

# America

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## Selfie Spirituality

CHRISTIAN LIFE IN THE AGE OF FACEBOOK AND TWITTER

JEFFREY J. MACIEJEWSKI

## The Stained Glass Ceiling

MARY ANN WALSH



I started out from the center of Rome. Passing close enough to touch the outer walls of the towering Baroque church dedicated to the founder of the Jesuits, I traversed the cobbled streets that wind their way through this ancient quarter, emerging at last into the Piazza Venezia, the frenzied circus where several Roman roads converge. I then passed beneath the balcony from which Benito Mussolini declared war on the United States in 1941. Just a few steps farther and I was in front of the memorial to King Victor Emmanuel II, the 19th-century king of Italy, a marble monstrosity that Romans liken to a wedding cake. I dodged the traffic and crossed a footbridge that spans the ancient imperial forum, the center of commercial and political activity in first-century Rome. From there I trekked up the Esquiline Hill, one of the city's seven storied hills; at the summit, I spied at last my destination: the Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore.

I looked and caught my breath, taking in the vista and all that I had just encountered. In one 45-minute walk, I had traversed 2,000 years of human history: empires, trade wars, world wars, monarchies long past. "What remains?" I thought. "What is left of all that history, all that earthly glory?" I then turned toward the basilica and answered my own question: "That. That is what remains: the church. When all is said and done, after 2,000 years of earthly triumphs and unimaginable tragedies, the church, almost alone, has survived antiquity and all that followed. Here, among the rubble of man's broken dreams, there is the church, this church, specifically, that has stood here since 400 A.D."

On the day I visited, as they have done nearly every day for 1,500 years, the people of God came to that church to worship the one true God, to tell the true story of human history. Masses

were said, confessions were heard, hearts were healed. The church, I realized, is a survivor; it is, in fact, the only institution to have survived the outrageous fortunes of European history: two millennia of the comings and goings of statesmen, kings, emperors, madmen, poets, playwrights, artists, soldiers, terrorists, saints and sinners.

One of the questions I am most frequently asked by the news media is whether the church is still relevant in the modern world. When I was in Rome for the papal conclave, I would answer something like this: "Look around you. You and 15,000 other journalists have traveled here to cover this event. You're not here to cover the Italian monarchy; there isn't one. You're not here to cover Italian fascism; that too is long gone. You're certainly not here to cover the Roman Empire. You're here to cover the church. Look around you. The question isn't 'Is the church still relevant?' The question is: 'What else is?'"

Now don't mistake this for triumphalism. As Leonard J. DeLorenzo writes in this issue: "If the sickness of the world is its inability to love genuinely, then the church is intended to be the place where we learn how to love.... This is what the church is. And yet the sins of its members—all its members, though some more than others—keeps it from growing fully into what it is meant to be."

True enough. So it might do us all some good to sit back and think about the big picture. And it still remains true that, in spite of everything—the partisan feuds, the lingering effects of scandal, the crisis of belief—the church endures and thrives. Amid all the infighting and the acrimony, in spite of all we have done and failed to do, new hearts are still won for Christ, souls are nourished, the hungry are fed, the naked are clothed. We are survivors. Thanks be to God.

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Cover: Tourists take selfies outside Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, August 22, 2014. Reuters/Charles Platiau

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## ON THE WEB

An exclusive interview with **Cardinal Reinhard Marx**, right, president of the German bishops' conference. Plus, Kevin Clarke talks about **Oscar Romero** on "America This Week." Full digital highlights on page 19 and at [americamagazine.org/webfeatures](http://americamagazine.org/webfeatures)



### Germany's Challenge

Europe is understandably on edge. In the weeks following the deadly terrorist attacks in Paris, authorities in France, Belgium and Germany have arrested dozens of suspects, many with ties to Islamic militant groups. Add to the mix concerns over immigration, economic integration and issues of national identity, and anxieties appear ready to boil over. That is particularly evident in Germany, where the rapid rise of the anti-immigrant, anti-Islamic group Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West has alarmed leaders.

Since its formation last October, this movement, known as Pegida, has channelled frustration over the government's inattention to the needs and problems of average citizens into resentment over the influx of immigrants and refugees into Germany. After the terror attacks in Paris, record crowds swelled in Dresden with chants of "We are the people." The movement has gained tens of thousands of adherents—even a Catholic priest, the Rev. Paul Spätling, was heard at a rally in Duisburg, purportedly spreading anti-Islamic stereotypes.

In response, Bishop Felix Genn of Münster promptly stripped the priest of his preaching faculties, saying that Father Spätling's xenophobic comments had no place in the church. The archbishops of Cologne and Aachen have called on Europeans to take seriously the suffering of refugees who arrive from crisis regions. Chancellor Angela Merkel has urged Germans not to follow those whose "hearts are cold and often full of prejudice." These admonitions need to be heeded as Germany confronts its own economic and political crises.

### St. Junípero Serra

The most controversial comment made by Pope Francis during his in-flight media conference from the Philippines on Jan. 19 may not have been his aside that Catholic families are not required to breed "like rabbits." Rather, it may have been the announcement that during his visit to the United States this fall, he would canonize Junípero Serra, the 18th-century Franciscan and missionary to the region that is now California.

Blessed Junípero Serra was one of the many indefatigable missionaries who left their home countries to minister to people who were at the time considered unworthy of such attention by many Europeans. The Spanish-born Franciscan assiduously learned the local languages and underwent immense hardships to bring the Gospel to those whom he clearly loved and cherished. But Friar Serra's legacy is not without controversy. He is seen

by some historians as overly supportive of the Spanish colonialists, who severely mistreated the native people. The perception of missionaries who "forcibly converted" the local peoples is also complicated by their ties to the Spanish colonialists. Father Serra is also quoted as approving of the Spanish overlords' practice of administering beatings to the Indians because that practice was commonplace. Others argue that he should be seen far more as a protector of Indians, much as the Jesuits were in the Reductions in Latin America in the 17th and 18th centuries.

Junípero Serra was a person of his time. We know the saints were not perfect, but neither are we. Let us pray that he will help us in our own efforts to evangelize, that we may avoid oppressing others and always make known through our lives the freedom of the Gospel.

### Nigeria on the Brink

To Western eyes, President Goodluck Jonathan of Nigeria appears extremely vulnerable as he heads into the country's elections on Feb. 14. His government has failed to recover over 200 of the girls abducted by Boko Haram last spring and in early January the militant group killed hundreds of innocent civilians, perhaps as many as 2,000, in a massacre in the town of Baga. But it is the nation's complex ethnic, religious and regional divisions that will determine the outcome, not unrest far from the capital.

President Jonathan's decision to contest the 2011 election—thus breaking an unwritten power-sharing rule that the presidency alternate between Christians and Muslims—sparked violence that left 800 dead after his victory. With his decision to run again, the threat of similar unrest looms large. Muhammadu Buhari, a Muslim and former military dictator, heads the opposition All Progressive Congress. Running on a credible anti-corruption platform, Mr. Buhari is better placed than any other candidate since 1999 to wrest control from the long-reigning People's Democratic Party.

Ensuring a peaceful and fair election process is critical. But Nigeria's leaders cannot wait until the votes are in to get a handle on the war within the country. Boko Haram poses an increasing threat to the region, and calls for outside intervention are growing louder. One Catholic bishop has said that "a concerted military campaign is needed by the West to crush Boko Haram." It would be better for the United States to follow the lead of African leaders, who announced on Jan. 22 that they would seek U.N. authorization for a multinational force to take on the militants, while stepping up humanitarian aid to the victims displaced by this senseless violence.



# State of the Family

The words *poor* and *poverty* seldom appeared in the State of the Union address delivered by President Obama on Jan. 20, but the policies the president proposed would benefit many working and lower income families. The president spoke in favor of expanding child care, instituting paid leave policies for workers and subsidizing community college costs. The speech was met with measured approval from Catholic advocates of social justice, including the Rev. Larry Snyder, outgoing president of Catholic Charities USA, who commended the president's "bold ideas," which could "break up the status quo that leaves so many on the sidelines."

The speech was greeted with less enthusiasm by Republican leaders, who, in light of the Democrats' lackluster performance in the November elections, marveled at the president's confident approach. Indeed, as much as we may support President Obama's desire to help working families, it is difficult, at least at first, to see how he will be able to reach consensus on these divisive issues. There is only so much the president can achieve by executive action.

Yet the State of the Union address may have been the opening salvo in an extended negotiation with Congress. On contentious issues like immigration, a grand bargain that includes concessions to both parties may still be possible. We hope so. Legislative success is needed both to help struggling families and to restore the nation's faith in the political process. If no progress is made, public esteem for both Democrats and Republicans could fall still farther and pose grave problems for the next administration.

The president was right to focus on working families, which both Democrats and Republicans claim to represent. Whether the two parties work together to bring about much-needed relief for these Americans, who still struggle even as the economy grows, will be a major test. Both sides, for example, recognize the importance of higher education for the long-term financial stability of families. Workers with college degrees fare much better in our economy than those with only a high school diploma. The president hopes to shrink that gap by making community colleges free. Senator Marco Rubio, Republican of Florida, meanwhile, has proposed an income-based repayment system for student loans, so graduates would not be overly burdened by the costs of their education. Both sides agree a problem exists. We hope there is room for negotiation and solutions that approach the problem from multiple angles.

Compromise may also be possible on the issue of

child care and paid medical leave. Traditionally these have been Democratic issues. Last year Senator Kirsten Gillibrand of New York and Representative Rosa DeLauro of Connecticut, both Democrats, proposed the Family and Medical Insurance Leave Act, which would establish a national paid leave insurance program funded by worker salaries. The bill did not progress far, but as more women take seats in Congress and in the upper echelons of business, there may be more sympathy for the argument that families with two working parents need additional support. This should not be a Democratic or Republican issue. In fact, one could call it a pro-life issue, since it makes our community more welcoming and supportive of families with children.



In a statement commenting on the State of the Union, Father Snyder pointed out that the percentage of individuals and families living at or below the federal poverty line remains roughly where it was at the beginning of the War on Poverty. This is a discouraging fact that should prompt soul-searching on the part of both parties. "People of good will can have disagreements about the strategies to achieve a future without poverty," Father Snyder said, "but what we cannot do is let divided government or differences of opinion prevent us from working together to strengthen pathways out of poverty for those in need."

This year the Catholic Church has dedicated itself to reflecting on the challenges facing the family. Issues of divorce and remarriage have drawn much attention, but as our fellow Catholics in developing countries remind us, economic conditions also pull at the seams of the family unit. This is no less true in the United States than abroad. As Clayton Sinyai reported recently on our blog *In All Things*, marriage rates are higher for men who have stable, family-supporting jobs. "If the new normal is an economy employing large numbers of men at poverty wages," Mr. Sinyai writes, "we are putting a dreadful burden on the institution of marriage in the interest of economic efficiency."

To his credit, President Obama understands the vital connections between economic security and the flourishing of the family. His argument for working parents was invigorating to hear. But as any parent knows, supporting a family is the work of daily sacrifice and patient compromise. Creating family-friendly policies will require no less.

## REPLY ALL

### Life Formation

Re “The Feminist Case Against Abortion,” by Serrin M. Foster (1/19): The past has so much to teach us, and its lessons are essential to the life-long formation of the conscience and the soul. I am a cradle Catholic but, like many of my age, had fallen away from the church when I found myself college-aged, pregnant, unmarried and full of dreams for my future that did not include a baby. Abortion was a practical consideration at the time, but my conscience said no—even though it would mean sacrificing, at least for some time, my professional aspirations.

In addition to my loving family, many state institutions supported my beautiful daughter and me in the early days, including food stamps, W.I.C. and Medicaid. Looking back, I believe that every hour of catechetical formation in my young life had been leading up to that life-changing decision. The Holy Spirit gave me the courage to choose a path that my upper-middle-class culture did not always sincerely support. Thanks to Ms. Foster and Feminists for Life for their efforts to support women in their college years.

JENNIFER ROBBINS  
*Online Comment*

### Monastic Matters

Re “Merton (Still) Matters,” by Daniel P. Horan, O.F.M. (1/19): It was good to see Thomas Merton presented as relevant to millennials, but I fear much is lost by the author’s focus on Merton’s post-1960 writings and his later efforts at interreligious dialogue and social activism—to the near-com-

plete shelving of the immense volume of his earlier work and their themes of “solitude, contemplation, asceticism, the monastic vocation.”

Millennials, and all of us “in an age of hyperconnectivity and rapid communication,” could benefit from more solitude, contemplation, asceticism and a more monastic pace to lay-life. In *The Silent Life* (1957), Merton has something to say to the 21st century about the scourge of consumerism: “The love, the joy which we can and indeed must take in created things, depends entirely on our detachment. As soon as we take them to ourselves, appropriate them, hug them to our hearts, we have stolen them from God. They are no longer His, but our own.” This is a petite taste of how the earlier Merton speaks to the stuff of the spiritual life, the necessary groundwork that must be laid before making the leap to such things as interreligious dialogue and social activism.

JAMES K. HANNA  
*Venetia, Pa.*

### Fair to History

I was quite disappointed with “Up the Mountain” (1/19), John Anderson’s review of “Selma.” There is no question that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was a great man who contributed mightily to awaking America to some of its incredibly unjust practices toward African-Americans. The movie seeks to make that reality known today.

While I never expect a so-called historical film to be totally fair to history, I did expect from Mr. Anderson at least a passing mention of the fact that many reputable historians, including aides to President Johnson and members of civil rights movement, have challenged the way the movie

portrays the president as resistant to the work of Dr. King.

Even more disturbing to me was his connecting today’s police departments to “Bull Connor, the Ku Klux Klan and a strain of systematic racism that, as shown in the film, tends to manifest itself in brutality.” The vast majority of police officers in our nation are dedicated working men and women who seek to serve and protect the people. No doubt, there are rare times of failure and even racism. To link today’s police with Bull Connor and the Ku Klux Klan, however, is terribly unfair, and I think calls for an apology from Mr. Anderson. I believe Dr. King would judge such a large body of men and women on the content of their character and not on the basis of vast overstatement of prejudice against these fine men and women.

PATRICK WOODS, C.S.S.R.  
*Bethpage, N.Y.*

### Synod Studies

In “Synod Can Unify Church” (1/5), Mary Ann Walsh, R.S.M., writes that “the church needs a plan to gather data” in preparation for the bishops’ October 2015 meeting on the family. As a retired social scientist, I think asking the right questions is very important. Some recent research suggests we might be in for some pleasant surprises if we do.

*Families and Faith: How Religion Is Passed Down Across Generations*, by Vern L. Bengtson with Norrella M. Putney and Susan Harris, is a rare longitudinal study. Researchers found the correlations between parents’ and their children’s religious attitudes were just as strong in 2005 as they were in 1970, averaging around 0.5, very high for any survey. Parents were particularly good at transmitting broad attitudes, like the intensity of their faith and their level of religious participation. If they were warm and noncoercive they also tended to transmit their specific tradition; more demanding parents, however, often produced religious off-

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spring of another denomination. In *American Grace*, Robert D. Putnam and David E. Campbell show that the very positive effects of church attendance (health, happiness and helping behavior) occurred only for those with religious networks of families, close friends and small groups.

