

# America

2019 CPA MAGAZINE OF THE YEAR

NOVEMBER 11, 2019

THE JESUIT REVIEW OF FAITH AND CULTURE

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# *A Pilgrimage to Lourdes and Ignatian Paris*



**10-Day Pilgrimage  
September 25 – October 4, 2020**

We invite you to join

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## The Pilgrim

*Matt Malone, S.J., led a pilgrimage to Ireland for **America** readers during October. What follows is the text of the homily he delivered during a Mass at St. Ignatius Church in Galway City. It has been edited for length.*

Eight years ago this spring, I stood at the one intersection in Ballinamore Bridge, County Galway, Ireland. The town—a hamlet, really—is named for the ancient stone bridge that spans the stream there. There’s a chapel, a pub and little else. From there, a century ago, my great-grandfather set out for the United States. As I stood in that tiny, aged place, I thought of his courage and the sense of awe he must have had when he first caught sight of Manhattan. From Ballinamore Bridge to the center of the world!

James McHugh was a pilgrim. How fitting, then, that his great-grandson should join a religious order founded by a pilgrim, St. Ignatius Loyola, the one for whom this church is named. Every Christian is on a pilgrimage, of course, a traveler between the already and the not yet—on a path marked out by our forebears and yet uniquely ours. But the sons of Ignatius are a particular type of pilgrim, something more like James McHugh. Jesuits are always getting thrown out of this place or that. Over the years, we were thrown out of Spain, for example, more than a dozen times. Why? Hard to say, but I think the Lord hints at the reason in the Gospel. In a world beset by sin, oppression and injustice, there is nothing more threatening than faith, hope and love. Evangelists are destabilizing forces.

Whatever the reason, the Jesuits have had their ups and downs, includ-

ing here in Galway City. We first came here in 1620, the same year those other pilgrims landed at a certain rock on the South Shore of Massachusetts. In 1645 the Jesuits built the first school in the area. Throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, they were banished and invited back into Galway on too many occasions to count. Finally, in 1859, the bishop of Galway invited the Jesuits to start a college and a church here.

What sustained the Jesuits through these trials—through the fickle vicissitudes of history? Well, it is the very same thing that gave James McHugh the courage to leave Ballinamore Bridge. In a word, hope. In a sentence—one with which you are surely familiar—it is the hope born of the belief that God can truly be found in all things. This faith is the heart of the pilgrim, every pilgrim, the pilgrim’s *modus operandi*. Faith is our yes to what we know; but even more, it is our yes to what we don’t know—to all that is to come. It is the perduring belief that whatever happens has within it the power to call forth from us a deeper response to God and to one another.

This place speaks to such a faith—this island, bounded by the horizon, the beyond, the future. This is why the pilgrimage of the church, the church herself, has so often been symbolized by a boat. We call it the Barque of Peter, for example. As at sea, here at the altar of the Lord the past and future converge and become radically present. We encounter the God of the here and now and the God of what lies beyond the horizon.

While the real presence in the Eucharist is the presence of God in

Christ par excellence, God’s presence is not restricted to the Eucharist. “The world is charged with the grandeur of God,” the Jesuit poet Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote. The faith of a pilgrim is that God can be found in all things—in all things past, present and future. Most often we merely glimpse a trace of that presence, but there are moments when the experience is more profound and the memory lingers.

There is a clear example of this in the work of Eugene O’Neill, the Irish-American playwright. In “Long Day’s Journey Into Night,” Edmund Tyrone recounts an evening at sea, when “I became drunk with the beauty and singing rhythm of it, and for a moment I lost myself—actually lost my life. I was set free! I dissolved in the sea, became white sails and flying spray, became beauty and rhythm, became moonlight and the ship and the high dim-starred sky! I belonged, without past or future, with peace and unity and a wild joy, within something greater than my own life, or the life of Man, to Life itself. To God, if you want to put it that way.”

Edmund’s pilgrimage is also the journey of James McHugh, the journey of the Jesuits, the journey of every pilgrim—stumbling toward nowhere, yet somehow crazily convinced that there is no such thing as nowhere. That beyond the sea, beyond the horizon, there is, there must be, a somewhere, a place made somewhere by grace.

By God, if you want to call it that.

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Matt Malone, S.J.  
Twitter: @americaeditor.





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AP Photo/Hassan Ammar

Anti-government protesters in front of Mohammad Al-Amin Mosque in Beirut, Lebanon, Oct. 20. Protests took place nationwide after the government announced a slate of new taxes.

Cover: Joe Montana, University of Notre Dame quarterback, playing against the University of Southern California in the “green jersey game” in 1977.

Tony Tomsic via AP

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## *Should the United States have a period of mandatory service for all citizens?*

Many countries around the globe employ a system of mandatory national service for their citizens. Such service may include, among other things, a required stint in the military or working on public service projects at home or abroad. Some have argued that the United States should consider implementing a policy of mandatory national service, particularly as a way to promote national unity and understanding in a time of partisanship. Others, however, are skeptical about the proposal, particularly about the practical and financial challenges that would be involved. We asked our readers: Is mandatory service for U.S. citizens a good idea?

It seems in this country there isn't a shared American experience we can all relate to. A mandatory period of service between high school and college would help with maturity for kids entering college. I think the primary benefit would be a shared American experience that gives people from all backgrounds, races and income levels a chance to empathize with others and see how others live and have lived. I think doing the service farther from home would be better, but the most important aspect, in my mind, is that people work with people with different ideologies, religions and socio-economic backgrounds.

**Peter Conley**  
Topeka, Kan.

Yes. I think it would help young people realize that they can make a positive contribution to the country, and hopefully they will continue in this manner for the rest of their lives. It will also allow people from different parts of the country, or who come from different stratas of society, to find common bonds while recognizing and respecting differences. Serving in the military is one option, but there is a multitude of ways for people to contribute depending on their talents and interests.

**Ethel Sutherland**  
Baltimore, Md.

If national service meant building infrastructure or creating art and parks like the New Deal of the 1930s, can you imagine how amazing that would be? Or require national service along the lines of the Jesuit Volunteer Corps. I learned so many lessons by interacting with other folks with whom I'd not normally interact, especially living in community. I think that last factor really forced me to wrangle with some internal issues I had.

**Ana Saldivar-Christilles**  
Somerville, Md.

If we require anything, it should be something that involves helping society and those in need, similar to AmeriCorp or the Peace Corps. A lot of students go to college not knowing quite what they want to do, so service would be the perfect time to gain various life experiences and interactions with others. People will have a better idea of what is important to them, as opposed to just listening to a career counselor. They should have the choice whether to stay in their home state, but going somewhere else provides a much better experience.

**Julia Westerlund**  
Proctor, Minn.

No. It would likely be taken as an infringement of individual rights. But I hadn't considered the idea mentioned in the survey blurb of service as a way to potentially get people who are opposed to one another to work together, but that is as good an idea as any. It could also be a good variation of government-sponsored post-secondary education, in that perhaps the individual could use it as an internship-like opportunity.

**Cyrus Troche**  
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

No. Mandatory service of any kind is otherwise known as a draft. I am generally not in favor of a draft. Voluntary service would be acceptable, especially if it helps erase student debt. The participants should be paid at the same rate as a new military recruit, and then two years of service would make a person eligible to receive college funding similar to a G.I. Bill.

**Carlos Rodriguez**  
Pico Rivera, Calif.





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## Unity and Hope From the Amazon Synod Must Speak Louder Than Fear

The final document approved by the necessary two-thirds majority of the voting members of the synod for the Pan-Amazonian region focused on four calls for conversion: pastoral, cultural, ecological and synodal. But how will those calls be heard in the church, given the intense focus on the synod's endorsement of ordaining married men in order to make the Eucharist more available in Amazonian communities?

Additionally, the synod's closing week was dominated by news of the theft of wooden statues depicting a pregnant Amazonian woman, which had been used along with other symbols, including the cross, in prayer services during the synod. The thieves recorded and publicized video of themselves dumping the statues off a bridge into the Tiber River, celebrating their vandalism as a blow against "idolatry." (The statues were later recovered by the Italian police.)

The theft set off a social media frenzy fueled by breathless "breaking news" coverage in a number of media outlets that frequently drum up opposition to Pope Francis—the same outlets that had spent the months leading up to the synod fomenting fear about its working document and the people chosen to serve on its organizing committee. These media reports drew in many cases on quotes from and interviews with prelates, priests and laypeople who presented themselves as "more Catholic than the pope" regarding the topics under discussion at the synod.

Because of this determined effort to scandalize the faithful, the synod appeared to be divisive, when in fact it was an instance of profound ecclesial communion. The church gathered to-

gether a wide range of participants to consider the needs of a complex and vital region, unique in its ecological importance, that includes nine countries and an enormous number of cultures. Even the most contentious question—on married priests—was approved by more than three-quarters of those voting. Of the 120 total paragraphs in the final document, 113 were approved by more than 90 percent of the voters.

Among the themes that received such overwhelming support were: the opportunity for the church "to differentiate itself from new colonizing powers by listening to the Amazonian peoples"; greater pastoral efforts to assist migrants and oppose human trafficking; the establishment of an Amazonian Catholic university; and the recognition of an integral link between preserving the ecology of the Amazon and protecting the rights of its indigenous communities.

One of the most significant questions we now face in the church is how to commit to the path of "synodal conversion," as this synod has put it, overcoming fear and distrust. The synod called for strengthening "a culture of dialogue, reciprocal listening, spiritual discernment, consensus and communion" and said that "it is not possible to be the church without recognizing an effective exercise of the *sensus fidei* of the whole people of God."

Throughout much of Francis' papacy, particularly during synod meetings, the church's commitment to listening, discernment and communion has been opposed by a sort of "heckler's veto" exercised by the most fearful and intolerant voices in the church. They presume that their

cramped vision of the tradition has already answered and foreclosed any question that might be considered. Those voices speak from desolation, not from the action of the Holy Spirit, and they risk crowding out the honest and faithful critique that Francis has said he desires.

The church must, therefore, embrace the challenge of amplifying the voices present in the synod hall and among the local communities of the Amazon. We need, as Pope Francis said in his homily at the synod's closing Mass, to remember that "the cry of the poor...is the cry of hope of the church." The whole body of Christ needs to hear God speaking to us there.

### The 'Nones' at Our Doors

The Pew Research Center recently reported that "nones," or the religiously unaffiliated, make up 26 percent of the U.S. population, up from 17 percent only a decade ago. Over the same period, those identifying as Christian dropped from 77 percent to 65 percent, and Catholics fell from 23 percent to 20 percent. It would be simplistic to say, as Attorney General William P. Barr did in a recent speech at the University of Notre Dame, that organized "secularism" is the cause, as surveys also suggest that most nones do not consider themselves atheist or against spirituality. Still, Pew decided there was enough evidence to headline its report "Decline of Christianity Continues at Rapid Pace."

This kind of alarmism can be infectious, but better to pause and consider the context. Polls suggest that institutions of all kinds, from the federal government to local newspapers,



are experiencing a loss of public confidence in their ability to respond to a period of great political, economic and social change. Getting better poll numbers is not the point here.

Of greater concern is the possibility that Americans are coming to associate faith with a particular ideological bent. Religious affiliation has fallen especially among Democrats, and the University of Notre Dame political scientist David Campbell recently told The Associated Press, “Increasingly, Americans associate religion with the Republican Party—and if they are not Republicans themselves, they turn away from religion.” (It would help if the Democratic Party made it clear that it regards religious faith as compatible with good citizenship, rather than a threat to it.)

Political scientists once praised the United States for its “cross-cutting cleavages”—meaning that each citizen belonged to a different combination of political party, church, fraternal or neighborhood groups and unions or professional organizations. The ideal was an interlacing of groups rather than mutually exclusive identities that reinforce division. As a new study of the Troubles in Northern Ireland suggests (see Short Take, Page 10), the loss of regular contact with people of other faiths and political beliefs can lead to destabilization and violence.

The rise of the nones should not be a reason to ramp up a culture war or to force a choosing of sides. Instead of raging at the polls, we should be inviting our neighbors, both the faithful and the nones, to join us in pursuit of the common good.

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## A lesson from Northern Ireland: Walls make bad neighbors

This summer was the 50th anniversary of Northern Ireland's Troubles, a decades-long civil war that killed more than 3,000 people. The war lasted until 1998, when the Good Friday Agreement reaffirmed British control of Northern Ireland but offered Catholics assurances against government discrimination.

Today, Northern Ireland's Catholics and Protestants have equal reason to regret the conflict. Thirty years of war, thousands dead and a peace settlement that cannot heal the psychological scars—why did all of this happen? New political science research sheds some light on this question. It may also carry lessons for Americans who worry about social divisions and violence in our own time.

Our research shows that the most diverse neighborhoods of Northern Ireland's capital, Belfast, experienced most of the city's 1,617 conflict-related deaths. "Interfaces," where Catholic neighborhoods abutted Protestant neighborhoods, were exceptionally deadly sites. At first, this finding seems to support the argument for separating ethnic and religious groups—partitioning neighborhoods, restricting immigration and hardening borders to prevent "others" from entering one's own community. (The "peace walls" built to separate Catholic and Protestant enclaves in Belfast are the physical embodiment of this strategy.) But a closer look gives reason to question the wisdom of partition.

Belfast's historical problem was not diversity per se but rather the failure to build social bridges between Protestant and Catholic communities. Protestants and Catholics lived in close proximity, but the two communities avoided meaningful interaction.

Some of the fault lay with religious and political leaders. At least one Catholic bishop, the Most Rev. William Philbin, warned that he would not confirm children who left the parochial school system to attend mixed state-run schools. (He was then "corrected" by the Vatican.) Meanwhile, a Protestant-dominated government shut Catholics out of public housing, higher-paying jobs and a heavily gerrymandered local parliament. It is small wonder that Catholics and Protestants came to distrust one another, to eschew "mixed" marriage and to adjust their daily routines to avoid street interactions with the religious "other."

Our analysis suggests that when communities fail to integrate socially, residential diversity exacerbates violence. But when communities do integrate socially, diversity can be a good thing. Research on Hindu-Muslim violence in India shows that diverse cities are less violent, perhaps because Hindus and Muslims develop economic interdependence in complementary professions. Unable to prosper separately, the two religious communities there built social links and discouraged prejudicial beliefs about the ethnic other. Research shows similar dynamics in Kenya: Diverse communities, when linked by meaningful social ties, experienced less intercommunal violence during that country's 2007-8 riots.

In a U.S. context, this means that initiatives like hardening the Mexican border, restricting immigration and banning Muslims from entering the country are at best misguided; at worst, they represent a cynical effort to promote white nationalism.

Consider the issue of terrorism. Jihadist groups have difficulty making

inroads in the United States, especially compared with European countries whose secular politicians view Muslims as inherently foreign. In the more pluralistic United States, most Muslim Americans feel that the country is friendly toward them and that they can get ahead in the economy if they work hard. In a 2017 Pew Research Center poll, 92 percent of U.S. Muslims said that they were proud to be Americans. The sense of pride is at least as strong among immigrant Muslims, the very people our current presidential administration singles out as allegedly un-American and dangerous.

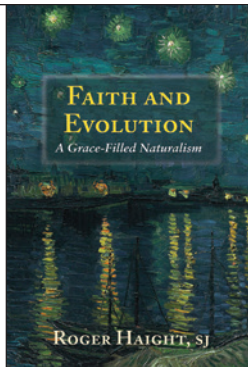
Taken together, our analysis of Belfast and the findings from India and Kenya suggest that faith leaders in the United States have the power to shape intercommunal relations. If religious leaders neglect or discourage bridge building, they prime society for conflict over diversity. But churches can serve as spaces for integration, breaking down racial, ethnic and linguistic barriers, as well as the bureaucratic barriers of immigration status. Additionally, leaders of different faiths can encourage meaningful contact between their respective flocks.

Analogies can be made between Belfast's religious divisions and the sometimes-fraught relations between Christians and Muslims in the United States (or between Christians and Jews or Christians and atheists). But interfaith dialogue can help to inoculate against the problems that plagued Belfast.

