America

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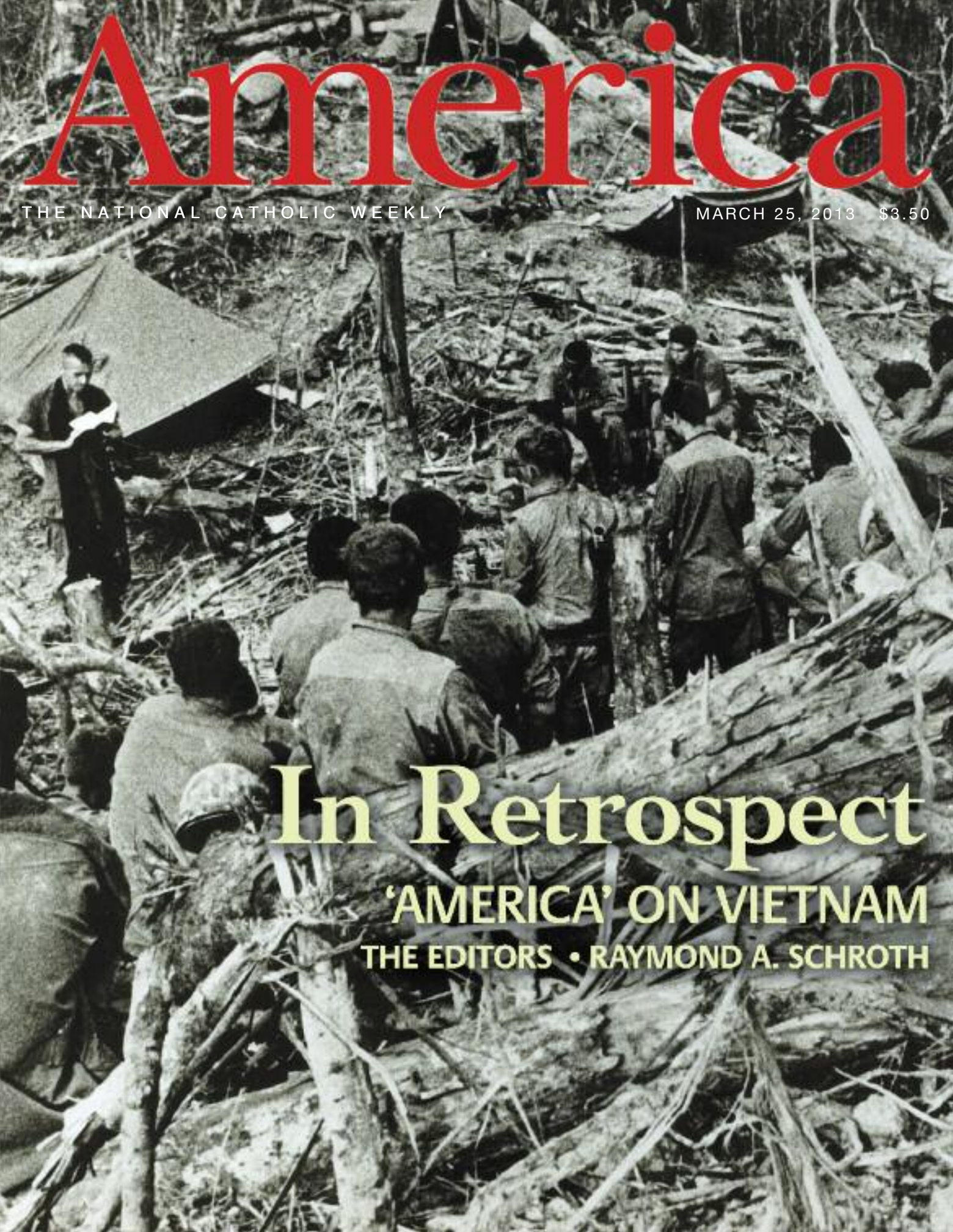

In Retrospect

'AMERICA' ON VIETNAM

THE EDITORS • RAYMOND A. SCHROTH

OF MANY THINGS

I arrived in Rome in the rain, grateful for the end of a long, bumpy flight. Though tempted to kiss the ground, mimicking Blessed John Paul II's customary arrival gesture, I opted not to; in my case, rather than an act of pious humility, it would have been an act of desperate relief. My fellow aviophobes, those among us who are intensely afraid to fly, might have understood, but very few others would. In any event, all things papal, and not just Blessed John Paul's travel habits, were much on my mind. Like thousands of others—journalists, priests, religious, general curiosity seekers—I had come to Rome for the papal conclave. By my count I am the third editor in chief of **America** to observe a conclave up close. Thomas J. Reese, S.J., editor in chief from 1998 to 2005, wrote a whole book about the Vatican and the conclave process. Another of my predecessors, Joseph A. O'Hare, S.J., was lucky enough to be in Rome during the historic year of three popes in 1978.

I arrived in the Eternal City with neither expertise nor the expectation of good luck. Still, I had arrived in historic circumstances: a conclave occasioned by the first papal resignation in 600 years. It was late and I should have been exhausted, but the lingering adrenaline from my fight-flight response on Alitalia had me wide-eyed. When another Jesuit suggested that we head down to the square to see the newly installed chimney on the roof of the Sistine Chapel, I readily agreed.

Even in ordinary circumstances, you cannot approach St. Peter's Square without expectant wonder. On this night, though, the walk is especially soul stirring; the place is filled with expectation, almost pregnant with hope; something familiar yet entirely new is about to happen. Even on this dank night, the square is filled with pilgrims; they are joined by dozens of journalists readying their klieg lights, studying their notes. How many similar moments—minus the klieg lights—has this place borne, I think. How many billions of people for trillions of minutes? Behind the scrim of time, against the backdrop of a fallen world, how many stories of faith, hope and love, have been enacted on this ancient stage? Impossible to say, really, except in faith.

We are told that we live in a postmodern world, that our common story is just so much mythology; that our "grand narratives," to use Jean-François Lyotard's famous phrase, have disintegrated and are irretrievable. Our 140-character contemporary culture seems to confirm that view. Perhaps, then, the world is in mourning, grieving the loss of its dreams, those irretrievable grand narratives. Are we right to mourn, though, or are we grieving for that which was always dead? What was it that Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger said just before the last papal election? "How many winds of doctrine have we known in recent decades, how many ideological currents, how many ways of thinking? The small boat of the thought of many Christians has often been tossed about by these waves—flung from one extreme to another." The pope emeritus, it seems, is a postmodern man: to him, the grand narrative is a dangerous modern fantasy.

With one, decisive exception: Amid the wreckage of man's ideological conjurings, among the moral debris of the many "-isms" that nearly destroyed us, there is the true cross, on which hung the one true story of our origin and destiny. On this soggy Roman night, the body of the crucified and risen One reaches out with Bernini's arms to welcome the weary pilgrims of this postmodern world, which has become, in a strange yet familiar twist in the story, a *praeparatio evangelica* for the new evangelist. Tonight, dozens of centuries into man's prodigal yet holy pilgrimage, the saints stand guard here; sentinels in stone at the symbolic entrance to eternity. The watchword? "Be not afraid."

MATT MALONE, S.J.

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Cover: A Catholic chaplain holds a service for U.S. troops, to remember fallen comrades killed in the area in May 1968, in Quang Tri, South Vietnam. Rolls Press/Popperfoto/Getty Images

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Raymond A. Schroth, S.J., right, talks about **America**'s coverage of Vietnam on our podcast. Plus, an interview with David Nasaw, **Joseph P. Kennedy's biographer,** and a conversation about **HBO's "Girls."** All at americamagazine.org

Unforced Error

The nation was treated to the mother of all Beltway paralyses on March 1 with the beginning of sequestration. A doomsday tactic that had been cobbled together as a prod toward rational compromise grew into the monster that consumed the 2013 budget, as $85 billion in defense and social spending cuts began. Worse, as sequestration ticked closer in February, some politicians began to promote it to the public as a more or less harmless way to get Washington spending under control.

But as it takes effect over the coming months, sequestration will begin inflicting real pain on people least able to endure it. While the nation's scandalous defense spending has long required sensible reduction, many Americans still suffering in the aftermath of the Great Recession need government support now. Some vital programs that serve the most vulnerable, like nutrition aid and health services, will be protected. But other programs—housing vouchers for the poor and disabled, for example—will suffer more from the cutbacks.

If common sense prevails, there remains negotiating room this year to put the country on a path to sensible spending control, measuring the special demands of the economic moment against the long-term requirement of deficit reduction. Are this White House and this Congress up to that challenge? The current rhetoric suggests otherwise. The public may have to wait until the next round of congressional elections, which may deliver a Congress more amenable to reality and less captive to ideology.

Mainstream Celibacy

The confluence of the papal conclave and the resignation of Cardinal Keith O'Brien of Scotland focused the media's attention on celibacy. Cardinal O'Brien was accused by several priests of making inappropriate sexual advances; soon afterward he resigned, turned down a chance to attend the conclave and then issued an apology. For a few in the media (not all, of course) this was an opportunity to opine on something that some opinion-makers seem to know little about: the celibate life. Priests are lonely, said several op-eds; and celibacy was said (against all the evidence) to be a direct cause of sexual abuse.

Some op-ed articles seem to have been written by people who have never met a priest who has promised celibacy or a member of a religious order who vows chastity. (That the two—celibacy and chastity—are different also eludes many commentators.) There are, of course, fewer celibate men and women around these days in the clergy and religious orders. But it rarely seems to dawn on some essayists that they already know many celibate people—unmarried men and women, widows and widowers, for example—who are not child molesters. Second, it seems impossible to them that someone could forego sexual intimacy and not be either sick or crazy and certainly lonely. Yet a survey by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate in 2009 showed that a staggering 97 percent of priests (that would be celibate priests) are "very happy" or "pretty happy"—two thirds of them being "very happy." Celibacy and loneliness rank relatively low as "problems" for them. High among "sources of satisfaction" was the "opportunity to work with many people and be part of their lives."

Rx: Real Reform

In his epic distillation of the wrongheadedness of the U.S. health care system (Time, 3/4/2013), Steven Brill asks a simple question: Why is health care so expensive? What Mr. Brill discovers is old news to those who have closely followed the decades-long debate over health care reform, but the numbers he uncovers retain the power to shock. In his forensic accounting, Mr. Brill discovers jaw-dropping markups at every stage of health care delivery. The gouging is rampant at both for-profit and allegedly not-for-profit facilities, where in a white-collar gold rush, some executives reward themselves with million dollar—and beyond—salaries.

U.S. health care now consumes as much as 20 percent of the nation's economy. Yet despite its high cost—as much as triple the per capita expense of other industrialized nations—it still achieves only poor to mediocre outcomes.

It is clear who benefits from the status quo, but who pays? U.S. taxpayers and health plan members, many of whom surrender each year a percentage of compensation that represents the difference between working for want and a reasonably secure middle-class lifestyle. About the only dependable players in this carnival of overbilling have been much-derided government bureaucrats striving to keep hospital invoices honest in the nation's vast Medicare system. So why has a greatly expanded Medicare, the so-called public option, been tabled in discussions of health care reform?

Mr. Brill explains that however sensible it may be, the public option creates too many "losers" among people in health care with clout in Washington. The cloutless outside the Beltway, however, deserve better treatment. Allowing industry lobbyists to continue to dictate the parameters of "reform" is a prescription for disaster.

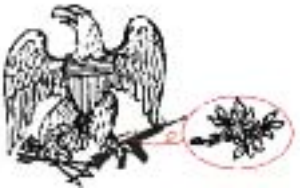
Vietnam Postscript

Last January marked the 40th anniversary of the "Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam," commonly known as the Paris Peace Accords. The principal signatories, U.S. National Security Advisor Henry A. Kissinger and the North Vietnamese emissary Mr. Tho, were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for their diplomacy, though Le Duc Tho refused to accept it. The cease-fire did not hold. Within months, fighting had resumed between the forces of North and South Vietnam; it continued until the spring of 1975, when the north completed its rout and proceeded to unify the country under Communist rule. The war had raged for more than 20 years and had claimed the lives of perhaps millions of Southeast Asians and 58,000 American soldiers.

The 1973 Paris Peace Accords, however, formally ended U.S. ground involvement in the longest war in American history. The agreement also marked the start of a long, agonizing process of national self-reflection. The Vietnam War had destroyed a presidency, divided the country and wrecked havoc on the American psyche. As the returning troops disembarked, they met a people in the midst of an existential crisis. In the view of much of the world, the United States had gone within a single generation from being savior of the free world to being the globe's greatest villain, mainly because of its conduct in Vietnam. Throughout the country in 1973, Americans were wrestling with their complicity in what many now conceded was an objectively immoral conflict.

This magazine was no exception. **America**'s commentary on U.S. policy in Vietnam had gone on as long as the war itself. As the historical narrative in the present issue shows, **America** was loath to see the true character of the conflict. A year and a half prior to the Paris Peace Accords, though, we had dramatically shifted our editorial stance: "What we must do is ask ourselves about our complicity," the editors wrote in April 1971; the loss of innocent human life had "mounted beyond the point of any possible proportionate gain in the name of justice." The conclusion of that editorial was correct, but we were painfully slow to reach it; slower than most of our peers in the Catholic press, certainly slower than the antiwar activists we had casually dismissed as irrelevant.

America had generally good and reasonable motives for our reluctance to abandon the U.S. cause in Vietnam. There was, first of all, our concern for the oppressive and immoral nature of Communism itself. We were rightly horrified, moreover, by the genocidal and corrupt policies of Hanoi's Communist regime. But like most Westerners, we wrongly conceived of international Communism as a monolith and unquestioningly subscribed to its corollary: the dubious "domino theory," the notion that if one country fell to international Communism, its neighbors would soon follow.



There were other reasons, however, more peculiar to us: Most of **America**'s editors at the time had come of age in the embattled Catholic ghettoes of the country's major cities; they were uncritically sympathetic toward almost any Catholic minority, including the corrupt Catholic minority that governed South Vietnam. The editors were also hesitant to criticize the policy of a country that had only recently come to entertain the possibility that Roman Catholics could be loyal Americans.