These studies suggest, as Pope Francis has, that if we focus upon rules and doctrines, we are likely to find that religion is not very helpful to people and may even be a source of conflict and unhappiness. On the other hand, if we focus upon creating religious networks and encounters that are respectful, caring and merciful, the picture looks much better.

JACK RAKOSKY  
*Online Comment*

### Diluting Marriage

Re “Family in Focus,” by the Rev. Robert P. Imbelli (12/8): I am not a theologian, not even an armchair one, but I think I understand logic. If divorced and remarried Catholics are permitted to partake in the Eucharist, it means one of two things: Living in unrepentant, continuing violation of church teaching with no intention of trying to stop is no longer a sin; or, whether or not you are in unrepentant, continuing sin is not relevant to receiving Communion. I see no other logical conclusion.

And if this drastic change in the church teaching is to be made, how can it be limited merely to divorced and remarried Catholics? Why shouldn't this apply to Catholics who are unmarried and living with multiple partners? Moreover, with all the stresses on married couples to keep their vows of love and fidelity, I do not see how diluting the meaning of marriage helps.

JOSEPH MANTA  
*Online Comment*

### Questioning Logic

Some have questioned the logic behind the argument for giving Communion to the divorced and re-

### STATUS UPDATE

*Readers respond to “The Feminist Case Against Abortion: Recovering the Pro-Life Roots of the Women’s Movement,” by Serrin M. Foster (1/19).*

I believe that we should create an economy in which women are respected, their economic needs are met, their childcare needs are met and family is truly supported. And for now, because this is not a reality, I do not believe women should be jailed and punished for ending their pregnancies early. Making abortion illegal may swell jail cells, but it won't change the reasons women seek abortion out in the first place.

ELLERY KLEIN

When I left for my sophomore year in college, my mother gave my room to a woman and her 2-year-old son. This was three years after *Roe vs. Wade* had passed. The young pregnant mother chose to have her second child and give it up for adoption rather than have an abortion. I think about this young woman who made her choice to move in with a family she didn't know and, after several months, give up her child to another family. Her choices were difficult and inconvenient, but they were the right choices. Abortion is always a wrong choice, never to be celebrated, as it hurts the mother and the child.

GINGER BOLAN KOAR

married. But was Jesus being logical when he said, “Forgive seven times seventy”? Was Jesus being logical when he told a story about a man who worked one hour and got the same pay as the man who worked all day? Repentance is not always so simple or logical as one might think.

Many people who have failed in their first marriage have used that failure to grow and become more mature and even better Christians. The marriage may not be reparable. So many people try again another time and learn from their past mistakes. They may even need the sacraments of the Eucharist and penance to keep their second or even third commitment. Poll after poll shows that Catholics understand that people whose first marriage failed should not be excluded from Communion. Are these Catholics all lack-

ing in logic? Maybe so, but maybe they understand Jesus, who came for sinners, not for the righteous.

PAUL FERRIS  
*Online Comment*



CARTOON: HARLEY SCHWADRON



## PRO-LIFE

### March In Washington Draws Young, Social Media Savvy Crowd

Using a phrase long associated with the civil rights movement, Cardinal Sean P. O'Malley, O.F.M.Cap., of Boston told an overflow crowd in Washington, D.C. "We shall overcome" in the fight against abortion. In his homily on Jan. 21 during the opening Mass of the National Prayer Vigil for Life, Cardinal O'Malley said, quoting Pope Francis, "The church cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for a better world."

He added, "In our country, people have come together in the fight to overcome racism" and other social ills. "The quest for human rights and solidarity brought together people of faith to 'repair the world,' to use the Jewish expression." Now, Cardinal O'Malley said, the fight is for the right to life, "and we shall overcome," he said to applause from a crowd of more than 11,000 at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington.

The cardinal, who is chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities, used his sermon to take apart some "American mythology" about abortion. The three biggest myths, he said, are that abortion is a women's issue, that most Americans "are pro-choice, pro-abortion" and that "young people are overwhelmingly in favor of the pro-abortion position."

But polling over the past 20 years, according to Cardinal O'Malley, shows "women have consistently been more pro-life than men." On the second myth, Cardinal O'Malley quoted outgoing president of NARAL Pro-Choice America, Nancy Keegan, who said "there is a large intensity gap" among supporters of legal abortion and their foes.

And young people, the cardinal added to applause, "are the most pro-life segment of the American people." Five years ago, the Gallup organization "declared pro-life is the new normal," Cardinal O'Malley said. "Congratulations, young people—you're normal."

Indeed, the 42nd annual March for Life and rally in Washington, which drew tens of thousands to the capital on Jan. 22, is twice as old as its participants, predominantly college and high school age students. And as each year's turnout seems younger, so do the day's tools of communication.

Participants not only met up by texting or calling each other on their

cellphones, they also shared their experiences of the day—and explained reasons for making the trip—by posting many photos on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. Many began documenting their experience days before the march with posts from buses or rest stops along the way.

On the day of the march, there were online images from pre-march rallies, groups huddled on the National Mall or taking up a huge swath of Constitution Avenue as they made their way to the U.S. Supreme Court. The photos included group selfies, pictures with bishops and even with a cardboard cutout of Pope Francis, but the pro-life cause was also front and center, with most groups carrying placards with phrases like "I am the Pro-Life Generation," "Defend Life" or "#TeamLife."

But the ease of sharing photos and connecting is not the only plus side of cellphones and social media use for

**GENERATION LIFE.** Young people from around the nation converged on Washington on Jan. 22.



these marchers. For many, this technology is a way to further spread their message. Under the Twitter hashtag #Whywemarch, they posted their reasons for coming in 140 characters or less or posted photos of themselves holding handwritten signs that explained their reasons.

They could have taken their cue from Pope Francis, who sent a tweet at 7 a.m. (EST) on Jan. 22: "Every Life is a Gift. #marchforlife." By the following day it had been retweeted 18,807 times and favorited 24,265 times.

## NIGERIA

### Western Forces Needed to Stop Boko Haram?

Underlining the failure of the Nigerian government to stop the violent rampage of Boko





Haram, a Catholic bishop has called for Western military intervention. The Muslim militant group's increasingly deadly assaults and expanded recruitment from countries across North Africa mean "a concerted military campaign is needed by the West to crush Boko Haram," said Bishop Oliver Dashe Doeme of Maiduguri, capital of the troubled Borno State.

"The West should bring in security—land forces—to contain and beat back Boko Haram," he said in an interview on Jan. 19 with the international Catholic charity Aid to the Church in Need.

Boko Haram leaders say they seek to overthrow the Nigerian

government and create an Islamic state. More than 11,000 Nigerians have died since Boko Haram launched an insurgency in 2009, engaging in a campaign of terror, mass killings and abductions, carrying out suicide bombings, burning villages and forcing hundreds of thousands of people to flee. It is feared that as many as 2,000 people may have been killed when militants captured Baga in early January, razing thousands of homes in their path.

The number of Nigerians displaced because of the insurgency may be close to one million, according to the International Organization for Migration.

Bishop Doeme said that of the 125,000 Catholics in his diocese, almost 70,000 have fled their homes and about 1,000 have been killed. Boko Haram militants have destroyed more than 50 churches and chapels in his diocese, he added, and more than 200 churches have had to be abandoned in the past five years.

The Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project, an academic group that uses media reports to monitor violence in conflicts, reported in January that Boko Haram was responsible

for nearly half of all civilian deaths in African conflict zones in 2014.

Cardinal John Olorunfemi Onaiyekan of Abuja said Boko Haram is committing "crimes against humanity." He complained that despite the seriousness of these acts, Nigerian government leaders "continue to do nothing and live as if nothing has happened. It's not that [they] lack the means: the money is there and lots of it. What is missing is the sense of responsibility on the part of those who govern," he told Vatican Radio on Jan. 19.

Bishop Doeme said the Nigerian military is corrupt, complicit and inept. "Among the soldiers, there were sympathizers with Boko Haram; some of them were even Boko Haram members; and many of them just ran away" during the militants attack on Baga. The bishop said the government also knows who is financially supporting the group from abroad.

Boko Haram militants are recruiting people in neighboring countries "enticing them with money, they pay in dollars. And the people, who are without work, follow them," Cardinal Onaiyekan said.

African nations need to cooperate, he said, and prayers are urgently needed "so that our government is able to recognize the seriousness of the situation, so that we can launch not just a military [response], but also a path of political dialogue.

"That way we can slowly begin to change the mentality of these people who commit these atrocities, not just against our country but against human life," the cardinal said.



**ON THE RUN.** A young girl driven from her village by Boko Haram rests at a camp for displaced people in Yola in northern Nigeria on Jan. 13.

## Cardinal Marx At Stanford

An increasingly influential German cardinal spoke to a packed auditorium at Stanford University on Jan. 15 about the challenge of organizing a free and open society that is linked with the common good. “It is important for the church to be in the great questions of social justice,” said Cardinal Reinhard Marx, head of the German bishops’ conference and part of the nine-member Council of Cardinals that advises Pope Francis on church governance. Christianity must be more active in the political scene in the West, he said, and be part of the development that “gives the poor a chance.” In identifying several of the main challenges in the Western world today, Cardinal Marx said, “We must think beyond capitalism. We have to create a model nearer to the social market economy” that includes strong social protections for vulnerable members of society. “Perhaps the most important discussion of the 21st century is how to organize the common good on a global level, to protect human rights for all people,” he said.

## The Roots of Poverty

Families who have many children do not cause poverty, Pope Francis said. The main culprit is “an economic system that has removed the human person from its focus and has placed the god of money” as its priority instead, he said on Jan. 21. On the flight back from Manila to Rome, the pope had told journalists on Jan. 19 that “for the people who are the poorest, a child is a treasure” and “God knows how to help them.” But he also underlined that being a good Catholic did not mean married couples “had to be like rabbits,” that is, have children “one after the other” without any sense of responsibility. Through dialogue with each

## NEWS BRIEFS

Minneapolis on Jan. 16 became the 12th U.S. Catholic diocese to **file for bankruptcy protection** because of the unmanageable costs of settlements and future claims resulting from sexual abuse by clergy. + The number of people **falling victim to the Ebola virus** in West Africa—where at least 8,668 have died—has fallen to the lowest level in months, the World Health Organization said on Jan. 23, warning that dwindling funds and the coming rainy season threaten efforts to control the disease. + The Philippine government came under fire on Jan. 23 after admitting that **hundreds of homeless people** were taken off Manila’s streets and put temporarily into luxury accommodation during Pope Francis’ recent visit. + The Supreme Court agreed on Jan. 23 to consider whether a drug protocol used in **recent lethal injections** violates the Constitution’s prohibition on cruel and unusual punishment. + The feast day of St. Josephine Bakhita, Feb. 8, has been designated as the first International **Day of Prayer and Awareness against Human Trafficking**. + Pope Francis plans to visit the Central African Republic late this year in an effort to **end two years of intercommunal violence**, Bishop Nestor-Desire Nongo Aziagbia of Bossangoa said on Jan. 22.



Ending Ebola?

other, their pastors and church groups, each couple can seek to discern its own “parental responsibility” and recognize there are “licit” means, through natural family planning, to be “prudent” and generous in welcoming life, he said.

## Immigration Reform Is Pro-life Concern

A group of Catholic leaders urged fellow Catholics in Congress to set aside “partisan bickering” and support the U.S. bishops’ efforts on behalf of a comprehensive immigration reform, calling it a sanctity of life issue and an important step in building a culture of life. “Our nation’s inhumane and flawed immigration policies leave migrant women, children and families

abandoned by the side of the road,” the group said in a letter released on Jan. 20, two days before the anniversary of the Supreme Court’s decision in *Roe v. Wade* legalizing abortion. Among the more than 100 signers of the letter were the presidents of at least 31 Catholic universities, as well as bishops, men and women religious, former staff members at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and the heads of various institutes and social action agencies. “As Cardinal Sean O’Malley put it in a homily at the U.S.-Mexico border last year: ‘We know that the border is lined with unmarked graves of thousands who die alone and nameless,’” the letter said.

From CNS, RNS and other sources.



DISPATCH | MIAMI

## Pope Francis: Our Man in Havana?

**O**n the weekend after President Obama's historic announcement on Dec. 17 that he wanted to re-establish diplomatic ties with communist Cuba, I visited a park in Miami's Little Havana section.

Cuban exiles were holding a protest against normalizing relations with Havana, which were severed 54 years ago, and the mood was angry. Almost everyone I talked to used the same word—"betrayal"—but they weren't directing it just at Obama. The largely Roman Catholic crowd also felt deceived by Pope Francis, the man who brokered the normalization deal between Obama and the Cuban leader Raúl Castro.

"He's very misinformed about Cuba," said Ana Garcia, a woman in her 60s who lives in the Cuban-exile enclave of Hialeah, just outside Miami. "It's painful to know the Holy Father is appeasing the Castros."

This isn't the first time the Vatican and Cuban exiles have been at odds. Most exiles were stung when St. John Paul II traveled to Cuba in 1998 and huddled with Raúl's older brother and predecessor, Fidel Castro. Nor were they pleased when John Paul's successor, Benedict XVI, paid the island a visit three years ago.

Most of all they were irritated by Rome's unwavering support for Cardinal Jaime Ortega, the soon-to-retire Archbishop of Havana. His admittedly successful efforts to revive Cuba's moribund Catholic Church involved moments of cooperation with

the regime that made him a Castro puppet in the eyes of many exiles—including Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen of Miami, who has called Ortega a Castro "collaborator."

But from Francis, they believe, has come a whole new level of *desilusión*, or disappointment. They say that by so enthusiastically blessing the Washington-Havana rapprochement, the pontiff has legitimized a dicta-

### The trade embargo has put more hardship on Cubans than on Communism.

torship that regularly jails dissidents and keeps Cuba's 10 million people trapped in deprivation.

"We've gone from a Catholic Church that helped bring down Communism in Eastern Europe to one that's now propping it up in Cuba," says John Suarez of the Directorio Democrático Cubano, a prominent Miami exile group.

But Archbishop Thomas Wenski of Miami disagrees. He argues that after a fruitless half century of isolating Cuba, normalization more effectively positions both the United States and the church to help accelerate democratic transition when the octogenarian Castros are gone.

By allowing Americans to funnel more investment and capital goods to Cuba's fledgling private entrepreneurs, Wenski told me, the new policy of engagement "opens new space for individual initiative and independent thought."

"The [exiles'] pain is real," Wenski told The Associated Press last month.

"But you can't build a future on resentments."

Francis, an Argentine, had other reasons for nudging the United States and Cuba together. They stem from both his papacy's emphasis on aiding the poor and his portfolio as the first Latin American pontiff.

In the first sense, he believes the 53-year-old U.S. trade embargo against the Castros has put more hardship on Cubans than on Communism. And he is right: The embargo has always served Fidel and Raúl as a convenient scapegoat for their economic blunders and an equally convenient rationale for their political repression.