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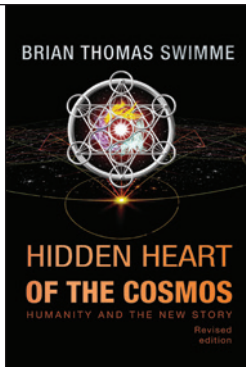
*Joseph M. Brown is an assistant professor of political science at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. Gordon McCord is on the faculty of the School of Global Policy and Strategy at the University of California, San Diego.*





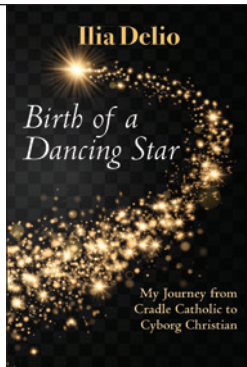
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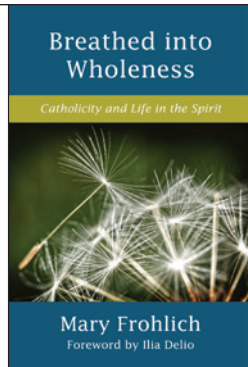
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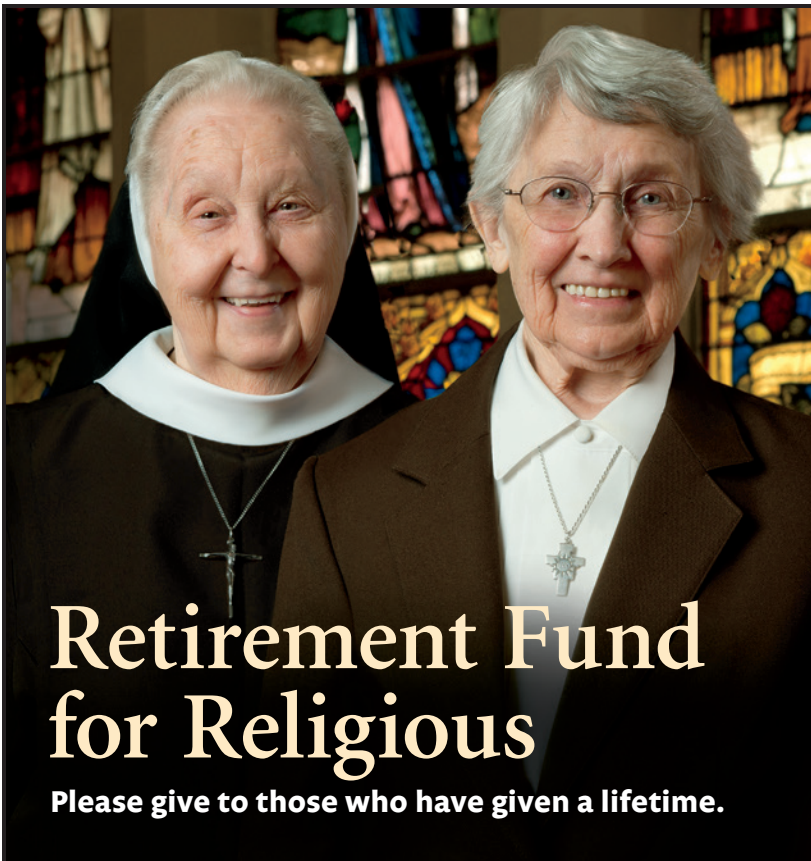
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## Pope Francis: The church must listen to 'the cry of the poor'

*Synod votes to ordain married men, protect Amazon's indigenous peoples and rain forests*

By Gerard O'Connell and Luke Hansen

The Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for the Pan-Amazonian Region concluded its work on Oct. 26 by approving all 120 paragraphs of its final document with the necessary two-thirds majority vote, including one proposing the priestly ordination of “suitable and esteemed” married men who are permanent deacons in communities of this vast region.

While that latter proposal attracted much of the media attention and had the most votes against it (41 against, 128 in favor), the most important thing to emerge from the synod was the unequivocal commitment by the church in the nine countries of the Amazon region to seek new ways to preach the Gospel and to promote justice and stand in solidarity with its 34 million inhabitants in defense of their rights and against all forms of violence and exploitation that they now suffer. Synod participants were especially attentive to the treatment of the region's 2.5 million indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation, that is, living in communities that shun contact with the industrialized world.

At the same time, the synod committed the church in

the region to work for the protection of the Amazonian rain forest, since deforestation threatens the entire ecosystem.

The synod is a consultative body and its proposals are considered as recommendations to the pope. He will decide how best to respond to them. Speaking at the end of the synod, Pope Francis gave instructions for the text and the votes to be published, and he announced his intention to issue an apostolic exhortation based on the synod's conclusions before the end of the year.

He praised the media for its work of reporting the synod but appealed to journalists not to merely focus on “the disciplinary questions”—alluding to the ordination of married men—but to make known the other important issues that were central to the synod's discussion. The 33-page final document calls for four conversions: pastoral, cultural, ecological and synodal.

Presenting the text at a Vatican press briefing on Oct. 26, Cardinal Michael Czerny, S.J., said that without these four conversions there are “no new paths” and “no real change.”



“With the Amazon burning,” he said, “many more people are realizing that things have to change. We cannot keep repeating old responses to urgent problems and expect to get better results.”

Referring to the need for an ecological conversion at the personal and communal level, he said the ecological crisis is so deep that if we don’t change, “we’re not going to make it.”

Concerning the possibility of the priestly ordination of married men from church communities in Amazonia, the synod noted that many of these communities rarely have the Eucharist, the sacrament of reconciliation or the anointing of the sick—even going for a year or more without these sacraments because of the shortage of priests.

“We appreciate celibacy as a gift from God,” the synod affirmed, “to the extent that this gift enables the missionary disciple, ordained to the priesthood, to dedicate himself fully to the service of the Holy People of God.” Yet this discipline “is not required by the very nature of the priesthood,” the synod continued, quoting the Second Vatican Council’s decree on priesthood.

The synod then proposed “establishing criteria and dispositions on the part of the competent authority” to ordain as priests “suitable and esteemed men of the community, who have had a fruitful permanent diaconate” and “an adequate formation for the priesthood, having a legitimately constituted and stable family, to sustain the life of the Christian community through the preaching of the Word and the celebration of the sacraments in the most remote areas of the Amazon region.” The synod added that “in this regard, some [synod fathers] were in favor of a more universal approach to the subject.”

Another question that received great attention during the synod was what kind of “official ministry” could be conferred on women, in light of the decisive role they play in the Amazonian church.

The synod’s final document notes that in “a large number” of the consultations carried out in the Amazon, “the permanent diaconate for women was requested,” adding that the theme was important during the synod. Then, referring to a study commission on women deacons that Pope Francis established in 2016, which “arrived at a partial result based on what the reality of the diaconate of women was like in the early centuries of the Church and its impli-

cations for today,” the final document expresses the desire of the synod “to share our experiences and reflections with the Commission and await its results.”

This paragraph received the support of 137 bishops, with 30 against.

In his closing remarks, Pope Francis told the synod participants he accepts the request to reconvene the papal commission on the diaconate of women, perhaps “with new members,” in order to continue studying “how the permanent diaconate worked in the early church.”

“I take up the challenge,” he said, leading to applause in the synod hall.

In the final document’s reflections on new paths for a synodal conversion, the synod says it is “urgent” for the church in the Amazon “to promote and confer ministries for men and women in an equitable manner.”

There are many specific proposals in the final document that are destined to have a long-term impact on the church and peoples in the region. Among them is the significant proposal for the creation of “a liturgical rite for the indigenous peoples of the Amazon”—otherwise referred to as “an Amazonian rite”—in addition to the 23 different rites that already exist in the Catholic Church worldwide.

The three-week-long synod officially closed with a Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica on Oct. 27.

In an inspiring and challenging homily about the Gospel parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector, Pope Francis asked, “How many times, even in the church, have the voices of the poor not been heard and perhaps scoffed at or silenced because they are inconvenient?”

“In this synod,” he said, “we have had the grace of listening to the voices of the poor and of reflecting on the precariousness of their lives, threatened by predatory models of development. Yet precisely in this situation, many have testified to us that it is possible to look at reality in a different way, accepting it with open arms as a gift, treating the created world not as a resource to be exploited but as a home to be preserved, with trust in God.”

The pope concluded, “Let us pray for the grace to be able to listen to the cry of the poor... The cry of the poor is the church’s cry of hope.”

Gerard O’Connell, *Vatican correspondent.*  
Twitter: @gerryrome.

Luke Hansen, S.J., *special correspondent.*  
Twitter: @lukehansensj.

## Whom do you trust to get the job done?

Only 58 percent of U.S. Catholics feel that their religious leaders take responsibility for their mistakes at least some of the time, according to a new Pew Research Center report—a notable exception to the generally warm feelings towards U.S. religious leadership.

Asked about five functions of leadership positions, a significant majority of U.S. adults who responded to the December 2018 survey said that religious leaders performed four of them “well,” at least “some of the time.” The fifth criterion—the outlier—was religious leaders’ ability to admit and take responsibility for mistakes.

Overall, 50 percent of respondents felt that religious leaders admit and take responsibility for mistakes at least some of the time. Only 30 percent of religiously unaffiliated adults agreed with the statement, but the 58 percent among Catholics was the lowest of any major religious affiliation. It is unclear how these numbers have changed in the wake of the sexual abuse crisis since this survey is the first

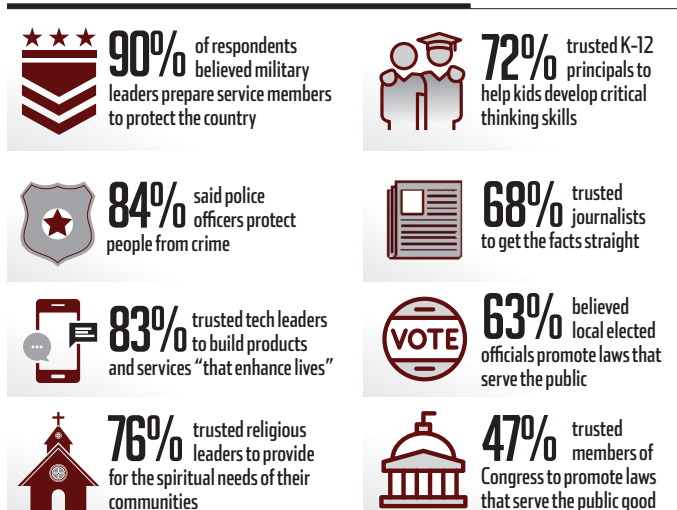
of its kind conducted by Pew.

The data on attitudes toward religious leadership was part of a larger study conducted by Pew on the question of institutional trust in the United States. The survey asked about numerous types of authority figures, including members of Congress, military leaders and journalists. Among these groups, U.S. adults felt that members of Congress were most likely to act unethically, with eight in ten responding that members of Congress act unethically at least some of the time.

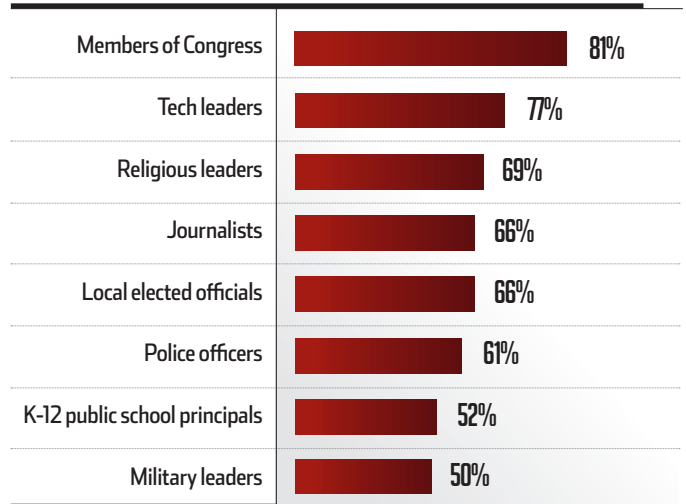
Military leaders were the most trusted to “fulfill key aspects of their missions” at least some of the time. Religious leaders were rated below police officers and leaders of technology companies but ahead of K-12 public school principals, journalists and local elected officials. Dead last by this metric were members of Congress.

Kevin Jackson, *O’Hare fellow*. Twitter: @jevinkackson.

### How well do they do their jobs “some or most of the time”?



### Percentage who say \_\_\_\_ behaves unethically “all, most or some of the time”?



### Percent of all U.S. adults who say that religious leaders \_\_\_\_\_ at least some of the time:



Sources: “Why Americans Don’t Fully Trust Many Who Hold Positions of Power and Responsibility,” Pew Research Center, Sept. 19, 2019.



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## THE JOHN COURTNEY MURRAY, S.J., LECTURE

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Clouds of smoke rose above the skyline of Culiacán before a 12-hour gun battle ended in the release of a Sinaloan drug lord.

AP Photo/Hector Parra

## Mexico's fight against organized crime takes a dark turn after urban combat in Culiacán

Mexico was on edge after a wave of violence hit the country in late October, culminating in heavy fighting between the army and alleged members of organized crime in Culiacán, the capital of the northern state of Sinaloa. The gun battle lasted for hours on Oct. 17. The latest violence followed earlier shootouts in the central states of Michoacán, where 14 police officers were killed on Oct. 14, and Guerrero two days later, where 15 people were killed: one police officer and 14 alleged gang members.

The unprecedented bloodshed cast a shadow over the security policies of President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, who assumed office last year with the promise of significantly reducing violence and bringing an end to the drug war, a struggle that according to some estimates has cost close to 300,000 lives since 2006.

“Officially, there is no more war,” the president said in February. “We want peace.” But after last week’s attacks, critics do not believe the president.

“The [drug] war isn’t over,” Carlos Bravo Regidor, a political analyst and academic in Mexico City, told **America**. “We’re still there, with organized crime groups wielding the same power, with the same tactics we know aren’t working, with the same lies of the politicians.”

Mexico is no stranger to extreme violence, but the attacks in Culiacán may represent a watershed moment that casts a dark, new reality over the country’s struggle against drug trafficking groups. The fighting in the Sinaloan capital was more akin to guerrilla warfare than to previous confrontations. Worse, the urban battle appears to have been won by organized crime.

The fighting erupted after soldiers and elements of the National Guard arrested Ovidio Guzmán López, the 28-year-old son of Joaquín Guzmán Loera—known as El Chapo, the notorious crime lord and co-founder of the

powerful Sinaloa cartel. The elder Mr. Guzmán was sentenced to life in prison in the United States earlier this year. His sons reportedly continue to run the cartel.

Within hours of the arrest, gunmen sporting bulletproof vests and automatic rifles swarmed the National Guard in Culiacán, blocked major avenues by setting cars and tires on fire and sent civilians scrambling for cover in panic. By the end of the afternoon, the streets of Culiacán were all but deserted; businesses, schools and government buildings had closed; and thick plumes of black smoke rose above buildings.

“I’ve never seen anything like this. How are we supposed to live like this?” one man, who asked to remain anonymous, said that evening as he sought shelter in the lobby of a hotel near the Forum shopping mall, where some of the heaviest fighting occurred.

Mr. Guzmán was ultimately released after four hours. According to Alfonso Durazo, the federal secretary for public security, the government decided to “suspend further actions to safeguard the citizens of Culiacán.”

“What happened in Culiacán, I think, is clearly unprecedented,” Everard Meade, the director of the Trans-Border Institute in San Diego, said. “There have been outbreaks of violence in the city before, such as in 2008, during the rupture of two factions within the Sinaloa cartel, but it wasn’t an army of gunmen against the Mexican army in the middle of the afternoon in a major city.”

Among the general public, the Mexican army and navy have been among the most trusted institutions for years. In Culiacán, however, the army appeared overwhelmed by the sheer force of the cartel’s gunmen and poorly prepared for the consequences of Ovidio Guzmán’s arrest.

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Jan-Albert Hootsen, *Mexico City correspondent.*  
Twitter: @jahootsen.



Jesus loves me,  
this I know.



568  
1 Timoteo 1, 2  
gaan kolóku ku en bunuhati. Biga a mbei mi ko ta biibi nën liba, nõõ hèn a toona da mi di lobi di dee sèmbè dee nama ku en ta feni. Aai womi, di soni dè nõõ a bigi da mi e.

15 Wè Timoteo, mi o taki wan soni da i aki gbelin seei, kijoo. Nõõ a dè wan gaan bambuu taki di hii sèmbè musu piki waiwai. Hèn da disi: Jesosi Keesitu ko a goonliba u heepi takullibima puu de a hogi basu. Nõõ mi wè bi da di mõn gaan takullibima a hii dee otowan dendu.

