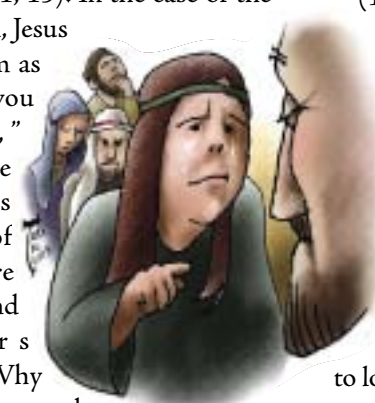
It adds to the puzzlement that at other times in the Gospel of John Jesus does come to the aid of persons in need of healing: the royal official’s son in Capernaum (4:46-54), a man who was paralyzed at the pool of Bethesda (5:1-18) and a man born blind (9:1-41) near the pool of Siloam. In each of these instances there appears to have been no prior relationship between Jesus and the one asking for healing. Jesus is simply passing by when he sees

the man born blind (9:1). The man healed at Bethesda does not know who Jesus is (5:11, 13). In the case of the royal official, Jesus refers to him as part of “you people,” whom he disparages because of their desire for signs and wonders (4:48). Why would Jesus extend himself to these people and not to his own close friends? He had once even put himself in danger by doing so in Bethesda, and that episode concludes with Jesus’ opponents trying to kill him (5:18).

The two days Jesus delayed in going to Bethany may have been time that he needed to discern whether it was “the hour” for him to take this fatal step. It is clear that to go to Judea would put Jesus at great risk. His disciples twice try to dissuade him from going there (11:7-8, 12). Thomas’s wry remark, “Let us also go, that we may die with him” (11:16), proves to be exactly true; the chapter ends with the Sanhedrin planning to put Jesus to death (11:53).

As Jesus’ followers try to build communities of equal disciples, it is a challenge to embrace as friends those who are not kin and those to whom we are not naturally drawn. It is even more difficult to be willing to lay down one’s life for any of those befriended, as

Jesus does. In the fourth Gospel, Jesus’ mission is to bring life to the full for all (10:10) by offering friendship to all persons and drawing them to love himself (12:32). Jesus loves Martha, Mary and Lazarus (vv. 3, 5, 35). But he also loves all other persons—to the death. There are no favorites or best friends. The anonymous Beloved Disciple stands for each person who allows himself or herself to be loved by Jesus and to love him in return. All of us, beloved



PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

- Let Jesus hold you in his presence when it feels as if he is absent.
- How has Jesus helped you form risky friendships?
- Share with Jesus whatever grief you may have over the death of a loved one, and let him weep with you.

of Jesus, can put ourselves in the place of the one who rests on Jesus’ bosom (13:23).

When one chooses to abide in Jesus, then he is always present, even if not in the same physical, earthly way the first beloved disciples wanted him to be. As Martha professes her belief in the Risen One, she affirms that he is always truly present and that all who die believing in him are likewise living and present still. Such belief does not take away grief for the dear departed but turns our mourning into hope-filled joy.

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.

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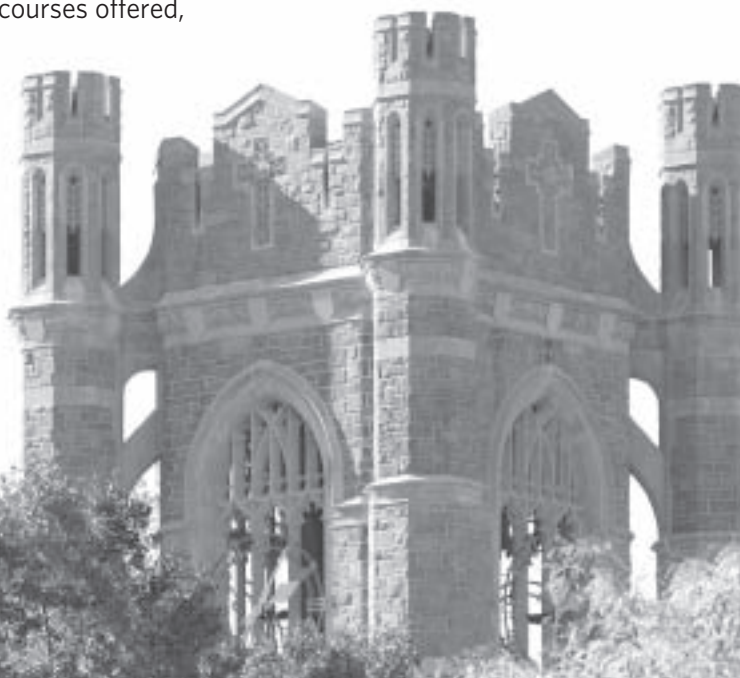
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