In the second regard, Francis sees the U.S.-Cuba conflict from a broader angle—namely, the tensions it produces not just across the Florida Straits but throughout the Western Hemisphere. So when the Obama administration was looking for help in winning the release of the U.S.A.I.D. contractor Alan Gross—who was jailed in Cuba in 2009 on questionable espionage charges—they found it when Francis became pope in the spring of 2013. As I wrote in these pages last year, Francis has to make being the first Latin American pope mean something, much the way St. John Paul II made being the first Slavic pontiff matter when the Iron Curtain fell. So, in personal messages to both men, he urged Obama and Raúl Castro to parlay the secret Gross negotiations into something bigger. The normalization deal was sealed, in fact, at the Vatican last fall.

That just makes the ire of the Cuban exiles worse. But the good news for Francis is that polls show younger Cuban-Americans approve of normalization—and his role in it.

**TIM PADGETT**

**TIM PADGETT**, the Americas editor for the NPR affiliate WLRN, is *America's Miami correspondent*.



# Are We Safer?

A few years ago, I read *The United States and Torture*, a collection of essays by lawyers, historians, journalists and scholars edited by Marjorie Cohn, a professor of law at the Thomas Jefferson School of Law. I had kept abreast of the news and thought I was up to snuff on the subject, but *The United States and Torture* showed me there was more to learn than I had ever imagined.

The same is true of *Drones and Targeted Killing*, a new collection of essays Professor Cohn has assembled to address the legal, moral and geopolitical issues raised by the United States' embrace of assassination as a central, go-tool in combating terrorism. Just out, Cohn's book may not sound like light reading, but the 14 chapters written by legal experts, journalists, policy wonks and activists are readable and absorbing and, like her book on torture, highly informative.

Since coming to power, the Obama administration has dramatically increased the use of targeted killings, chiefly, though not exclusively, by unmanned drones. Though it claims drone attacks are highly accurate, causing little collateral damage, it has yet to document that or to provide any accounting of the number of people killed. Studies of specific attacks by independent monitors find a higher number of civilian deaths than the government acknowledges.

Are drone strikes serving a strategic purpose? A study by the Stimson Center released in June says it is doubtful. The Council on Foreign Relations reports that of the estimated

3,000 people killed by U.S. drones, the vast majority have not been Al Qaeda or Taliban leaders but low-level anonymous insurgents engaged in attacks against their governments, not international terrorism plots. The New American Foundation tracks drone attacks in Pakistan and Yemen and reports about 2 percent of those killed by U.S. drone strikes are militant leaders. These are figures that should make Americans wonder about the other 98 percent, but as Vicki Divoll, a former C.I.A. lawyer who now teaches at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md., notes, "People are a lot more comfortable with Predator strikes that kill many than with a throat-slitting that kills one."

Drone attacks not only kill individuals, they terrorize whole communities and affect the fabric of daily life. A chapter in *Drones* written by Medea Benjamin after a trip to Yemen and Pakistan to investigate the effects of drone strikes there describes the fear and helplessness people feel on seeing drones hover overhead for days at a time. People do not attend community events for fear of being attacked; many children are afraid to go to school. The use of "double taps" to target rescuers going to the scene to help victims is a war crime and has had a chilling effect on aid workers. Members of one humanitarian organization told researchers their policy was to wait for six hours before going to the scene of a drone strike.

Like torture, extrajudicial assassination is illegal, a violation of both American and international law. In the

post 9/11 era, Americans seem complaisant about both. But unmanned drone attacks are another step toward normalizing war, making continuous war appear remote, risk-free and acceptable. Fully automated drones capable of choosing targets without human involvement are in the pipeline; this will make killing even more removed from public concern and thus control.

Do drone strikes make us safer?

Many Americans assume so, but Cohn quotes a former commander of U.S. troops in Afghanistan, Gen. Stanley McChrystal, on the hatred they engender, fueling radicalization and leading to the recruitment of more terrorists.

Terrorism by state and nonstate actors is symbiotic. The one encourages the other. Drone strikes have proliferated because of their relative cheapness in terms of dollar cost and loss of U.S. lives, but drones are a tactic, not a solution. Much as Americans might like to, we cannot kill our way to tranquillity and peace. To reduce terrorism, we have to address the conditions that give rise to it, including, as it happens, the expanding use of extrajudicial killings that violate our laws, our notions of justice and our religion.

South Africa's Archbishop Desmond Tutu has written a fine foreword to Cohn's book. But where are the moral voices in this country—particularly those of church leaders—condemning a policy that places assassination at the heart of U.S. foreign policy?

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MARGOT PATTERSON is the author of *Islam Considered: A Christian Perspective*.



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# The Downside of Devolution

**G**reg Abbott, the new governor of Texas, is not happy with municipal government. Shortly before taking office, he complained about city restrictions on plastic bags, tree-cutting and fracking. “We’re forming a patchwork quilt of bans and rules and regulations that is eroding the Texas model,” he told a free-market think tank in January. “My vision is one where individual liberties are not bound by city limit signs.”

Abbott’s objection to patchwork laws may seem incongruous in a state that has refused to implement the federal Affordable Care Act and has banned the use of Common Core educational standards, and where elected officials have mused aloud about leaving the United States. But from Abbott’s pro-business point of view, the government of Texas—where the Democratic Party has much less power than in Washington, D.C., or in the biggest cities of the Lone Star State—is the ideal final adjudicator of what should be the law.

Those concerned with social welfare and criminal justice reform may not agree. But gridlock in Washington, and the unlikelihood of a smashing victory for either party in 2016, is shifting attention to state governments. As a result of last year’s elections, the Republicans control both the governorship and both houses of the legislature in 23 states, with the Democrats in complete control in another seven states. For most Americans, policy changes are more likely to come from their state capitals than from Congress.

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States can be laboratories for innovative ideas, but there is no guarantee that they’ll catch on nationally. The Affordable Care Act, fashioned from a Massachusetts program, is still meeting fierce resistance in many states, and it could still be gutted by the Supreme Court or by a Republican president. The Obama administration’s proposal for free tuition at community colleges (contingent on academic progress) is borrowed from a Tennessee program, but it has almost no chance of passing Congress.

State and regional efforts to fight global warming, like the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative in the Northeast, have not focused Washington’s attention on the problem. Criminal-justice reform in states like Texas, which now emphasizes treatment rather than prison for drug addicts, will not necessarily go national when presidential candidates still quake with fear that they will be labeled “soft on crime.”

There is a temptation to give up on national policy and settle for progress at the state level. One can also take the cynical attitude that people in certain states are just too wrongheaded to worry about. Last December, the Daily Beast’s Michael Tomasky suggested that the Democratic Party should just give up on the South: “Forget about the whole fetid place.... Let the GOP have it and run it and turn it into Free-Market Jesus Paradise.”

But there are moral implications to the decentralization of policy. If your state moves toward a more humane criminal-justice system, do you forget

about how prisoners are treated in other states? If your state guarantees a livable wage or time off for new parents, do you stop caring what presidential candidates and congressional leaders say about such policies? What about abortion, fair taxation and the right to vote? Do they no longer matter when you cross a state border?

As Governor Abbott acknowledged in Texas, citizens frustrated with the

There are moral implications to the decentralization of policy.

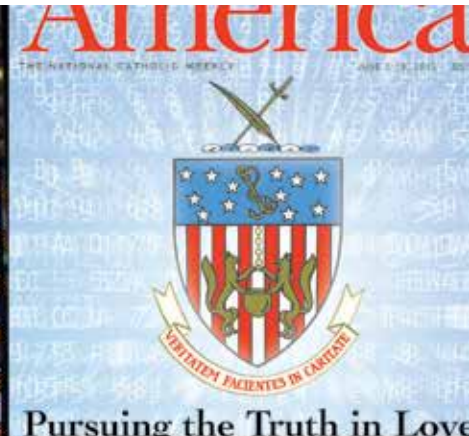
national government are also turning to cities and towns for solutions. Besides environmental regulations, municipalities like Chicago and San Jose are now enacting their own minimum-wage laws, which may help the residents of those powerful cities but do not do much for the working poor who are increasingly found

in the suburbs.

In our biggest cities, questions of social justice can be downscaled further, as neighborhood associations fight off homeless shelters, halfway houses—even public buses and affordable housing developments. The thinking is that a neighborhood bears no responsibility for the welfare of residents elsewhere in a city, a kind of “charity begins at home” philosophy at its most narrowminded.

This is the downside of decentralized government, and it is no less troubling than isolationism or ignorance about human rights in other nations. When Washington fails to respond to a problem, it is logical to seek remedies from states or cities. Success at the local level, however, does not mean that social justice has been achieved.





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# Whom Do You Follow?

## Christian life in the age of Facebook and Twitter

BY JEFFREY J. MACIEJEWSKI

Christians today are surrounded by the trappings of commercial culture and the constant allure of digital living. These can sometimes be terribly distracting, causing us to give more attention to our cultural life than our spiritual life. Yet Jesus tells us: “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat [or drink], or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?” (Mt 6:25). As we ponder these words and consider our lives immersed in technology, we are faced with a great challenge. Digital living brings with it many conveniences that brighten and improve our lives. At the same time, it can foster anxiety and obsessive tendencies that can, if we are not mindful of them, become the center of our thoughts, taking the place of the spiritual mindfulness to which Jesus alluded.

For perspective on the challenges we face, it might be helpful to look back at another cultural villain that threatened (and continues to threaten) our relationship with God: advertising and the acquisition of material possessions. In 1997, St. John Paul II warned us: “It is not wrong to want to live better; what is wrong is a style of life which is presumed to be better when it is directed toward ‘having’ rather than ‘being,’ and which wants to have more, not in order to be more but in order to spend life in enjoyment as an end in itself” (“Ethics in Advertising”). His message was simple: It is wrong to entertain inordinate desires for material possessions, to surrender ourselves to their single-minded pursuit.

This was nothing new. What St. John Paul II offered was not so much an admonition as a restatement of what Pope Paul VI asserted in 1971. “[The] unremitting pressure to buy articles of luxury” from advertising, Paul VI declared, “can arouse false wants that hurt both individuals and families by making them ignore what they really need” (“*Communio et Progressio*”). What we really need, Jesus tells us, is to look beyond concerns about our earthly wants and needs, to see that life is about more than food, to discover that there is more to the body than clothes. Yet this is a struggle—one that can be abated only by avoiding the attractions offered by advertising and recognizing that there is more to human

progress than acquiring material goods and cultivating lavish lifestyles.

Today advertising remains a powerful force. According to the economist Douglas Galbi, total U.S. advertising spending (as a percentage of gross domestic product) has remained largely unchanged since Paul VI’s time. The media landscape, however, has changed dramatically. In the last 30 years we have seen the creation of cable television, personal computers and smart phones, the dawn of the Internet and the stunning growth of social media. Since YouTube’s launch in 2005, the site has become home to a billion unique monthly visitors. Facebook, which was started in 2004, now hosts more than a billion monthly active users. Since Twitter’s launch in 2006, use of the site has mushroomed to 241 million monthly active users, who send an average of 500 million tweets per day. The influence of advertising looks feeble by comparison. Social media now take center stage when the church addresses the use of media. In his encyclical in honor of the 48th World Communications Day, Pope Francis concluded, “The desire for digital connectivity can have the effect of isolating us from our neighbors, from those closest to us.”

### Looking for Connections

What is distressing is that the “desire for digital connectivity” that Francis speaks of seems to conflict with Jesus’ teaching that we should seek glory not from one another, but from God. As he remarked to followers in Jerusalem, “How can you believe, when you accept praise from one another and do not seek the praise that comes from the only God?” (Jn 5:44). For better and for worse, we are social animals, so we are wired for connectivity. We want to connect with others, to form friendships, bonds, loving relationships.

But this desire for digital connectivity is fueled by something else: the triggering of reward centers in our brains. In a study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Science that involved analysis of brain scans, researchers concluded that self-disclosure—the activity behind such things as Facebook status updates and tweets—arouses our central reward center, dispensing dopamine, the neurotransmitter whose effects are amplified by stimulants like cocaine and methamphetamine. Consequently, some people turn to social media for this stimulation. “Humans so willingly self-disclose,” the authors write, “because doing so

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CNS PHOTOTONY GENTILE, REUTERS

represents an event with intrinsic value, in the same way as with primary rewards such as food and sex.” Another study found that getting Facebook “likes” gives us the same neurological response. In an article in *The International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, Daria Kuss and Mark Griffiths found that “extraverts appear to use social networking sites for social enhancement, whereas introverts use [them] for social compensation, each of which appears to be related to greater usage,” and “may be indicative of potential addiction.”

Research points to inordinate amounts of time spent engaged with social media. According to Nielsen, the average user spends 15 hours and 38 minutes per month accessing social media sites. That number grows to an average of 20 hours and 43 minutes per month for the 18- to 34-year-old demographic. But people we might call “super users” spend far greater amounts of time using social media. The market research firm Ipsos suggests that these users spend an average of 3.6 hours per day using social media, with those under the age of 35 spending a reported 4.2 hours per day. Then there is the priority that some place on social media.

According to one study, 48 percent of social media users check or update their Facebook pages or Twitter feeds during the night or as soon as they wake up in the morning. If only we gave God such dedicated attention.

Beyond neurological stimulation, such compulsive behaviors are driven by the pursuit of “micro-celebrity.” In her book *Camgirls: Celebrity and Community in the Age of Social Networks*, Theresa Senft defines micro-celebrity as “a new style of online performance in which people employ webcams, video, audio, blogs and social networking sites to ‘amp up’ their popularity among readers, viewers, and those to whom they are linked online.” It is, as Senft asserts, a way of crafting one’s persona so as to make oneself irresistible to others. In Paul VI’s time, preoccupations with consumerism were thought to do the same. Today, however, this behavior is not limited to traditional conceptions of who is and who is not a celebrity, and virtually anyone can develop an audience online.

### **Obsessed With Ourselves**

This is the most difficult obstacle for followers of Jesus to

overcome: the realization that looking to one another for glory involves something akin to drug use, aided in no small way by micro-celebrity behavior and the ubiquitous technology that facilitates it all. As Christians, how do we deal with these temptations? By recognizing abuse of social media for what it is: an obsession with self. When we think of seeking glory from others as reflecting an obsession with ourselves, the practice takes on new meaning, particularly in the context of our relationship with God.

When we ignore God, we serve only ourselves. The fundamental problem is pointed out by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount: “No man can serve two masters. Either he will hate this one, and love that other one, or he will follow after this one, and despise that other one” (Mt 6:24). Jesus makes clear that the path to righteousness involves serving God and God alone. It is not that we should disregard the self; we can be concerned with our health, with our education and with other things. Rather, we are called to avoid being overly concerned with winning the affections of others. As Jesus tells us, “Anyone who raises himself up will be humbled, and anyone who humbles himself will be raised up” (Mt 23:12).

Unfortunately, it often seems difficult to be “raised up” by God. We cannot see God or touch God, so we cannot get the kind of immediate feedback that we get from one another. If only God could “like” us on Facebook or “favorite” one of our tweets! So we must seek glory from God without the guarantee of outward signs of affirmation. That is, of course, what faith is all about, and that is what Jesus has in mind when he lays out the foundations of Christian morality.