16 Wè nõõ fèèn hedi tu Jesosi Keesitu ko abi tjalihati da mi e. Aai. A hoi pasensi da mi seei, fu mi a dè wan maaka da hinwan u libima kuma mi di kè ko biibi nën, taa a sà feni di libi u teego tu.

17 Wè fa i si Masa Gadu sai dè, hèn wè da di kaba Tiima u mundu fu nõõmò e. Fa a dè fèèn dè, an o dedè mõonsò. Libisèmbè an tjika u si en ku woi tu.

19 Nõõ mi taki e, ta hoi di biibi di i si i ta biibi a Masa Jesosi naandè gingin e. Nõõ i musu ta piki di hati fi nõõmò te a ta manda i a wan bambuu soni. Biga wanlò sèmbè an bi du sò, nõõ hèn wè di biibi u de kaba a sòsò gbegedee, leti kuma tē i singi a dan tuwè lai fi go fiaa. 20 Wan u dee sèmbè dee mi taki dè, da Himènüsü, wan da Alekesani. Ma nõõ mi buta de tu sèmbè dè a di didibi maun kaa, be de lei taa de an musu ta waka ta mindi soni da Gadu ta poi en në mõn. Nõõ da sò.

Aki Paulosu ta lei fa dee biibima u Masa Jesosi musu ta tja deseeli.

21 Wè womi Timoteo, awa mi o taki da i fa fii lei dee biibima u Masa Jesosi a i ala fa u de musu libi.

Sò. A di fosu kamian, nõõ un musu ta begi Masa Gaangadu da hii sèmbè. Un musu ta tia dee fuka u dè.

569  
1 Timoteo 2, 3  
fèèn, biga de nõõ da tuutuu soni a mundu.

5 Biga wan kodo Gadu tò nõõ dè a mundu e, hèn da Masa Gaangadu. Nõõ wan kodo Sèmbè tò ta taanpu a u libisèmbè ku Gadu mindi fu seeka taki da u. Hèn da Jesosi Keesitu di bi tei libisèmbè siinkii. 6 Hèn wè bi deen seepi kuma wan paima paka putu u a hogi basu a di juu di Gadu buta. Nõõ fa a du en naandè, ku en hii mundu sa si fa Gadu kè heepi u libisèmbè tjika.

7 Nõõ fu mi sa ta konda di soni dè hedi mbei Gadu tei mi buta tjabukama fèèn e. Nõõ fa mi ta fan aki, na mindi mi ta mindi soni e, womi, ma tuutuu soni mi ta taki. Nõõ Gadu buta mi leima tu, fu mi ta lei dee oto sèmbè na u Isaeli dee soni u Gadu. Biga de da dee tuutuu soni fu musu biibi. Nõõ sò e.

8 Wè nõõ mi taki e womi, taa a bi kamian ta dee biibima, ta ko fèèn, biga de nõõ da tuutuu soni a mundu.

9 Biga wan kodo Gadu tò nõõ dè a mundu e, hèn da Masa Gaangadu. Nõõ wan kodo Sèmbè tò ta taanpu a u libisèmbè ku Gadu mindi fu seeka taki da u. Hèn da Jesosi Keesitu di bi tei libisèmbè siinkii. 6 Hèn wè bi deen seepi kuma wan paima paka putu u a hogi basu a di juu di Gadu buta. Nõõ fa a du en naandè, ku en hii mundu sa si fa Gadu kè heepi u libisèmbè tjika.

7 Nõõ fu mi sa ta konda di soni dè hedi mbei Gadu tei mi buta tjabukama fèèn e. Nõõ fa mi ta fan aki, na mindi mi ta mindi soni e, womi, ma tuutuu soni mi ta taki. Nõõ Gadu buta mi leima tu, fu mi ta lei dee oto sèmbè na u Isaeli dee soni u Gadu. Biga de da dee tuutuu soni fu musu biibi. Nõõ sò e.

8 Wè nõõ mi taki e womi, taa a bi kamian ta dee biibima, ta ko fèèn, biga de nõõ da tuutuu soni a mundu.

9 Biga wan kodo Gadu tò nõõ dè a mundu e, hèn da Masa Gaangadu. Nõõ wan kodo Sèmbè tò ta taanpu a u libisèmbè ku Gadu mindi fu seeka taki da u. Hèn da Jesosi Keesitu di bi tei libisèmbè siinkii. 6 Hèn wè bi deen seepi kuma wan paima paka putu u a hogi basu a di juu di Gadu buta. Nõõ fa a du en naandè, ku en hii mundu sa si fa Gadu kè heepi u libisèmbè tjika.

11 Fa mujè ai dè, de musu ta lei a wan saapi asi ta saka de seei da dee womi. 10 Mi seei ma ta da mujè pas unde ta lei sèmbè wajaja a lanti dudu ta pèc basi a womi sèmbè liba e. Nõõ. Ma de musu ta hoi deseei a wan saapi fasi. 13 Faand nbei, womi? Biga wè a fosu Gadu mbei Adam, a baka fèèn u mbei Eva. 14 Hèn tu, di sindèi na Adam a feni ganjan e. Ma lya a ganjan, nõõ hèn a ko poi dveti u Masa Gaangadu. 15 Nõõ fu di dè hedi Gadu taa te mujè ojai, nõõ pai fèèn o taanga.

Wè sò a u pasu tuu. Ma nõõ tòku di soni u poi. Biga ee wan mujè sèmbè u biibi a Gadu ta hoi go dou ta lobi sèmbè ta libi a wan gbelingbelin faj ku saka fasi nõõ bèsègi sa fosu soni a Gadu tu.





## As new Syria conflict breaks out, archbishop of Erbil urges protection of refugees and religious minorities

As a tenuous cease-fire continued in late October along the border between Turkey and what had been Kurdish-held territory in northern Syria, apprehension was rising in a nearby region that has also seen far too much violence and disorder in recent years.

Bashar Warda, C.Ss.R., the Chaldean Catholic archbishop of Erbil in Iraqi-Kurdistan, urged all parties in the new conflict between Turkey and the Kurdish and allied militias of the Syrian Democratic Forces “to remember at all times their obligations to protect innocent civilians.”

“As the Church, our prayers and hopes are always for an end to this never-ending cycle of violence from all participants,” Archbishop Warda said in a statement released on Oct. 12. The archbishop said Erbil over the past two years has already absorbed a growing number of Syrian Christian refugees “who have sought safety within the Christian community here.”

“We expect that should additional Christians seek to flee conflict in Northeast Syria, most of them would come here to Erbil,” he said. “We pray that the government of Iraq, the Kurdistan Regional Government, and the international community would not turn them away, but would help in providing for their care, along with all the other innocents of all faiths.”

The Turkish incursion, aimed at uprooting Kurdish forces that President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey insists represent a potential terrorist danger, only contributes to the already complex situation in the region, the archbishop said. It represents an entirely new threat to the progress achieved within Iraq, he said, toward driving out ISIS and restoring Christian and other Iraqi minority communities in Nineveh and Sinjar.

“The international community must understand that the minorities will not be able to withstand another serious conflict inside Iraq,” Archbishop Warda said, “especially any conflict that takes place within the fragile homelands of the Christians and Yazidis.

“Continuing tension that results in serious conflict in these areas would mark the end of all efforts to return and instead mark the beginning of an exodus of minorities that no one could control,” he said.

Just days before in Washington, Christians concerned with religious freedom violations resulting from the Turkish offensive urged President Trump to “reconsider and reverse” his decision to move U.S. troops out of the way of the Turkish incursion in Syria.

In a letter on Oct. 9 to Mr. Trump, scores of advocacy organizations, some participating in the International Religious Freedom Roundtable that meets on Capitol





CNS photo/Muhammad Hamed, Reuters

A displaced Kurdish family waits to cross into Iraq on Oct. 21 near Derik, Syria.

Hill in Washington, called on the president “not to abandon Christians, Yazidis and Kurds” who are the inhabitants of the Syrian border region that Turkey is bombing to create what it calls a “safe zone.”

“It was deeply shocking to us as advocates for international religious freedom,” as the region “is a rare example of success for U.S. military intervention post-911—a showcase for religious freedom and democracy,” the letter said of the president’s decision.

“It undercuts our own trust that this administration is truly committed to international religious freedom and the survival of religious minorities in the Middle East,” it said, adding that “the proposed invasion zone includes key historic Syriac Christian towns and churches, all Kurdish majority towns, the population, and key administrative and education centers.”

Mr. Erdogan has vowed to move two million Syrian refugees who are Sunni Muslim and currently in Turkey into the “safe zone” and displace Syriac Christians, Yazidis and Kurds, who are the native inhabitants of northeastern Syria.

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Kevin Clarke, *chief correspondent.*  
Twitter: @ClarkeAtAmerica.  
With reporting from Catholic News Service



CNS photo/Maria Rueda

Luis Salazar, O.F.M.Cap., greets a guest at Our Lady of Chiquinquirà in Caracas.

## GOODNEWS: A Venezuelan Franciscan ‘Living the Gospel’ online

In Caracas, Luis Antonio Salazar, a Capuchin Franciscan priest, is breaking with traditional ways of preaching and bringing the Gospel to thousands of cell-phone users each week through an Instagram video series called “Vivir el Evangelio” (“Living the Gospel”). In one-minute videos he discusses key passages of the New Testament with the help of electronic music and special effects.

In a recent video, he discussed a passage from the Gospel of Luke that recounts how Jesus cured 10 lepers, including a Samaritan man. The Samaritan was the only leper who returned to thank him for the miraculous deed.

“Interesting,” Father Salazar notes. “Jesus cured a foreigner. That’s because he doesn’t suffer from xenophobia.”

Father Salazar started posting videos to Instagram in 2018. In just one year, Salazar’s account—@Flas70—has grown to more than 120,000 followers.

“I want to take those stories that happened 2,000 years ago with the Pharisees, the scribes and the rest of the characters in the Bible,” Father Salazar said, “and show people what they teach us about being good Christians.”

Father Salazar said the videos have connected him with young Catholics in other cities and other Spanish-speaking countries, forming a “digital parish” he tries to tend daily.

The Capuchin said the videos are part of a broader effort to make the church more present in the lives of the Venezuelan people at a time when the country continues to experience a harrowing economic and political crisis.

Father Salazar has attended several antigovernment protests, comforting protesters who suffered from the effects of tear gas. “I think it is important for the Venezuelan people to see that the church is with them,” he said.

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Catholic News Service

COMING TO THE  
GMR  
FIGHT  
FOR





# MOM

## Why we need an economy for care

By Nathan Schneider

I was just about to start my parental leave, one frigid night around New Year's, when my wife and I went to a neighborhood bar for the brief kind of date we could get with a baby and a toddler at home. One of our down-the-street neighbors was there, the guy with a truck and a tiny vintage car. I told him I would be spending the next few months taking care of our baby daughter, so he might see me around more, pushing a stroller.

"Okey-doke, Mr. Mom," he said.

Not only did I take this as an insult in the moment—that's "Mr. Dad" to you, thanks very much—but it stuck with me, especially in the early weeks, before the baby and I got eating and naps and walks down to a science, when we were crying at each other and altogether helpless, and low on the pumped breastmilk I could not

replenish, and I was the only less-good-than-mom, stay-at-home dad I knew of in the zip code while the mom cliques packed the coffee shops and the library play zone.

I forget when it was, over the course of the months at home with my little charge, that I started thinking of the Desert Mothers. These were the women ascetics who began fleeing to the deserts of Egypt and Syria in the years after Christianity became the religion of Rome. They inhabited a community of men, mainly; and for the women who partook, excellence was associated with masculinity. "According to my nature I am a woman, but not according to my thoughts," Amma Sarah once boasted to a pair of male sages. To a group of monks, she said, "It is I who am a man, you who are women."

Notwithstanding Pope Francis' repeated

## During the six-or-so months that I was home with my daughter, I think that I did better than just provide a lousier version of mom.

anxieties about “gender theory” and blurry lines between sexes, we inherit a long legacy of Christian gender-bending. Anselm of Canterbury and Bernard of Clairvaux, among other medieval saints, referred to Jesus and Paul as mothers. Anselm prayed to Christ, “Are you not that mother who, like a hen, collects her chickens under her wings?” Bernard, who once received a vision of drinking milk from the breast of Mary, counseled the men of authority in his time to give milk, too. “Learn, you who rule the earth,” he wrote, “let your bosom expand with milk, not swell with passion.”

Why, then, should I be so ashamed to be called a mother? What would it take for “Mr. Mom” to sound like a compliment? Why did I not boast to my neighbor, “It is I who am a woman, you who are a man”?

Gender-bending, Christian or otherwise, is not a symmetrical affair. Amma Sarah’s claims assume that the desert is no place for a mere woman. Anselm elsewhere affirms the superiority of the masculine and the male identity of God; he understands Jesus’ femininity as a signal of humility. Our culture tells us that being a tomboy is understandable, but a mama’s boy ought to be reformed. Among transgender people today, who all face elevated risks of violence and harassment, trans women report higher rates than trans men do.

The cultural pressure from this asymmetry prevents many of us from doing what we should—prevents men, for instance, from taking caregiving roles, from imitating the loving hen that Anselm sees in Jesus. These pressures result in concrete challenges: I am afraid this is going to have to do with money.

•••

Day after day, as I was trying to model for my daughter the mechanics of crawling on the carpet, I was being paid. I am a professor at a state research university, which has to compete with the lavish benefits at tech companies for talent. It is also not practical to bring in an adjunct to teach just half a course, so the university offers an entire semester’s parental leave. Our first child was born between my first two semesters on the job, which was then just a temporary position, and I worked through his first months

without interruption. When the second baby was coming—on my wife’s urging, and reluctantly, because I wasn’t sure I could continue to exist without my job—I told my department chair that I would be taking the university up on its policy. My wife stayed home in the first months, and then it was my turn.

While people in other comparably wealthy countries might not bat an eye at this arrangement, several months of paid parental leave is vanishingly rare in the United States. Ours is the only high-income country in the world that does not guarantee paid leave for new mothers—and it is an outlier, also, among much poorer countries. Most countries in the world allow such leave to be taken by either parent.

If it is not merely cruelty, perhaps the refusal to pay for family-based care is the consequence of a well-meaning idea—that care of loved ones should be protected from the rotten market so it can remain pure and worthy of special respect. Paid care work in the home is common, but usually it has been delegated to an underclass, defined by race or citizenship status, which helps prevent its wages from being sufficient to entail the dignity such work deserves. When the social contracts for labor were codified in the New Deal, domestic workers were denied rights to union organizing and overtime pay. Any existing economy for care has to remain invisible to protect the illusion of purity.

Catholic understandings of sacrificial motherhood reinforce this. The mother must be ever at the foot of her children’s crosses, expecting nothing in return. Even a Catholic thinker as radical as the priest and philosopher Ivan Illich feared that making an economy out of gendered care work would only worsen the subjugation of women in the futile pursuit of “unisex economic equality.” Writing in the early 1980s, Illich objected to calls among feminists for paid housework—the so-called “wages for housework” campaigns.

One leading advocate of wages for housework was Silvia Federici, the Italian activist and philosopher who is now a professor emerita at Hofstra University. In her 1975 essay “Wages Against Housework,” she wrote, “By denying housework a wage and transforming it into an act of love, capital has killed many birds with one stone.” The economy depends on care work to produce and sustain its workers, but businesses and the state avoid paying that cost by transferring it to the workers themselves and their families. Not paying for care requires women to depend on the wages of the men in their lives, while placing the whole family’s pressure on men to keep up their wages. It amounts to a layered cake of dependency with employers at the top.

Despite their disagreements about the remedy, Illich



and Federici share a common analysis of the origin story for this arrangement—in particular, the point of transition from medieval feudalism to early capitalism. The crux of this bloody period was a process by which the enclosure of land into private property drove working families from lives of communal subsistence to hired production. The basic economic unit was no longer the family but the wage-earner. Roles of authority that women held in the older regime, such as midwifery and herbal medicine, became rebranded and persecuted as witchcraft when male professionals began demanding wages for the new versions of that work. The roles available to women became fewer. Capitalism removed them from direct

involvement in remunerative production and relegated them to its necessary but unrewarded substrate—what Illich called “shadow work.”