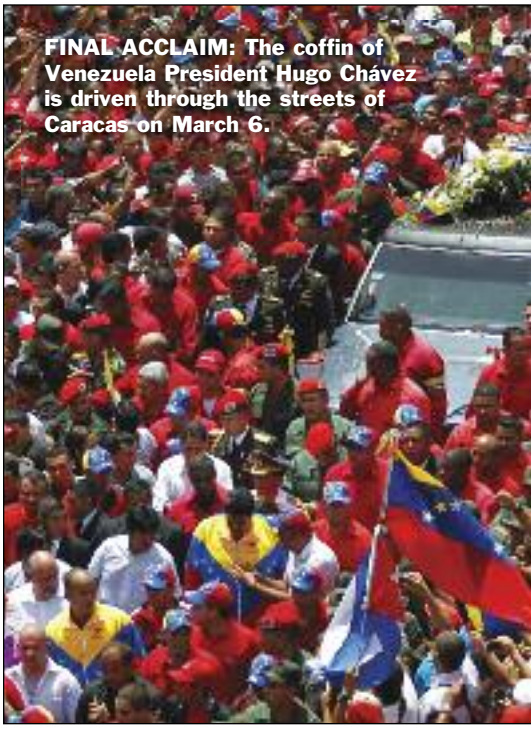
All of those factors help to explain why this magazine failed to grasp fully the futile and unethical nature of the U.S. intervention. None of them, however, excuse that failure. The editors acted in good faith and in good conscience; unlike others, however, **America** was unable to appreciate well enough and early enough what was truly at stake. Ours was not a moral failure, but it was a prudential failure with important moral implications, and it presents an abiding lesson.

America chose Easter 1971 to announce the change in the editorial line on Vietnam: "For the Christian, Easter is the celebration of Christ's Resurrection, the affirmation of His victory over death and sin, the prelude to His entrance into judgment over all men. Lent, the six weeks preceding this most sacred of Christian holy days, is for the individual Christian a period of scrutiny, pruning and a purifying awareness of having fallen short of his calling and commitment. The end of Lent and the dawn of Easter, this year, provide American Christians with a unique occasion for profound examination of conscience."

In the spirit of the Lenten season and in recognition of the 40th anniversary of the end of formal U.S. involvement in Vietnam, **America** asks for forgiveness for what we have done and for what we have failed to do, and we join our prayer with that of our predecessors on the masthead: that the people of the United States will be imbued with "a burning sense of contrition and a renewed purpose to do better as a people."

LATIN AMERICA

Chavez Death Brings New Chance For U.S.–Venezuela Engagement


FINAL ACCLAIM: The coffin of Venezuela President Hugo Chávez is driven through the streets of Caracas on March 6.

The passing of President Hugo Chávez of Venezuela unleashed an epic outpouring of grief among his supporters in Venezuela, the likes of which may only be eventually paralleled with the passing of another larger-than-life figure in Latin American socialism, Cuba's Fidel Castro. Matthew Carnes, S.J., assistant professor of government at Georgetown University, said Chávez will be remembered as a leader who had an "outsized impact in Venezuelan politics."

Father Carnes said Chávez's passing offers an opportunity for the United States, politically and economically, to revive its relationship with Venezuela. Occasionally "capricious and doctrinaire," Chávez was "someone the United States had a hard time negotiating with," according to Father Carnes.

Whether his designated political heir, Vice President Nicholas Maduro, or an opposition candidate, most likely Henrique Capriles Radonski, governor of the Venezuelan state of Miranda, is elected to replace Chávez, Father Carnes expects a more pragmatic and less confrontational leadership to emerge. That could mean improved ties not just with Venezuela but throughout the region, he said, and a possible opening for renewed U.S. investment and partnership with the Venezuelan state oil industry. Despite Chávez's notorious distaste for U.S. political leaders, under his leadership Venezuela remained one of the largest suppliers of oil to the United States. This is likely to continue.

Chávez died on March 5 of complications from a respiratory infection nearly two years and four surgeries after his cancer diagnosis was made public. He was 58. He will be remembered for improving the basic lot of millions of Venezuelans, Father Carnes said, but more important, he offered to the traditionally politically and materially impoverished of Venezuela "an idea of what society

INDIA

Refugee Women Especially Vulnerable to Sexual Violence

For the single women in New Delhi's Chin community, harassment is part of daily life since they arrived in India from Burma. "Yes, men touch us," they say. "Men grab us when we walk to the market.... Men tell us we owe them our bodies for coming to their country." Women seeking refuge in New Delhi have fewer ways to report sexual harassment and assault without language skills, resources, knowledge of their rights or legal status. There are currently 20,000 refugees in the city, 12,000 of them from Chin State, the poorest region in Burma.

The U.N.-funded Don Bosco Center provides language and livelihood education to adults and informal schooling to young people in the city. The Jesuit Refugee Service began working in the Chin community in 2011, providing tailoring training to refugee women. At a garment factory they might take home 2,800 rupees ($55) in a month, but J.R.S. staff members hope the young women can earn a living tailoring at home with new sewing machines and skills.

This is an issue not only of income but also of safety. Without enough money to go to the market, most Chin women forage for food after midnight, when the markets have closed and unwanted vegetables have been discounted or discarded. Some go in groups for protection, but that does not always help.

"Delhi is not safe for women; we always get sexually harassed. Local teens brush against us and harass us in little ways. People steal from us. I need to go to the market to get discarded vegetables after 11 p.m., but I know I'm risking getting sexually harassed by local men," said "Elizabeth," a single mother who now earns money knit-

could and should be and then in some ways delivered on that." Whether or not his social successes can survive his passing is an open question. Chávez, Father Carnes explained, treated his literary, housing or antihunger campaigns as *misiones*, popular and well-publicized outreach efforts that did not necessarily leave behind a bureaucratic or political infrastructure that could perpetuate social progress.

The relationship of the Catholic Church in Venezuela with the president was complicated, if not at times downright nasty. "There were years that were difficult, tense," said Auxiliary Bishop González de Zarate, secretary general of the Venezuelan bishops' conference. "There were attacks and strong responses.... But I feel that there was a calming in the past year." He said that in the second half of 2012, the bishops' conference held two meetings with top Chávez government officials, including Vice President Maduro.

Can Venezuelan socialism, Chavismo, survive without Chávez? Certainly his personal charisma will be hard to replicate. "He was always the spokesperson," said Father Carnes, "He was always the focal point, always the one on TV giving voice to this and, especially behind the scenes, the one pulling the political strings to keep this moving inside of Venezuelan politics, and without that the idea can only go so far."

Father Carnes said the United States should learn a lesson from its choppy history with this polarizing Latin American figure. "One of the things he's pushed us on is how little attention we have given to our neighbors right here on the southern border," said Father Carnes. "And that's something felt quite strongly throughout the region."

While a parade of recent U.S. presidents were diverted from the hemispheric south by engagement with Europe, Asia, conflict in the Middle East and wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, U.S. relations with its closest neighbors and trading partners moldered on the sidelines. "We've ignored some of these really vital relationships right here on our borders that really do need more of our attention. That's something we can learn from the Chávez experience," said Father Carnes. **KEVIN CLARKE**

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ting baby clothes on a machine rented from the Don Bosco Center.

After the rape and murder of a 23-year-old Delhi woman in December, the city saw dozens of mass protests. Legislation to reinstate India's fast-track court for rapists is now being considered. There is also talk of changing the penalty for rape to death and of prosecuting younger offenders. There are no statistics on sexual violence against refugee women in India. Often these crimes go unreported.

"This is an issue that affects every woman in Delhi," said Rini, a Burmese Women's Development volunteer. "Indian women get groped all the time. I'm Indian, so at least I can talk back to the guy or go to the police. But refugee women can't talk to the police. If they do, the police don't listen, and they feel more marginalized." An investigation in 2012 of 30 police officers found that 17 of them blamed the victim.

"Margaret" fled Chin State when she was 17, crossing the border to India's Mizoram State, where more than 110,000 Chin people live. She came to New Delhi because it is the only city in India where asylum seekers can register with the United Nations and receive some semblance of legal protection. Now she says Delhi is too dangerous, and she and a friend want to return to Mizoram to work on a farm until it is safe to return to Burma.

They will earn substantially less money, but they say they will have a safe community and know their neighbors. "I truly thought it would be safer here than in Burma. Now I don't know," Margaret said.

TARGETS? Chin refugees learn tailoring in New Delhi.

MOLLY MULLEN *is the J.R.S. international communications consultant.*

Conclave's Key Issues?

As the Roman Catholic Church begins, at this writing, a conclave to elect a new pope, Catholics in the United States tend to view the scandal over sexual abuse by members of the clergy as the most important problem facing their church today. According to a nationwide survey conducted by the Pew Research Center, 34 percent of U.S. Catholics mention sexual abuse, pedophilia or some other reference to the scandal as the church's most important problem. No other problem garners more than 10 percent of responses. Seven percent cite low attendance at Mass, a loss of followers or a general loss of faith in society as the most important problem facing the church at this time. An equal number say the church's most important problem is that it is outdated or out of touch and needs to become more modern or adapt to changes in society. More than a quarter of U.S. Catholics say the most important way the Catholic Church helps society today is by serving those in need through charitable works, and 11 percent say it is through providing moral guidance and values.

Archdiocesan Agencies, Buildings Consolidated

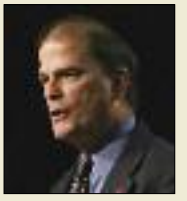
Archbishop Charles J. Chaput of Philadelphia announced on March 7 that the archdiocese will consolidate some facilities and close some buildings on the campus of St. Charles Borromeo Seminary in Wynnewood, Pa. "St. Charles Borromeo Seminary is the heart of our church in Philadelphia, and we remain dedicated to not only maintaining its presence in our community, but strengthening it for many generations to come," Archbishop Chaput said in a statement. "The plan being announced today will ensure the future viability and sustainability of our seminary now and in the future." The plan, which is expected to take three to five years to implement completely, will see the campus reduced from its current 75 acres to 30 acres. Meanwhile the Archdiocese of Chicago has laid off 60 pastoral center employees and plans to consolidate some of its agencies because of a budget deficit in its administrative operations, according to Cardinal Francis E. George.

Immigration Reform Efforts Funded

The Catholic Campaign for Human Development, the official domestic antipoverty agency of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, has approved special grants totaling $800,000 to mobilize Catholics on behalf of comprehensive immigration reform and to prepare Catholic institutions to serve communities benefiting from the reform legislation. "These grants represent a distinctively Catholic contribution in promoting comprehensive immigration reform. They will strengthen the capacity of our institutions to help immigrant families come out from the shadows and participate more actively in American society," said Bishop Jaime Soto of Sacramento, Calif., chairman of the U.S. bishops' C.C.H.D. subcommittee, on March 5. The grants will support efforts to promote immigration reform by Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.; PICO National Network; and the Justice for Immigrants Campaign, a U.S.C.C.B. initiative that works to educate Catholics on church teaching about immigration and to promote immigration reform.

From CNS and other sources.

NEWS BRIEFS



Gordon Wadge

The U.S. bishops' Committee on Doctrine will **meet with the nation's theological societies** on March 16 at The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. ✦ Three Republican House members on March 5 introduced a bill to protect the **conscience rights** of health care workers and employers in response to a new federal mandate for contraceptive care. ✦ On March 3 Catholic Charities USA presented Gordon Wadge, executive director of the YMCA of Greater New Orleans, with a **lifetime achievement award.** ✦ Bishop Richard G. Lennon of Cleveland said in a decree dated March 4 that the Rev. Robert Marrone, leader of a faith community formed after its parish was closed in 2010, **incurred excommunication** *latae sententiae* for failing to reconcile with the church.✦ The next pope must be vigilant in **preventing sexual abuse** by members of the clergy and accept a policy of "zero tolerance" as the universal law, said Cardinal Francis E. George of Chicago on March 4. ✦ Bishop Matthew Clark and Bishop Howard Hubbard, **retiring from the sees of Rochester and Albany** respectively, were honored by Fordham University on March 6 with the President's Medal.

JAMES T. KEANE

Breaking News

Too young to remember the Year of Three Popes in 1978, I experienced the passing of John Paul II in 2005 as the only papal transition to compare with the dramatic events of this month. A jones for some sense of the history of such transitions drove me to the dusty back aisles of the library for accounts of the election of Paul VI in the summer of 1963, smack-dab in the midst of the Second Vatican Council. One should not embark on such a search, I soon learned, unless steeled for some melancholy at the lost art of religion reporting.

A cover story in Time (6/7/63) on John XXIII's death noted that the French clergy referred to Cardinal Giovanni Montini, the future Paul VI, as "Le Dauphin," the presumed heir apparent. Another cover story three weeks later, shortly after Montini's election, offered an appraisal of the new pope that would prove eerily prescient during his reign: "a Hamlet."

Hamlet? Le Dauphin? In long stories accompanied by detailed analyses, journals both religious and secular turned in high-level reporting that summer that sometimes got the details wrong, but did so with a level of erudition lost to their present-day heirs. How did we go from this to breathy takes on Benedict's love of red shoes or analyses of how the ex-papal cats would fare in their new surroundings?

In fairness, no one who has spent any time in religious journalism will claim that covering events like a papal transition is an easy task, for the oft-byzantine particulars of religious practice and belief can be almost impossible to communicate effectively in, ahem, layman's terms. How does one parse millennia-old dogmas, after all, for a culture where (according to Britain's Catholic Herald) a vendor of religious goods publicly offers both unadorned crosses and "the one with the little man on it"? Or explain theological controversies to a world where, a professor tells me, a Catholic university student turns in a paper on Calvin's "Doctrine of Double Penetration"? The philistines aren't just at the gate; they've carried off the Ark itself.

No one will claim that covering a papal transition is an easy task.

In the interest of full disclosure, I admit I might not have known the significance of the term dauphin were it not for a terrible Leonardo DiCaprio movie in 1990 about Louis XIV; similarly, I long thought that Macbeth, not Hamlet, was the Shakespearian protagonist prone to tormented bouts of indecision. But perhaps that is exactly the point about the level of discourse—can anyone point to a religion story in a popular news journal in 2013 and admit it occasioned an embarrassed trip to the bookshelf?

The cover of Time for the week of March 11, when the cardinals were meeting in Rome, by the way, was of an Olympic athlete imprisoned on murder charges. For reasons suspected but not entirely understood, he is not wearing a shirt.