### **If Jesus Could Tweet**

Social media can undermine our relationship with God as we obsess about seeking glory from one another. Yet our task is not to forsake social media or throw away our digital devices. Rather, we must use them according to our faith. Jesus reminds us that such things are not to be targets of anxiety. Our heavenly Father knows we need the accouterments of contemporary life—after all, even the Vatican has taken to Twitter to spread the news of the Gospel—so it would be foolish to think that Jesus would tell us to completely give up our smart phones and tablets. But if we use them, we must recognize that they are tools to help us communicate with one another as we endeavor to live in God’s love. It is

the quality of the communication that is most important. We must realize that these tools are but mere possessions, about which Jesus’ instruction is clear: “Watch, and be on your guard against avarice of any kind, for life does not consist in possessions” (Lk 12:15).

The social media possess enormous potential for bringing people together—in some cases across long distances—to share in community and to work toward a sense of common good. Facebook provides individuals and families a convenient way to stay in touch, sharing status updates as well as photos and videos. Twitter allows people to quickly communicate with one another and to share stories that ultimately bind us together. The popular website LinkedIn enables individuals to manage their professional careers. After all, these are social media: They empower us as naturally social animals, giving us more opportunities to participate in a shared humanity.

As Christians, however, we should place our love for God above all else, seeking God’s glory instead of seeking glory from each other. St. Augustine wrote, “Among all who are truly pious, it is at all events agreed that no one without true piety—that is, true worship of the true God—can have true virtue; and that it is not true virtue which is the slave of human praise.” That is, true virtue—what Augustine might term as the proper ordering of love—is only possible with true piety, and true piety is only possible by holding God’s love above all else. True virtue is far above human praise—even praise that comes in the form of Facebook likes and retweets on Twitter.

We must remember Jesus’ teaching that we are to love God with all our hearts, with all our souls, with all our minds and with all our strength (Mk. 12:30). No commandment is greater than this. To follow Jesus faithfully we must keep this at the top of our minds and forever in our hearts. We must not allow social media to become an object of obsession, but explore how it can help us to authentically share and participate in God’s love. Pope Benedict XVI said that social media are “nourished by aspirations rooted in the human heart,” aspirations that involve creating for ourselves a shared sense of humanity shaped according to God’s love. True virtue comes with ordering our love. When we visit Facebook, use Twitter or engage other social media, we should focus on sharing God’s love with one another rather than focus on ourselves. 

**The social media possess enormous potential for bringing people together—in some cases across long distances—to share in community and to work toward a sense of common good.**



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# Take These Gifts

Women should have more leadership roles in the church.

BY MARY ANN WALSH

**Carol Keehan, D.C., greeted Dr. Georges Dubuche, director general of the Haitian Ministry of Health, before the dedication ceremony for the rebuilt St. Francis de Sales Hospital in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Looking on is the U.S. ambassador to Haiti, Pamela A. White.**



**W**hen it comes to women and men in U.S. society, there is no equality yet. But in the United States, the church is ahead of most Fortune 500 companies and even the White House. When you look at the numbers and take ordination—a doctrinal question—off the table, women do better in the church than in U.S. society overall.

Recent statistics show that women currently hold only 5 percent of Fortune 500 chief executive officer positions and only 4.9 percent of Fortune 1,000 C.E.O. positions. Salaries at the White House also show women trailing men. The Washington Post reported in July that “the average male White House employee currently earns about \$88,600, while the average female White House employee earns about \$78,400,” a gap of 13 percent. A reason, the Post suggested, is that “more men hold the higher-paying, senior jobs in the White House, and more women hold the lower-paying, junior jobs.”

The Post also reported that the “White House pay gap is

similar to the disparity within the federal government,” but it is less than that for the United States as a whole, given that “the nation overall has a 23.5 percent gap.”

Women in the U.S. church are in top leadership positions but not in proportion to their numbers and usually not as the leaders in the larger organizations within the church. Among Catholic Healthcare Association members, for example, there are 54 Catholic hospital systems, with budgets of an estimated \$110 billion. Only nine of these systems are headed by women (who oversee a combined budget of \$9.4 billion).

Yet the situation improves for lower-ranking leadership positions in the C.H.A. Of the 664 individual Catholic hospitals in the United States, 28 percent are led by women. Women C.E.O.s/administrators head up 1,049 or 70 percent of the 1,606 long-term care or continuum care institutions. The numbers show advancement in leadership—but not enough. Much more can and should be done to ensure that women have meaningful leadership roles in the church today.

## Promoting the Gifts of Women

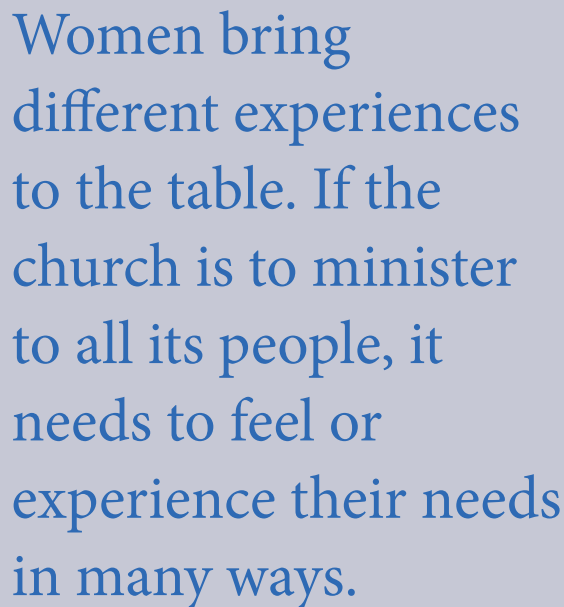
Much of the talent of top-flight women is not being used.

MARY ANN WALSH, R.S.M., is the U.S. church correspondent for America.



Women's gifts, which include intuition and relational skills, are not taken advantage of in decision making.

Some years ago I met with a group of men to draft a statement about a property dispute. I suggested we show the church cared. "Huh?" everyone else said, "What's caring got to do with it?" Eventually they inserted something about caring. They were nice men, but their goal was to win in a property



Women bring different experiences to the table. If the church is to minister to all its people, it needs to feel or experience their needs in many ways.

dispute, and caring was not a concern. Victory was.

This inequality sends a message that women are less capable, insignificant and unworthy. This is no small problem, considering we are taught that all are made in God's image and likeness and have inherent dignity. It seems reasonable to believe that God has given women gifts for the church, and insofar as we do not let these gifts shine we diminish the church and neglect the divine gifts.

Women bring different experiences to the table. If the church is to minister to all its people, it needs to feel or experience their needs in many ways. In the early days of the crisis caused by the sexual abuse of children by members of the clergy, a key problem was that leaders identified more with Father Jim than with little Jimmy. They knew Father and his family and played cards with him. Having had more women in positions of leadership, especially mothers, might have shifted the balance more toward little Jimmy, a vulnerable child or teen.

Women lean toward consensus and recognize nuances. Two decades ago, I was director of communications for World Youth Day in Denver. The pope was coming, and I sought advice from the late Tim Russert.

Tim knew most of the people I would deal with were men and offered a common male approach. "You own the pope, so you're in charge!" It was an adult version of sandlot sports: whoever owns the ball decides what position he will play.

I adopted this so-called male mindset to make the event work. But my maternal side took over too. A 19-year-old with a fatal disease wanted to meet the pope. That became a priority, and I gave her a special place at Mass and made it happen. A male organizer objected, saying she should be with children to meet the pope later. I argued that a 19-year-old belonged with adults. I saw a nuance that my male colleague did not.

### **Becoming a Role Model**

Statistics from U.S. hospitals suggest women make a difference. Catholic hospitals, where one out of six persons in the country receives medical care, reflect women's historical influence through their services. Many hospitals were founded by religious orders of women, and many still operate under their sponsorship, if not their direct administration.

The 2012 American Hospital Association Annual Survey, for example, shows that Catholic hospitals lead over government hospitals, other non-profit hospitals and investor-owned hospitals when it comes to provision of public health and specialty services. Catholic hospitals lead in offering traditionally "unprofitable" services: think birthing rooms, breast cancer screening, community outreach, geriatrics services, nutrition programs, palliative care, trauma services, behavioral services and more.

Some would argue that the church's greatest strength in the United States has been the Catholic school system, built primarily by women religious. Right now, about 48 percent of the diocesan superintendents, 80 percent of elementary school principals and 38 percent of high school principals are female.

The success of Catholic schools where women have been empowered as leaders testifies to women's gifts. For decades we have seen students in Catholic schools, generally led by women, succeed despite sociological obstacles like poverty and challenging family circumstances. One very recent example is U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor, who got her educational start at Blessed Sacrament School in the Bronx.

Women predominate in social services, but women lead only 65 out of 165 major Catholic Charities agencies. Still, these 65 women oversee services annually for more than 2.2 million people, with a budget of almost \$655 million, and supervise almost 10,300 staff members. But how might we continue to improve the role of women in the church?

*Open more leadership positions to women.* Pope Francis speaks of shaking up his curia. There are offices there where women would be logical leaders, like the Congregation for

Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life. This congregation oversees most of the world's estimated 722,000 women and 186,000 men in religious orders.

Other offices that could logically accommodate women at the top include the Pontifical Council for the Family and the Pontifical Council for the Laity. Given the presence of women in top government positions, the time also seems right to add women to the Vatican diplomatic corps.

There ought to be a place for some of the growing number of women theologians at the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Pope Francis recently advised Cardinal Gerhard Müller, head of the C.D.F., that he wanted more women on the International Theological Commission, an advisory body to the C.D.F. on contemporary issues, where up until now there were but two women. Recently the number increased to five, and they now constitute 16 percent of the new commission's membership. It is easy to argue that 50 percent of the commission members should be women—or even more, as a kind of affirmative action. The addition of women to C.D.F. professional staff also is long overdue.

*Acknowledge what women already do.* In virtually every U.S. parish, women read the Scriptures at Mass and distribute Communion. Perhaps it is time to welcome them officially into the ministries of lector and acolyte. Historically, lector and acolyte were referred to as orders and seen as steps toward ordination. Given the changed reality, could this be recon-

sidered? An increasing number of women also serve as parish-life coordinators and parish pastoral associates, positions that might be better acknowledged in the church through installation services.


*Promote women in major archdioceses.* Women can be promoted to positions like chancellor, director of Catholic Charities and superintendent of schools. Women already hold such positions in smaller dioceses, but not in many large ones. Put more women on seminary boards and other consultative groups. Make women's positions meaningful. Promoting women to the position of chancellor is step one. Making the position more than that of official record-keeper would be step two. As the number of women educated in canon law increases, it may be time to name women as heads of diocesan tribunals.

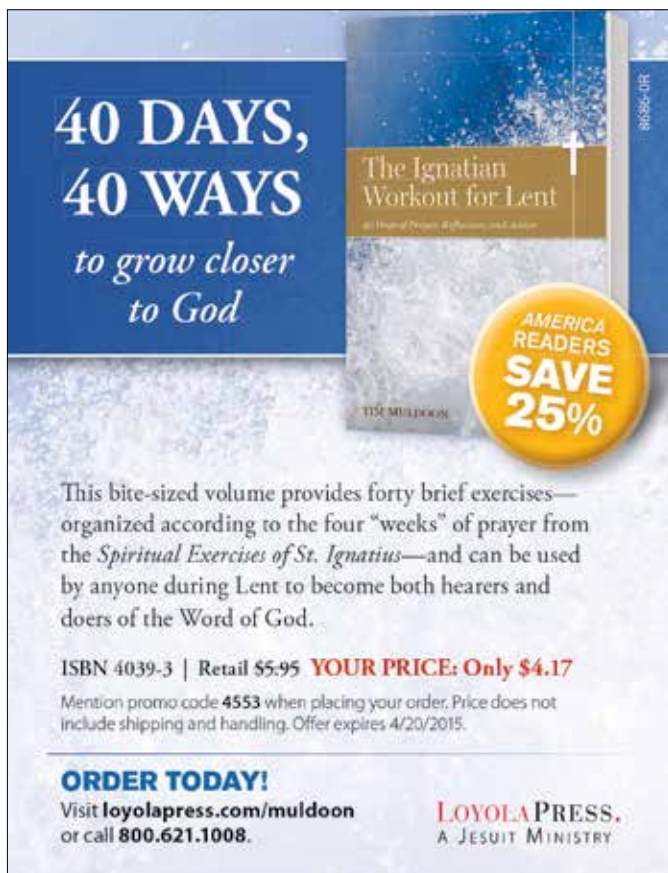
*Promote more women leaders in Catholic colleges and universities.* The first president of the consolidated Jesuit-run University of Detroit and the Sisters of Mercy's Mercy College, now the University of Detroit Mercy, was the Dominican sister Maureen Fay. The Jesuit-founded LeMoyne College in Syracuse, N.Y., caught higher education's attention in 2014 when it named Linda LeMura as the first woman president of a Jesuit college or university. For over 100 years, sisters have successfully led colleges and universities established by their orders; their track record in educational leadership is well established.

*Establish leadership academies within professional groups and ensure that half the participants are women.* Study where women have not succeeded as top leaders. Did they lack resources or decisiveness or boldness of vision? If this is a trend, can remedies be suggested?

One barrier to promotion of women in the church may be that ordination has become equated with power, which is a theological distortion considering that ordination is for service. Pope Francis never suggests he will ordain women, but he has stated, "The feminine genius is needed whenever we make important decisions."

Last January at a national conference in Italy, Pope Francis said he hoped the space for women to contribute incisively to the life of our church would continue to increase. Months later he appointed the first woman to head one of the seven pontifical universities in Rome when he named Mary Melone, a Franciscan sister, rector of the Pontifical University Antonianum, run by male Franciscans of the Order of Friars Minor.

Women bring unique gifts to any situation. Women in the Catholic Church have made powerful contributions, but they can make more. Women's talents and the need for them are slowly finding recognition in the Catholic Church. That is progress. Fortune 500 companies and the White House need to catch up. And the church needs to boldly set an example too. 