Federici’s rhetoric in the 1970s pointed toward rebellion, toward an escape from housework. But more recently she has changed her tone—from “refusal” to “valorization,” as she puts it, recognizing the strength and solidarity that can come through care work. All along she and her comrades spoke of housework, not housewives, knowing that if it were paid for, care would attract more takers than just married women. Illich feared that pay-for-care would turn gender into a commodity, but the feminists said that this has already happened. They wanted to live

The altar at the Church of Dominus Fleuit in Jerusalem is decorated with a mosaic of a hen gathering her chicks, meant to symbolize Christ’s nurturing love. St. Anselm is known to have prayed to Christ: “Are you not that mother who, like a hen, collects her chickens under her wings?”



## Rector of the Tantar Ecumenical Institute



The University of Notre Dame invites nominations and applications for the role of Rector of the Tantar Ecumenical Institute in Jerusalem. For more information, please visit [Tantar.org/Rector](http://Tantar.org/Rector).

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## Paid family leave is an obvious pro-life, pro-family policy, practical enough that nearly every other country in the world requires it.

out their gender from a posture of self-determination rather than constraint.

Wages matter. The bishops like to say that federal budgets are moral documents; the household budget is one, too. We signal respect with how we distribute—and to whom we entrust—scarce things like money. On days when I was bored and frustrated and chronically grumpy in baby-land, when my sense of self seemed most remote, I found some solace in thinking that at least I was being paid.

During the six-or-so months that I was home with my daughter, I think that in the end I did better than just provide a lousier version of mom. Yes, I played the imitation game with pumped breastmilk, and, to be clear, real-mom still fed her through the night and at lunchtime. I sometimes wished I had my own milk to offer, and so, I suspect, did the baby. But I also found that because I wasn't working, I had the time to bring my daughter along for activities of a more guy-ish sort than I typically attempted—house repairs, minor carpentry, hacking old computers, experimental vegetable gardening. Ironically, as Mr. Mom, I turned out to be more conventionally dad-like than usual. We also did a ton of laundry and dishes and cleaning.

The tasks of care that at first felt like gender-bending, like reversing the gendered expectations I had been trained on my whole life, turned into opportunities for skill and pride. My little girl and I mastered a rhythm of naps and walks that kept us both sane and smiley. We made it work. We were good. But it also wasn't forever. When the time was up, I was more than ready to go back to the office, and my daughter was soon a star at her new day care.

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While I was home, one of my wife's coworkers left for another job. While remaining no less Ms. Mom, she swung into action, working late nights and weekends, and spun the challenge into what I (quite objectively) regard as a visionary reorganization that bucked outdated structures in her industry. She ended up with a raise and a promotion that would not have been waiting for her had she been the one at home all that time. In the end, this was another source of pride for me: I got to do some extra shadow work while she made her breakthrough.

Mothers experience a penalty—both in their perceived commitment to their job and in their salary—whether or not they have paid parental leave. Fathers sense this, which is why the majority of us do not take leave even when we have the option of doing so. In many workplaces, workers intuitively know that taking leave for child care will signal that they are not dedicated enough to their jobs. In aggregate, mothers see pay increases for each month they continue to work while their partners take leave.

Paid family leave is an obvious pro-life, pro-family policy, practical enough that nearly every other country in the world requires it. Ensuring that both parents get and use it is even better. But how could we get there?

One of the more imaginative ideas comes from Senator Marco Rubio. He proposed last year that new parents should be able to borrow Social Security benefits for a few months from their future selves—a glimpse of retirement in middle adulthood, paid for with a few months' less retirement later on. My ageist tendencies, of which I am not proud, delight in the prospect of robbing from one's own golden years. Ivanka Trump approves, too.

It surely is not necessary, however, to chip away at an essential benefit like Social Security to carry out nonoptional care work. Like public education and clean water, access to care should be something we have every incentive to use. Another set of proposals, coming from Democrats like Senators Cory Booker and Sherrod Brown, would restructure the Earned Income Tax Credit to provide refunds when members of the family perform care work. Unlike Senator Rubio's plan, their definition of care includes not just new parents but also those taking care of sick or elderly relatives.

There is good reason for broadening the paid-leave frame even further. Years ago I remember reading an anecdote in the sociologist Arlie Russell Hochschild's study *The Time Bind*, the story of an office where the only father who



Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University. Photo by Bettye Lane





Wages for Housework march, 1977. The movement was popularized in the 1970s and '80s, with many arguing that the economy depends on care work, but businesses and the state avoid paying that cost by transferring it to the workers themselves and their families.

took parental leave was the one so socially isolated by racism that he was not privy to the cues that discouraged the other men from doing so. The story is also a statistic. Only 14 percent of fathers who can take more than two weeks off actually do so. One way of alleviating such pressure is simply to universalize the policy: Everyone gets the same opportunity for occasional long-term paid leave, for whatever reason. Some could use it for child care, others for self-care. It sounds generous, but it is not crazy. No less than the Society for Human Resources Management—that is, the experts on this kind of thing—have an “open leave” policy for their employees.

We can argue about what the right legislation should be; and we should do so much more, because the question is interesting and important. But first take to heart what we are talking about here: care as a commons, not a luxury. While the end of feudalism had its virtues, its horror was the transition to a world where common land was no longer a given, where one could go hungry without recourse to

a garden or gleanings. Care should be like what that older world offered—a kind of work and reward available to anyone willing to do it, for anyone who needs it. Fathers should not have to fear retribution for being caregivers, and mothers deserve the economic respect they have long earned but rarely received.

Now, as I watch and help my daughter grow, I see in her (and in myself) the work of our months together. We shared the kind of care every human being at some time, in some form, had—the care for one who cannot help oneself or begin to repay it. Yes, there was bending involved; I am bent in her direction. I hope that someday all fathers will have the chance to imitate the motherhood of Jesus.

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# A FIGHTING SPIRIT

By Rachel Lu

## *The place of Notre Dame football in American Catholicism*

By any normal standard, the fall of 1943 was a magnificent one for the Fighting Irish of the University of Notre Dame. The nation as a whole was thinking about war, mobilizing to beat Hitler and the other Axis powers abroad. On the home front, the Irish football team racked up nine wins, six of them against highly ranked teams. They were crowned national champions despite a disappointing end-of-season loss at the Great Lakes Naval Station in Illinois. Their star quarterback, Angelo Bertelli, was called away by the Marine Corps to serve in the South Pacific after just six games. But his performance in those six games still won him the Heisman Trophy, the highest honor a college football player can receive.

For most coaches, the success of that season would have been the crowning achievement of a lifetime. Frank Leahy, Notre Dame's head coach, was barely getting started. After the 1943 season he took a two-year leave of absence, serving in the United States Navy. When he returned, he headed up one of the most remarkable dynasties in the history of football. The 1946 Notre Dame recruiting class would play four years under the Golden Dome without ever losing a game. They claimed three more national championships and two more Heisman Trophies before hanging up their cleats.

Those were the dynasty days. Leahy's teams were so saturated with talent that some players left college for the National Football

League in hopes of getting more playing time. With so many superstars at his disposal, Leahy established a habit of playing his second string for the second and fourth quarters of each game. Just as the opposing team was gasping for breath, they would look up to see a fresh crew of Irish players leaping off the bench.

U.S. Catholics embraced the Fighting Irish with enthusiasm. When the leaves started turning each September, people who had never set foot in the state of Indiana would be decked out like frat boys, raising the gold and blue for Our Lady's loyal sons. In parochial schools across the nation, nuns led Catholic schoolchildren in prayers for Irish victory. Notre Dame was the first school in the U.S. to have a nationwide following of "subway alums," devoted fans for whom a radio dial represented their only connection to the university. It was said in those days that every priest in the U.S. was a de facto recruiter for Notre Dame.

In the minds of their fans, Notre Dame's stars were much more than football players. They were warriors, fighting for the honor of Catholics across the nation.

### **A Storied History**

College football turns 150 this fall. It is a good time to reflect on the significance of a homegrown sport that has deeply influenced American culture. What has football contributed to American Catholicism? What has Catholicism contributed to American

The "King of Kings" mural (known as "Touchdown Jesus") can be seen on the side of the Hesburgh Library at Notre Dame.





iStock



The 1905 University of Notre Dame football team. Though the squad outscored its opponents 312 to 80, their record was 5 to 4 that year.



football? For Catholics, it is particularly worth revisiting Notre Dame's unique story. In this heavily Protestant country, where "popery" has often been viewed with suspicion, Catholics spent centuries fighting for full social inclusion. That effort brought many colorful characters to the fore as Catholics worked to establish a presence in politics, business, the military, the academy and the arts. But the struggle assumed a particularly literal guise on crisp Saturday afternoons in the fall. In the old country, feuding Catholics and Protestants sometimes settled their differences with the sword. Here in the United States, they preferred the pigskin.

Notre Dame's football team dates back to the late 19th century, but there is not much worth remembering until the dawn of the 20th. Its first noteworthy coach, Pat O'Dea, was an Irish-Catholic Australian who made a name for himself as an outstanding kicker at the University of Wisconsin. O'Dea brought an abundance of energy to the game, and he quickly made Notre Dame's football team into a regional power. Unfortunately, he was a fighting Irishman in more ways than one. In 1901, O'Dea recklessly volunteered the Irish for a matchup with his own pro team, the Studebakers. Coaching one team while playing for the other, he was bound to ruffle some feathers. The college players trounced the local pros, and O'Dea's humiliated teammates turned on him in an ugly post-game brawl. Embarrassed by the national attention, Notre Dame fired its pugilistic coach.

Better times were soon to come. In 1911, the team welcomed a remarkable young player who was destined to transform Notre Dame, and indeed all of college football. Born in Voss, Norway, Knute Larsen Rockne was a brilliant and athletically gifted young man, with the work ethic of a boy who had grown up in poverty. He excelled immediately, both as a player and as a student. Within five years of his graduation, he was back on campus, ready to put South Bend on the map as the head football coach.

Legends rose from the grass during those golden years, with Rockne fielding five unbeaten teams, claiming three national championships and chalking up more than 100 victories against only 12 losses. The Four Horsemen, Rockne's legendary 1924 backfield, made their famous ride "outlined against a blue-gray October sky," in the sportswriter Grantland Rice's famous turn of phrase. George Gipp was selected as Notre Dame's first-ever Walter Camp All-American, just weeks before dying of pneumonia in dramatic fashion. (According to legend, he told Rockne on

his deathbed to urge the boys to "win just one for the Gipper" the next time they found themselves in a tight spot. Sixty years later, Ronald Reagan inherited the phrase, having played Gipp in the 1940 film "Knut Rockne, All American.")

Rockne cultivated a nationwide fan base, in part based on his success; a century later he still holds the record for the highest winning percentage in the history of college football. He was a key figure, not only in building up Notre Dame's football team, but also in selling college football to a still-skeptical American public. A born salesman and a brilliant strategist, he was continually scheming, looking for innovative ways to develop and improve his teams. This was never more evident than in the famous game against Army in November 1913, when Rockne and his friend Gus Dorais revolutionized the game of football by their use of the forward pass.

It was unusual in those days for teams to travel so far for a single game, and the Easterners' expectations were not high. Notre Dame was so underfunded that they brought more players than cleats, and had to share. Many fans assumed that these corn-fed Midwesterners had been imported by Army as a sacrificial offering. As it happened, that game would go down in history. Rockne and Dorais had spent their summer tossing a football on the shores of Lake Erie, in effect inventing precision passing. Before that, the forward pass had been legal but was primarily used in desperate situations as a last-ditch move. Rockne realized that a practiced, well-executed passing game could be an incredibly potent weapon for Notre Dame's offense. Dorais completed 14 of 17 passes for a total gain of 243 yards, and Notre Dame crushed the favorites, 35 to 13. College football has never been the same.

Tragedy struck in 1931 when the beloved Rockne, still in his early 40s, was killed in a plane crash. The nation mourned. Irish fans wondered if the glory days were over. It turned out, though, that Rockne's legacy still had life. Elmer Layden, one of the Four Horsemen, kept the team in fighting shape through the Great Depression. In 1941, the reins were handed to the most talented of Rockne's proteges: Leahy. By the time Leahy retired in 1951, the Irish had been a dominant force in college football for four decades.

### **Nostalgia and Realism**

Modern-day Notre Dame fans like myself tend to look back on these times with a mixture of pleasure and pain. It is sweet to reflect on the magnificence of Notre Dame's





Photo courtesy of the University of Notre Dame Archives.

football tradition. There is also some bitterness when we consider that the team's best days may be behind it. The boys still take the field on Saturdays in September with their heads encased in gold. Supposedly, this is a metal that doesn't tarnish. The legacy, however, does feel a bit tarnished.

It has been 30 years since Notre Dame football's last national championship, but the changes go beyond the scoreboard. We still sing the famous "Notre Dame Victory March" (composed in 1908, just before the advent of the Rockne years), but its lofty claims have started to feel like run-of-the-mill braggadocio. Is this just the cumulative effect of too many disappointing bowl losses? Was it inevitable that the scrappy, come-from-behind Irish would lose some of their mystique, once they became an established football power? Or is Notre Dame's decline just another illustration of the mundane truism that the good times eventually stop rolling?

Over the past decade, Notre Dame's football team has been coached by Brian Kelly, a 57-year-old Irish-American Catholic from Massachusetts. Though he lacks the affable charm of a Rockne or a Lou Holtz, Kelly has proven himself a capable coach, boasting two undefeated regular seasons and, last year, an appearance in the College Football

Playoff. (The Irish were blown out in the semifinals by the Clemson Tigers, but the pain was lessened after Alabama's vaunted Crimson Tide suffered the same fate a week later.) Clearly this is not dynasty-level domination. Still, with Kelly at the helm, Irish fans have enjoyed four bowl wins, fielded Heisman candidates and heard sportscasters discuss them as serious national title contenders. Fans can turn to their September calendars hoping that perhaps, just maybe, this could be the year.

Should that be enough? It still feels that we are listening to echoes of past glory, perhaps in part because Notre Dame is no longer as much a cultural touchstone for Catholics as it was in days of yore. Subway alums still exist, and many of us still cheer the gold and blue every Saturday. Today, though, it would be quite unusual to see nuns urging children to implore the Almighty for victory over Michigan State.

All sports dynasties decline eventually, of course; and in Notre Dame's case, it may even be that the decline of football is actually a good thing. The good times ended in part because the bad times ended. When Catholics were still coping with prejudice and widespread marginalization, a winning football team could symbolize their ongoing struggle for cultural recognition. As the larger project succeeded, that pugi-

listic spirit was inevitably going to decline. Maybe we do not need the Fighting Irish anymore.

### **Catholics Turn Their Lonely Eyes to You**

But here is the problem: It still feels as if we do. U.S. Catholics may have settled their differences with Protestants, but we still feel beleaguered. The U.S. church is not in a state of good health. The revelations of horrific clerical abuse of minors and vulnerable persons seem endless, and many Catholic institutions have faced bankruptcy and closure. On a cultural level, the church's moral authority seems to be waning. Legions of young Catholics are leaving their faith behind. Where have you gone, Joe Montana? More than ever, it seems, Catholics need reassurance that their faith will prevail against the odds.

Attracting players is more difficult for Notre Dame nowadays, when nationwide recruiting of student-athletes is commonplace and when Notre Dame is just one school among many that can offer athletes the benefits of top-notch facilities, regular television exposure and legions of adoring fans. Under the Golden Dome, players can find superb academic opportunities that are probably unmatched by any other major football program apart from Stanford. Regrettably, this does not always appear to be a priority for most athletes. Justifiable concerns about the cumulative negative impact of the rigors of the sport on players' health may also mean that the pool of potential players begins to shrink.

Notre Dame's unique identity has helped them before, however. Anti-Catholic prejudice had already waned considerably by the time Ara Parseghian took the reins as head coach in 1963, but that did not stop the quarterback Joe Theismann from soundly defeating the Texas Longhorns in the 1971 Cotton Bowl. Later in that same decade, another extraordinary Joe—this time Joe Montana—thrilled the nation with yet another incredible Cotton Bowl victory over a vaunted University of Texas team. For my own generation, the Holtz years may still be a fond memory. Catholics had mostly come into their own by that time, but Tony Rice and Raghib Ismail, known as Rocket, still managed to strike fear into the hearts of defensive backs across the land. With the right coach, the right strategy and a stable of electrifying players, anything is possible. It is also impossible to predict when a genius like Rockne might appear, providing the gust of wind that stirs the smoldering coals back to flame.



Originally invented by Ivy League patricians, football was once a sport for wealthy, silver-spooned elites.