Of course, we have heard this song before, that all history is a tale of degeneration. Italians even have a saying for it: "Si stava meglio quando si stava peggio" ("Things were better when they were worse"). We all, journalists included, have some devotion to the Golden Age fallacy, the notion that anything honorable or well-made declines in quality over time. It is hard to avoid because everyone suffers from the "affective heuristic," a tendency to put sepia tones around the past in order to color over the unpleasant bits. And there's plenty in those old stories that can be unpleasant, or simply boring. This very journal once ran a column called "Ecclesial Notes" that was little more than a catalog of episcopal appointments and transfers. Some time spent with these stories can make any reader wonder if there might be some more color allowed to the enterprise, or mention of papal cats.

In the end, there is much to be said for real experts. When the current media frenzy over the papacy dies down, the work of religion reporting can return to those wielding more expert pens, and hastily reassigned writers from the business and gossip beats will return to their own specialties. In the meantime, one hopes they will navigate the steep learning curve a bit more rapidly. The sooner the better. A former editor of this journal tells me he once fielded a call from a reporter who had previously quizzed him at length about papal history. "This first pope, Peter," asked the reporter, "Can you tell me his last name?"

JAMES T. KEANE *is an editor at Orbis Books in Ossining, N.Y., and a former associate editor of* ***America****.*

God calls.

WE ANSWER.

Heather wanted to be a journalist. When she joined the campus ministry program at her college, the experience led her to change her major to religious studies. She went on to earn a masters degree in theology. Heather is now the Director of Religious Education at the Cathedral of St. Matthew in Washington DC.

Many lay ministers are students when they hear the call to serve Christ and others. Like Heather, 77 percent of us hold degrees, and 46 percent have completed graduate studies. Higher education prepares us to bring pastoral care, adult formation, children's education, social concerns ministry and music to parishes across the country.

National Association for Lay Ministry

www.nalm.org

Learn more about Lay Ministry and hear our stories at http://co-workers.org

America at War

Tracking the editorial path of a magazine and nation in conflict

BY RAYMOND A. SCHROTH

Paris, spring, 1954. Berlioz's "Requiem" echoes over public address systems throughout the streets of a city in mourning. Dien Bien Phu, France's last fortress in Vietnam, has fallen to the Communist Viet Minh. It was the end of an empire. Thousands of miles away, in the old townhouse on 108th Street in New York, the editors of **America** took note. As a college student studying abroad in France, I had no idea I would one day join them in considering the issues of the day.

Over the next 20 years, the editors would wrestle with topics like the Second Vatican Council, birth control, the "new breed" of young people and campus riots; but the most divisive issue the staff had to deal with was the Vietnam War. In July 1954 representatives from the United States, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, China, France and North and South Vietnam were finishing weeks of meetings in Geneva, seeking the peaceful reunification of "Indochina." The Geneva Accords divided Vietnam at the 17th Parallel, with the understanding that the nation would be reunited following a general election in 1956. This general election never took place. In the south, the new Republic of Vietnam elected its own premier, Ngo Dinh Diem, while Ho Chi Minh, who had at one time hoped for United States support, established a Communist government in the north that would pursue a guerilla war in the south.

In those years the magazine staff included 15 resident Jesuits plus some Jesuit correspondents around the world. Along with Vincent S. Kearney, S.J., and Benjamin L. Masse, S.J., who had visited Vietnam and were the most outspoken on the topic, some of the memorable personalities included the editor in chief, Thurston N. Davis, S.J., a brilliant stylist with a doctorate in classics from Harvard; John LaFarge, S.J., pioneer of interracial justice; Francis Canavan, S.J., a sharp-tongued conservative; Robert A. Graham, S.J., defender of Pope Pius XII; and C. J. McNaspy, S.J., a polymath, music expert and admired friend of many younger Jesuits, whose careers he encouraged.

The accords, wrote Father Kearney in "Vietnam after Geneva" (**Am.,** 9/11/54), left the north's Communists with a considerable advantage. With its long common frontier with China, men and arms were easily smuggled across the border. The Communists were winning the ideological battle; during the day they played the role of the "loyal, peaceful farmer," but at night they arose from the rice paddies to hide mines in roads and harass the French. Father Masse, in "The Revolt in Vietnam" (11/26/60), reported that the South Vietnamese were growing dissatisfied with Mr. Diem because he appointed members of his family to high office and allowed no free expression or parliamentary opposition—in fact, he was a dictator. Yet Mr. Diem, said Father Masse, was an incorruptible patriot, a philosopher pondering the metaphysical base of Asian democracy.

The editors of **America** saw Vietnam as a religious war that divided the country. Some citizens viewed the righteous United States as the "city on a hill," while others believed that the nation was losing its soul in the war's waste of human life. In May 1963 Mr. Diem sent troops to quell a Buddhist demonstration in the city of Hue, where his brother, Ngo Dinh Thuc, was bishop. The soldiers reportedly fired into the crowds, killing several protestors, including children. Unrest spread to Saigon. The magazine knew it could not defend all of Mr. Diem's policies, but it fell back on its standard arguments: Mr. Diem's enemies are Communists; his faults are exaggerated. Finally: He is all we have.

The Coup

The assassination on Nov. 1, 1963, of both Mr. Diem and his brother and unofficial advisor, Ngo Dinh Nhu, prompted an editorial that asserted that were it not for Mr. Diem, all of Vietnam would now be ruled from Communist Hanoi. The editors did acknowledge that Mr. Diem sacrificed freedom of expression in order to win the war: "Maybe he was wrong. Maybe he was right. We're soon going to find out" (11/16/63).

But another political assassination soon distracted **America** from troubles in Vietnam. Father Davis used his Of Many Things column to link international and domestic sadness following the death of President John F. Kennedy. "What that long last week of November left us was an immemorial ache," he wrote. "Indeed, the whole earth ached, as the messages we publish in this issue prove." An

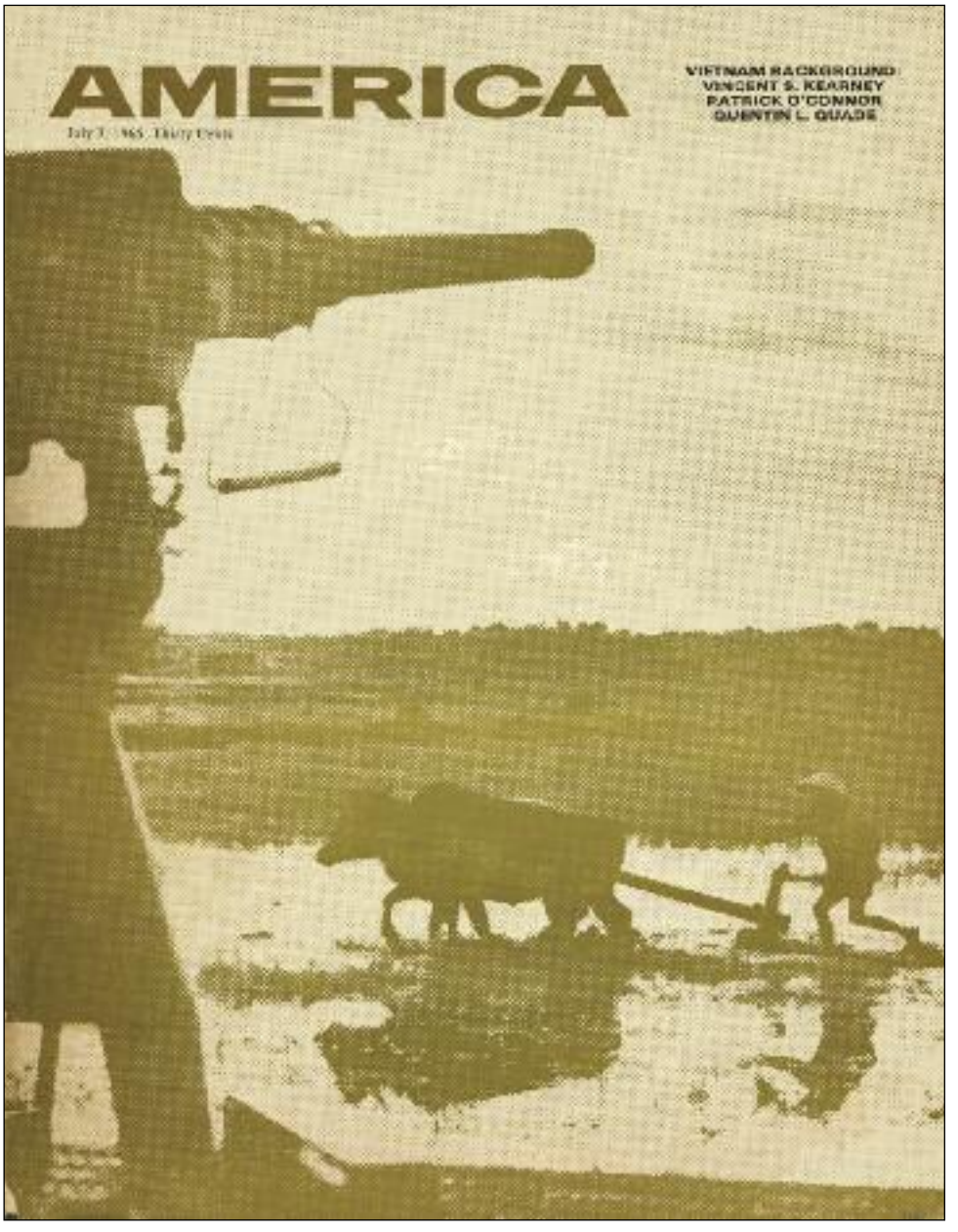
RAYMOND A. SCHROTH, S.J., *is literary editor of* ***America****.*

editorial, "Power and Responsibility," concluded: "When our president falls, the world trembles. We cannot longer pretend that our affairs are ours alone." Adding to the sadness in the office was the fact that Father LaFarge, two days after the assassination of Mr. Kennedy, lay down to read the paper and died in his sleep.

In April 1964, while finishing its 55th year of publication and with a circulation of over 90,000, the **America** staff moved into its current quarters at 106 West 56th Street in Manhattan. For most of the following year the magazine continued to argue that Mr. Diem had been good for Vietnam; that the Buddhists played Hanoi's game; that Catholics were being persecuted.

The editors cheered President Lyndon B. Johnson's "plastering North Vietnam's PT-boat flotilla" after engagements at sea with a U.S. destroyer in the Gulf of Tonkin in August 1965. Mr. Johnson used post-Tonkin authority granted by Congress to greatly expand the war. By the end of 1968, Mr. Johnson had completed "Operation Rolling Thunder," a prolonged aerial bombing campaign, and had built up troop strength to 536,000. By then nearly 40,000 U.S. service members had died in battle.

At home the peace movement manifested itself in several forms—"teach-ins," full-page newspaper ads and acts of civil disobedience, like burning draft cards. None of these "actions" won the magazine's approval. An editor's commentary scorns a letter to President Johnson that appeared as an advertisement in The New York Times with the heading, "In the Name of God, STOP IT!" The letter was signed by 2,500 priests, ministers and rabbis. **America** called it "sentimental clamor" that will please the Communists.



New Voices

Another view began to break into the pages of **America** after the appearance of an interview by Daniel L. Flaherty, S.J., the magazine's book editor, with the novelist Morris West, whose novel, *The Ambassador*, was loosely based on Mr. Diem. Mr. West describes the Diem family as "intransigent Catholics out of the Middle Ages." Mr. West himself was "turning away from militant crusades against communism." More significant was John C. Bennett's "Christian Realism in Vietnam," (8/30/66), which stated boldly, "We need to see first of all that we are involved in acts of inhumanity that are morally intolerable." Mr. Bennett advised Americans to abandon the obsessive belief that a Communist regime was the worst fate that could come to any country. In June 1967 signs of soul searching surfaced. In "Of Many Things," Father Davis asks a dozen friends, including a bishop and five priests, the same question:

"Should we get out?"

One respondent, John Deedy, an editor at Commonweal, says the United States is on an "unjust and foolhardy mission…almost genocide." Yet a Sept. 23 editorial still attempts to explain why the United States is in Vietnam. We are there, it argues, "to prevent 17 million Vietnamese from being swallowed up by a voracious and aggressive communism. We are not there to nourish the feeble roots of democracy." But within a few months, as both the casualties and the tide of resistance to the war rise, critics introduce a new element to the moral equation: Is the moral cost proportionate to the political means?

'Our Human Brothers'

Today American Catholics remember 1968 as a turning point. That turbulent year included the assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy, the riots at the Demo-cratic Convention in Chicago, the escalation of the Vietnam War and Pope Paul VI's encyclical "Humanae Vitae," which effectively alienated a great part of the generation with its ban on birth control. In the mid-1960s the national Catholic press became more aware of the moral issues raised by the war. In 1965 Commonweal gave increasing support to anti-war demonstrators, and by December 1966 its editors declared, "The United States should get out of Vietnam."

As Easter is a call for new life for the repentant, it means we must end our Vietnam involvement as soon as possible, the editors wrote in April 1971.

The National Catholic Reporter in January 1968 declared, "The war in Vietnam is now clearly immoral." Just a month before, the editors of U. S. Catholic condemned the Vietnam War as immoral, arguing napalm and carpet bombings were killing combatants and non-combatants alike, that the killing was brutalizing the killers and that the country's growing involvement in Vietnam polarized the American people and squandered national resources.

That same month, an editorial in **America** suggested that a bombing halt, which the bishops of South Vietnam had requested, would lead to the conference table, but adds, "It is time the peace movement stopped being an apologist for Hanoi and became relevant." In this context a landmark article by John McLaughlin, S.J., an associate editor, raised blood pressure and eyebrows. Titled "A Bombing Pause?" (1/27/68), it begins: "We are fast approaching a critical juncture in the Vietnam war which calls for an unconditional pause in the bombing of the North." The pause will reduce the suffering of the North Vietnamese: "Although we are warring with these people, they are our human brothers."

But the vapors of peace were blown away by the Tet Offensive at the end of January, when the Viet Cong—taking advantage of tunnels, hidden trails and the hospitality of local allies—suddenly appeared all over the south, including at the gates of the American Embassy in Saigon. The attack began during "Tet," the Vietnamese New Year's celebration when many presumed an unofficial ceasefire would be observed. Technically the U.S. side "won," inflicting heavy losses on North Vietnamese regulars and Viet Cong, but back home, the nation suffered a psychological trauma that would not heal.