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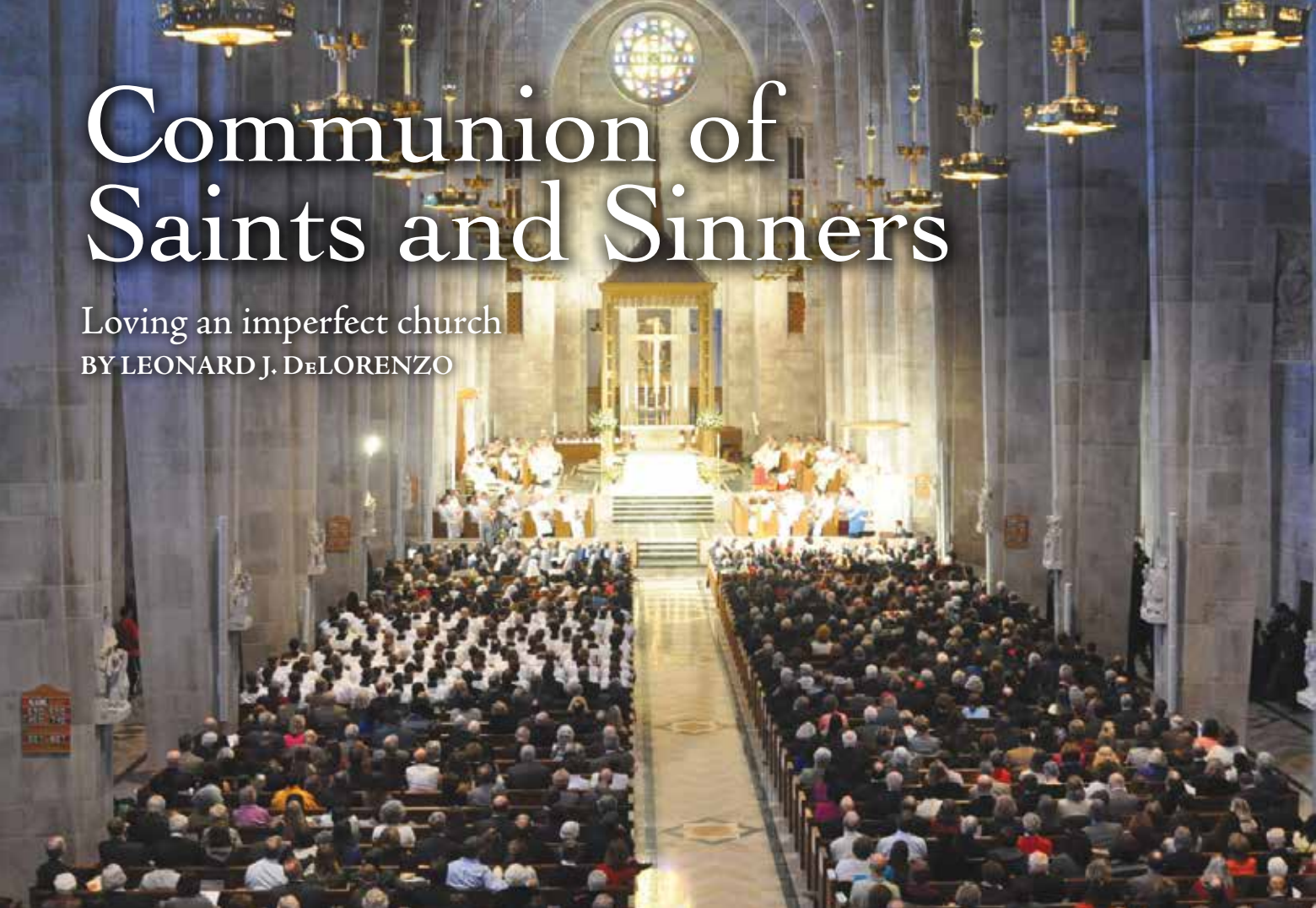
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# Communion of Saints and Sinners

Loving an imperfect church

BY LEONARD J. DELORENZO



**T**he church is full of sinners. On this much pretty much everyone can agree. If one took the secular media's typical presentation of the church as truth, one might even think that the church is full of nothing but sinners. Actually, that too is true. What is less apparent is that those in the church know this well; it is why we cling to this church.

One of the most popular and rich images of the church is that of the body of Christ. The Catholic Church is meant to be the visible sign of what is now otherwise unseen: the risen body of Jesus of Nazareth. And perhaps no scene in Scripture represents the confounding character of this church's constitution better than that recorded in latter verses of the Gospel of Luke (23:33–43). Here we learn that Jesus was hung upon the cross not alone but with two criminals flanking him: one on his right, the other on his left. Reviled and exhausted, Jesus spent the last moments of his life between two justly condemned criminals, indistinguish-

able and interchangeable, at least until the 39th verse. For then the two are differentiated, as one rebukes and turns away from the so-called Messiah, while the other beseeches and turns toward him. In the middle of these two fundamental orientations hangs the body of Christ.

This is a pre-eminent image of the church. It is not a church of just the right or just the left. It is the church that holds together repentant sinners and unrepentant sinners, the latter of whom it hopes to convert by holding the whole communion together. In that communion all manner of sin is collected, all those shadowy effects of a world that does not know the light from which it comes and to which it is meant to go. We who cling together in this church do so not because we believe ourselves to be pure and just, but precisely because we know we are not.

We cling together because we know we are sick and in need of healing. This church is our hospital, for here, together, we receive the medicine to open up closed hearts and release us from the unclean spirits that seek to define us by what we can do, accumulate or dominate in this world, or what can define or dominate us. It sometimes seems that the masses gather around this hospital, yelling up to the windows to tell us just how sick we are. Yes, we know. That is why we are here.

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**LEONARD J. DELORENZO** is the director of the *Notre Dame Vocation Initiative (Notre Dame Vision)* in the Institute for Church Life at the University of Notre Dame, where he also teaches in the theology department. He is currently working on a book on the theology of the communion of saints.

## Human and Divine

The French Dominican Yves Congar released a book in 1969 with a title that, if released today, might lead it to be either widely ignored or sharply lampooned: *This Church That I Love*. As one of the leading theological minds behind the Second Vatican Council, Congar used this little book as yet another opportunity to make known what the documents of Vatican II attest time and again: the Catholic Church is composed of both human and divine elements. As is all too obvious (especially now), this church is certainly not a purely divine institution, such as would unimpeachably exemplify a perfect society. But at the same time, this institution is not a purely human enterprise that establishes itself and sets its own mandate. It is both at once.

The church is human with all that is good about our humanity, but not without those parts of us that have been corrupted through pride, the lust for prestige, acts of violence and hidden malice. The church is also divine, for the love of God, which is

God's very being, touches us here to first heal the corruptions of our humanity and then elevate our humanity toward a relationship with God.

What Congar and others rediscovered at the council was that the church does not exist as an idea or in the imagination, but is in fact a living, breathing, beautiful and wounded body, whose very life is generated from the grace of God, though it is not yet fully what it is called to be. Though not the full realization of its divine calling, the church does not cease to call all persons and every people into its communion. In its head, Christ, who is fully human and fully divine, the church is to be, as the "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church" states in its very first paragraph, "a sacrament—a sign and instrument, that is, of communion with God and of the unity of the entire human race...so that all people... may achieve full unity in Christ." If the sickness of the world is its inability to love genuinely, then the church is intended to be the place where we learn how to love, first in receiving the love of God in Christ and then in bonding ourselves to one another in acts of charity.

This is what the church is. And yet the sin of its members—all its members, though some more than others—keeps it from growing fully into what it is meant to be. In our own time, nothing has scourged the church so much as the sexual abuse of the most vulnerable of our members at the hands of those entrusted to be their shepherds and caretakers. The scandal of these acts of abuse, along with the failures of those in authority to intervene, stop and correct

these abuses, gravely afflicted all involved, deeply scarring many: the victims by force, the perpetrators by will and the authorities by compliance. As for the causes of this odiousness, there is no shortage of opinions. It is, some say, due to the vow of celibacy, the unmarried clergy, an outmoded governance structure, the myth of papal infallibility, antiquated doctrine, unsophisticated magisterial instructions and on and on.

Of course, all of these things—even in their misrepresented and misunderstood forms—are interconnected in the life of the church, but not one of them is the source of the scandalous things in the church. The only source is sin. It is pride, the closure to love, the preference for self over others, the rejection of truth and the disregard for true beauty,

the unwillingness to give in charity what one receives in love at the altar: this is the sin that rends the church. It is the darkness that the light has yet to dispel.

Ironically, this means that within the church itself exists the source of sickness and its healing.

The very structure that is at times used to communicate corruption and harm is the same one that communicates healing and charity. This is because the divine that touches the human in the church seeks to transform the human into what it is meant to become: a communion of charity. The point of the church is not to gather people together to feed them individually for the sake of their separate spiritual journeys. The point of the church is to bond people together in the love of God so that they become what they receive.

This is what Henri de Lubac, S.J., reminded the church in recovering the dual meaning of the Eucharist as the mystical body of Christ (*corpus mysticum*): the Eucharist is both the gift of God that is bestowed upon the people and the gift of God that the people become. The Eucharist is never a private affair, because it is the gift of making a communion of the people who assemble—in all places at all times—through the very gift of God's self to the world. God makes himself one with us in Christ so that we may become one with each other in him. The making of communion means healing all divisions, remedying all ailments and forgiving all sins.

## The Church's Mission

Often, segments of the secular media can seem divided regarding their own views of the church. Some outlets critique the church for its failures in holiness, chiding it for falling short of what the world must, implicitly at least, believe the church should be. Other outlets claim that the church is ir-

**The church does not exist as an idea or in the imagination, but is in fact a living, breathing, beautiful and wounded body.**



relevant, outdated, one of the last remaining relics of foregone and forlorn times. At one and the same time, critics of the church both explicitly reject the claim that the church makes and implicitly critique the church on the basis of the very claim that they reject. Perhaps therein lies our society's fascination with the church at times like these: it both wants the church to be better than it is and does not want the church to be at all.

The real issue, though, is that the only way to truly see the church is to see it for the mystery it is. It is the inner union of divine and human elements that has yet to become fully what it already is most basically. It is hard to see this when one only critiques from the outside and refuses to step inside, even for a moment. The church is the communion of sinners—both repentant and unrepentant—that is also the communion of saints. It holds out hope for those who rebuke and turn away from the Messiah in its midst, it receives the confession of those who ask for his healing and it communicates the charity of those who have become one with others in the love of Christ.

The modern world wants the church to be a liberal democracy, an egalitarian society, a masterfully managed international organization, a philanthropic agency, a modern communications outlet and a perfect society, all while seeming to want it to go away altogether. The church is thus judged according to the criteria pertaining to these (and oth-

er) ideals. In the end, though, the church is measured according to a standard much deeper and much broader than these, one that is thoroughly transcendent. The church is the sign and instrument of the openness of the world to God, who came to the world definitively in Christ and now reaches out to the world through and with the church.

What is seen when the church gathers in communion at the Eucharist is a sign for the world of God's singular desire: to draw us all together in the bonds of charity, of common will. This communion is also meant to bring about what it signifies, in reaching out in charity to all, in upholding the dignity of all, in offering healing and forgiveness to all, in seeking healing and forgiveness from all and in growing together in the love of God, who alone is the fulfillment of our deepest desires.

The church is not just an odd entity passing through the world, but precisely that which seeks to participate in the transformation of the world. Even when it is what it should be, the church's speech and movements will seem strange to the world, for it is trying to lead the world beyond its own limits. And in what is the richest irony of all, God elects to work through and with ordinary, sinful human beings in this plan of salvation. For the plan is to save us together for each other, not separately for our lonesome selves. It is the communion of sinners that is the sign and instrument of this salvation. ▲

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# The Pope in the Poncho

Pope Francis' recent visit to the Philippines provided many memorable moments, but one in particular stands out: Francis celebrating open-air Mass on a stormy, wet and windy day at Tacloban airport, wearing a yellow plastic poncho over his vestments.

The decision to do so was entirely his. His advisors, both local and Roman, suggested he celebrate Mass in the cathedral at Palo, as nobody celebrates open-air Mass here in such inclement conditions. He rejected the idea. The crowd was vast; the church could accommodate only a few hundred. He had come to be with them, not to be protected from the weather.

His aides wanted to provide him with a large umbrella or a good raincoat; he dismissed their proposal, saying he wanted to wear a yellow poncho exactly like those being worn by the 500,000 faithful waiting for Mass and lining the route from the airport to that site. He had come to be with them, to share their sufferings and accompany them for some hours. For Francis, this is what incarnation of the Gospel means.

By the time his plane touched down at Tacloban airport after a 75-minute bumpy flight from Manila, the tropical storm was in full swing, bringing rain and 60-mile-an-hour winds. The government had provided one million yellow plastic ponchos for the occasion, but had outlawed the use of umbrellas to avoid injury to people as the wind could, in seconds, turn them into le-

thal flying objects.

Survivors told me Francis brought consolation and hope to these victims of the worst typhoon in history, which hit their island on Nov. 8, 2013, causing some 10,000 deaths and making four million people homeless.

They gave a mighty roar of intense delight as he stepped off the plane at the windy, rain-swept airport. They jumped and danced for joy as he drove among them in his pope-mobile and reached out to touch or bless them. His presence clearly meant the world to them. Many had lost family members, friends or neighbors; some all three. Francis knew this. He sensed their pain. The look on his face during Mass conveyed his great desire to embrace and console each one. His words said this too.

He had prepared a homily, written in English, but on seeing the hundreds of thousands of survivors huddled before him under the rain in yellow plastic ponchos like his, he discarded his prepared text and, using a Vatican translator, spoke powerfully in Spanish and with emotion, from his heart to theirs, with words of faith and hope that brought many to tears. Journalists wept too.

"When I saw from Rome that catastrophe I felt I had to be here. And on those very days I decided to come here. I am here to be with you—a little bit late, but I'm here," he told them, drawing thunderous applause.

"I have come to tell you that Jesus is Lord. And he never lets us down," Francis said. They applauded.

"You might say to me: Father, I was let down because I have lost so many things, my house and my livelihood," Francis said. "If you say that, it's true, and I respect those sentiments. But Jesus is there, nailed to the cross and from there he does not let us down. He experienced all the calamities that we experience.... From the cross, he is there for you.... We have a Lord who cries with us and walks with us in the most difficult moments of life." They clapped. They wept.

He spoke from his heart to theirs and brought many to tears.

"So many of you have lost everything, I don't know what to say to you. But the Lord does know what to say to you. Some of you have lost part of your families. All I can do is keep silence and walk with you all with my silent heart." He prayed with them for their loved ones. A long silence followed. Tears flowed freely. Later they sang and received Communion.

He drove among them after Mass, wearing the yellow plastic poncho that became the iconic image of his visit to the Philippines. Afterward he had lunch with 30 survivors who had lost loved ones.

The previous day he had been advised against travelling because tropical storm Amang was brewing, but he refused to cancel the visit. By the end of Mass, however, the storm had become a Category 2 typhoon. He had little choice but to depart four hours earlier than planned. Still, he had achieved his goal: to come and console them.

GERARD O'CONNELL

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

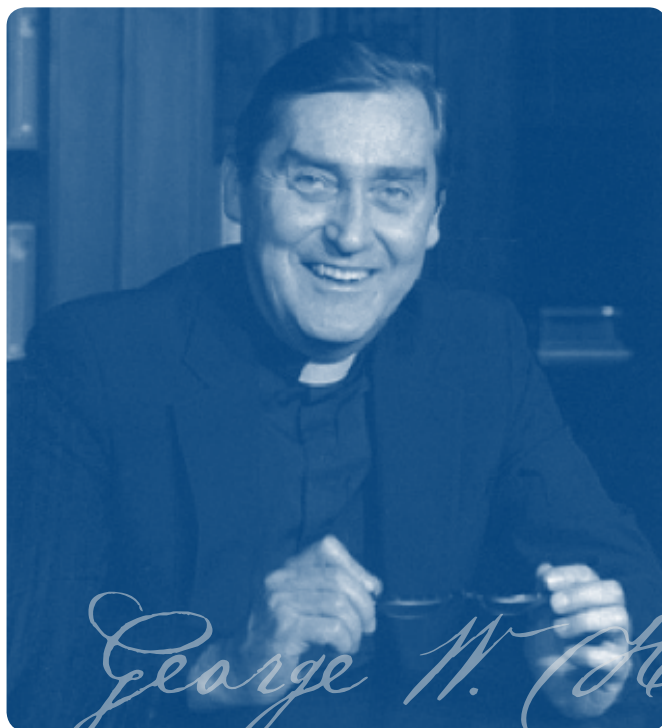


# GEORGE W. HUNT, S.J. PRIZE

*For Excellence In Journalism, Arts & Letters*

**America**  
THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC REVIEW

 **Saint Thomas More**  
The Catholic Chapel & Center at Yale University



## THE LIFE OF GEORGE W. HUNT, S.J. (1937-2011)

George W. Hunt, S.J. served as the eleventh editor in chief of *America*, the national Catholic review published by the Jesuits of the United States. A native of Yonkers, New York, Father Hunt entered the Society of Jesus in 1954 and was ordained a priest in 1967. He earned a theology degree from Yale Divinity School in 1970, later remarking that his decision to study Kierkegaard with Yale Professor Paul Holmer was “the best and most fruitful decision in my entire academic life,” for it set the stage for a life-long study of the literary arts.