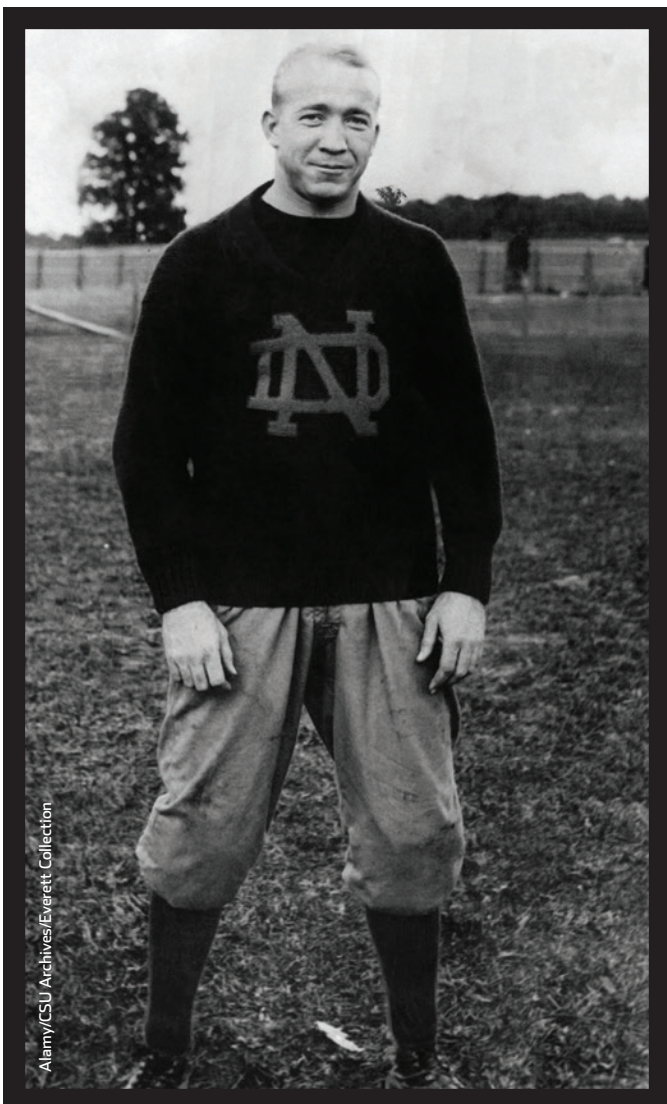
### **A Legacy Beyond Football**

Rockne's impact extends well beyond the gridiron, however. His Fighting Irish did much to revolutionize a great American sport, but the Notre Dame tradition is about more than stopping the wishbone offense or perfecting the forward pass. It is about surviving and thriving as a minority in a nation that is not always as hospitable as we might hope. Considering that many Catholics are feeling ill at ease in our own society, we should draw some inspiration from the example set by those scrappy young athletes. There are lessons that have application both on and off the gridiron.

First of all, Catholics as a whole can benefit from even a small group of Catholics who excel at something that is broadly respected within society. In the earlier half of the 20th century, the Fighting Irish set Catholic hearts ablaze by beating Protestants at what was, quite literally, their own game. Originally invented by Ivy League patricians, football was once a sport for wealthy, silver-spooned elites. Immigrants and minorities had to muscle their way in, both literally and figuratively. Football was the perfect vehicle for proving that Catholics were tough enough, smart enough, and *American* enough to be accepted in the culture at large. Even if Catholic dogma seemed obscure and Catholic liturgy arcane, no one could ignore an argument articulated in the language of drives and downs. Modern-day Catholics should take note: It pays to speak to people in a language they understand.

It is also worth reflecting on this when controversies arise concerning Catholic education. This seems to happen especially at the University of Notre Dame, where faculty and students have had a number of public battles over curricula, contraceptives and invited speakers, among other issues. The world of higher education has become increasingly progressive, and Catholic colleges and universities may





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Knute Rockne, famed player and later coach of the University of Notre Dame football team. During 13 years as head coach, Rockne won 105 games and three national championships.

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Notre Dame's most successful coaches were different in many ways, but they all shared something in common: an extraordinary work ethic. Parseghian worked himself so hard that he ultimately had to resign for the sake of his mental health. Leahy was infamous for grueling practices that by many players' accounts made the actual games feel like a breeze. Holtz started his very first month of coaching by dragging players to 6 a.m. practices on freezing winter mornings. This was in January, just after the regular season had ended.

Sometimes it seemed like too much. Without that training though, these would not have become elite teams. We all occasionally need that kind of bracing discipline. When we feel ill-used or persecuted, a kind word can sometimes be the needed medicine. Other times, we may just need someone to order us to drop and do 50.

The final lesson is a pleasant one. The Fighting Irish remind us that Cinderella stories are not always the stuff of fairy tales. In the prejudiced and class-divided first half of the 20th century, no one would have expected Irish Catholics to revolutionize a great American sport. But they did. They seized that ball and ran with it, and generations of young Catholics reaped the rewards of their success. In the chilly light of a 21st-century November, it is easy to think that such things cannot happen again. The Golden Dome does not sparkle so brightly anymore. The prospects for Catholicism in the United States can feel bleak. And nostalgia for a once-dominant sports team will not save us.

That is true, of course. Football will not save us. Sometimes God's grace can manifest itself in surprising ways, though. A dynamic football team once brought hope into the hearts of demoralized and struggling U.S. Catholics. It could happen again, on the gridiron or in some other sphere.

Rally, sons of Notre Dame!

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Rachel Lu, a contributing writer for *America*, lives in St. Paul, Minn.

struggle to maintain their distinctive religious character without losing all secular credibility. To many people, these debates seem to present us with a straightforward choice between the City of God and the City of Man. The reality may be more complicated. It would certainly be sad to see the University of Notre Dame lose its distinctiveness as a Catholic school. On the other hand, secular credibility has some value too. Rockne became a Catholic at Notre Dame and was, by most accounts, an admirable human being. He would not have had the cultural impact that he did, though, if he had not known how to win football games.

Paging back through the Notre Dame saga, we should also reflect that respect is not often given to us in this world. It is usually a hard-won commodity. As Christians, we can understand that all souls are precious. In ordinary human society though, it takes work to persuade others to like and admire us.



Migrants on an overcrowded wooden boat on the Mediterranean Sea wait to be rescued, September 2019.

# Refugees and the Scope of Solidarity

## The ethical challenge of a new world order

By David Hollenbach

Two starkly contrasting events point to the urgent ethical challenge raised by the plight of refugees today. Less than a year ago, in the new Global Refugee Compact, the international community made a major commitment to alleviate the suffering of refugees. But just a few months later, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees reported that the number of forcibly displaced people had reached 70.8 million, a record-breaking high.

Refugees are people who have fallen through the cracks of the nation-state system. Their needs will not be met if we rely solely on the national interests of individual countries. The Refugee Compact seeks increased well-being and self-reliance for displaced people and reduced pressure on





AP Photo/Renata Brito

host countries. These aims are transnational goods. Minimal achievement of the goals of the Global Compact, therefore, will require increased moral commitment across borders. But some inside our borders are also in great need. How to act in solidarity with forcibly displaced people while also supporting the needs of hurting co-citizens is an explosive issue today.

The idea of solidarity has deep roots in our ethical traditions. Aristotle, for example, saw the Greek city-states as held together by what he called “civic friendship.” Today, we would call this “solidarity,” a bond that knits people together into a “we” and leads them to see the good of this “we” as their own good. In the Hebrew Bible, the people of Israel are bound to God and to each other by a covenant of love. Without the mutual support that flows from this covenant, Israel would not exist at all. These traditions highlight the solidarity needed to hold local communities, nations and even global humanity together. A key moral

question raised by the needs of refugees is the scope of “we” to whom we are morally bound.

If solidarity extends only as far as national or cultural borders, refugees will not receive the support they need. On the other hand, if we fail to support U.S. citizens who are economically vulnerable, we should not be surprised when some of them take anti-immigrant and anti-refugee political stances. The challenge, then, is to find the appropriate relation among the solidarities that link us to communities of diverse scope. We will need to discover what St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas called an *ordo amoris*—an order among our loves.

### Local, National and Global Communities

The Catholic social tradition addresses this issue by calling on the principle of subsidiarity. Subsidiarity, first set forth by Pope Pius XI in 1931, recognizes that persons need to be linked together both in smaller, local communities and in larger, even global, communities. Smaller, nearby communities can provide vital support that enables people to live with dignity and to flourish. Nevertheless, action by larger institutions will also be needed if grassroots bodies cannot or will not act.

In the refugee context, this means the primary responsibility toward displaced people falls on their home country. But if their own country fails to protect them or drives them to flee, the duty of protection moves to neighboring countries and to larger regional and international bodies. Thus there are duties both to one’s fellow citizens and to the forced migrants who need protection through asylum or assistance. Neither of these duties is absolute. Duties to fellow citizens do not always trump duties to refugees, nor do duties to refugees always override duties to co-citizens. This means we are challenged to strengthen solidarity on multiple levels.

Exclusionary localism, isolationist nationalism and hegemonic globalism must all be resisted. Support for the displaced will require assistance for working-class people whose economic vulnerability can otherwise lead them to see migrants as threats. But we must also strengthen the bonds of solidarity that enable us to see the displaced as members of a “we” that reaches across the borders in our increasingly interconnected world.

### The Need for Priorities

Determining the priorities (the *ordo amoris*) that relate the solidarity we share with vulnerable co-citizens to the solidarity we should have with displaced people from other parts of the world will be central if we are to respond more adequately to forced migration. At the top of the list of priorities are the very binding negative duties not to act in ways that cause displacement. These include the duty not to persecute or oppress people and the obligation not to commit grave abuses like genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, which drive so many from their homes by treating them as if they were not human at all.

There are also positive duties toward those displaced from and within countries other than our own. We can clarify when we have such positive duties by drawing on a form of moral analysis originally developed by several scholars at Yale University in the 1970s to help clarify the university’s responsibility to help eliminate the apartheid regime in South Africa through the use of its investments. They called their approach the Kew Gardens Principle because it arose from their reflection on a tragic event that occurred in the Kew Gardens section of New York City, where a young woman was viciously assaulted and died a slow death while a number of people witnessed the attack and did nothing. Though we have since learned that the initial reports about the incident were not fully accurate, the public outrage stimulated by the press coverage point to the fact that most people have a conviction that there can be positive moral duties to aid others in emergency situations and that omis-

sion can sometimes be as objectionable as commission.

Drawing on this conviction, it seems clear that there is a positive responsibility to help address grave harms when there is a critical need, when one has proximity to the need, when one has the capability to make a difference, when action by others is unlikely and when one can assist without disproportionate harm to oneself. These criteria can help us think about our positive responsibilities to displaced people today and the priorities among them.

Large numbers of displaced people are certainly in grave need of protection in Syria, South Sudan, the northern triangle of Central America and elsewhere today. Many have been displaced from their homes and millions face threats to their basic rights, including their right to life. The duty to respond falls first upon those whose proximity to the crisis makes them more likely to know of the need and to have a better understanding of how to respond to it. This means, of course, that the government of a nation where the crisis is occurring and local communities within that nation bear the prime responsibility.

In South Sudan, Syria and El Salvador, therefore, the governments, opposition forces and violent gangs in these countries have both the negative duty to stop the atrocities that are causing crisis and the positive duty to help lift the burdens facing the displaced. The duty to take positive action, however, does not end at the national borders of the countries where crisis is present. When people become aware of crisis in a neighboring country or even in a country at a great distance, this awareness leads to what might be called intellectual or psychological proximity. It puts them in moral proximity to those who are suffering.

There has been a helpful though imperfect response to the duties arising from proximity by the countries neighboring South Sudan, a country where over two million people have been displaced by conflict. The regional organization of South Sudan's neighboring countries is called the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, or IGAD. IGAD has been playing a diplomatic role in seeking to mediate the conflict within South Sudan that began in 2013, as it did earlier in helping to end the conflict between northern and southern Sudan that ultimately led to the independence of South Sudan. IGAD has been joined by several countries from outside the region in an effort known as IGAD Plus, which includes the African Union, the United Nations, China, the United States, the United Kingdom, Norway and the European Union. A sense of moral responsibility arose in these more distant bodies because of their proximity through awareness. These regional and global mediation efforts have certainly not been perfect and they

remain far from complete. Nevertheless, a fragile peace process is underway.

The criterion of capability also sheds light on positive duties that reach across borders. It has become common to point out that someone who cannot swim does not have a duty to come to aid a child who is drowning if providing the aid requires swimming some distance, while a good swimmer can have a duty to respond. Today, Syria's proximate neighbors—Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan—are already massively overburdened with Syrian refugees. They do not possess the economic and other capacities needed to provide asylum for many additional refugees. On the other hand, the resources of the wealthy nations of Western Europe, the United States and the Gulf states give them the capacity to receive many more asylum seekers than they currently accept and to provide more assistance to Syria's overburdened neighbors.

Some, of course, will claim that Europe and the United States are already overburdened by the Syrian, African and Central American refugees they have received over the past decade, especially since the influx of about a million Syrians into Germany in 2015. The arrival of these displaced people has produced a substantial backlash by nationalist movements that are causing some instability in the European Union itself and bringing about dangerous political divisions in the United States. The response to this backlash should attend to several issues.

First, it is clear that Europe, the United States and the Gulf states have notably greater capacity to respond to the needs of displaced people than do many of the countries that are already doing so. The number of Syrians seeking asylum in Europe is not even close to the number already within the borders of Syria's neighbors. Today, one out of every six people within the borders of Lebanon is a refugee. Thus, it is not surprising that when former Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom announced in 2015 that his country would grant asylum to 20,000 Syrians over the next five years, he was reminded that Lebanon had admitted that many Syrians over the previous two weekends. Indeed, developing countries today host 85 percent of the world's refugees, and the very poorest countries provide asylum to one-third of the global total.

Basic fairness and justice require that richer countries with greater capacities to help have a duty to do so. Thus, the United States has a duty to be more open to asylum seekers from Central America. Even more urgently, it means richer countries have a duty to assist the poorer countries that are already hosting most of the world's refugees. The funds being provided for this burden-sharing by the North need to



be substantially increased. For the United States, this implies a duty to provide aid to Central American countries to help them overcome the violence and poverty that is driving so many of their people to flee north.

Second, solid evidence suggests that admitting refugees usually does not place significant burdens on the host country. In the United States, for example, hard data indicate that refugees make important contributions to American society rather than placing burdens upon it. The median income of refugees who have come to the United States is the same as the income of those born in the country, their employment rate is higher than U.S.-born persons, and, on average, they have higher skill levels than do those born in the United States.

The argument that refugees are likely to be terrorists also lacks validity. Since the Refugee Act of 1980 established the current resettlement program, no American has been killed by a refugee in a terror attack. Stressing facts such as these can help rich nations of the Northern Hemisphere overcome racially or religiously driven stereotypes that lead some falsely to believe that denying asylum to refugees will protect the security and economic well-being of citizens.

### Toward the Future

In light of our transnational duties of solidarity, the refugee crisis occurring today calls us to reassess the high value we place on state sovereignty and national boundaries. Conflict that leads to displacement is the chief cause of forced migration today, and it can be criminal. Preventing such crimes and holding those who commit them accountable will be crucial to a more adequate global system of refugee protection. Taking positive steps to assist those who have been driven from their homes is also a duty. One's responsibility to help is proportional both to one's proximity to those in need and, more important today, to one's capacity to assist effectively.

North America, Western Europe and the Gulf states have urgent duties to assist the very poor countries who are already hosting most of today's refugees. Distributing these responsibilities in fair and politically effective ways is urgently required. Both the solidarity required by the global common good and millions of human lives are at stake. So is the very humanity we share with the displaced.

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David Hollenbach, S.J., of Georgetown University, is the Pedro Arrupe Distinguished Research Professor in the Walsh School of Foreign Service, Senior Fellow of the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs, and an affiliated professor in the theology department. This article is adapted from his latest book, *Humanity in Crisis: Ethical and Religious Response to Refugees*.



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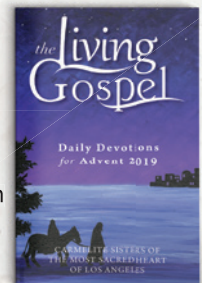
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# The Precipice

## Choosing life over death on the George Washington Bridge

By Gary Gately

On Christmas Day 2011, I am clutching the railing of the George Washington Bridge, staring into the cold, black waters of the Hudson, into the face of eternity itself. I forgot I am so afraid of heights. The wind is blowing stiff and cold. The signs read, “If you’re in crisis, call 1-800...” and “Take5toSaveLives.com—How to spot the signs of suicide.” Police call boxes appear every few hundred feet on the bridge’s concrete walkway.