On May 11, 1968, Father Davis passed the editorial baton to Donald R. Campion, S.J., a 46-year-old sociologist. He inherited a staff of 13 Jesuits who, over the next few years, would split in three directions on Vietnam policy: continued all-out support for the government; general support with moral reservations; a moral conclusion that the war was unjust and must end immediately.

Gradually, critical views gained print space. Father Davis, who had been my dean at Fordham University in New York, brought me in as a summer editor in 1965 and gave me a column for several years. Because my father was a World War I hero and I had spent two years in the army in Germany, I struggled with the idea that my country could be so terribly wrong. I covered the Democratic Convention in Chicago in 1968, the one that disintegrated into riots between Chicago police and thousands of young anti-war demonstrators. I got tear-gassed and witnessed an angry police officer pound his fist into the groin of a young man he was dragging off a Civil War statue. When I confronted him, he screamed that I should "go to Vietnam."

Because the Rev. Michael V. Gannon, a history professor at the University of Florida, thought no one should write about war without experiencing it, he went to Vietnam and listened to front-line troops for a month. He wrote, in "Up Tight in Vietnam" (8/31/68), that most troops were as confused and disheartened by the war as people back home. One described his motivations as staying alive, helping his buddies stay alive and getting "the hell out of here." Worst of

all, said a Protestant chaplain, so many enjoy killing. In their late night conversations they roar with laughter as they tell how they zapped a "gook" in the belly. "What are we doing with these young men?" he asked.

Jesuits in Jail

Some Jesuits felt compelled to oppose the war, even if that meant breaking the law. The activities of Daniel Berrigan, S.J., led to his short exile in Latin America, which the National Catholic Reporter claimed—and **America** denied—was occasioned by the hierarchy's intervention. Father Berrigan also traveled to Hanoi to pick up prisoners whom the Communists had agreed to release. He described his visit in an interview. Then in May 1968, nine activists, including Father Berrigan, invaded the draft board at Catonsville, Md., burning draft records in the parking lot.

In the editorial on the trial and conviction of the Catonsville Nine, the editors confessed the divisions among themselves but agreed on certain points: that the Selective Service Act should be reformed to allow for selective conscientious objection and that the defendants had a right to dissent. But had one the right to confront the consciences of others in a way that denies the others' freedom? No. The editors' conclusion: The nine chose the wrong means to dissent.

The following year the Chicago 15 pulled a similar draft card raid. "What to Do About Joe Mulligan?" (9/20/69), by James C. Fleck, S.J., concerned one of them, the 27-year old Joseph Mulligan, a Jesuit scholastic, not yet ordained, from Detroit. Father Fleck interviewed a selection of Mr. Mulligan's fellow Jesuits. It was clear that the Justice Department would try, convict and imprison Mr. Mulligan. But what would the Jesuits do? Should they pay for his defense? James O'Connor, S.J., a professor of canon law, was against Mr. Mulligan's actions and did not want him ordained, but the order is a family and the family must pay for the defense. Robert Hartnett, S.J., a political scientist best known as the **America** editor who stood up to the Communist-hunter Senator Joseph McCarthy, said, "If he wanted to act that way, he should not have joined the Society."

Meanwhile Robert F. Drinan, S.J., the Boston College Law School dean who was about to run for Congress in 1970, toured Vietnam. In "Political Freedom in Vietnam" (6/28/69), he revealed that the Thieu-Ky administration had imprisoned at least 20,000 persons "because of their non-Communist opposition to the Saigon regime." Father Drinan ran for Congress on his opposition to the war. He served five terms, until 1980 when Pope John Paul II demanded his removal, partly because the pope opposed priests in political positions but mainly because Father Drinan favored legalized abortion. Father McLaughlin ran

for the U.S. Senate from Rhode Island, without permission from his Jesuit superiors. He lost, left the Jesuits, became a speechwriter for Richard Nixon and now hosts a conservative talk show, "The McLaughlin Group" on television. Father Joe Mulligan does pastoral work in Christian base communities in Nicaragua. He recently wrote to **America** urging it to cease publishing ads for military chaplaincies.

Turning Point

The 1969 editorial year ended with the My Lai massacre. The editors wonder if Americans have lost the ability to mourn massacred people. Has human emotion become another casualty of the war?

If there is a clear turning point in **America**'s attitude about the war, it is perceivable in the editorial, "Easter and the American Conscience" (4/10/71). "What we must do is ask ourselves about our complicity." We are responsible for the subculture that has produced the Charles Manson murders, it argues, and the decision to carry the brutal Vietnam War forward. As Easter is a call for new life for the repentant, it means we must end our Vietnam involvement as soon as possible, the editors wrote. The loss of innocent life "has mounted beyond the point of any possible proportionate gain in the name of justice."

Finally, Msgr. Marvin Bordelon, director of the Department of International Affairs for the U.S. Catholic Conference (now the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops), cuts through the "gobbledegook" of the U.S. bishops' November statement on the war (1/8/72). For some, he writes, the statement means: "Further U.S. involvement in the Southeast Asia war is clearly immoral." Bishop Thomas Gumbleton of Detroit says anyone who agrees with the bishops "may not participate in the war." New Orleans Archbishop Philip Hannan disagrees. Msgr. Bordelon sides with Bishop Gumbleton. He says continuation of the war is "unjust and morally indefensible."

ON THE WEB

Raymond A. Schroth, S.J., talks about **America**'s coverage of Vietnam.
americamagazine.org/podcast

By spring 1972 **America** proposes amnesty for draft resisters in jail and those who have fled the country; the Paris peace talks have resumed; and a sweep of battle victories has strengthened North Vietnam's hand. At a May editorial meeting, winning, in the traditional sense of the word, is no longer considered a possibility. At best, the United States might deny the Vietnamese Communists a clear military victory, but it cannot guarantee South Vietnam an enduring peace. Still the editors write that further military involvement is no longer "politically or morally acceptable."

The final shock, two months after Henry Kissinger stated that "peace is at hand," comes when the Nixon administration orders the Christmas bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong, the "most sustained and devastating aerial attack ever launched against a foe in any two-week period in history." **America** says there is no possible justification for such brutality.

On April 30, 1975, the lead tank of the North Vietnam army smashes through the gates of the Saigon government palace. The president, Duong Van Minh, surrenders. American helicopters lift U.S. embassy staff and others from the roof.

Learning from the Past

Twenty years after President Minh's surrender, Vietnam was beautiful, prosperous and at peace. In Hanoi I visit the embalmed Ho Chi Minh in his air-conditioned tomb. In the Saigon war crimes museum a guillotine represents the French rule. In a photo, a G.I. proudly displays as a trophy the shredded head, shoulder and left arm of a Viet Cong soldier blown to bits by a grenade.

In the cathedral I pay my respects at the open coffin of the 84-year-old bishop of Saigon. No sound of Berlioz's "Requiem." On this day I take as my own a 1966 quote from the New York Times war correspondent Neil Sheehan: "I simply cannot help worrying that, in the process of waging this war, we are corrupting ourselves.... And I hope that we will not, in the name of some anti-Communist crusade, do this again." A

War of Words

The editors' evolving perspectives on Vietnam

The editorial is by tradition an anonymous literary art form; it speaks for an institution, not the individual at the typewriter or computer. But editorials are written by people—usually with a strong point of view and some expertise in the topic at hand. Thurston N. Davis, S.J., editor in chief of **America** during the period that included the Vietnam War, once wrote a short essay in which he claimed that he could always tell which New York Times editorials were written by Herbert Matthews, famous as a correspondent during the Spanish Civil War, by how often the metaphor "keeping the lid on" was employed.

The "beat" covered by the associate editor Vincent Kearney, S.J., included the Middle East, Far East and Africa, so chances are high that he set the magazine's Vietnam policy. Daniel L. Flaherty, S.J., managing editor at the time, told me recently, however, that the editors' reactions to the war were usually centered on what the president or a prominent official said and did, rather than on an examination of broader issues. This would apply also, I think, to the tendency to focus on a handful of newsmakers and reporters for praise or blame. These excerpts exemplify some themes of the 20 years between 1954 and 1974.

RAYMOND A. SCHROTH, S.J.

"Our Stake in Indo-China" (4/10/54) was inspired by Secretary of State John Foster Dulles' address at the Overseas Press Club on March 29, 1954, shortly after the agreement that divided North and South Vietnam. ***America*** *felt Dulles' speech prepared the American people psychologically for the possibility of a deeper United States involvement in another Asian ground war.*

. . .

On the whole, Mr. Dulles' clarification provided a direct answer to pleadings in this and other journals for a clear-cut statement of where the United States stands on the question of Indo-China. Only by proclaiming to the Soviet bloc that we have a stake in Southeast Asia and that we will defend it no matter what the "risk" can we argue at Geneva from a position of strength.

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Fog Over Vietnam" (3/7/64) was in response to what it considered "equivocation" in President Lyndon B. Johnson's speeches about when the present troops in Vietnam could be withdrawn and to the less than militant commitment of Senator Mike Mansfield, Democrat of Montana. ***America*** *restated what its own clear position had always been.*

If the American people are confused over our policy in Southeast Asia, we cannot say we blame them. Amid the statements and counterstatements, the proposals and counterproposals, that are flying thick and fast out of Washington, we ourselves confess to a certain mystification. At times we have wondered whether the government itself knows what it wants....

In these circumstances of divided counsel, the next move of the Administration came as no surprise. As though aware that spokesmen, official and otherwise, were flying off in all directions, Washington announced the formation on February 24 of an "interagency committee" to co-ordi-

nate U. S. policy and U. S. operations in South Vietnam. The move begged one all-important question: What was the policy to be co-ordinated?

As if in answer, certain elements of the press began launching a new trial balloon. The syndicated columnist Joseph Alsop and Max Frankel, Washington correspondent of the New York Times, for example, more than hinted at decisions brewing in Washington to "escalate" the war by carrying it into Communist-held North Vietnam. The time had come to give the Reds a dose of their own medicine.

There will doubtless be arguments for and against accepting the dangers inherent in "escalating" the war. Nevertheless, a decision one way or another cannot be made without a precise formulation of policy in Washington. As a start, we suggest that the Administration cut through the developing fog and restate our original purpose in South Vietnam.

This Review has been under the impression for a long time that we are in South Vietnam because at that point of the globe a militant, expansionist communism poses a crucial, front-line threat to the security of the free world. In that sense, Messrs. McNamara and Mansfield notwithstanding, South Vietnam's war is our war. In our opinion, the sooner we return to thinking of that war in those terms, rather than as a futile, frustrating, pointless fight (which is just what the Communists want us to think), the sooner shall we be able to mount a successful campaign. The sooner, too, will the American people be prepared to accept whatever sacrifices may be involved.

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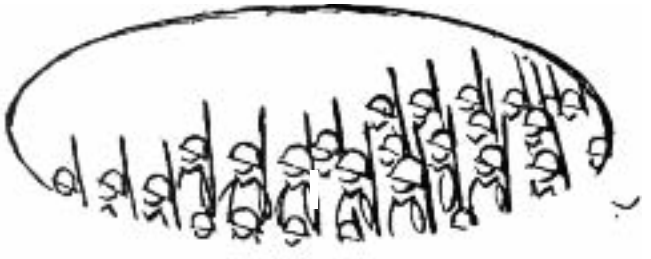
*"Peace Demonstrations" (10/30/65) examined a now accepted ritual that was just then taking shape. **America** consistently interpreted these events not as expressions of informed conscience but as giving comfort to the enemy. Within a few years Jesuit priests would be destroying draft records.*



During World War I, it was commonly supposed that wars start because the people are not consulted. For a certain brief period, the idea of "democratic control of foreign policy" was considered the magic key to lasting peace. Why should not the people have a direct say in whether their sons are to kill and be killed? Both reflection and experience soon made it clear that the vital interests of the country cannot be safely left to the instinctive reactions of well-intentioned but usually ill-informed millions, but must be confided to the responsible judgment of the duly elected representatives of the people. In some cases—in the 1930's, for example—popular pacifism encouraged expansionist aggressors to gamble on a cheap and quick victory over a defenseless and unaided neighbor.

It is hard to deny to the peace demonstrators of mid-October their right to register in public whatever disagreement they may have with current U. S. policy in Vietnam. Theoretically, this falls within their prerogative guaranteed in the Bill of Rights "peaceably to assemble and to petition the government for a redress of grievances." Yet there are aspects of the demonstrations that cause profound uneasiness and concern. This was not the harmless exercise of the right of appeal through constitutional channels. It had all the earmarks of a planned propaganda effort of dubious and suspect origin, whose real purpose was not so much to influence U. S. policy as to arouse world opinion against it. President Johnson is rightly shaken by the misleading and dangerous impression these demonstrations can convey abroad, particularly in Hanoi. The highly publicized and synchronized excursions through many cities across the nation could easily generate the illusion that a profound difference of opinion exists in the country. This could only encourage the Vietcong in their resistance, and cost more American lives. We fully share the indignation of Congressmen and others who deplore this "stab in the back" inflicted on young Americans who honorably answered their country's call and risk their lives today in far-off Vietnam—ironically, in order that demonstrators at home can continue to enjoy their constitutional right to march and to picket.

Archbishop Paul Nguyen Binh of Saigon

War is cruel. We need not glorify the conflict in Vietnam or indulge in outpourings of patriotic enthusiasm in order to justify it. This is a grim duty that a great nation must face up to as the price of its own liberty and the liberty of all nations. Those who, in addition to peaceably demonstrating, embark on a program to sabotage the Selective Service are entitled to no support. The law provides adequately and scrupulously for the rights of conscientious objectors. The destruction of a draft card is not the exercise of a right of conscience in any sense recognized by the Constitution. It is rather a gesture of contempt under which the card-destroyers live and whose benefits they are otherwise glad to share in. Their motives may be sincere, but

their actions must be roundly condemned.

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"The Heart of the Matter in Vietnam" (2/26/66) was a stark demonstration of the clarity with which the editors saw the conflict. George F. Kennan, former ambassador to the Soviet Union and author of the "containment" policy, testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee against further escalation of the war. Below is the second half of ***America****'s long reaction to his testimony.*

None of this, however, prevents Mr. Kennan from questioning our involvement in South Vietnam. Is it "necessarily the duty of the United States of America," he asks, to guarantee freedom everywhere? "There are more instances of oppression and abuse of power in the world," he believes, "than the United States alone can ever hope to remedy, and some of them are closer to home than Vietnam."