George W. Hunt, S.J. retired as editor in chief in 1998, at the conclusion of the magazine’s most prosperous year to-date. He remains the longest serving editor in chief in *America*’s history. Later that year, Father Hunt was named director of the Archbishop Hughes Institute for Religion and Culture at Fordham University, where he dedicated himself to “exploring the relationships between religion and other aspects of contemporary life.” George W. Hunt, S.J., Jesuit priest, author and friend, died in 2011 at the age of 74.

## THE MISSION OF THE GEORGE W. HUNT, S.J. PRIZE

The Hunt Prize is to be awarded annually and is made possible through the vision and generosity of Fay Vincent Jr., former commissioner of Major League Baseball, who sought to honor his long-standing friend, Father Hunt. The mission of the Prize is five-fold:

- I. To promote scholarship, the advancement of learning and the rigor of expression;
- II. To support and promote a new generation of journalists, authors and scholars;
- III. To memorialize the life and work of George W. Hunt, S.J.;
- IV. To forge a lasting partnership between *America* and the Saint Thomas More Chapel and Center at Yale University,
- V. To support the intellectual formation of Catholic young adults.

## CRITERIA

The Hunt Prize will be awarded to a single individual whose body of work has focused on one or more of the following topical areas:

- Catholicism and Civic Life
- Catholicism and Arts and Letters
- Modern American Fiction
- U.S. Sports
- U.S. History
- Jazz or Classical Music
- American Film and Drama
- Poetry
- Spirituality & Literature

Only English language works of which the nominee is the sole or principal author will be considered.

## ELIGIBILITY

Recipients of the George W. Hunt, S.J., Prize must dedicate a substantial portion of their professional energies to writing and must fulfill the following additional criteria:

- He or she must be 45 years of age or younger on the day the prize is awarded;
- He or she should be familiar with the Roman Catholic tradition;
- He or she should be of sound moral character and reputation and must not have published works that are manifestly atheistic or morally offensive.

## NOMINATIONS

**Nominations for The Hunt Prize will open on George W. Hunt’s birthday, at 12 a.m. on January 22, 2015 and the nomination period will close at 11:59 p.m. on March 31. All submissions may be made at: [huntprize.org](http://huntprize.org)**

## FORMAL AWARD AND CEREMONY

The winner will be announced in June 2015. The winner will be awarded a gift of \$25,000. Formal awarding will take place at the Saint Thomas More Chapel and Center at Yale University in September 2015.

The recipient of the award will deliver a lecture that is related to his or her primary works, and the lecture will be published as a cover story in *America* within three months of its delivery.

For more information: [huntprize.org](http://huntprize.org)

# Winter's Thaw

Warming up to a strange new city

BY PAUL BRUNKHORST

On Jan. 3, 2014, the air temperature in Minneapolis—without wind chill—was 10 degrees below zero—“good sleeping weather,” as we hardy Minnesotans like to say. Indeed, it was. I was thoroughly enjoying each night I spent burrowed under down feathers and fleece, warmed by the sounds and smells of home. This winter confinement helped me, halfway through my sophomore year of college and back home for Christmas break, appreciate even more the house I grew up in and the people with whom I grew up.

Those things in my family's house that I had brushed past in my teenage years suddenly stood out, and I was struck by how much these things, and the people associated with them, evoked an emotional response. Why, for example, had I never before noticed the clay crucifix over the door to the kitchen, the scene of so many dinners, homework sessions, fights and joyous reunions? And the clock in the dining room—which, in my youth, would blurt out a rather monotonous tone every hour until someone “forgot” to replace the batteries—beckoned to me with a gushing familiarity. With no social obligations (during break my iPhone sat largely unused on my desk), I enjoyed simply being in the presence of my family, trapped in the comforts of our familiar house.

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PAUL BRUNKHORST is a junior at Saint Louis University, where he studies English and political science.



Upon my return to Saint Louis University in mid-January, the campus was bathed in sunlight, the snow was melting, and the temperature hovered at 50 degrees. And I, in a move of course-scheduling genius, had allowed myself ample time to enjoy the unusually warm winter climate. On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, I didn't start class until noon. So, waking up on Wednesday morning, I decided—while sipping coffee in the sunny confines of my apartment—that it looked spring-like enough to merit a jaunt to morning Mass at the Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis. While I could have gone to Mass on campus, I was itching for the opportunity to use my bike, which had been locked up outside my dorm, unused, for several

months. So, in a chipper, caffeine-fueled mood, I slipped out of the apartment at 7:30 a.m. and readied my Schwinn for its winter voyage.

This Schwinn, a top-of-the-line mountain bike from Target, creaked and groaned as I pedaled it through the melting ice, its gears shedding the dirt and rust accumulated over many idle weeks. Things were going smoothly until I biked off the campus pathways and onto the street, where a blast of wind tore through my thin windbreaker and clawed at my exposed fingers. St. Louis is a strange place; while the day before had been a sunny respite from the winter gloom, I was riding my bike under a deceptively sunny sky that belied a winter fury. Cursing under my breath, I pedaled on; it was too late to turn back. But despite my gung-ho attitude, waves of anger swelled within me. These modest complaints—*Why didn't I wear gloves? Stupid, icy roads!*—furiously swirled in my mind like the polar winds and began to resemble the all-encompassing vortex of anger that I had tried so hard to suppress since coming back to school. *Why am I here? I hissed under my breath. I hate St. Louis, and I don't feel comfortable in a strange city! Why didn't I just go to school close to home?*

Flipping my bike up onto the curb outside the cathedral, my anger and resentment were in full swing. It took

ART: BOB ECKSTEIN



me four tries to get the correct combination to open the bike's padlock—my fingers numb with cold and slowed by intense frustration. As I walked toward the cathedral door, the Schwinn slid down the stop sign pole and crashed with a resounding thud onto the pavement and lay in a heap of jumbled lock-cable and chain on the snowy sidewalk. Turning away from this scene, I stomped through the double doors and into the nave.

Still steaming with anger, I adjusted my position in the pew and looked around. There were maybe 20 people scattered throughout the massive church, and this congregation consisted of the usual daily Mass crowd: the elderly, nuns and stay-at-home mothers and fathers with restless toddlers in tow. Turning back toward the lectern, I tried my best to focus on the homily.

"Despair is when forgiveness and the love of God is doubted," the priest said. The Gospel had been about the young rich man and his possessions.

"Now, doubt is a natural part of the faith," he continued, "but the doubt I'm talking about here is not of doctrinal issues, but of the underlying truth: that God loves you. Having despair can mean an absence of hope, and this is dangerous." He paused and coughed before continuing, "As Emily Dickinson wrote: 'Hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul, and sings the tune—without words—and never stops at all.'" And he finished, "God will never stop loving you."

As I was walking out of the cathedral after Mass, I passed a group of elderly women talking to one another as they stood outside their idling cars.

"Are you a student at S.L.U.?" one of them asked. College kids are not so hard to spot in this town; unkempt hair and scraggly facial whiskers no doubt gave me away.

"Yes, I am. I'm just going back there now, actually," I said, pointing to my bike, still clinging to the stop sign in a tangled mess of cable.

"Wow, cold day to bike!" she said. "Excellent though, that's just great. I wish that I could still bike. Someday you'll be as old as me, so watch out," the woman warned, and laughed. "But you have time. Have a happy day now."

"Thanks," I said.

It took a while to get the bike upright, and I pushed off the curb in a high gear. Straining against the pedals, I took off down the street, and the birds—stragglers that had missed the autumn migration, or perhaps had returned a bit early—sang their tune, which sounded a lot like hope, perched nearby.

I, like countless other students, was experiencing both the excitement and bewilderment of leaving the nest and forging my way in an often cold and biting world. But the strain of this academic life also presents an opportunity for spiritual growth. Through both bitter cold and cloaking warmth, God remains: always. I pedaled on. Yes, I thought, *a happy day*. ▲

How are you being called to serve?



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**THEATER** | MICHAEL V. TUETH

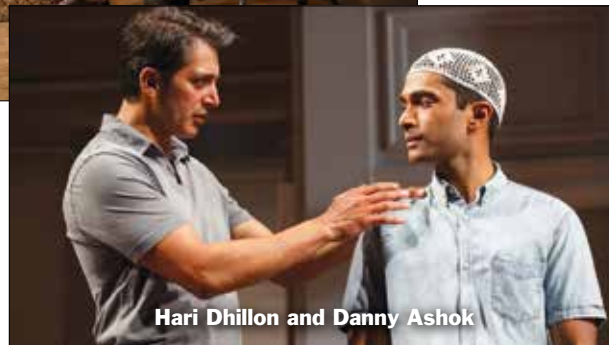
## TRUTH AND DARING

*The provocative, gripping challenge of 'Disgraced'*



**T**ell all the truth but tell it slant," wrote Emily Dickinson. These days, as concern about immigration, racism and terrorism take center stage, many people seek the truth about these issues, so perhaps there is no better time to experience Ayad Akhtar's provocative Pulitzer Prize winning drama, *Disgraced*, which appeared off-Broadway two years ago and is now running on Broadway. (It also set a box-office record during its run in London last year.) With its own "slant," it tackles each of these issues in a novel and gripping narrative that centers around the role of Islam in the midst of today's challenges.

Amir Kapoor (Hari Dhillon) is a very successful mergers-and-acquisitions lawyer who is, in his own words, an "apostate" Muslim. His wife Emily (Gretchen Moll) is an artist who has become a great admirer of Islamic cul-



ture. On one of the walls of their spacious apartment on New York's Upper East Side hangs one of Emily's paintings, which the playwright describes as "a vibrant, two-paneled image in luscious whites and blues with patterns reminiscent of an Islamic garden." As the play begins, Amir is posing for Emily as she sketches her painting, which she has chosen to model after Velasquez's famous "Portrait of Juan de Pareja," a Moor who, as Amir reminds her, was also his slave. Within minutes, they are arguing about what Amir considers to have been a waiter's racist attitude towards them at a restaurant the night before.

They are interrupted by a visit from Amir's nephew Hussein (Danny Ashok) who, like his uncle, is of South Asian origin but has become Americanized and has changed his name to Abe Jensen. With the support of Emily, he has come to ask Amir to join the legal team for a Muslim imam who has been accused of raising money for Hamas. Despite his opposition to the Muslim religion, Amir ends up being connected to the case, which leads to trouble for him.

But the trial is not the only place where race and faith are at play. A couple has been invited to dinner—Isaac (Josh Radnor), who is Jewish and a curator at the Whitney, and his wife Jory (Karen Pittman), who is African-American and works at the same law firm as Amir. So there we have it, a melting pot of four different ethnicities in one room, all similarly intelligent, cultured and articulate, living the American dream with a gener-

ous supply available on the liquor cart. What could possibly go wrong? Well, ever since "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" theatergoers have come to expect disaster from such a gathering. This play does not disappoint.

Emily has invited Isaac to dinner, hoping he will include some of her works in the museum's next exhibit. Meanwhile, Jory and Amir will have an opportunity for the usual workplace gossip, which will eventually lead to Jory's revelation of some bad news. The rest of the play presents some lively arguments fueled by considerable Scotch and wine.

With the tension between him and



his wife still palpable, Amir goes out to the liquor store to pick up the wine he forgot to buy, and Emily and Isaac get into a lively conversation about their mutual admiration of Islamic art and culture, which Emily maintains has been a major influence in philosophy and Western art and is “a part of who we are.” Isaac agrees, saying that the young artists today are working to “make art sacred again.”

But the dinner conversation morphs into Amir’s fierce criticism of the Koran, the Taliban and Islamic society in general. He admits, however, that he viewed the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, with a certain pride that the Muslim world was finally rising up against the Western pattern during the last 300 years of reshaping the borders and laws of the Middle East and basically “disgracing” the Arab world. By the end of the evening, he has managed to insult his Jewish and African-American guests and finally becomes quite violent.

Under Kimberly Senior’s direction, the performances are thrilling, combining intellectual acumen with a turbulent load of anger boiling underneath. The scenic design, by the multi-award winning and probably busiest designer on Broadway, John Lee Beatty, says it all. Any New York apartment that includes a balcony off the living room and a bedroom that can be reached only by going down a lengthy hallway tells us all we need to know about Amir and Emily’s financial status.

The playwright, Ayad Akhtar, who is also an actor, director, filmmaker and novelist, was born in Staten Island to Pakistani parents and raised in Milwaukee. His writing has focused on the complex relations between Americans and Muslims both inside the United States and beyond in the 21st century. His film “The War Within” (2005) examined the conflicts in the life of a young man who becomes a terrorist. And another of his plays, “The Invisible Hand,” just opened off

Broadway. It presents the plight of a high-level American employee of Citibank in Pakistan who has been taken hostage and who counters their demand for a \$10 million ransom with his plan to manipulate the stock market to raise considerably more money to offer for his release. One critic describes the play as a display of “the power of the almighty dollar to shape or shake societies around the world.”

Audiences should be prepared to be shocked and disturbed by “Disgraced,” which Akhtar considers to be a tragedy in the mode of Greek drama, especially in its examination of, as he puts it, “the recalcitrant tribal tendencies we all harbor.” But they should not be surprised if it is nominated for several Tony Awards this season. Akhtar has spoken about the way in which a play must contain “insinuations of truth.” Sounds a lot like Emily Dickinson to me.

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MICHAEL V. TUETH, S.J., is associate professor of communications and media studies at Fordham University in New York.

# FOLEY POETRY CONTEST

Poems are being accepted for the 2015 Foley Poetry Award.

Each entrant is asked to submit only one typed, unpublished poem on any topic. The poem should be 30 lines or fewer and not under consideration elsewhere. Include contact information on the same page as the poem. Poems will not be returned.

Please do not submit poems by email or fax.

Submissions must be postmarked between Jan. 1 and March 31, 2015.

Poems received outside the designated period will be treated as regular poetry submissions and are not eligible for the prize.

The winning poem will be published in the June 8-15 issue of *America*. Three runner-up poems will be published in subsequent issues. Notable entrants also may be considered for inclusion on our poetry site, [americaliterary.tumblr.com](http://americaliterary.tumblr.com).