Here come two lovers, hand in hand. In another life, I was one of them. We were them. We ambled through Manhattan at midnight, long before the brilliant September Tuesday when the world changed, down there where the red and green lights now bathe the top of the Empire State Building, where the angels blow their horns and the skaters glide across the rink at Rockefeller Center and throngs fill St. Patrick’s Cathedral, which smells of votive candles lit with plaintive pleas in hope and desperation. The city-

scapes in the store windows imitate life—life at least for the beautiful people.

So maybe it is true: Your life really does flash before your eyes in your final moments.

The shivers course through me. I think of bungee jumpers and classic manic depressive, high-risk, thrill-seeking behavior; and the shivers are not because of the cold but because the prospect is so tantalizing. Somersaults? A triple jack-knife dive? A spinning plunge? What is the difference, really? I have pondered it so many times, longed for it, prayed for it, played it over and over in my head. I had received the sacrament of the anointing of the sick from Bill Watters, S.J., a priest in Baltimore who is my father-confessor, my spiritual director, my conscience when I could no longer trust my own. I did not tell him of my plans.

Now the precipice awaits.

For most of seven years, I had kept those desperate





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moments on the G.W.B. a secret from all but family and close friends. Do not go public with it, some told me. Your kids will never live it down. Publishing that, one editor warned, would be, well, career suicide.

Then, Anthony Bourdain killed himself. Tony Bourdain—a man who seemed to relish squeezing from every moment all the life he could and savoring it. If this darkness could take from us Bourdain and Kate Spade and before them Robin Williams and Ernest Hemingway, why should I keep my secret any longer? And so I feel compelled to share my story. Perhaps others may find solace and suspend disbelief just long enough to imagine not hating being alive.

They are not emotional cripples or immoral people who fail to recognize life for the gift it is, not evil people, not sinners who seek to violate the commandment “Thou shall not kill.” All these things I had long associated with suicidal people.

This is an American epidemic of people suffering, so often in silence, suffering not a moral failing or emotional weakness but mental illness. Suicides have surged 30 percent since 1999 in the United States and now claim an average of 202 Americans a day, more than 2.5 times as many lives as homicides. And the young have become the most vulnerable. More teenagers and young adults die by suicide than from cancer, heart disease, AIDS, birth defects, stroke, pneumonia, influenza and chronic lung disease combined. I think of the words of the newsman Mike Wallace, which played on a video during my first stay in a psych ward, in 2003: “Depression is like being sentenced to be alive.”

But again and again, I brood over the question I cannot answer: Not so much what drove me to the brink—depres-

sion, addiction, a marriage that disintegrated. No, rather I have pondered: What kept me from jumping? Why did life triumph in those desperate moments? What enables us to choose to continue?

For me, it is a sunset, my son’s whispers echoing, “I love you, Dad,” and a ghost, that of an editor who died in 2010, Anne Zusy. Sunset over the Hudson paints Englewood Cliffs all oranges and crimsons and purples, and I just gaze at it, savoring the beauty of last light. Then I look to the Manhattan skyline, and my mind meanders to interning at The New York Times. I hear the voice of Annie, echoing through the decades. Annie, the editor who had hired me and mentored me and saved me so many times, is saying: “Look, don’t worry, O.K.? Have some fun. You’re not meant to be miserable. God loves you, and he wants you to be happy.”

With that, I turn and take that long walk down the winding concrete pathway of the bridge to the subway at 181st Street, take the A train, then board the Megabus back home to Baltimore.

•••

What saved me? No simple answers or solutions exist. People in the throes of deep depression cannot see a tomorrow of bright sunshine and love and joy. We see blackness, the sun blotted out of the sky, and can imagine only more darkness ahead. While antidepressants have been life-saving for many individuals, they have not slowed the suicide epidemic. Advances in psychiatry and better understanding of the mysterious workings of the brain have not. Being connected via screens has not. We are both more and less connected. Many of us are on social media much of the day and too much of the night, yet lonelier than ever.

Only light can pierce this darkness, and only love can shine that light. That means people who care—even when you have given them every reason to conclude you cannot be saved—can reach you: family, friends, loved ones, a priest, a coach, a volunteer on a suicide hotline, a therapist who recognizes that you do not snap out of depression that makes you want to die but that there is a path out.

Love is the answer. Nothing else could have saved me when I could no longer save myself. Others, their words, even words spoken decades ago, gave me enough hope to choose life over death.

---

Gary Gately, a Baltimore-based journalist, has won 15 national, regional and local awards for investigative, public service, feature, business and travel stories. His work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Boston Globe* and elsewhere.





# *Quiet Prophet of a Distracted Age*

By Robert Dean Lurie

I saw machines invading the land that had previously been the home of culture.

—Romano Guardini  
*Letters From Lake Como*

A curious thing can happen when a person leaves a place for years—or decades. The mind retains a snapshot of that place exactly as it was the last time one saw it. The rest of the world may move along, but the snapshot stays there, stubbornly pinned to a specific but increasingly distant date.

And if one ever happens to return to that place, this fixed image can throw into relief changes one might not have grasped otherwise.

I experienced this firsthand in 2011 when I made a return visit to Minneapolis—the city where I was raised—after an absence of 17 years. My own mental time capsule was of the pre-internet era: the sidewalks, creeks, lakes and interconnected bike paths of South Minneapolis filled with people actively engaged with nature and with each other. But now a shift

had occurred—subtle, perhaps, but psychologically jarring. The introduction of smartphones to that environment had disrupted the harmony. Amid the runners, cyclists and walkers there now emerged a new type: not fully present, neither gazing inward nor outward but down into their devices. They sat on benches. They wandered. Their lack of spatial awareness hovered about them like a hazy mist.

This type—let's call it the “phone zombie”—was not really new to me. I had been that person on occasion. But





The technological changes Romano Guardini witnessed during his lifetime were far more dramatic than anything we are likely to see in our own era.

the introduction of this element into a much-cherished and much-missed place brought home its foreignness, its not-quite-rightness. And this feeling has only grown in me since then. I can't help thinking that we have said yes to something that is throwing us out of balance with nature and with each other even as it purports to liberate us.

The 20th-century theologian Romano Guardini had a similar—albeit more dramatic—epiphany on a return visit to his family home of Lake Como, Italy, in the early 1920s. He spent the rest of his life wrestling with its implications. Lake Como, unlike Guardini's adopted home of Berlin, had been slow to industrialize, and so the sight of smokestacks making a belated intrusion into its pristine landscape took the young priest by surprise.

“All at once...on the singing lines

of a small town, I saw the great box of a factory,” he writes in *Letters From Lake Como*.


Look how in a landscape in which all the risings and fallings and measures and proportions came together in one clear melody, along with the lofty bell tower there was suddenly a smokestack, and everything fell apart. You must take some pains to understand this. It was truly terrible. We are used to it in [Germany]. We have even learned to see something valuable in what is unavoidable. Our eyes are beginning to open to the greatness of this new world, and we are finding the ability to contemplate it and the

hands to mold it. But see, here it was totally different. Here was form closer to humanity. Here was nature indwelt by humanity. And now I saw it breaking apart.

The technological changes Guardini witnessed during his lifetime (1885-1968) were far more dramatic, jarring and violent than anything we are likely to see in our own era. Yet the deeper I go into his writings, the more convinced I become of their urgency and relevance in the here and now.

### **The Essence of Things**

A soft-spoken, short-statured man who in his one-on-one interactions was polite and friendly to a fault, Guardini in his prose had the ability to zero in on the essence of things.



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# ‘Man must fight for inner health and freedom,’ Guardini writes, ‘against noise in all its forms.’

---

His writing retained the gentleness of his personal demeanor, but it also displayed a firmness of purpose—a willingness to shake the reader from complacency. Most crucially, he had the patience to wait for answers to emerge. *Letters From Lake Como*, which is a collection of letters Guardini wrote to his friend Josef Weiger, concerns itself almost exclusively with an analysis of the problems posed by encroaching technology.

It is not until the ninth and final letter, written three years into the correspondence, that a recommended course of action begins to surface. Even then, Guardini refused to rush it. He would devote two more volumes—*The End of the Modern World* (1956) and *Power and Responsibility* (1961)—to refining and expanding his vision. By that time a second world war, two atomic bombs, an emerging Cold War and the rise of the consumer society had made a grim case for the validity of his arguments.

Guardini’s critique of technology consists of three main points, all of which remain relevant in our current age of distraction. First, in the machine age we have lost the sense of immersion with nature that we once enjoyed. Guardini describes how earlier technologies such as the sailing vessel, the open hearth and the plow functioned in a direct, tactile collabora-

tion with the natural world. These technologies were “[works] of the mind and spirit [but] also fully integrated into nature.” Subsequent innovations, such as the gasoline engine, electrical heating and the tractor, created a distance with the natural world,

making it seem as if it were something to be conquered. We have yet to fully assess the psychological damage this shift has caused, but the environmental effects have been all too apparent.

The second point, which is closely related to the first, is that technology has given human beings tremendous power, yet our ethical standards have not kept pace with this rapid development; we are just as inclined to use this new power for ill as for good. Given the cataclysmic events of his lifetime, Guardini suspected that our worst instincts might have the upper hand.

Lastly, the mechanization (and, in our current era, the digitization) of society has created a mechanized mind, leaving little room for an appreciation of, or even a tolerance for, the transcendent. This phenomenon has only increased since Guardini’s time.

Concurrent with this loss of what Guardini calls “natural religious experience” has been a move toward mass conformity—what we might call the “hive mind.” “Mass man has no desire for independence or originality in either the management or the conduct of his life,” Guardini writes in *The End of the Modern World*. “Nor does he seek to create an environment belonging only to himself, reflecting only his self. The gadgets and technics forced upon him by the patterns of machine

production and of abstract planning mass man accepts quite simply; they are the forms of life itself.”

At first glance this argument would appear to have lost its validity in the current era. We have, superficially at least, moved beyond the visibly conformist culture of the 1950s. If anything, the myriad platforms now available for individual expression have taken us too far in the opposite direction and ushered in a culture of dislocated narcissism. But if we look closely at how various ideological camps have sealed themselves off into “bubbles” on social media; if we observe the resulting tribalism and groupthink; if we reflect on how public discourse has been replaced seemingly overnight by a sound and fury more appropriate to a sporting event, with one mob attempting to shout down another—we can see that narcissism and true “freedom of internal judgment” are not the same thing.

## Beyond Our Imaginations

It is hard to deny that we live in an exhilarating age. New technologies have facilitated an explosion of entrepreneurship and creativity that could scarcely have been imagined a generation ago. The opportunities now available to each of us at the click of a button are practically limitless. Yet it is becoming clear that we are also in the midst of a crisis, much of it playing out in our internal lives. We have never been so connected, yet we have never felt so separated. Consider the recent reports that have linked new tech to upticks in attention deficit disorder, depression and anxiety disorders, sleep disruption, traffic fatalities, pornography addiction, identity theft, bullying, political polarization and even suicide. We have freedom, yes. We have power. But we don’t always



know what to do with our freedom and power.

Unique among writers of a tech-wary bent, Guardini urged his readers to embrace the present fully and without reservation. But he also stressed that they do so with intention. And here we arrive at the aspect of his work that cries out most loudly for a modern audience: Guardini's advocacy for a new attitude of technology mindfulness, to be exercised at the individual level.

As with his critique, the recommendation has three major components.

First, we must reclaim the interior lives that technology has wrested from us. "Man's depths must be re-awakened," Guardini writes in *Power and Responsibility*.

His life must again include times, his day moments of stillness in which he collects himself, spreads out before his heart the problems which have stirred him during the day. In a word, man must learn again to meditate and to pray.... He must step aside from the general hustle and bustle; must become tranquil and really "there," opening his mind and heart wide to some word of piety or wisdom or ethical honor, whether he takes it from Scripture or Plato, from Goethe or Jeremias Gotthelf.

A direct result of this recommitment to contemplation should be a greater sense of self-control. Guardini uses the somewhat loaded term *asceticism* but defines it in a manner that ought to have broad appeal. "Man must fight for inner health and freedom," he writes, "against the machinations of advertising, the flood of loud

sensationalism, against noise in all its forms.... Asceticism is the refusal to capitulate, the determination to fight them, there at the key bastion—namely, in ourselves." If I may adapt this for the here and now: We must create space between ourselves and our devices.

Guardini's final point is the most difficult to grasp and enact: We must reclaim our common, eternal values and make these the impetus for all our decisions—the big decisions like how we raise our children and care for our ailing parents as well as the "small" decisions like how we interact with our devices. "By this I do not mean to follow a program of any kind," Guardini writes, "but to make the simple responses that always were and always will be right."

Guardini was aware that these suggestions were merely a starting point, "an attempt to set a course." And he seemed conflicted at times as to whether to frame these musings in explicitly Christian terms—as he did much of the time—or aim for a more universalist tone, as he did quite effectively in the closing chapter of *Power and Responsibility* (quoted above) and in a 1959 address to the Munich College of Technology. Touching on faith and the "innermost part" of the human spirit, but not specifying its contours, Guardini urged the future leaders and innovators in attendance to "imagine an intellectual council of nations in which the very best among us would discuss these matters irrespective of all politics."

Human existence has advanced so far, humans have taken so big a grip of themselves, the possibilities of achievement and destruction have become so incalculable that the time has come for a

new virtue, a new skill in intellectual government in which, made serious by so much experience, we can break free from entanglement in departmentalized spheres of thinking and life.

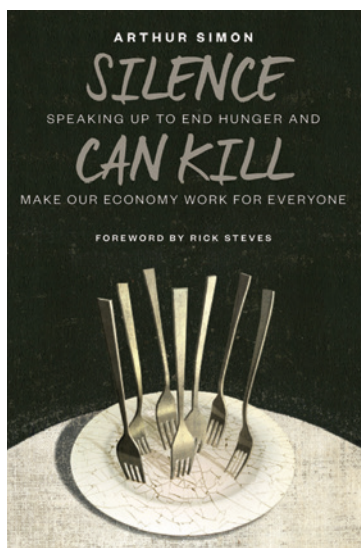
Guardini was one of the more outward-looking Catholic figures of his day, repeatedly urging the faithful to engage in open dialogue with the modern world. For this and other reasons he is now considered to have been a "precursor to Vatican II." Even so, certain aspects of his writing might come across as conservative and exclusivist to modern readers of a non-Christian background. He states, in *The End of the Modern World*, that "the knowledge of what it means to be a person is inexplicably bound up with the Faith of Christianity. An affirmation and a cultivation of the personal can endure for a time perhaps after Faith has been extinguished, but gradually they too will be lost." That was not an especially controversial statement for a Catholic theologian to make in 1956, but it does make Guardini a harder sell for contemporary readers who stand outside the Christian faith. In any case, all would do well to engage with him, for here was a writer of tremendous sensitivity and grace, taking on a problem that concerned the entire world—then and now.

He had a fixed image in his mind. He saw that image altered by exterior forces. He thought about what he might do about it. And so, all these years later, the kind, quiet man continues to speak.

---

Robert Dean Lurie is the author, most recently, of *Begin the Begin: R.E.M.'s Early Years* (Verse Chorus Press).

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## On a Circus Elephant

By James Matthew Wilson

The master of the ring may call it great,  
Promising bumbling clowns, a fearsome cat,  
And high wire walkers who defy their fate.  
For most there, though, the circus thrills fall flat.

A sequined girl looks sick on her cerceau,  
While an illusionist tugs scarves and flowers  
From the frayed jacket where they're kept in stow,  
Until the children tire of his powers.

And, in the sagging grandstand, darting bees  
Mount raids on snow cones and spilled caramel corn.  
A bawling infant soils its mother's knees.  
The mingling harlequin has lost his horn.

But then they come, the slow gray monoliths.  
Heavy of foot they are, and silent, ridden  
Each by high-feathered reinas sprung from myths  
To charm such giants to do as they're bidden.

Drawn back on hind legs, trunks raised up to God,  
They seem contemptuous of all applause,  
Confessing ancient knowledge, with each nod,  
Of what the earth commands from its deep laws.