Those who so argue that the United States should play a limited role in world affairs seem to be ready to sacrifice such nations as South Vietnam, albeit unwillingly, to the demands of power politics. Let the world be divided, they seem to be saying, into spheres of Communist and non-Communist influence, even though, in the case of South Vietnam, as Mr. Kennan stated at the Senate hearings, Communist domination would be "morally unwarranted." Are we to conclude that morality has no place in the world of power politics?

Pressed to its logical conclusion, this position invites questions that John J. Roche, former national chairman of Americans for Democratic Action (ADA), raises in an article recently written for the Detroit News. "In this spirit, which is profoundly conservative in the psychological sense," says Mr. Roche disapprovingly, "an American can argue that the game in Asia is not worth the candle. What difference does it make in the over-all balance of power whether South Vietnam is inside or outside the Communist sphere? ... Why get involved in a faraway country between people of whom we know nothing? More broadly, what difference does it make if the Afrikaners butcher the Bantu, the Arabs overrun the Israelis or the Chinese crush India?"

True, this is probably a caricature of

the Kennan position. Still, if this nation were seeking a rationale to justify our disengagement not only from Asia but from Africa and Europe as well, the Kennan approach would provide it. Sen. Stuart Symington (D., Mo.) saw the implications when, during the Foreign Relations Committee hearings, he asked Mr. Kennan if he would advocate U. S. withdrawal from Europe.

As the controversy over our involvement in South Vietnam gets hotter, the American people should be prepared to ask and answer for themselves such questions as these. For the central issue in Vietnam is not whether to escalate or de-escalate, whether to bomb supply lines in the North or not bomb supply lines in the North, whether to accept the Vietcong as a legitimate political entity or not, but whether we are right and the Communists are wrong. And if we are right, whether we can still bring ourselves, as Mr. Roche puts it, "to turn 15 million South Vietnamese over to the terror regime in Hanoi."

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"Sheep in the Meadow" (4/29/67) was, for better or worse, a consequence of the ***America*** *staff's location only three blocks from Central Park. If I read this comment correctly, the author did not approve of androgynous hippies in bell bottom trousers, beads and purple pants. He did approve of the Vietnam War.*

On the morning of Spring Mobilization Day, April 15, crowds jammed the Sheep Meadow in New York's Central Park to shape up for the massive march to UN headquarters that would protest U. S. involvement in Vietnam. The vast "be-in" made the meadow swing. On one rocky knoll, an excited cluster of draft-card burners were dropping their cards into tin-can incinerators. Near them, on a ridge up under some trees, a stand was doing a smart business in "revolutionary books"—items ranging from Marx to Mao and Che Guevara plus sundry reprints from Ramparts magazine. On a neighboring knoll, a "Red Guard" Maoist contingent had mounted festoons of Vietcong flags on a big scaffold and were cheering as they sent a smaller flag aloft on a gas balloon. Down in the soggy valley below the two knolls, a band of bearded and painted members of the Obscene Anarchist International ("We're only doing our thing," said their mimeographed handout, spangled with four-letter words) were making large black anarchist flags. One was feeding cheese to a baby.

The smell of roast bananas was in the air, and hundreds of buttons marked "Banana Power" extolled the virtues of the newest psychedelic. Androgynous hippies wore bells, beads, purple pants, Viet peasant hats and a wide variety of buttons with such legends as "Sterilize L.B.J.—No More Ugly Children" or "R.I.P.—L.B.J." Several floats loaded with sculptured dead babies or bloody doll bodies were wheeled into line. A woman wore a hat on which seven naked dolls replaced the usual Easter flowers. A maypole fell

into formation behind a float carrying huge caricatures of Mr. Johnson, Mr. Rusk, Mr. McNamara, Senator Dirksen and Cardinal Spellman, all pictured as hawks and vultures. The New York Communist party marched with the tightest formation of any group and sang the lustiest. At the head of the section marked "Religious Groups" walked a man dressed as a priest, arm in arm with a woman in a bright mini-miniskirt. All the really "in" people carried or wore a daffodil. This practice is thought of as a show of "flower power."

Though the disciplined Communists, the Maoists and the assorted beatnik groups were so numerous and prominent, there were many other thousands of quieter people in the long file to UN Plaza. Quakers and Ethical Culturists: trainloads from cities like Cleveland, Washington and Chicago; some academicians in caps and gowns; teachers and social workers; a handful of ministers, priests and nuns; groups from Catholic and secular college campuses. A prominent Catholic monsignor walked at the head of the march with his arm locked into that of Rev. Martin Luther King. There were a number of Negroes on hand, but the turnout from Harlem was extremely light. It seemed as though the Negro community as a whole was not willing to go along with Dr. King's unfortunate new strategy of wedding the civil rights movement to the protest for peace in Vietnam.

At the end of the day, the rain came pouring down on the crowd, and Sanitation Department trucks moved along after the last straggling band of "unaffiliated" artists and writers. Men worked late that night cleaning the streets of Manhattan.

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"Easter and the American Conscience" (4/10/71), written, according to penciled initials on documents in the archives, by Donald Campion, S.J., then an associate editor, marked a turning point in ***America****'s perception of the war, prompted, oddly, by the confluence of two famous murder cases: the murders led by Charles Manson in California, and the slaughter, under the command of Lieut. William L. Calley Jr., of most of the inhabitants of a village in Vietnam. But it was also Easter, and the editor had to write about the meaning of the resurrection.*

For the Christian, Easter is the celebration of Christ's Resurrection, the affirmation of His victory over death and sin, the prelude to His entrance into judgment over all men. Lent, the six weeks preceding this most sacred of Christian holy days, is for the individual Christian a period of scrutiny, pruning and a purifying awareness of having fallen short of his calling and commitment. The end of Lent and the dawn of Easter, this year, provide American Christians with a unique occasion for profound examination of conscience, a burning sense of contrition and a renewed purpose to do better as a people.

The occasion arose from two murder trials, of Charles Manson and three girl followers in Los Angeles, of Lieut. William L. Calley, Jr. in Fort Benning, Ga. Both trials were lengthy. The Calley verdict of guilty ended the longest trial in the history of American military justice. The jury in the Manson case sat through weeks of hearings merely to decide what punishment should be attached to its previous finding of guilty. The questions posed, then, for the American public had little to do with the soundness of national justice and its concern for the rights of defendants. What we must do is ask ourselves about our complicity.

There could and should be some soul-searching on the part of the nation in the wake of the Manson trial. The murder of Sharon Tate and her companions was too gruesome to permit of sentimentalizing over the blighted background of those convicted of the deed. Yet there will be many families who wonder with pain whether they have had a hand in turning a young son or sister off into the hideous subculture out of which that murder party grew.

If national complicity in the events leading up to the Tate murder is surely mitigated, the same is not so of the massacre at My Lai. Grant whatever explanation one wants to make of the duty a soldier in the field has to follow his own conscience in carrying out any military order, the fact remains that the decision to carry forward the war itself is one for which our Presidents, our Congress and all of us bear some measure of responsibility.

ON THE WEB
Additional archive articles on the war in Vietnam.
americamagazine.org/pages

The summons of Lent and Easter, however, is not to fruitless efforts to allocate measures of responsibility, weigh past intentions or explore mitigating circumstances. It is a call to new life for the future, a life that is repentant but filled with new purpose. What does this mean about our involvement in Vietnam?

It must mean a firm commitment to bring that involvement to an end as soon as possible. Presidents and generals have long since told us that there is no sense to the pursuit of military victory. Whatever the savagery and stubbornness of the North Vietnamese, there is no point in trying to match them on those grounds. More important even in terms of traditional "just war" morality, the loss of innocent life—so tragically dramatized in, but not confined to, the My Lai affair—has mounted beyond the point of any possible proportionate gain in the name of justice. Since responsibility for the war rests on the entire nation, each of us should accept a share in the task of making it clear that our national will is to end it now. A

A Place at the Table

Breaking bread with Sister Cook

BY BRIAN DOYLE

When I was a Catholic schoolboy, several hundred years ago, the custom of our teachers, each and every one a sister of the Order of Preachers, was that if you forgot your lunch or had it stolen under assault and occasionally battery, you were sent, curiously without ignominy, to the adjacent convent. There Sister Cook, a spherical woman with the immense burly forearms of a stevedore, would make you a peanut butter and jam sandwich or a peanut butter and honey sandwich—your choice. And you would eat your sandwich at the huge, old wooden table in her kitchen, a table as big and gnarled as a ship, as she bustled about doing this and that; and she would offer you milk or water—your choice.

She never had a tart or testy word for you, but would even occasionally haul up a tall wooden stool to the table and perch upon it as golden dust and swirls of flour drifted through the bars of sunlight. And she would ask you questions about your family, all of whom she knew, partly because your brothers and sister had sat at this same table, and eaten of the sisters' bread and honey, and then been sent back through the tiny lush convent garden and through the vaulting wooden fence, emerging into the chaos of the schoolyard, where screaming children sprinted this way and that, some grabbing each other by the hair or necktie, until the bell rang and they again fell into lines ordered by grade and teacher and shuffled burbling back into the echoing hallways, therein to be educated.

Many a man has written elegiacally or bitterly of his education under the adamant will and firm hands of the sisters, but not so many have sung of the quiet corners where perhaps we were better educated than we were in our classrooms, with their rows of desks and pillars of chalk and maps of the world. Perhaps I learned more about communion at that epic timbered table in that golden kitchen than I did in religion class. Perhaps I learned more about listening as prayer from Sister Cook than I did from any number of speakers on any number of subjects. Perhaps I soaked up something subtle and telling and substantive and holy about service and commitment and promise from Sister Cook, who did not teach a class or rule the religious education curriculum or conduct religious ritual and observance in public, but quietly served sandwiches to more small hungry, shy children than anyone can count, in her golden, redolent kitchen, with its table bigger than a boat.

Sometimes there would be two of us, or even three, sitting quietly at that table, mowing through our sandwiches, using two hands to hoist the heavy drinking glasses that the sisters used. They must have had herculean wrists, the sisters of the Order of Preachers, after years of such glasses lifted to such lips. And Sister would wait until all of us were done, and we would mumble our heartfelt gratitude and bring our dishes to her spotless sink and be shown the door. And never once that I remember did any child, including me, ever ask her about herself, her trials and travails, her delights and distractions, what music she loved, what stories, what extraordinary birds. We ran down the path toward the vaulting wooden fence, heedless; and only now do I stop and turn back and look her in the face and say thank you, Sister Cook, for your gentle and delicious gift, which was not the sandwich, savory as peanut butter and honey can be, but you. A

BRIAN DOYLE *is the editor of Portland Magazine at the University of Portland and the author, most recently, of the essay collection* Grace Notes.

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM/LORI SPARKIA

Via Crucis

It began in curiosity.

Last summer I was in Paris researching a book on Blaise Pascal when the report of a miracle caught my eye. On March 24, 1656, Pascal's niece was suddenly cured of a painful eye abscess after she applied a relic of the crown of thorns to it. After investigation, the Archdiocese of Paris declared the alleged miracle worthy of belief. Commentators have pointed out that the "miracle of the thorn" took place in a Parisian Catholicism with intense devotion to the crown of thorns, housed in the luminous Sainte-Chapelle.

When I attended Mass at Notre Dame the following Sunday, a bulletin announcement leapt out. On Friday, the cathedral would host the veneration of its relics of the Passion. An ancient devotion had suddenly been revived.

When I entered the cathedral that Friday, two-thirds of the nave was filled with pilgrims. As the bell tolled three, a procession brought the relics up the aisle led by Knights and Ladies of the Holy Sepulcher, resplendent in their capes and mantillas. Dressed in a blue alb, the cantor led us through a series of psalms sung antiphonally. The piercing Miserere brought many to tears. Lectors read from Isaiah, St. John and Paul Claudel on the blood of the cross. A priest briefly preached on atonement. Before the veneration, thurifers raised a cloud of incense over the relics. The knights then held the relics up for veneration at the foot of the altar as the ladies acted as ushers. We bowed and kissed the gold-encrusted glass globe housing the visible crown of thorns. Many audibly wept. At the end of two hours, pilgrims still crowded the aisle to await their turn.

What are we to make of this?

Superstition? Unlikely. I was not the only one in the congregation who doubted that this was the actual crown worn by Jesus. The service program chastely informed us that "scientists have arrived at no consensus on the historical provenance of the relic." There was no special glow.

Nostalgia? Undoubtedly. The crown we venerate was the supreme devotional object of medieval Catholicism. As we kiss it, we touch the faith of the crusading Saint Louis in a church triumphant. We also retrieve the piety of the church's long 19th century, with its graphic devotions to the cross, now all but disappeared.

The veneration of the crown of thorns is an oddly postmodern act of worship.

And yet. The service is a child of the Second Vatican Council. The readings are in French, not Latin. The congregation sings one vibrant psalm after the other. The lay knights, ladies, lectors and cantor are the key ministers. Off to the side, the priest seems an appurtenance. Notre-Dame is not only the site of the church triumphant's rose window; it is also the boxing arena between the church and a persecutory modernity. Here in 1793, an actress posing as the Goddess of Reason proclaimed the death of Catholicism and the dawn of deism. Here in 1804, Napoleon crowned himself under the gaze of a wavering Pius VII, uncertain not only about Napoleon but also about the church's posture toward this new type of secular state: refusal, surrender or the labyrinthine path of accommodation which Pius ultimately chose.

This veneration service is about the need to spend time with Jesus crucified. Postconciliar reformers often emphasized the need to replace the lachrymose preconciliar focus on the Passion with a new stress on the Resurrection. But the felt-board Alleluias always sounded wan. As we kiss the crown of thorns we affirm the sober Christian truth: we are redeemed sinners. The tears of the pilgrims spring from the recognition of our unfathomable sin and God's unfathomable mercy as we face the cross head-on, without distraction.

The veneration of the crown of thorns is also an oddly postmodern act of worship. We do not simply speak about the cross or pray about it or even sing about it. We kiss the cross. We use that most intimate corporeal gesture to express gratitude and sorrow as we embrace Jesus crucified. It's about the body: the bloodied body of Jesus and our own lacerated body as we march, genuflect and kiss under the vaulted roof. An ancient dance of adoration has broken up through the tile floor.