Cash prize: \$1,000

Send poems to:

Foley Poetry Contest  
America Magazine  
106 West 56th Street  
New York, NY 10019

## A POET'S CORNER

“There is no way of telling people that they are all walking around shining like the sun.” These famous words of Thomas Merton convey the vision he experienced standing on a street corner in Louisville, Ky., on March 18, 1958. It was 10 years and nine months before his untimely death, but Merton had no way of knowing that—and even if he had been aware, through some preternatural vision, of the precise extent of his finitude, it would likely have increased his wonder and delight in the vision of infinitude he was receiving.

Jan. 31, 2015, marked the 100th anniversary of Thomas Merton’s birth, and he is everywhere, his centenary celebrated in journal articles, at conferences and in new books and essays. Given Merton’s centrality to American Catholic life and literature from the moment his conversion memoir, *The Seven Storey Mountain*, became an unlikely runaway bestseller to the moment of his accidental death by electrocution at an ecumenical conference of Christian and Buddhist monks in Thailand on Dec. 10, 1968 (the 27th anniversary of his entry into Gethsemane Abbey), it is fitting, if ironic, that he be feted: fitting because Merton’s work is still alive, five decades after his death; ironic because Merton entered a Trappist monastery, renouncing the world and his youthful pretensions to becoming a famous writer, in order to disappear.

But disappear he could not, no matter how hard he tried. His voice proved to be one we needed (if not one we heeded). In his 60-odd books, Merton addressed matters both spiritual and

social, bringing the eternal and the temporal into alignment with one another. He wrote beautiful meditations on contemplative prayer as well as fierce critiques of America’s racism, its war-mongering and the secular world’s love affair with the atomic bomb. Speaking from the margins of society, unimpeded by political and personal passions that blinded many during the fractious 1960s, Merton could see what others could not. The clarity of his voice emerged from the clarity of his vision.

“Always be a poet, even in prose.” These words of a very different writer, Charles Baudelaire, aptly describe the source and power of Thomas Merton’s singular voice. Baudelaire refers to the craftsmanship demanded by poetry—its exactitude of language, the brevity and density that empowers poetry to “say the unsayable” (in the words of the poet Donald Hall). But they also describe a way of being in the world, of encountering reality—one must be a poet in order to write like one.

By disposition, orientation and practice, Merton was a poet, and a prolific one at that—he began writing as a schoolboy, won a poetry prize at Columbia University, published his work in elite and mainstream journals and collected his poems in 11 volumes published in his lifetime. Since the appearance of his first collection, *Thirty Poems* (1944), Merton’s poetry has been continuously in print. Given all this, it is unfortunate that Merton’s identity as a poet is barely acknowledged in the recent tributes to him and seems a

fact of his life that threatens to be lost. A learned colleague confided to me recently, “I didn’t even know Merton wrote poems.”

This oversight is due largely to our culture’s lack of regard for poetry. Reversing the ancient literary hierarchy, which placed poetry near the top of the ladder, we moderns condescend to poetry. At best, it is a harmless genre, suitable for children; at worst, it is an intellectual embarrassment.

But not for Thomas Merton, whose acquisition of self-knowledge was predicated upon the power of poetry. He discovered his humanity in Shakespeare, his penchant for the visionary in Blake and his understanding of the soul’s pilgrimage in Dante—so much so that he named his memoir in homage to his poetic master’s

progress through the *Purgatorio*.

Merton believed, along with Emerson, that “poets are liberating gods,” that the practice of poetry releases them (and us) from the claims of daily-ness and the ordinary, permitting us all a glimpse of eternity.

To the poet, Merton wrote, “the whole world and all the incidents of life tend to be sacraments—signs of God, signs of his love working in the world.” The poetry that results is gospel. Standing on the corner of Fourth and Walnut Streets, Thomas Merton receives this sacramental vision, suddenly sees his fellow human beings “shining like the Son” and tells us the good news.

Speaking  
from the  
margins,  
Merton could  
see what  
others could  
not.



ANGELA ALAIMO O'DONNELL is a poet, professor and associate director of the Curran Center for American Catholic Studies at Fordham University. Twitter: @AODonnellAngela.



# A MIDWESTERN JOURNEY

## SEARCHING FOR MARQUETTE A Pilgrimage in Art

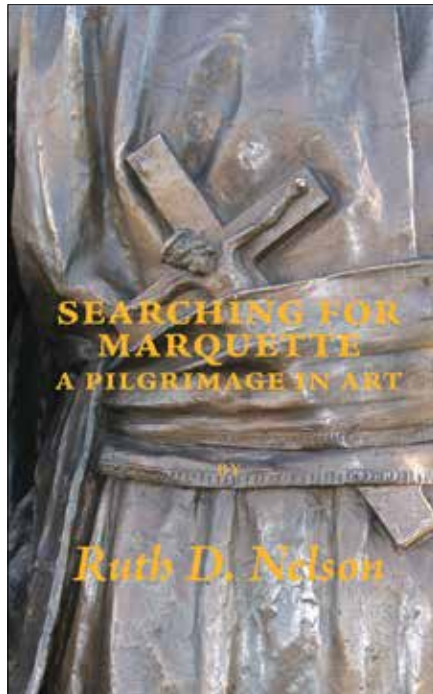
By Ruth D. Nelson  
Marquette University Press. 302p \$29

Jacques Marquette was a Jesuit missionary and explorer. His missionary work included five years in remote northern Michigan (throughout I use today's geographic terms), a challenging mission, and perhaps his life would have continued in relative anonymity except for his being assigned in 1673 to accompany Louis Joliet to explore the vast American heartland. This trip took the party of seven Frenchmen and two Miami guides across Wisconsin, down the Mississippi to the Arkansas River and back north again by way of the Illinois River and the west shore of Lake Michigan to the mission of St. Francis Xavier, near today's Green Bay. A year later Marquette returned to mission work in central Illinois, but his health failed. Early in 1675 his two French companions on this mission tried to get him back to northern Michigan, but he died along the way. He was just short of 38 years old.

Marquette's journal and map from 1673 supported France's claim to the vast territory through which the party traveled. Some of the local peoples remembered him for his kindness and care for them, and he appeared in histories of the period. But for a long time the river near which he died—early on named the Pere Marquette—was the only monument to his memory.

*Searching for Marquette* explores why and how this changed and studies the artwork associated with Marquette's missions. Ruth D. Nelson, who writes on art in the Midwest, has done a remarkable amount of research into Marquette's popularity, which has

inspired quite a few place names and institutional names and many statues and graphic representations of the man. Basically following the geography of Marquette's time in the Midwest,



the book tells his story and weaves in interesting local stories too.

Marquette's evolution from historical note to Midwestern hero happened a century and a half after his death. Local historians were beginning to write about their area's past. In the 1820s, Henry Rowe Schoolcraft explored the Michigan Territory, read of Marquette and found the site of the mission of St. Ignace, which Marquette had founded and where he was eventually buried. And George Bancroft's *History of the United States*, begun in 1834, started the spread of interest in Marquette and in pioneer days long past. The American Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1876 likewise fed the nation's inter-

est in its history. And for the Chicago Columbian Exposition in 1893, Cyrus E. Dallin, a sculptor who earlier had studied in Paris with Augustus Saint-Gaudens, used Native Americans as the subject of his work and a decade later sculpted a statue of Marquette for the St. Louis Exposition of 1904.

Places Marquette had worked at and visited began to create artwork to honor him. As schools and parks were given his name, images abounded in sculpture, painting, bas relief, drawing and mosaic. Though no one knew what he really looked like, heroic images became standard. Harry Wood traveled to France and met a number of Marquette's family descendants and painted Marquette as tall and blond.

A stunning series of mosaics in the Marquette Building in Chicago depicts scenes from his life. A plaque on the Michigan Avenue Bridge over the Chicago River shows Marquette and Joliet, who had passed there on their return journey north; a sculpture on the bridge curiously portrays Marquette in a Franciscan habit.

Nelson places her research on this artwork in the context of local lore. Mentioning the luxurious Hotel Pere Marquette in Peoria, Ill., she notes that Peoria was an important stop on the vaudeville circuit (hence the expression "if it plays in Peoria"). And she writes that Archbishop Joseph H. Schlarman of Peoria in 1933 "was an early advocate of ethanol...and 'warned about the impending danger of reliance on foreign oil.'" These additional stories provide an enhanced context for this serious study of a very particular subject in art history.

Nelson's research and her interpretation of it are very impressive. The book would have benefited, though, from more careful editing. Commas appear or fail to appear without system. Misplaced modifiers are awkward. Thus, "Mounted on a bluff in a quarry in Godfrey, [Ill.,] the Rotarians lost

their lease ten years later." Or: "Offered as a raffle prize, a Cincinnati coffee shop owner won the painting and, in turn, put it up for sale." Also, the introduction includes 15 endnotes, but numbers in the text stop after number six. And the table of contents places Milwaukee in Illinois!

Still, the book is an interesting look at a limited but important facet of American history. People found in Marquette a quiet but fully dedicated hero from a mythic past who devoted his life to a cause he believed in before he died worn-out and sick at a remote river in Michigan. Besides this the Pere Marquette River, a county and a town in both Michigan and Wisconsin now

bear his name, as do towns in Iowa and Kansas, lakes in Missouri and Minnesota, an island in Lake Huron, countless parks and streets, Marquette University and High School in Milwaukee and proud high schools elsewhere. The book explains what one author called a "Marquette movement," that turned Marquette into a hero. In 1930 The New York Times called him "a man of stout purpose and pure heart" and wondered why the Catholic Church did not canonize him.

*Searching for Marquette* answers many questions, but not that one.

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

KENNETH R. HIMES

## TRADITIONAL WISDOM

### WAR'S ENDS

#### Human Rights, International Order, and the Ethics of Peace

By James G. Murphy, S.J.  
Georgetown University Press. 240p  
\$29.95

Announcements of the irrelevancy, demise or uselessness of the just war tradition are commonly made. Those making the claims are sometimes adherents to the tradition of pacifism and nonviolence who are disillusioned with efforts to treat war as a morally legitimate enterprise. Or they may be so-called "realists," who find talk of moral restraint in warfare foolish and naïve.

And yet the number of books published in recent years that take just war thinking seriously and offer thoughtful exposition, commentary and revision of the tradition suggests there remains a large audience of readers who find the wisdom of that politico-moral tradition still worth considering. For that readership the book under review will offer many rewarding reflections.

James G. Murphy is an associate professor of philosophy at Loyola University of Chicago. The book is largely devoid of theological materials, with no appeals to Scripture or official church teaching in the development of his argument. That will certainly limit the persuasiveness of Murphy's arguments to just war critics, since one common charge against just war thinking is precisely that it fails to reflect the teaching and witness of Jesus and the early church. As a work of political philosophy, however, the book ought to be taken on its own terms.

*War's Ends* is focused on what has been called the *jus ad bellum* segment of the just war tradition—that is, the determination of whether one should go to war. It addresses who should make that determination, with what

justification, for what goals and under what conditions.

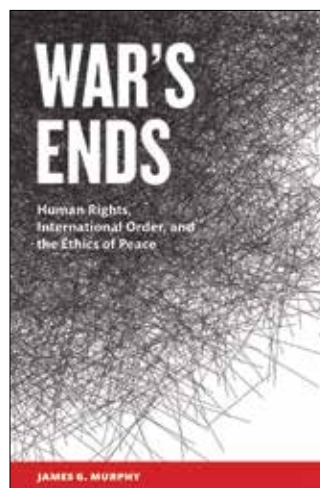
The author excludes from his treatment the *jus in bello* elements of means, that is, how to actually fight a war in a moral manner. He also largely avoids the study of recent proposals concerning the *jus post bellum*, how to end war justly and establish peace. Over the centuries there have been a variety of lists for *jus ad bellum* criteria. Murphy argues for six: competent authority, just cause, right intention, reasonable success, last resort and proportionality. He also proposes that this is the proper order for the criteria both in terms of importance within the tradition and because the later criteria logically depend on the earlier.

The crucial point, repeated often throughout this well structured volume, is Murphy's belief that any acceptable theory of just war is context-dependent. Assessing the morality of war must be done within the context of an overarching theory of the good. Drawing upon Augustine's

view of peace as a positive good rather than merely the absence of violence, Murphy argues that a satisfactory philosophy of peace in national or international societies entails 1) protection and promotion of human rights, 2) establishment and maintenance of a just order of political institutions and 3) the fostering of harmonious social relations among

the group's membership.

Skilled and proper governance is required to attain peace, not simply abstention from violence. The just war tradition is meant as a source of moral guidance for political leadership. "Political decisions to go or not to go to war are not judgments in favor of war as such or avoidance of war as such but



are choices of appropriate means to pursue the good and human well-being," Murphy states. Here he stands in line with the oft-misunderstood view of the German military theorist Carl von Clausewitz that "war is politics carried on by other means." Wise political governance is about determining what policy will attain the public good of peace, rightly understood. Simply avoiding war at all cost is no more a proper end of governance than is going to war for any reason. War is an instrument that may or may not be able to attain the public good of peace in a given situation. Making ethical judgments about all wars independent of their context is to abandon the work of morally wise political discernment.

Following two opening chapters in which Murphy makes his case for a positive view of peace and the central role for political judgment when determining the morality of a given war, he then devotes a chapter to each of the six *jus ad bellum* criteria on his list. Each of these later chapters builds upon his foundational premises and contains a number of insightful and provocative ideas.

Among the ideas Murphy offers I found several especially worth noting. In agreement with much recent writing by just war thinkers, Murphy denies that self-defense is the mainstay of just cause within the tradition. It is, of course, one of the possible just causes for resort to war but it is not the sole one, nor even the most important one in the tradition. The goods of justice, international order and peace all have their salience for determining just cause in our present circumstance.

Sovereignty is a much discussed idea in our age of globalization, what with genocides and other humanitarian crises vividly present in our memories, and the author outlines a sensible approach to the question. Murphy's focus on the importance of good political governance for true peace leads him to adopt a strong bias for human-

itarian intervention, even to the point of considering unilateral action in certain cases.

Of particular assistance for understanding the *jus ad bellum* is the chapter on right intention. Even many proponents of just war do not always understand this central element of the tradition. Murphy deftly explains that intention is not to be confused with motive. Intention answers the question, "what are you going to do?" not "why are you doing that?" Intention is also not to be confused with just cause. As Murphy writes, "It is one thing for a state to have just cause to go to war; it is quite another for it to have worked out a contextually appropriate response, involving a well-crafted intention."

Right intention refers to specific action; it has to do with clarity about what precisely one is seeking to achieve by the decision to use armed force. A state may intend too little or too much through waging war, and the challenge of right intention is to achieve a proper match between legitimate, concrete goals and strategic military action. Correctly understood, the classic criterion of right intention ought to address many of the issues that some just war theorists now discuss under the new rubric of *jus post bellum*.