Yes, all will see, now, some magnificence  
As sovereign and dark as a storm cloud,  
Even the coarse of mind and dull of sense  
Who constitute the pierced and tattooed crowd.

And somewhere on the upper benches, there,  
Undersized in his cutoff denim shorts,  
Eyes weepy from hay fever, thick red hair  
Matted with sweat, and knuckles scarred by warts,

A boy stares down on this strange spectacle  
And feels it pull him from the life he's known,  
To learn its tented secrets, give up all,  
And journey, he alone, to the alone.

---

James Matthew Wilson is a past runner-up for the Foley poetry contest and the author of nine books, including *The River of the Immaculate Conception* (Wiseblood, 2019).





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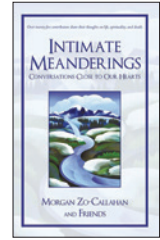
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## Tiny Scriptures of Truth

By Joe Hoover, Brandon Sanchez, Isabelle Senechal, Emma Winters and Chloe Gunther

This year's poetry roundup includes reviews of new collections by Aria Aber, Mary Karr and Elizabeth Bradfield.

To review properly the new collection **Hard Damage**, by Aria Aber, you simply want to copy the entire text of the book into your article and just say: *Read this. I can add nothing.*

But space is limited. So: In this collection, winner of the 2019 Prairie Schooner Book prize, Aber writes about her status as one who left the country as a girl and wrestles with her identity, her desire to go back, the weirdness of being homesick for a country riven by war she knows only a little. "To miss my life in Kabul is to tongue/ pears laced with needles," she writes. "I had no life in Kabul. How, then, can I trust my mind's long corridor, its longing for before?" In another poem she gets a taxi ride from an ex-Marine who fought in Afghanistan and finds herself envious that he resided in her country longer than she ever did.

Not only is the book crammed with startling and compelling writing—its jagged style, its fervor, its broken and conflicted confession—it

reminds us that, oh yes, there has been a war far away from here that "we" (namely, an intensely small percentage of Americans) have been involved in. For 17 years.

Her words are challenging little psalms, tiny scriptures of truth sometimes difficult to confront.

In "Asylum": "Even poverty can be glamorous, if you insist./ Piss rusted on elevator floors so gilded I mistake it for a trinket." In "Stone" Aber gives voice to a startling admission about having children—wholly unsentimental and close to the bone: "But now, arid as a stone, I can admit/ that I wanted children/ only so I could name them, and thus/ sentence them to an ancestry that I lacked."

One portion of the book begins by listing virtually every "regime change" the United States has engineered since 1949. 1953: Iranian coup d'état; 1970-73: Chile; 1976: Jamaican coup; 1979-89: Operation Cyclone in Afghanistan, and so on.

"Operation Cyclone" then becomes an extended poem, the most

damning and inciting poem in the whole book. It begins with this insane observation: "DEDICATED TO THE GALLANT MUJAHADEEN FIGHTERS rolls down/ the original cut of the saturated/ last scene of Rambo III."

The poem goes on to explore with exquisite images the inner contradictions and realities of Mujahadeen—Muslim guerillas engaging in jihad "... with beautiful cheekbones, dancing Atan at a wedding, cracking a joke in lie for narenj palau,...planting bombs in purple silk dresses,/ deep in sacks of lentils...who love watching Turkish novellas with their mothers..."

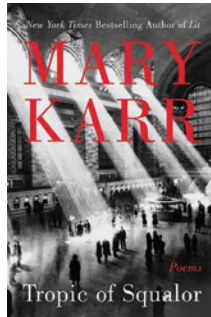
In "Azalea, Azalea," Aber dives into life in the United States, making love, contemplating flowers, making a living, while hell is made of her home country. It contains what may be the beating heart and most telling line of the entire book: "How much/ of my yearly tax is spent to bomb/ the dirt that birthed me/ is a question/ I never wanted to consider."

Joe Hoover





**Hard Damage**  
By Adriana Aber  
University of  
Nebraska Press  
126 p \$17.95



**Tropic of Squalor**  
By Mary Karr  
Harper  
96p \$22.99



**The Crazy Bunch**  
By Willie Perdomo  
Penguin Books  
128 p \$18

Included among the six names in the dedication to her new collection, **Tropic of Squalor**, Mary Karr writes “& (wincingly enough) for Jesus.” The phrasing is ambiguous. Is the author wincing because she is casting herself as any other straight-ahead, all-American Profligate User of the Name (a writerly version of Kurt Warner shouting into a mic after the Rams won the 2000 Super Bowl, “Thank you, Jesus!”)? Or is she dedicating the book to Jesus because it is always a bold move to commend something to Christ—poetry, life, whatever. An ominous and awesome undertaking.

Regardless of the reason, it reveals a soul clearly involved and wrestling and taking note not only of Christ but of the very quality of her own belief. The second half of the book, 30-plus pages, is dedicated to “The Less Holy Bible.” In the last poem of that section, “Revelation: The Messenger,” a young man arrives at her door with “an unsigned contract for selling my soul/ to Holy-wood....” We learn at the end that his name is Jesus (“and I’d been weeks entreating the iron gray sky to see specifically Him”).

Many of the poems are set in Texas, where Karr grew up, or in New York, where she lives now: listening to the jackhammers; stepping over a homeless man sleeping in her doorway; confronting her neighbor who engages with boy prostitutes; the strangeness of visiting Ground Zero and unable to give it the reverence it deserves because she

has to shower and get to a fundraiser.

Known widely as a memoirist, Karr’s first forays into published writing were poetry. Her work is not filled with the kind of writing that transplants you to some new country, so to speak. It does not overwhelm you with twists and turns. She wrote once in the journal *Parnassus* a critique of what she would consider to be overwritten poetry that loses its way. She takes issue with a James Merrill poem, for instance, that is filled with “glittery pushpins of language and metaphor,” its clarity lost amid its ornamented style. For her, the point of a poem is “to stir emotion.” This stirring “derives from a pure rendering of primal human experiences.”

We witness in Karr’s poetry a person fighting for her spirituality, struggling to maintain her dignity—not in some specific moment of shame, but in the way we all struggle to hoist our dignity up again and remind ourselves of our inherent worth. “After decades of suffering the torments/ Of mine own mind, I awoke one dawn/ Breathing into the odd center of this/ Once orphaned flesh. Alive, blinking.”

“The Like Button” acts out this struggle to overcome suffering on a wider stage. She imagines a world in which the unwashed, the homeless, the outcast, become those with the highest approval on social media. “Imagine/ the forever dispossessed/ transforming as they feel the thumb/ of *yes* impress itself/ into the very flesh.”

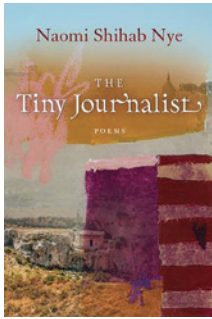
Joe Hoover

Read Willie Perdomo’s **The Crazy Bunch** on an 86-degree day, as I did, and you will feel both ecstatic and pensive. Sifting through the past, Perdomo configures an East Harlem all his own. Centering on a tragic early-1990s summer in which several of his friends die, the collection is sunbaked but gloomy.

Some of the most arresting images from the collection involve bodily discomfort in summer heat. “When you feel a follicle of sweat grovel down your back, you/ have arrived.” In a poem called “Brother Lo on the Prison Industrial Complex” there is “a hint of ammonia in your cough.”

Perdomo, who teaches English at Phillips Exeter Academy, grew up in East Harlem. He was inspired to write the collection after watching an HBO documentary about the rapper Nas and the East Coast hip-hop scene in the early ’90s. Youth shines bright in these poems but is also hot to the touch—perplexing and dangerous. “Turn slow at the third corner,” Perdomo writes, “as if you were an uptown eclipse/ an indecisive twilight, a fix ready to burn.” As for religion, “Sundays were for...being late to your Confirmation.”

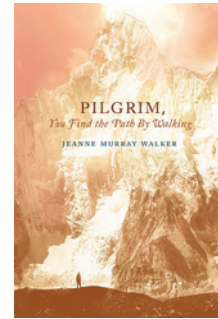
But *The Crazy Bunch* is about more than a crew of kids and summertime sadness. It’s ultimately about what he calls “Post-Traumatic Hood Disorder” (which is also the title of a poetry collection by David Tomas Martinez reviewed in **America** last year). Friends die tragically and violently. The justice



**The Tiny Journalist**  
By Naomi Shihab Nye  
BOA Editions Ltd.  
128p \$24



**Toward Antarctica**  
By Elizabeth Bradfield  
Boreal Books/Red  
Hen Press  
160p \$19.95



**Pilgrim  
You Find the Path  
by Walking**  
By Jeanne Murray  
Walker  
Paraclete Press  
96p \$18

system is unjust. Even the lighter memories are darkened by the shadows of other poems, like “No ID”: “*I’m nobody/ I don’t have an ID/ I don’t exist/ I was just walking to the store.*” Toward the end of the book, his friend Papo says all there is to say: “Ortiz Funeral Home was a second home, a forever rest stop...a spot/ where you could kiss the dead. A place where you learned your/ friend’s government name.”

Brandon Sanchez

Naomi Shihab Nye’s latest poetry collection, **The Tiny Journalist**, is a sweeping, emotional dive into the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its impact on the marginalized. It blends raw storytelling with lived realities to shine a condemning light on the injustices experienced by the Palestinian people.

The poet’s Palestinian-American identity beats at the heart of the book as Nye wrestles with her childhood trauma, her residence in a country that does not recognize Palestine and her ethical responsibilities as a writer documenting her people’s ongoing suffering. Nye also draws upon the social media postings of the youth activist and 13-year-old reporter Janna Tamimi, who started recording videos of the anti-occupation protests on her mother’s smartphone when she was 7 years old. These videos ground Nye’s poems in modern-day Palestine and infuse them with an autobiographical, journalistic quality—that quality that resonates

with Nye’s call to “Stay strong, keep speaking truth” even when the world forgets about you.

Ultimately, *The Tiny Journalist* is a sincere plea for readers to bear witness and listen when marginalized groups raise their voices. Nye asks: “Do we imagine silence/ more powerful because/ it might contain everything?/ Quiet always lives inside noise./ But does it get much done?”

No, she concludes: “Silence waits/ for truth to break it.”

Isabelle Senechal

In an article for **America** that came out shortly after the release of “Laudato Si,” Jim McDermott, S.J., argued that if the environmental encyclical didn’t change your heart or mind, maybe poetry can. He urged everyone to go out and buy a few books by Mary Oliver to instigate an ecological conversion. Though she writes in a completely different style than Oliver, Elizabeth Bradfield’s **Toward Antarctica** also belongs in the hands of anyone still seeking a renewed appreciation for the grandeur of the natural world.

The book is the product of notes and photos Bradfield took during two trips to Antarctica. In form and content, *Toward Antarctica* feels intensely new. It switches between poetry and prose and includes Bradfield’s photos. The pictures are breathtaking, full of bright-eyed birds and sea ice smashing into land.

Bradfield writes in a Japanese

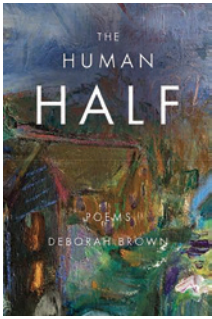
form, the *haibun*, which incorporates short poems into diary-like prose. The writing is tight, fragmented: “stretched on low ice/ ignored in near distance/ a leopard seal yawns.” The poet gives us access, in photos and words, to things most of us will never see. But for all the newness of a book about Antarctica, Bradfield’s writing does not feel otherworldly. Entries about the dynamics of the ship’s crew and the differences between those who are working and the tourists ground the book in something familiar and human. Those entries left me even more amazed by her lines about wildlife I had never heard of before: the “fawn-shouldered gentoo/ aglow among countershaded usuals/ nesting anyway.”

Emma Winters

**Pilgrim, You Find the Path by Walking**, by Jeanne Murray Walker, bears the feel of classic, observational, “quiet” American poetry. The theme is the ordinary, the everyday. Bakers and shoemakers. A 12-point buck, a bird watching someone shower. Walking in the woods, a girl learning how to write a word, the tension before a concert begins. But “classic” does not mean worn or clichéd; work that is classic in form or content can mean fresh, ever fresh.

Like any good writing, it takes up questions you suddenly realize have been latent within you as well. In “The Haunting,” Why do we love what’s miniature/ and take it to our hearts?” Why indeed? Or in “Farewell”: “Ev-





**The Human Half**  
By Deborah Brown  
BOA Editions, Ltd.  
80p \$17



**A Cruelty Special to Our Species**  
By Emily Jungmin Yoon  
Harper Collins  
80p \$25.99

everything we long for,/ we make ours through longing. Apples seem/ crisper, sweeter when they're conjured/ than if I taste them on the tongue."

In "So You're Losing Your Memory?": "In the attic of your skull, you can feel erasing/ The Pledge, times tables. And your bruising/ mistakes gone too."

After reading the poem "Foreboding"—"Only we stay,/ who can't migrate, we who hear the scratch/ and fall of leaves, more anxious every day/ as darkness lengthens"—it hits me for the first time: Humans are the only creatures who know that, eventually, they are going to die. A small gift of insight born of those odd little nooks poetry can create in us, a small access point to let in something new.

Joe Hoover

The spiritual (and religious) collection **The Human Half** is deeply tied to the celestial, Greek gods, death and nature. Deborah Brown writes about big things, the kind that would enter the hazy realm of the abstract—that is, if she weren't also writing about "a screen door torn from its hinge,/ left to flap like a demented tongue."

The questions she poses across the book arrested me, demanded my attention. In a poem about her sister's funeral and her mother's attire for the event, the speaker interrogates her mother and herself. She asks: "What if the red suit was who she was/ and judging her years later is who I am?"

The book is also confessional, combining ordinary phrasings, "I don't have," with an image that's surprising and new: "I don't have a finished house with floorboards/ to walk on."

*The Human Half* is the kind of poetry book that makes me want to take out my own notebook and write something new and precise. In fact, each phrase of Brown's poem "Write About This" is a fresh prompt. And if years from now, you read a new poem that feels as if it might have been inspired by a line "about an evening full/ of squirrels flying between us," know Deborah Brown supplied the writing exercise.

Emma Winters

It is no secret that war and violence take children from their mothers, but Emily Jungmin Yoon brings to light another way in which the battlefield steals motherhood. Yoon lived the first nine years of her life in Busan, in the Republic of Korea. In **A Cruelty Special to Our Species**, Yoon tells the heartbreaking story of thousands of Korean women—the so-called comfort women—forced into sex slavery by Japanese soldiers during World War II. The collection is divided into four sections. "Testimonies," the middle portion of the book, captures the raw emotions and first-hand accounts of the trauma. In this section, Yoon restores the voice and dignity of the women by titling each poem with the name of a girl forced into sex slavery.

Many of the testimonies tell of

motherhood being stripped away. The comfort women suffered from infertility and miscarriages as a result of the drugs and abuse they endured. Lines like "I had a miscarriage," "I lost my uterus" and "I became infertile" almost overwhelm the poetry in this section.

Yoon's courage shines through her poetry. Her approach to sex slavery is shockingly straightforward, leaving no room for false interpretation of just how devastating these events were. The words are hard to digest, as they make the stomach churn in a way only the most heinous actions of humanity can. Tragically evident is the fact that thousands of women will never be able to return to themselves, as the voice in the poem titled "Kim Sang-hi" narrates: "I want to find solace but I cannot/ When I wake in the morning I cannot."

Yoon's jarring poetry holds the soldiers accountable for the thousands of lives ruined during World War II. Her message continues to resonate around the world today as people are still forced into sex trafficking with and without war on their home soil.

Chloe Gunther

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Joe Hoover, S.J., is *America's* poetry editor. Brandon Sanchez, Emma Winters are former Joseph A. O'Hare, S.J., fellows at *America*. Isabelle Senechal is a current O'Hare fellow. Chloe Gunter is a former intern.

## A memory play from Almodóvar

By John Anderson

Antonio Banderas has played in eight Pedro Almodóvar movies over four decades.

The plan for Pedro Almodóvar, when he was growing up in fascist Spain, was that the boy would become a priest—something alluded to in the wonderfully rich and moving “Pain and Glory,” his highly, but not entirely, autobiographical memory play. The plan was not God’s. Instead he became one of the world’s great film directors and perhaps the only living foreign filmmaker who is a single-name commodity in the U.S. market. “Pain and Glory” is, in fact, introduced in the credits as “a film by Almodóvar.”