This Lent, Notre Dame is holding the Passion veneration weekly rather than monthly. In that most skeptical of neighborhoods, beholding the wood of the cross is suddenly avant-garde.

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Editor's Note: See correction to this column published on 2/25 on page 37.

ART | KAREN SUE SMITH

CONTEMPORARY 'CRUCIFIXION'

Renato Guttuso's modern Italian masterpiece

'Crucifixion," a wall-sized oil painting created by Renato Guttuso (1911-87), one of Italy's finest modern painters, is widely recognized as a 20th-century masterpiece today. But a year after the painting was unveiled in Rome in 1941, during World War II, it sparked controversy. Guttuso, who had made an international debut by winning first prize at the prestigious Premio Bergamo in 1938, was in the process of establishing an international reputation as an artist. When "Crucifixion" won second prize in 1942, the honor solidified his stature and brought him fame. Yet that very year the Vatican condemned the painting, dubbed Guttuso *pictor diabolicus*, "devilish painter," and forbade Catholics to see the scandalous work. In several obituaries published in the United States, reporters noted that Guttuso had also been excommunicated because of it. According to one priest, however, he was reunited to the church by a deathbed confession.

"Crucifixion," by Renato Guttuso, 1941

ALINARI / ART RESOURCE, NY / © ARTRES

The identity of the person (or group, perhaps) who objected to the work is unclear, but the Vatican's concerns likely involved the painting's nudity and modernist style. The unclothed figure of Mary Magdalene (center) likely caused offense, given that she is a saint of the church. In fact, nearly all the figures in the image—male and female—are nude. Add to that Mary's gesture: she clings to Jesus' body with both hands. Cubist elements may have seemed inappropriate for a depiction of the crucifixion, not to mention the composition, in which Jesus is placed not at the center of the image, as custom has it, and his face is largely obscured. The artist's personal politics, as an active anti-Fascist and member of the Communist Party, also may have contributed to the Vatican's critique. These criticisms, however, should themselves be criticized in light of the painting's popularity, depth and potential to offer spiritual enrichment.

Today Guttuso's "Crucifixion" is widely admired and widely seen. In 2010, for instance, this work and other of Guttuso's antiwar paintings were part of a major exhibition in London presenting 20 years of anti-Fascist art by many Italian artists (Guttuso's "The Massacre," an expressionist painting from 1943, was chosen as the cover image for the catalog). And "Crucifixion" was recently on view at the Complesso del Vittoriano in Rome as part of a yearlong major retrospective, with 100 wide-ranging works, titled "Guttuso 1912-2012," to honor the centenary of the artist's birth.

Contemporary viewers must understand "Crucifixion" on two levels: its own historical context, that is, as a product of wartime Italy, and also as religious art. The former perspective

gives the work a politically charged interpretation. The latter enables the painting to inspire us today.

A close look at the painting will reveal that, at first glance, "Crucifixion" depicts the horror of a grizzly execution: three men are strung up naked on tall crosses, while three women below them weep, flail their arms or hide their faces. Boldly, the artist has placed the instruments of torture in the foreground, where they cannot be missed: not only a hammer and nails but also a knife, scissors and bottles, perhaps of vinegar/gall (to minimize pain). We find ourselves looking at an anti-torture, anti-tyranny proclamation, a work opposed to cruelty.

By directing most of the faces away from the viewer, the artist gives the scene an everyman/everywoman quality, as if to remind us that tortuous deaths happen to many people, even now. We can see the applicability of this scene to newspaper accounts of wartime atrocities in Syria, Mali or the Sudan. The image of crucifixion is readily applicable to our times.

The artist's appeal to the crucifixion of Jesus enables viewers to see more clearly and empathetically the forms of inhumanity taking place around them. "This is wartime," Guttuso confided to his diary, "Abyssinia, gallows, decapitations, Spain. I want to paint the agony of Christ as a scene of today...as a symbol of all those who, because of their ideas, endure outrage, imprisonment and torment."

While it has universal application, "Crucifixion" adheres closely to the biblical accounts of Jesus' death. A crown of thorns identifies Jesus, which allows viewers to recognize other biblical characters from the story: the thieves, one of whom is painted in a blood-curdling cadmium red, and the disconsolate Magdalene. Two armed men on horseback, Roman soldiers, keep watch; the one holding a pair of dice has won the wager for Jesus' cloak, which he has draped over his mount. The story is as clear as a stained glass window, and Guttuso knew that in the 1940s even Italian peasants could read its meanings. To magnify both the visual tension and the narrative drama, the artist has packed eight people and two horses into the picture. Behind them lies the city, a telling inclusion that lets the viewer see just how far off and isolated is this murderous episode we are witnessing. Overhead hovers a sky blackened by grief.

In choosing the crucifixion as a subject, Guttuso pointedly reminds viewers that Rome exercised world power in Jesus' day and that religious leaders colluded with the Romans in Jesus' death. As Guttuso painted, Benito Mussolini's Rome allied itself with Adolph Hitler; the Axis powers invaded European nations and systematically slaughtered Jews (like Jesus) by the millions. The dictators had largely co-opted the churches, despite instances of resistance. "Crucifixion" protests this abuse of religious and state power.

In fact, Guttuso painted a preparatory watercolor study entitled "Die Passion," in which one soldier on horseback bears the face of Adolph Hitler; he raises his arm in salute and looks directly at the viewer. This was a brave thing for an artist to commit to paper in 1940. It is not surprising that Guttuso omitted this caricature from "Crucifixion." That decision kept the painting from being tied to one historical era and magnified its applicability to future generations. The crucifixion itself gives the work its inherent, transcendent power.

"Crucifixion" is now 72 years old. Its modernist style speaks the language of contemporary people, accustomed as we are to cubist elements, distorted forms and chaotic movement in an image. We have grown up with Picasso's antiwar mural of 1937, "Guernica," which influenced Guttuso, who started work on "Crucifixion" just three years after seeing Picasso's stun-

KISSING THE CROSS

Kissing the cross,
    O precious cross,
it blisters the lips
like the hot coal
    held to Isaiah.

    O holy cross,
there is a body on it
    with a deep wound
the wound dealt by the world
    to the hopes of God.

    O beautiful God
    unrecognizable
who could not let us be
in our blind man's bluff
    our cruel humors

    O spent flesh
    that took on ours,
    O banked fire
beyond extinguishing,
        brand me.

JAMES S. TORRENS

JAMES S. TORRENS, S.J., *is* ***America****'s poetry editor.*

ning protest against the Spanish Civil War.

"Crucifixion," which depends on flattened shapes of red, blue, brown, gray and white, makes real for us the central scandal of Christianity—that the humanity Jesus desired to save, instead rejected, tortured and killed him like a common criminal. The painting helps us draw parallels with current atrocities, as the artist had hoped.

Furthermore, although nudity is ubiquitous in advertisements across many cultures, most viewers today would not allow it to obstruct the spiritual message of the art. And although nudity is depicted, it is the nakedness, a related but distinct concept, that makes a strong statement. Was not the crucifixion a historic nadir, a traumatic moment on the human calendar when the human race and its institutions were revealed in their abject nakedness, in destructive rebellion against God and wholly in need of redemption? The mayhem depicted in Guttuso's painting describes those days before Jesus' tomb was found empty, when hope seemed lost and humanity seemed condemned to meaningless suffering. Surely that is worth pondering.

ON THE WEB
Kerry Weber leads
a discussion of HBO's "Girls."
americamagazine.org/television

When I saw Guttuso's painting for the first time, last November in Rome, I was deeply moved. In reflecting on it, I have found the work to be a rich and inspiring resource, with themes as timely as they are broadly applicable. As a Lenten image, it assists with prayer and meditation.

Art looks different over time. Time can divorce or at least distance an artwork from the historical events that motivated the artist. Historic events may once have given the work a special urgency and power as it poured light on some horror or injustice crying out for redress. If such timeliness and critical insight, or the style or the nudity of the figures, brings condemnation of a work, its artistic merit and spiritual meaning may be obscured—for a time. Fortunately, a painting's true meaning and spiritual significance will eventually become clear if the work is a masterpiece. Renato Guttuso's "Crucifixion" continues to communicate on both the religious and the political level, and the art community has judged it, aesthetically, to be a masterwork.

KAREN SUE SMITH *is the former editorial director of* ***America.***

BOOKS | TOM FOX

A REALITY UNREDACTED

KILL ANYTHING THAT MOVES
The Real American War In Vietnam

By Nick Turse
Metropolitan Books. 384p $30

Reading *Kill Anything That Moves* was a disturbing and emotional experience for me. I found myself tearing up, gagging at times, as I turned the pages. The book released ghosts long buried in my psyche, stirring memories of anger and bitterness: anger at arrogant policymakers; bitterness at a seemingly indifferent public.

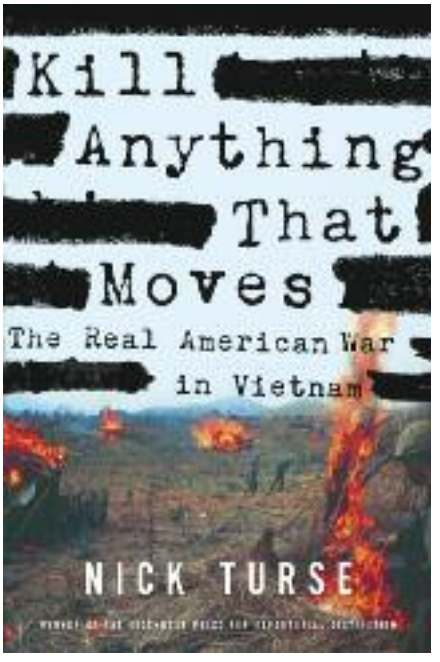
The book also brought back feelings of melancholy, frustration and loneliness as I recalled how much I enjoyed living in a foreign land despite

the war, how impossible it was to capture the attention of an uninformed people and to share adequately with them the unconscionable brutalities of the Vietnam War.

After graduating from Stanford in 1966, a time of high idealism in the wake of the Second Vatican Council, and bolstered by Thomas Merton's writings on nonviolence, I joined a nonprofit organization founded by Mennonites and Quakers, the International Voluntary Services. I asked to serve in Vietnam as a volunteer. After intense language training, I was sent to the capital of Phu Yen Province, a coastal town in central Vietnam called Tuy Hoa. For two years I lived there and worked among war refugees in makeshift camps built on sand. Most of the thousands of displaced farmers were women, children and the elderly. The men were off fighting for one side or the other.

I vividly remember the stench of discarded humanity, people almost without possessions packed into tin huts in camps they were told they could not leave. Disease and death were as common as hunger. Two miles away, down the coast, U.S. fighter bombers took off around the clock to bomb the villages from which the refugees streamed. Their stated mission was to support embattled troops. Beneath the wings of those aircraft, soldiers would often hand paint American flags, imagery that forced me into a new and unknown state of conflicted identity and isolation.

I was part of the so-called "other half" of the U.S. effort, the "nation building" or "pacification" half. I did what little I could. I gathered marbles for the young children. I frequently requested food, usually to little avail. Tons of U.S. bulgur wheat earmarked to feed the refugees were sold in the local market, lining the pockets of corrupt Vietnamese officials. I began small craft projects to keep young girls from turning to the usual trade, prostitution, to support their families. As Nick Turse's powerful and moving account of the war points out, the "nation building half" in reality amounted to a tenth of the U.S. effort, at most. One of my volunteer colleagues at the time described our work as "the Band-Aid on the genocide" going on in Vietnam.



Few Americans in Vietnam could or would ever mingle with the local people. Most were taught to fear and kill anyone wearing black pajamas, the so-called Viet Cong. They tragically failed to understand that black was the normal garb of Vietnamese farmers.

My experience was different. For nearly five years I mingled among the Vietnamese, first as a volunteer, later as a journalist. I ate their food, learned their customs, history and culture. Eventually I married a social worker from the Mekong delta.

I.V.S. volunteers were witnesses to history. A hundred or so in number at any one time, we saw the effects of the war from the ground up. Each of us viewed patches of a larger quilt. No one could see the whole. Even the best journalists of the time—among them David Halberstam, Peter Arnett, Neil Sheehan, Sidney Schanberg and Gloria Emerson—could not report the larger fabric of what amounted to incalculable brutality.

Kill Anything That Moves meticulously fills out the record and lets us see the larger picture. After nearly 50 years and tens of thousands of books written on Vietnam, it reveals as never before patterns of U.S. war atrocities. Turse began his methodical research of the war after stumbling across secret Pentagon files that gathered reports of military atrocities. He then studied newly released classified information, court-martial records, press accounts and secondary literature. (Chapter One alone has 72 footnotes.) He interviewed many U.S. veterans and Vietnamese survivors. He eventually concludes that the slaughter of Vietnamese civilians was common throughout the war, the natural result of military policies that included indoctrinating young recruits to fear and kill "gooks," policies that used body counts as metrics for success, that promoted soldiers for "killed in action" tallies, that employed search-and-destroy missions and free-fire zones, areas cleared of civilians where all others were considered hostile.

Turse writes, "I came to see the indiscriminate killing of South Vietnamese noncombatants—the endless slaughter that wiped out civilians day after day, month after month, year after year, throughout the Vietnam War—was neither accidental nor unforeseeable." Atrocities, he writes, were not intended so much as they flowed from widely accepted military procedures, policies that assured and overlooked rape, torture and killings. An estimated two million civilians died during the war.

The author's findings match my personal experiences. I witnessed U.S. racism and prejudice on a daily basis. It was taught as a survival mechanism. And eventually, in March 1968, there was May Lai, where U.S. soldiers slaughtered more than 500 civilians in

cold blood. Those killings occurred over a full day in the village. Soldiers even took time off to eat lunch before continuing with the murders, Turse tells us, adding that it was unique not in its nature but only in its scope.

Months later I traveled to My Lai by motorbike alone to interview survivors. I recall one young girl named Do Thi Huu, 13 at the time. She told me she saw her father shot by a soldier after being asked to walk out of the family's thatched hut dwelling. He then took her, she said, and rounded up her relatives, ordering them to sit in a circle. Once set, he opened fire on the group; she became buried beneath a stack of corpses.