In a book of this kind, one that argues for a number of particular interpretations and proposals, the reader is bound to have questions. In his treatment of preventive war, as distinct from pre-emptive attack, I found Murphy unpersuasive. I also wonder if the extensive scope he gives to "remote" right intention does not wind up treating the entire realm of statecraft as fall-

## GOD WATCHING

I'd been thinking of the veins

On the back of the hand:

A photo I'd seen of a woman

Clutching her baby in Darfur;

An old man, eyes closed,

Palming his forehead on the metro;

Ignatius in the painting clasping

A crucifix to his chest—the veins blue,

Raised like mole-runs

In soft earth. I was driving past

The Safeway, when something—a slit,

A scent—car window down, crickets'

Monkey-chatter, sun

Low orange—and soon

Siphoned-in cool and dark,

The rind and color of everything.

And I thought of the light

Coming into my office

Through two bent slats in a window-

Blind I couldn't fix

And felt whatever You want.

### RICK CANNON

*Rick Cannon has taught English at Gonzaga College High School in Washington, D.C., for the past 38 years. His poems have appeared in dozens of periodicals, including America, The Iowa Review and Midwest Quarterly. Mr. Cannon has served in recent years on the Literature Panel of the MSAC and as an executive editor of the oldest poetry periodical in the nation, Poet Lore.*



ing under the *ius ad bellum* criterion. I also think the author is a bit too reliant on one account of Aquinas's thought in his dismissal of the idea of there being any presumption against war in Thomas.

These reservations as I have expressed do not in any way deny the value of Murphy's book. There is much to

chew on and engage in this well written addition to the recent literature on just war.

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**KENNETH R. HIMES, O.F.M.** *teaches in the theology department of Boston College. His book Christianity and the Political Order (Orbis Books) recently received the first place award for social teaching from the Catholic Press Association.*

difficult struggle to preserve their faith than their co-religionists in Maryland, where a continuous supply of Jesuit (and to a lesser extent Franciscan) missionaries assured the presence of the sacramental ministry of the institutional church. Unbelievably, the English Province of the Society of Jesus had a surplus of manpower to spare for the Maryland mission in the 17th and 18th centuries, although they nearly discontinued the mission more than once.

Curran is admirably fair in his treatment of contentious issues. He notes the widely accepted opinion that the main motive that inspired the first Lord Baltimore (George Calvert) to establish the Maryland colony was financial rather than religious. However, adds Curran, "The Calverts' concern to construct a society where Catholics could participate fully was genuine enough." Curran is notably even-handed also in his analysis of the ongoing tensions between the Calverts and the Jesuits, which erupted within two years of the establishment of Maryland in 1634.

American Catholics are understandably proud of Maryland's Act of Toleration in 1649, passed by a predominantly Catholic Assembly, guaranteeing religious toleration to most Christians. Curran emphasizes its radical nature in a world where separation of church and state was regarded as a contradiction in terms. Some historians have minimized the significance of the Act of Toleration by pointing out that it was a purely pragmatic maneuver on the part of a beleaguered Catholic minority, who regarded it as the sole way to preserve religious toleration for

themselves. But it evolved into a sincere American Catholic commitment to the principle of religious freedom that three

THOMAS J. SHELLEY

## COLONIAL CATHOLICS

### PAPIST DEVILS Catholics in British North America, 1574-1783

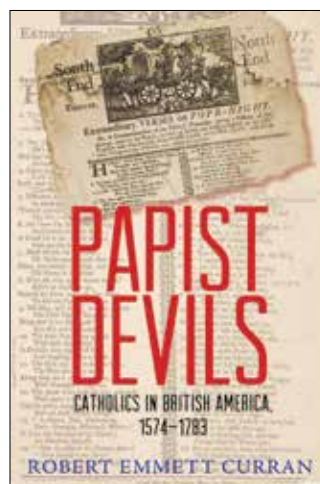
By Robert Emmett Curran  
The Catholic University of America Press.  
320p \$29.95

Scholars rarely have the good fortune to be able to return to their initial field of interest after a long interruption. An exception to that rule is Robert Emmett Curran, professor emeritus of history at Georgetown University, who temporarily set aside his extensive research in colonial and early Catholic history in English-speaking North America 30 years ago to write a magisterial three-volume history of Georgetown University at the request of the president of the university. His history of Georgetown drew plaudits from many quarters, including Georgetown's best known contemporary alumnus, former President Bill Clinton. In his retirement, one of the topics to which Curran has redirected his attention is his long-standing interest in tracing the formation of the distinctive features of American Catholicism as early as the 17th century.

It is obvious that Curran is not relying upon dog-eared index cards in his file cabinet. Both his methodology and bibliography reflect the cutting-edge approach of many scholars of American religious history today, who emphasize the "Atlantic dimension" of colonial

American religious history by tracing the interaction of events on both sides of the Atlantic. This trans-Atlantic connection is especially important in explaining the constantly shifting fortunes of Catholics in colonial Maryland, the heartland of English-speaking Catholicism in North America, since the legal status of Catholics in the colony was inextricably entwined with political developments in the mother country.

Curran sets the context in his initial chapter with a survey of the impact of the Protestant Reformation not only in England, but also in Ireland and Scotland. Hence he prefers to speak of British America rather than English America. A welcome and unusual addition is his extended and informative treatment of the fate of Catholics in the British islands in the Caribbean, especially Montserrat and St. Kitts. At one point there were more Catholics (many of them Irish exiles) in the British Caribbean than on the British North American mainland. These Caribbean Catholics, who had to rely on the services of what Curran calls "ad hoc island-hopping priests," faced a more



centuries later bore fruit in the enthusiastic support by the American hierarchy of the “Declaration on Religious Liberty” at the Second Vatican Council, a conciliar document that Msgr. John Tracy Ellis called a vindication of the only form of church-state relations that American Catholics have ever known.

Although Curran includes Pennsylvania, New York and even Acadia in his study, he concentrates on Maryland. Catholics never numbered more than 10 percent of the population, and many were poor, but there was also a Catholic elite who achieved extraordinary economic success despite the political disabilities that they suffered because of their religion. By the 1750s 10 of the 20 wealthiest men in Maryland were Catholics. Curran tells us that the Maryland Catholic gentry were able to afford dowries of as much as £300 for their daughters who wished to enter European convents, and they were able to send the majority of their sons to elite Catholic schools like St. Omer’s in France. Remarkably no fewer than 82 young Maryland Catholics studied abroad in just the 14 years between 1759 and 1773.

However, in the run up to the American Revolution, even the wealthiest American Catholics faced an uncertain future, when the combination of the Great Awakening, the French and Indian War and later the Quebec Act of 1774 triggered a revival of virulent anti-Catholic bigotry. In 1760 Charles Carroll of Annapolis, the second wealthiest man in Maryland, told his son, Charles Carroll of Carrolltown, “I leave you to judge whether Maryland be a tolerable residence for a Roman Catholic. Were I younger I would certainly quit it.” Fifteen years later his son led a successful campaign to readmit Catholics to Maryland political life. Curran credits him with being perhaps the single most influential person in persuading Maryland to support the cause of independence. He was the only Catholic to sign the Declaration of

Independence.

It would have been understandable if American Catholics had remained neutral during the War of Independence, since initially neither side wanted their support. For once, however, Catholics backed the winning side, when most of them threw their support to the patriots in the hope that they would secure for them the religious freedom that the British government had long denied

them. Their hopes were not disappointed. Writing to Rome in 1783 after the end of the war, another Maryland Carroll, the Rev. John Carroll, the future archbishop of Baltimore, informed the Roman authorities that “our religious system has undergone a revolution, if possible, more extraordinary than the political one.”

Two of the major strengths of this book derive from the author’s famil-

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**MSGR. THOMAS J. SHELLY**, a priest of the Archdiocese of New York, is professor emeritus of church history at Fordham University.

## CLASSIFIED

### Books

*Charles de Foucauld: Journey to Tamanrasset*, by Antoine Chatelard. <http://www.brothercharles.org/wordpress/>.

### Pilgrimage

**CAMINO DE SANTIAGO** (Spain), May 2-12, 2015. After day in Madrid, six-day walking pilgrimage (approximately 10 miles/day) with retreat talk and Eucharist daily and ending with Pilgrim Mass at Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela. Contact Michael Cooper, S.J., at [mwcooper1@verizon.net](mailto:mwcooper1@verizon.net) or (727) 644-5544. Space limited. Early registration by Feb. 1, 2015. Resource: "The Way" (a.k.a. the Camino) starring Martin Sheen.

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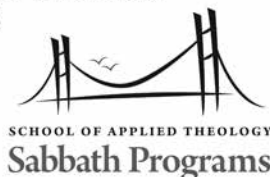
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# The Joy of Wholeness

SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (B), FEB. 15, 2015

Readings: Lv 13:1–2, 44–46; Ps 32:1–11; 1 Cor 10:31–11:1; Mk 1:40–45

*He went out and began to proclaim it freely, and to spread the word (Mk 1:45)*

In *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism*, Jonathan Klawans outlines the differences between ritual impurity and moral impurity. Moral impurity, which includes acts like adultery and murder, comprises a category of impure, sinful acts. Ritual impurity includes natural processes, like childbirth, marital sexual relations and menstruation, and does not reflect sinfulness. Leprosy, which designates any number of skin diseases, falls under the category of ritual impurity.

Although a person with a skin disease was guilty of no sin, “He shall remain unclean as long as he has the disease; he is unclean. He shall live alone; his dwelling shall be outside the camp” (Lv 13:45–46). Someone with leprosy was cut off from the totality of community and religious life. And while most ritual impurities lasted only a short time, often a day or a week, a skin disease could remain with a person in perpetuity.

It is no surprise that when a leper sought out Jesus, he begged him to restore him to physical wholeness so he could live in community again. Kneeling before Jesus, he said simply, “If you choose, you can make me clean.” And though he entreated Jesus, he did not plead his case but made a statement of fact: you are able to do this. It was a powerful act of faith in Jesus’ power and trust in Jesus’ compassion.

Jesus had “pity for the man,” rendered by the Greek verb *splanchnizomai*, which

indicates deep feelings, affection and love. Jesus was moved by compassion for the leper’s situation and “stretched out his hand and touched him.” With the word, “Be made clean,” and the touch, “immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean.”

Did Jesus do anything wrong in touching the man? Absolutely not, for although the ritual impurity of a leper was contagious, it was by no means sinful. While Jesus might have made himself technically unclean by touching the man, the healing restored the man immediately, so there was no impurity to transmit. Why does this matter? Because it is important to stress that Jesus was careful to follow the purity laws, not flout them.

After the man was healed, Jesus “sent him away at once, saying to him, ‘See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.’” Jesus’ compassion did not spill over into a joyous hug, welcoming the leper back into community; instead, Jesus sent the healed man on his own mission to fulfill the purity laws, as described in Lv 14:1–32. The man, by the healing of his leprosy, was only part way to reinstatement in the community. The priest must still examine him, and this process, as outlined in Leviticus, will take over a week to complete. He was on his way to full reintegration in the community, but he was not there yet.

But why did Jesus wish him to “say

nothing to anyone”? Did Jesus truly expect this man, joyous at being made whole, to keep quiet? Should he not tell the priests who had healed him? Since

Jesus’ mission was to call people into the kingdom, why would he tell the newly restored leper to say nothing? The healed leper certainly could not be silent!

He “went out and began to proclaim it freely, and to spread the word.” The number of people coming to see Jesus increased to such a degree that “Jesus could no longer go



## PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

How have you experienced and expressed the joy of the Gospel?

into a town openly, but stayed out in the country.”

There is tension between Jesus’ desire that the leper say nothing and Jesus’ mission to proclaim the kingdom. There are a number of statements similar to this in the Gospel of Mark. Scholars call this the Messianic secret and explore why Jesus calls people to follow him, heals people publicly and then tell these witnesses to say nothing to anyone. Is this a psychological ploy by Jesus or a literary technique of Mark?

Whatever the scholarly answer, the (healed) leper’s response suggests that the sheer joy of the Gospel overwhelms those whom Jesus has touched. Yes, the leper will fulfill the purity laws, but in his gut he knows he cannot remain silent after experiencing the Gospel’s healing power. **JOHN W. MARTENS**

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



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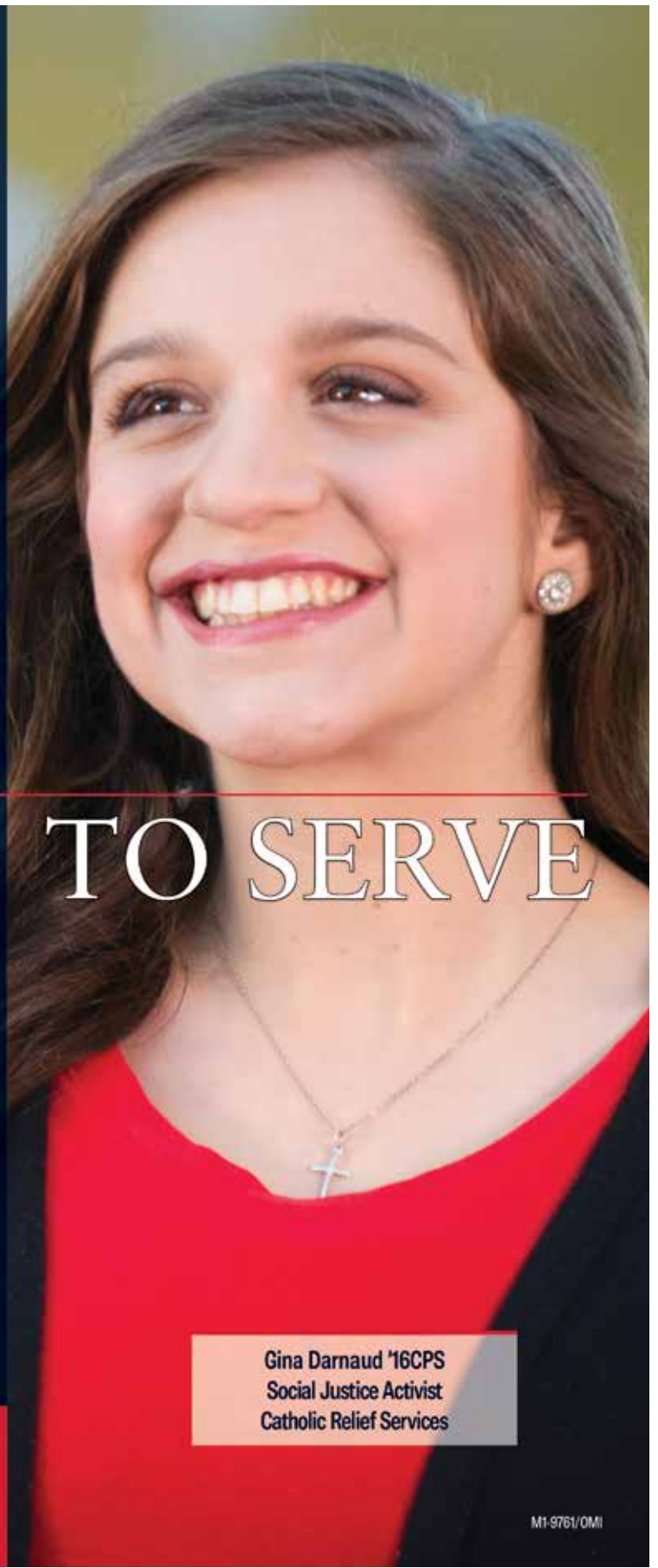
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