But Almodóvar has had a vocation and has certainly been a fisher of men—and women—through his virtuosic way with actors, a palette that pops with delightful precision and a way of dangling melodrama in front of his viewers before hooking them in the heart with emotional truth. It is a technique, of course, a strategy one might get tired of, at least for the angler. Which is the place where “Pain and Glory” enters the life of the film

director Salvador Mallo.

Almodóvar is of sufficient stature that an article on one of his movies—like the one you are reading—would begin by focusing on the director rather than on Antonio Banderas, the star of this film, who has played in eight Almodóvar movies over four decades, beginning with “Labyrinth of Passion” in 1982 and later “Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown,” “Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!” and, more recently, “I’m So Excited.” That Banderas is playing Almodóvar’s stand-in in “Pain and Glory” seems fitting; he has been the director’s avatar often enough. The casting calls to mind “8 1/2,” in which Federico Fellini’s muse, Marcello Mastroianni, played a film director ruminating over (and rueing) the scorched landscape of his romantic past, while desperately trying to find his mojo.

One of the bigger differences in these two retrospective views of a filmmaking life is that Salvador Mallo has given up looking for his mojo. He

is hip deep in malaise, and Banderas, unceasingly charismatic, nevertheless delivers a very downbeat performance. The character is apparently very close to the real-life Almodóvar—Banderas wears the director’s clothes, the hair is an homage, and they use the filmmaker’s apartment as Salvador’s home. The “pain” of the title is very real, too. Salvador is not necessarily starved for creative ideas so much as worn out. He has arthritis, bursitis, tinnitus and, not surprisingly, depression. He has undergone spinal fusion, something Banderas’s portrayal will make viewers feel deeply, whether they have bad backs or not. Salvador also has crippling headaches, which he takes to treating with heroin.

When he’s nodding out from the drugs—and even when he’s not—Salvador will close his eyes and travel back in time. He may have lost the will to work but not to create something, to fan a divine spark of creation even if only in his memories. We visit his





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school, where his singing voice freed him from classwork and, as a result, they “turned me into an ignoramus.” There are the white-washed catacombs where his needy family lived (“like the early Christians,” someone says). There is the idyllic riverfront, where his mother and other women wash their sheets and hang them on jasmine shrubs to dry. Everything, notably the interiors, are simply too beautiful to be anything but the work of an exalted imagination—and that includes his mother’s. Played by Penelope Cruz, Jacinta looks like no one’s mother except perhaps Salvador’s in an ecstatic fever

dream. (As an older woman, she is played by Julieta Serrano.)

Salvador’s heroin use—is it a habit?—arises from his reunion with Alberto Crespo (Asier Exteandia), who acted for him in the ’80s and with whom he has enjoyed a 30-year falling-out. A screening of their old film is something of a debacle: Salvador and Alberto do a Q. and A. by phone while smoking drugs. But the renewed interest in his work agitates Salvador’s creative juices and frees his innate honesty. During a bit of voice-over, Salvador admits that he believes in God when he needs him—something his physical decrepitude is making happen more often. Otherwise he is “an atheist,” though he says it in a way that suggests he hopes we know he is shamming: The “glory” of the title, after all, is about resurrection. And Salvador is too smart not to recognize the connections.

John Anderson is a television critic for *The Wall Street Journal* and a contributor to *The New York Times*.

## Representation at the opera

Written in the 1930s, George Gershwin’s “Porgy and Bess,” the story of a poor African-American community in South Carolina, has always been controversial. It is a story told through the eyes of the white men and women who wrote the novel, play, libretto and music. However, Gershwin’s insistence that the opera feature only an African-American cast and framing the poor African-American community as quintessentially American was itself a radical statement in his day.

Similarly, the Metropolitan Opera’s opening its 2019-20 season with “Porgy and Bess” provides a locus for a deeper conversation on race and gender.

All the stars in “Porgy and Bess” have previously starred on the Met stage. For example, Angel Blue, who captivates as Bess, made her Met debut as Mimi in “La Bohème,” one of opera’s most iconic roles. But the Met’s permanent chorus remains overwhelmingly white, with only six African-American members. And the last two seasons saw both *Aida* and *Othello* played by white singers.

Representation matters for both the artists and the audience. The choreographer Camille Brown lived across from a black opera singer in college who felt isolated and alone and eventually gave up opera. In *Sing*

*for Your Life: A Story of Race, Music, and Family*, Daniel Bergner describes Ryan Speedo Green’s unlikely journey to the Met stage. A young Speedo Green saw Denyce Graves star as Carmen, and it opened the possibility that black singers could sing opera. In “Porgy and Bess,” audiences see both Graves and Speedo Green, Blue and Eric Owens, the bass-baritone playing Porgy, joined by almost 90 African-American performers.

As a white woman, it was important for me to witness a performance in which the white cast played suspect characters. In “Porgy and Bess,” the white performers are the police and town officials who manipulate and threaten Catfish Row residents. I could not help but think of Eric Garner’s plea “Why do you always stop me?” as the police harass the weaker residents of Catfish Row simply because they can.

Perhaps the greatest accomplishment of this production is the ability for something to be deeply particular while still inviting us to reflect upon our own universal humanity at the same time. And by centering non-white communities, opera can continue to do so.

Meghan Clark is an associate professor of moral theology at St. John’s University in New York. Twitter: @DrClarkMI.



# Give Testimony

Readings: Mal 3:19-20, Ps 98, 2 Thes 3:7-12, Lk 21:5-19

When I was in college, I spent some time in the hospital after surgery. My roommate was an elderly lady recovering from the same procedure I had had. She was a devout Pentecostal and often burst into spontaneous prayer, especially when she was experiencing pain or anxiety. At first these outbursts annoyed me; they woke me up or distracted me from whatever I was doing. As our time together continued, I started to find her prayers comforting. She usually included me in them, and as I struggled with my own pain and fear, her words gave me new strength. Near the end of our time, she told me how glad she was that she could share the Lord through her suffering.

Luke imagines a scenario like that in this Sunday's Gospel passage. Jesus and his disciples believed that God was preparing a decisive intervention in human history. Jesus would appear in glory to reward the righteous and punish sinners. Foreshadowings of this judgment appear in the Book of Revelation and in portions of the Gospels that scholars call the "Synoptic Apocalypse" (Mt 24:1-25:46; Mk 13:1-37; Lk 21:1-36). Each of these passages speaks to the needs of a particular audience. In Revelation, the message is, "Hang on! I am coming soon!" In Mark, the message is, "Get ready!" In Matthew and Luke, the message is, "Stay ready, even though the Lord is delayed!"

Matthew and Luke both give their audience insights to help them stay ready. Both Evangelists taught their listeners to use the unexpected delay to reveal God's kingdom. Matthew stressed the role of good works in this revelation: "Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me" (Mt 25:40). Luke places greater emphasis on the role of preaching. Revealing the kingdom means speaking boldly about the mighty deeds of Jesus Christ. Christ's delay is part of God's plan; it gives Christians time to preach the Gospel to everyone who will listen.

God's plan requires that this message go out even to places that are indifferent or hostile to the Gospel. For Luke, this gives persecuted Christians an important role: "It will lead to your giving testimony." Disciples who are

*'I myself shall give you a wisdom in speaking.'*  
(Lk 21:15)



## PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

In what ways do you reveal God's kingdom?

Has Christ ever worked through you in a moment of distress?

How can you reveal God's reign to those who might otherwise miss it?

brought to trial will be able to use the occasion to share the good news. Kings, governors, synagogue officials and prison guards who would never have encountered an evangelist will now hear the Gospel, preached by the Spirit itself through the disciple. Thus even persecution will reveal God's kingdom.

No one ought to seek out trials, and we must never minimize the horrors that persecuted Christians face in the world today. Suffering is inevitable, however, and at least in Luke's mind it can provide a rich field for evangelization. My roommate in the hospital used her suffering to strengthen me with her faith. Just so, a disciple who can rely on Christ even in moments of profound distress will be able to share God's love with someone who might have otherwise been lost forever.

Michael Simone, S.J., teaches Scripture at Boston College School of Theology and Ministry.





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# You Will Be With Me

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

Many in the first century expected a Messiah, but few agreed on the specifics. Their ideas converged, however, on one important point: The Messiah would be a descendant of David. God had promised David an eternal kingdom over which his offspring would always rule. In Jesus' day, however, this was not the case. Herod and his sons were foreigners who controlled Israel on behalf of another foreign power, the Romans. Many in Israel expected a new king from among David's descendants who would renew Israel's independence.

That Jesus appeared in Galilee as a carpenter was not a significant stumbling block. David had many descendants, who lived all over the Jewish world. A bigger problem was that Jesus never exhibited any royal traits. As this Sunday's first reading makes clear, David's primary job was to be a military commander. Not only did Jesus fail to do this; he preached a message that made such a role impossible. Jesus never confronted the foreigners who ruled Israel, unlike David and the other ancient kings who guarded Israel's independence. Jesus' ignominious death at the hands of those same foreigners made it impossible to believe that he was the expected descendant of David who would liberate Israel.

*'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.'*  
(Lk 23:42)



## PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

How has Christ led you?

How has the Gospel helped you experience divine love?

How have your own sacrifices led someone else to God?

Nevertheless, early Christians called Jesus their king and believed the kingdom he had established was the fulfillment of God's promise to David. Jesus was their leader because only he knew how to show them the way to the Father. His strategic vision was not a plan of invasion but rather the conquest of death itself. His tactics, shared in his Gospel preaching, were generosity, forgiveness, care for the poor, healing the sick and calling sinners to repentance. His overall doctrine was love. He had an unalloyed experience of the Father's love, and any who believed in him and lived according to the Gospel would experience the same. This was what led many early Christians to believe Jesus was truly their long-expected king. He led them not to some transient earthly victory but into eternal life.

Jesus died rather than repudiate his belief in God's love. Luke especially stresses Jesus' single-hearted obedience to the Father. Even on the cross, Jesus trusts the Father so completely that he can promise paradise to one of the thieves crucified with him. By contrast, Luke makes sure that his readers get a good look at the "rulers" of Israel. They sneer at Jesus, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah." What they fail to grasp, and what utterly subverts their authority, is that love demands sacrifice. David risked his life against a lion and a bear when shepherding his father's flocks; he risked it again against Goliath and repeatedly in battle thereafter. Just so, Jesus laid down his own life for his flock, and thereby reveals himself as David's offspring and the true king of Israel.

Love is a foretaste of paradise. Jesus experienced it completely and gave us his Gospel so that we can do the same. This is why he is our king. Only one so completely in tune with divine love is a guide trustworthy enough to lead us through the doors of paradise.

Michael Simone, S.J., teaches Scripture at Boston College School of Theology and Ministry.

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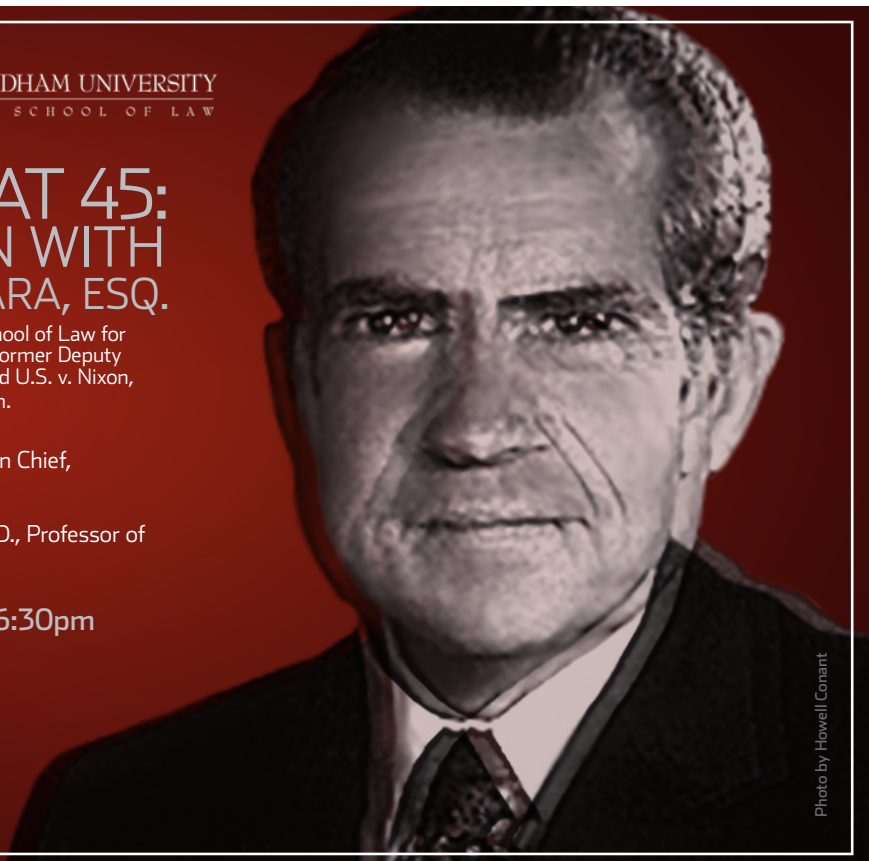


Photo by Howell Conant

# The Sacrament of Encounter

## How social justice activism has given me hope

By John Gehring



I'm often weary these days. These are dark, painful times for our church and country. A former cardinal of Washington, D.C., has been defrocked for sexual abuse. The White House is occupied by a president who demeans people with rhetoric and hurts those on the peripheries with cruel policies. As a Catholic writer and commentator who focuses on the intersection of church and politics, I spend a lot of time talking to members of the media about contentious topics. Being a "professional Catholic" in the public square right now is heavy work.

The truth is it can breed cynicism and weigh down your soul.

What keeps me sane, even hopeful, is a halting evolution in my spirituality that requires learning to get out of my head and putting myself in uncomfortable places. I am a bookish introvert by nature, prone to bouts of wry detachment. For years, my journalistic disposition and reserved personality made me skeptical of activism. My faith life also gravitates toward words and intellect, more *lectio divina* than faith in action. But the more I step outside myself, the more I am rescued from these despair-inducing days by the sacrament of encounter and the holy witness of faithful advocates speaking truth to power. The teachers helping me down this road are young and old, citizens and undocumented, lay and ordained, straight and L.G.B.T.Q.

A year ago, I traveled to the U.S.-Mexico border with a delegation of Catholic priests as part of an immersion trip put together by my organization, Faith in Public Life. In El Paso, I met Ruben Garcia, the director of Annunciation House, a respite center that has provided shelter for more than 150,000 migrants over the past year alone. "What I'm asking you is to use your voice, use your pulpit, stand up for migrants and say, 'What we are doing is wrong,'" he told us in what sounded like a prayerful plea.

I have been graced to work with and learn from young, undocumented immigrants who leave me in awe of their courage. Arlin Tellez, a sophomore at Trinity Washington University, was only 4 when she crossed the border at night with her mother, clutching a prayer card her grandmother gave her. Ms. Tellez is now an organizer, public speaker and leading immigration activist. As a white man who has unearned privileges because of my race, gender and sexuality, I am reminded by young Catholics like Ms. Tellez that the more comfortable I get, the farther I am from the heart of the Gospel.

Pope Francis teaches us that our church is one that is "bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out in the streets." Christianity is not a collection of abstract principles that can be reduced to parsing and defending faceless propositions. The shattering

mystery of the Incarnation is that God stands with us in our pain, anxiety, joy and longings. This gritty theology requires us to take risks and act.

"We have to put our bodies where our mouths are," the 90-year-old sister Pat Murphy, R.S.M., told me before we joined 70 other Catholics arrested in Washington, D.C., in July during a civil disobedience action to protest the detention of immigrant children. I keep learning from people like her and the Rev. Bryan Massingale, a theologian at Fordham University who in a recent address on L.G.B.T.Q. Catholics bravely challenged the church to recognize all forms of exclusion, to see the connection between racial justice and L.G.B.T.Q. justice. "I will not bracket my 'black' self in order to be 'gay' so you can take what makes you comfortable," he said. "You have to take all of me. I don't want to spend my energies building a church or world where only part of me is welcomed, valued and loved."

The church of prophets and faithful agitators will continue to lead us.

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**John Gehring is the Catholic program director at Faith in Public Life and the author of *The Francis Effect: A Radical Pope's Challenge to the American Catholic Church*.**





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