On another occasion I remember entering a bombed-out village hours after it had been destroyed by U.S. war planes. While dwellings still smoldered and broken palm trees lined pathways, I walked through the village. At one point I encountered a middle-aged man who approached me, carrying his lifeless 4-year-old daughter in his arms. Staring at me, he said, "Tell President Johnson how my daughter died."

The U.S. military flew 3.4 million aircraft sorties during the war, expending 30 billion pounds of munitions, releasing the equivalent in explosive force of 640 Hiroshima bombs.

Even now, we have yet to acknowledge the evil we unleashed in Vietnam. This book should force some long overdue soul-searching. *Kill Anything That Moves* should become mandatory reading in all U.S. history classes and in classrooms where warfare is taught. But can we face the dark side of our military policies? Can we, as a nation, learn from the past? I am not optimistic. Reading this book and then passing it along could possibly pave the way. We owe this much to the ghosts of wars past and those to come.

TOM FOX *is the former editor and now publisher of The National Catholic Reporter.*

RICHARD LENNAN

COMMUNION WAVER

WHY PRIESTS?
A Failed Tradition

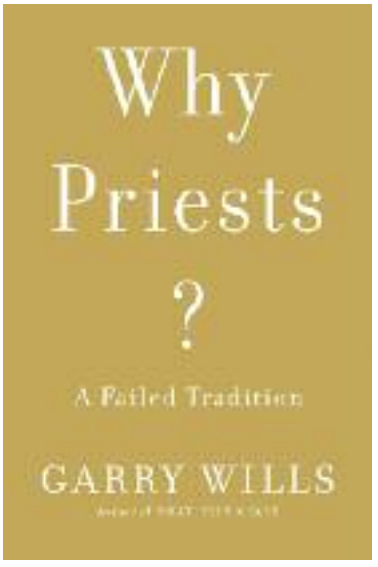
By Garry Wills
Viking. 320p. $27.95

In *On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine*, John Henry Newman argues that indifference among "the educated classes" would result if the faithful were cut off from the study of doctrines and those doctrines made subject simply to *fides implicita*. Garry Wills's *Why Priests?* can be read as a warning, perhaps especially for bishops, that attempting to insulate the priesthood from questions about its past, present or future form will produce, particularly in the wake of the sexual abuse crisis, not just the indifference that Cardinal Newman predicted, but a wholesale rejection of the church's ordained ministry.

Wills professes no animosity to priests as a group; he simply regards the priesthood as a false development. His other non-negotiable is that the Letter to the Hebrews, particularly when referring to Jesus as priest and by choosing "sacrifice" as the hermeneutical lens through which to view the death of Jesus, is entirely to blame for another false development: a perception of the Eucharist as "a miracle" that only "the sorcerer's apprentice" (a k a the priest) can accomplish.

As portrayed by Wills, both the ordained priesthood and the theology of the Eucharist as sacrifice have had deleterious effects: The former has

been simply a mechanism of control; the latter a source of grotesque longing for the miraculous, a hankering for liquefied blood and for the face of Jesus in a tortilla. Garry Wills takes no prisoners.



Wills assembles an array of evidence—biblical, patristic, historical—as the basis for his rejection of both the ordained priesthood and the eucharistic piety that perpetuates the priesthood. Much like Joe Friday—"just the facts, Ma'am"—Wills presumes that facts present no ambiguity. The difficulty, however, is that the priority given to his conclusions determines the choice of what can serve as a fact.

The most glaring example of Wills's selectivity in regard to the facts comes in his historical survey of the sacraments. Here the guiding principle is that "priestly imperialism" is central to the development of the Catholic Church's sacramental system. Accordingly, he presents the theology of St. Thomas Aquinas as a shoddy apologetic and the introduction of individual confession as nothing more than a mechanism to bolster clerical control over the sacrament. The biblical and historical retrieval that guided the post-Vatican II revision of the sacramental rites receives no acknowledgement. Wills allows not even a poetic imagination: thus, the use of "Cana" in the title of pre-marriage courses can aim only at perpetuating "the myth that the wedding at Cana was a Christian sacrament." While one can grant Wills's assertion that these courses may not always be helpful, it is difficult to see that any weakness is attributable directly to eisegesis of the fourth Gospel.

Just as disappointing as the book's selective reading of history is its isolation from the world of contemporary theological scholarship. Wills cites numerous exegetes to support his reading of Hebrews, but none who see it differently, none who might understand "sacrifice" as something other than a blight or Hebrews as more than ideology. Theologians fare even worse: They're largely absent. Theology cannot validly explain away history, but the relationship between history and faith is more complex than it appears in *Why Priests?* Contemporary theologies of the reception of tradition do grapple with the questions raised by biblical scholarship and history; they do take seriously the challenges that the development of ministry over time presents to the belief that the ordained ministry is "God-given." Dialogue with this theology would have been a restraint on Wills's generalizations, but it might have given his work nuance and texture.

Wills claims that his deconstructions will lead to a healthier church. It is difficult, however, to see how this book will encourage those who dream of a church that is other than a Procrustean bed that compels God's mystery to conform to one or other set of competing prejudices. In blaming imperialistic "killer priests" for all that ails the church, Wills is as damaging to hope as those who characterize all dissatisfaction in the church as a liberal conspiracy.

Why Priests? is not a book to recommend. Nonetheless, it can be a book from which to learn. Although Wills insists that history is the nemesis of the church's doctrines and institutions as it lays bare their ideological distortions, this is not the lesson to take from the book, since authentic ecclesial faith need not fear history. The lesson, rather, is that suspicion toward the church's doctrine and practices, the suspicion so evident in this book, will not yield to an act of authority. Accordingly, if we want the role of the priesthood in the church to be received as a life-giving possibility, we must not attempt to insulate it from critique and discussions that might lead to significant reform. Questions and challenges are not necessarily the denial of grace; they can be an embrace of it. Garry Wills views the priesthood as a zero-sum game: either reject it or accept it uncritically. Must it be so?

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DANIEL H. BAYS

RECALCITRANT CATHOLICS

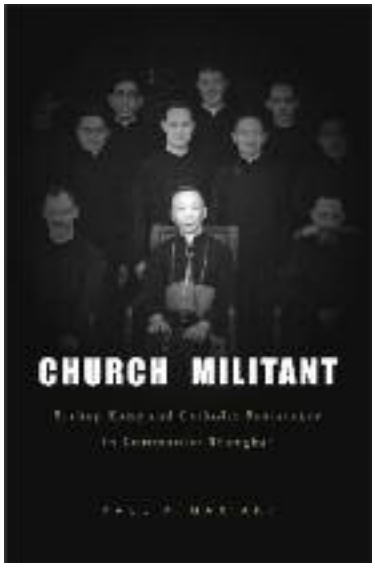
CHURCH MILITANT
Bishop Kung and Catholic Resistance In Communist Shanghai

By Paul P. Mariani
Harvard University Press. 310p $39.95.

Paul Mariani, S.J., has given us a first-rate product here. All scholars of modern Chinese Christian history are in his debt, as are all scholars of church history in any part of the world. Mariani's strategy is simple: To tell the story of the Communist attempt to subdue the recalcitrant Catholic church in Shanghai in the years after

the Chinese Communist forces won the civil war of 1945-49.

That chain of events was one of the most important of the new regime's goals in the campaign to gain control systematically of all organizations in the key city of Shanghai, especially those with foreign links. Eventually they succeeded, but not before the Shanghai Catholics had put up a determined and surprisingly effective resistance.



Mariani was able to purloin some Public Security Bureau documents from the Shanghai municipal archives and managed to get copies out of China. These documents enabled him to trace precisely the growing frustration of the Communists with the hard-core Catholic resistance, and the final steps, from 1955 to 1957, to dismantle the previous Catholic structures and replace them with a rather hollow organization, the Catholic Patriotic Association.

This is a dramatic story, of course, and Mariani recounts it well, including its inherent drama. There are militant Catholic Youth and Legion of Mary members organizing public demonstrations and operating underground printing presses. There are young priests brutally martyred, sparking renewed Catholic resistance. And there is, most of all, the beatific but unyielding figure of Bishop Ignatius Kung Pinmei (later Cardinal Kung), who was at the center of events during 1949 to1955, from his appointment as Bishop of Shanghai to his incarceration by the authorities.

Kung was a key figure. As the first Chinese bishop in Shanghai and a native son, he was wildly popular and revered by Catholics. His moral authority during these years and the years after his imprisonment was never shaken. After being held in jail for five years, Kung was convicted in 1960 and formally sentenced, along with several other Chinese and foreign priests.

Mariani reminds us that the intense hostility between the Communist Party and the Catholic Church that had built up since the 1920s was very real. The Holy See, under both Pius XI and Pius XII, was unswervingly anti-Communist, a position that seems extreme today but was basic. Against this background was the reality of Chinese Communist troops and cadres during the late 1940s, clashing with rural Catholic leadership over land reform in areas where many villages were largely Catholic and much of the land was owned by the church or wealthy Catholic landlords. So during the last stages of the civil war, when the Communists were obviously winning, the Vatican issued orders directing all Catholics not to cooperate with the Communists, under threat of excommunication. And the Vatican's representative, the papal nuncio Antonio Riberi, openly urged non-cooperation. This egregious behavior earned him rapid expulsion by the new regime, but one can see the depth of the mistrust and suspicion on both sides of this political divide.

Several aspects of the book deserve mention as interesting sidebars to Mariani's very capable narrative. One is how at this time in history, almost 400 years after the first Jesuits came to China, it remained obvious that the church in China was still overwhelmingly Western in composition and especially in its leadership. There had been no Chinese bishops consecrated from 1689 to 1926, when two were appointed. But that practice did not permeate the church even by the 1950s. The fact is that the Protestants did a much better job than the Catholics in devolving power to "native agency."

This fine book also shows that substantial documentation exists on this kind of politically sensitive topic. Mariani found, mostly by chance, Public Security Bureau and other Chinese records in China that enrich his analysis and support his arguments. And it seems an act of providence that he was able to take copies of these out of China. But he also found new material in archives outside of China—in the personal papers of American priests, for example, who were in Shanghai in the early 1950s that are now kept in the headquarters of the California province of the Jesuits.

Finally, this work is still relevant to issues in China today. The present regime has certainly discussed within its own top circles the ongoing thorn in its side constituted by recalcitrant Catholics, and although the position of lay leaders and Catholic clergy is somewhat more secure than in the 1950s, it is by no means free from the sort of harassment and even violence that was the norm almost six decades ago. Moreover, the mentality of the regime is almost unchanged since then. The issues of those years are still with us today, especially the topic of the consecration of bishops.

DANIEL H. BAYS *is a theology professor at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Mich.*

LETTERS

Dad's Retirement

"Getting to Work," by Patricia Ranft (2/18), provided an informative view of the theology of work and the legacy of Catholic theology on labor. But her attempt to apply this legacy to the 21st-century United States sounded like a Paul Ryan campaign rant.

What was she talking about? Social Security diminishes the importance of labor? Our benefit is determined by our years of work and how much we earn. How many seniors "retire while still able and active, only to discover in boredom the beneficial nature of work"?

I thought of my Dad, born in New York in the 1920s, who was forced to work from the age of 14 at blue-collar jobs and, except for a stint in the army during World War II, worked his whole life. He retired at 65 to collect his pension and Social Security benefits. I remember asking him what he was going to do when he retired. His answer was simple: to watch TV and play cards with his friends. I guess that 35 years of "beneficial" work was enough.

In the world, when theory and reality collide, theory applied to real people causes great harm.

ROBERT MILLER
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Who Benefits?

Patricia Ranft indicated "potential problems with entitlement societies," in that "they fool people into believing that not working is as desirable as working." Professor Ranft does not specify whether she believes that the United States is an entitlement society, but many do. In that regard, it is important to note that more than 90 percent of the benefit dollars that entitlement and other mandatory programs provide go to assist people who are elderly, seriously disabled or members of working households—not to able-bodied, working-age Americans who choose not to work.

EDMUND KULAKOWSKI
Warwick, N.Y.

Enter the Helix

I am grateful for the clarity of "The Noble Enterprise," by Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl (2/4), of the role of bishops and theologians in the crucial task of the new evangelization.

In response, I offer an interpretive image grounded in Cardinal Wuerl's assertions concerning the vital interplay among the theologian's vocation, the received faith and the magisterium: the "hermeneutical helix." This helix admits of multiple strands, representing the interplay of textual analysis, philosophical and theological reflection and the indispensable doctrinal teachings of the magisterium that determine the "boundaries of the authentic faith." In this hermeneutical helix, there are multiple points of intersection among the strands (some simultaneous) as it continues to Infinity. The synthetic understanding which the theologian seeks in the hermeneutical helix admits of objective norms, as well as speculative, practical and experiential components.

St. Thomas Aquinas taught that the methodology of any "science" is subalternate to the integrity of *sacra doctrina*. Cardinal Thomas Cajetan understood that *sacra doctrina* is com-

prehensive and that theology remains a single science—enjoying a single formal light. Our being taught by God is prior to the establishment of distinct theological disciplines or crafts. All the while, the magisterium engages and judges the conformity of "scientific expositions" with the church's faith and tempers the subjectivist threat to privatize the meaning of the authoritative text(s). Cardinal Wuerl's "dynamic vision" of theology maintains that faith is a legitimate mode of knowing, and the array of subalternate sciences must be employed in pursuit of comprehending the *sacra doctrina*.

And yet vibrant theological collaborators with the bishops, "to be agents of the new evangelization," writes Cardinal Wuerl, "must first perceive themselves as such, as important cooperators in the work of the church, as credible and convicted believers." Otherwise, how shall we effectively repropose the Gospel of Jesus Christ in our day?

STEVEN C. BOGUSLAWSKI, O.P.
Washington, D.C.

Into the Light

The days of the chubby little friar lecturing on Peter Lombard in a drafty medieval hall are long gone. Religious studies and theology departments are interdisciplinary places. Bernard Lonergan, S.J., completely rewrote the book on how to do theology. (Full disclosure: I hang out with a bunch of Lonergan disciples at Boston College.)

Lonergan states that in all thought, positions and counter-positions develop, and that counter-positions fairly cry out to be reversed. It is like the story of the emperor parading through the capital with no clothes on. Emperor, get dressed! I would like to mention just a couple of Cardinal Wuerl's counter-positions that I believe need to be reversed.

First, Pope Benedict XVI has said that people who have distanced themselves from the church are leaving the light and going into the darkness. Exactly the opposite is true. The taint of clerical sex abuse is the darkness, and people are rushing out into the light. As personally a victim of priestly sex abuse, I can vouch for this.

Second, Cardinal Wuerl seems to imply that to think with the church means sticking to the standard Vatican line. The theologians I know do in fact think with the church. But it is the people of God, the whole church. Whatever happened to respect for aggiornamento, for fresh theological air coming in? The church is a big tent.

WILLIAM BENDZICK
Dover, N.J.

Please Write Again

I met Cardinal Wuerl in the mid-1980s. He was a member of one of the teams of bishops and theologians appointed to conduct the apostolic visitation of U.S. seminaries mandated by Rome. I was a full-time faculty member at St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary in Boynton Beach, Fla. He impressed me at the time by his genuine love for the church and as a pastoral and a very approachable person.

In "The Noble Enterprise," Cardinal Wuerl addresses the relationship between the teaching office of the bishops and the role of theologians. Perhaps he is aware that his article calls for a complementary one on the *sensus fidelium*, that "supernatural instinct" (as Pope Benedict XVI recently referred to it) that received due attention during the early Arian polemics and again when Marian dogmas were proclaimed.

(REV.) MARCELLUS FERNANDEZ
Middleton, Idaho

Changing Magisterium

I find troubling an aspect of Cardinal Wuerl's article, but perhaps I am reading it wrongly. He appeals to the magisterium not only as being authoritative, but also as if it were a block of truths unchanging for all time (which appears to be also how the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* treats it). But it would be very helpful to some of us to know how we are to understand what at least appear to be significant differences in magisterial teaching.

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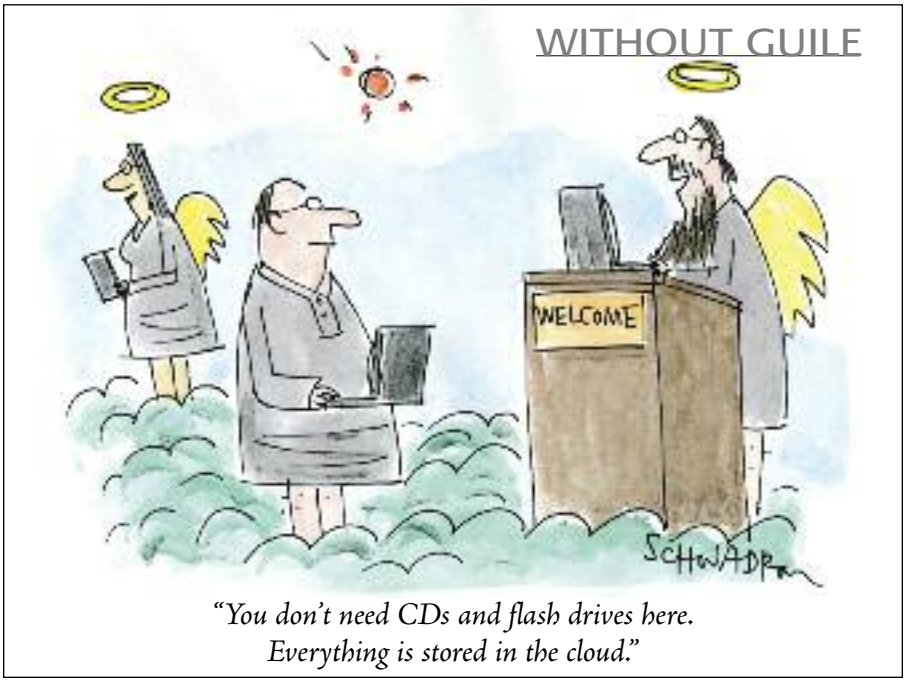

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Read, for instance, Pope Gregory XVI's "Mirari Vos" (1832) or Pius IX's "Quanta Cura" (the "Syllabus of Errors," 1864) on the absurdities of calling for freedom of conscience, and then read Pope John XXIII's "Pacem in Terris" (1963) on the same subject. How do we explain the "apparent" differences? Read Pope Nicholas V's "Romanus Pontifex" (1455) authorizing the King of Portugal to enslave pagans and Saracens and others, and then read Pope John Paul II's "Veritatis Splendor" (1993) on the subject of slavery. Where would the cardinal have us look for guidance? (To give credit where it's due: I'm stealing the latter example from *A Church That Can and Cannot Change*, by John T. Noonan Jr.)

Second, Cardinal Wuerl cites Proposition 12 of the recent Synod of Bishops, manifesting "adherence to the thought of our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI," particularly in his teaching on Vatican II. Since I've spent a large part of my career studying contemporary China, the phrase carries an unhappy resonance of that country's campaigns to ensure the adherence of the Communist faithful to "the thought of Mao Zedong." Is the comparison absurd? I hope so, but I'm not sure. Loyalty to a man—president, pope, king, even party leader, is one thing; loyalty to his "thought" is something else.

NICHOLAS CLIFFORD
Middlebury, Vt.

Opportune Moment

Incredible as it may seem, Cardinal Wuerl did not quote Vatican II's "Decree on Ecumenism" in his article that sought to enlighten theologians about their task. The decree reads in part: "Thus if, in various times and circumstances, there have been deficiencies in moral conduct or in church discipline, or even in the way that church teaching has been formulated—to be carefully distinguished from the deposit of faith itself—these can and should be set right at the opportune moment." To paraphrase: We have here a pilgrim church.

Today we would say more truthfully and humbly not "if" but "when" there have been those "deficiencies." Going from "if" to "when" is part of the pilgrimage. Hasn't the church moved from the arrogance of that presumption of innocence to the humility of admitted historical facts? Among many other tasks of the theologian today is an explanation for why, after several hundred years of scholasticism in seminary formation, it was a Baptist preacher, Martin Luther King Jr., who moved us all along that pilgrim path. If he was not a theologian in the service of the church—something more than mere Christianity—was there ever such a one? Faith is not the only thing we have received from the past.

The decree continues, "The words of St. John hold good about sins against unity: 'If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.' So we humbly beg pardon of God and of our separated brethren, just as we forgive them that trespass against us." Let's narrow the issue here to the Catholic hierarchy and theologians, as the article did. Both are in need of one another's mutual forgiveness. They need to create the "opportune moment."

JEROME KNIES, O.S.A.
Racine, Wis.

Correction: The last sentence of the Philosopher's Notebook column by John J. Conley, S.J., in the issue of 2/25, p.19, was incomplete. The complete sentence is: "The great cause still beckons."

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Encountering Hope

EASTER (C), MARCH 31, 2013

Readings: Acts 10:34–43; Ps 118:1–23; Col 3:1–4; Lk 24:13–35

"The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!" (Lk 24:34)

'But we had hoped he was the one to redeem Israel." There it is, in a short summary sentence: the end of their hope. When hope is placed in the past tense, it is over. You get up, share a last word and embrace with your friends, dust yourself off and begin to walk home. The Greek tense of the verb "hope" in this sentence indicates ongoing action in the past ("we had been hoping"). The hope the disciples had placed in Jesus was not momentary, but was at the heart of their ongoing lives. Now, for Cleopas and the unnamed disciple, hope had crashed to a halt when Jesus died on the cross.

Jesus had told his apostles and disciples on a number of occasions that he would die and be raised, but either this did not meet their expectations or they were unable to process the truth Jesus had told them. The women, Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Mary the mother of James, who had remained faithful to Jesus, were reminded of this truth when they went to care for Jesus' body at the tomb.

Two angels greeted them, saying: "Why do you seek the living one among the dead? He is not here, but he has been raised. Remember what he said to you while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners and be crucified, and rise on the third day." Only then, Luke tells us, did the women remember what Jesus had said and believe what had taken place. But when the women went to tell the apostles and the other disciples what had happened, they were unable or unwilling to believe the women and considered their story "nonsense."

Permission must be granted for the doubt and reservations of the disciples, because, after all, dead men do not rise from their graves. When the teacher you had hoped was the Messiah dies a cruel Roman death on the cross, a death witnessed by many of his followers, you start to talk and discuss what might have been, how it went wrong, perhaps even how you could have been so mistaken.

The encounter of Cleopas and the unnamed disciple with the risen Lord on the road to Emmaus gives us insight into the nature of God and the means by which God came to save us and why it was so easy for the disciples to think in terms of hope in the past tense instead of joy in the present.

Apart from the humiliating death on the cross, there was no monumental rising from the grave, with strikes of thunder, lightning, earthquakes and the resurrected Jesus striding triumphantly across the world stage. There was only an empty tomb and angelic messengers, witnessed by a few women and later by Peter, and quiet encounters along a lonely road.

Yet joy breaks in with the presence of the risen Lord quietly walking alongside his bereft disciples, asking questions and listening to their answers, until he breaks in and says, "Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" They do not identify him as Jesus, but they need him near, as he seems to be leaving them. They cannot be apart from this wondrous stranger. It is only when Jesus breaks bread with them that "their eyes were opened"—and he was gone.

He was gone, but hope had returned. It is with hope that Cleopas and his friend returned to Jerusalem to meet with the other disciples. There they learned that their encounter with the risen Jesus was not the only one, as they are told that "the Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!"

There could be no church without Easter, only broken disciples walking home with sweet and bitter memories; and there could be no Easter without Jesus risen from the dead. He can appear subtly and in numerous ways, but always in the breaking of the eucharistic bread that his disciples share. The mark of his disciples is hope and joy and the ability to say, "The Lord has risen indeed."

JOHN W. MARTENS

PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

- When do I have trouble seeing the risen Lord?
- How do I allow the Resurrection to shape my life?
- How do I meet the risen Jesus with hope and joy?

ART: TAD DUNNE

JOHN W. MARTENS *is an associate professor of theology at the University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minn.*

Human Dignity in World Affairs

Celebrating *Pacem in Terris* and its Legacy

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Pope John XXIII promulgated *Pacem in Terris*, "Peace on Earth", on April 11,1963, in the depths of the Cold War and after the Second Vatican Council had concluded its first of four sessions. Released just weeks before his death but five months after the chilling standoff between President Kennedy and Premier Khrushchev in the Cuban Missile Crisis, the encyclical became the decisive last will and testament of Pope John and the charter Vatican II needed to embrace an agenda for peace, human dignity and human rights. Fifty years later, the ideas developed in *Pacem in Terris* retain their centrality for contemporary world affairs.

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Director, John XXIII Foundation for Religious Studies, Bologna

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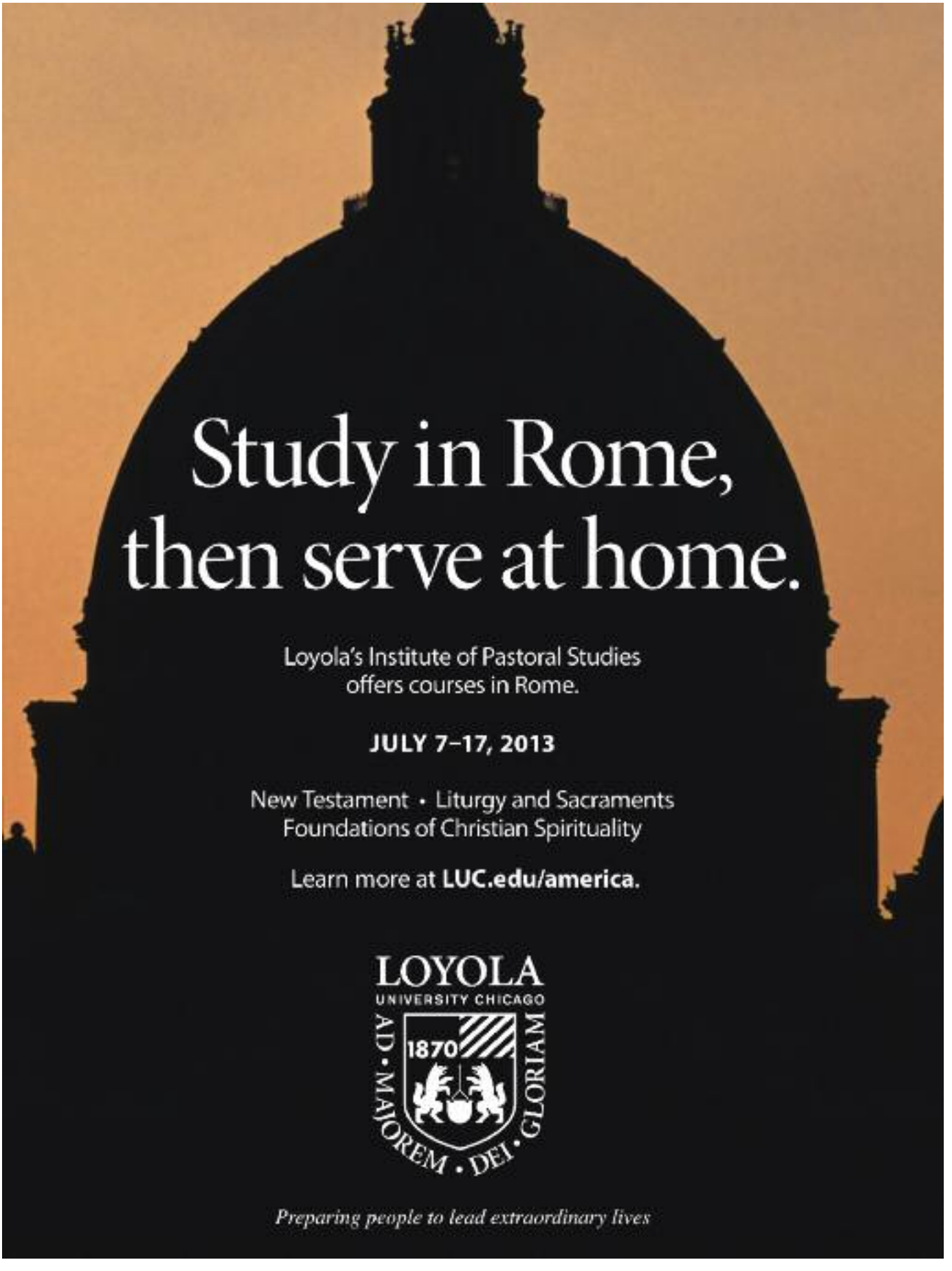
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