

# America

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## A Path to the Future

HOW THE CHURCH CAN HELP BUILD A SUSTAINABLE WORLD

JEFFREY D. SACHS



On Sept. 26, 1957, **America** mailed a check for \$50 to Room 362 of the Senate Office Building in Washington, D.C. The check was made out to “Senator John F. Kennedy” and represented payment in full for an article he had written about the ongoing crisis in Algeria (10/5/57). There is no evidence that Senator Kennedy cashed the check; he was, after all, fabulously wealthy and Kennedys prided themselves on the fact that they never carried money. Apart from the fact that he wouldn’t have known how to cash a check, he also would have lacked the time to do so. In the autumn of 1957, Kennedy’s national profile was rising fast; serious people were seriously talking about a presidential run in 1960.

One of the ways Kennedy chose to stand out from the rest of the presidential pack was in his public position on Algeria. In a speech on the Senate floor and later in an article in this magazine, Senator Kennedy bucked the foreign policy establishment by suggesting that in the ongoing struggle for control of France’s African possession, the United States should side with the native Algerians rather than with the government in Paris.

For this the wise old men chastised him. Dean Acheson, former U.S. Secretary of State, described Kennedy’s views on Algeria as “the juvenile utterances of a junior Senator.” Kennedy responded in **America**, writing that “there is, of course, no arguing with those who feel that to discuss the Algerian question in other than the clichés of official French policy is to commit a moral outrage.” At the same time, Kennedy knew that there was no obvious, lasting solution to the Algerian problem, that “no simple slogan or formula will provide a facile solution, and perfect justice in the dispute is impossible to obtain.”

I was reminded of that last bit when I read the article by Elias D. Mallon, S.A., in this issue of **America**. Nearly 60

years after J.F.K. wrote for these pages, **America** once again looks at a seemingly intractable problem in the Mediterranean region. Father Mallon’s analysis is, in fact, a faint echo of Senator Kennedy’s caution, especially when Father Mallon writes that “to expect democracy in the Middle East to emerge, develop democratic institutions and thrive in a decade or two is not only unrealistic; it is unfair.” Indeed, such a course would amount to something President Kennedy himself derided in a 1963 speech, an unsustainable “Pax Americana enforced on the world by American weapons of war.” Still, there are many in the foreign policy establishment today who argue for such a “historically naïve” form of progress, says Father Mallon: “For many in the United States, democracy means ‘just like us.’”

What, then, is the solution? Well, as John Kennedy would argue, any solution must begin with the humble recognition that we live in a fallen world and not merely in an imperfect society. As he said in 1963, peace and progress should be “based not on a sudden revolution in human nature but on a gradual evolution in human institutions—on a series of concrete actions and effective agreements which are in the interests of all concerned.” That seems a more reasonable starting point, not just in the Middle East but also in Europe, which Paul D. McNelis, S.J., examines in this issue, as well as in the pursuit of sustainable global development, which Jeffrey D. Sachs discusses.

In all these efforts, however, we would do well to remember that we are the creatures and not the Creator. In the final analysis, real, lasting change requires the conversion of hearts and that, in turn, almost always requires the aid of grace. That is easier said than done, of course, especially in those parts of the world where the people ask not what they can do for their country but are focused instead on what their country is doing to them.

**MATT MALONE, S.J.**

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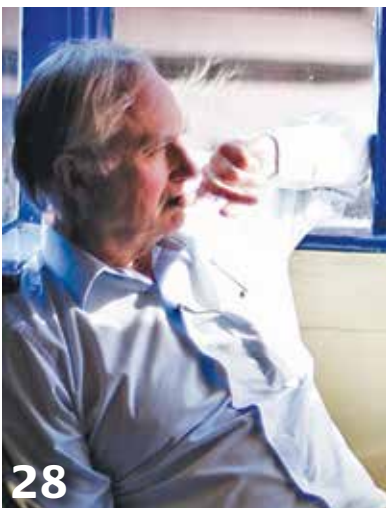
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## ON THE WEB

Chris Lowney, right, discusses his new book on **Pope Francis' leadership style** on our podcast. Plus, Jim McDermott, S.J., writes on "**Doctor Who**" at 50, and the next **Catholic Book Club** selection: Flannery O'Connor's *Prayer Journal*. All at [americamagazine.org](http://americamagazine.org).



### Iranian Détente

In Geneva last month, U.S. and European negotiators achieved a major diplomatic breakthrough that offers a way out of the state of constant crisis between Iran and the West. American officials and representatives from five other world powers concluded an interim accord that will halt Iran's nuclear development program for six months, creating breathing room for negotiations toward a more comprehensive, final agreement.

As the talks proceeded, hardliners in Iran were aghast, and Israeli leaders intent on squashing Iran's rapprochement with the United States did their best to thwart further progress. These two strangest of bedfellows have joined hands in efforts to undermine the continuing negotiations. They have been ably assisted by some late entrants into the game—members of Congress who have taken to throwing last-minute obstacles in the way of this historic opportunity. It is fair to wonder if these members of Congress are more mindful of Israel's best interests—or, more accurately, what Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu erroneously presumes them to be—than the best interests of the nation they purportedly serve. The United States can ill afford another confrontation in the Middle East, and the potential benefits of an Iranian détente are manifold.

The howling from the sidelines cannot be allowed to throw off negotiators as they attempt to capitalize on the interim agreement. Normalizing relations with Iran is good for the United States; it is good for Iran; and in the long run, it will prove to be good for Israel.

### China's Real Choice

Economic calculus and demographic realities are reportedly behind China's recent decision to relax its one-child policy to allow couples to have a second child if either parent is an only child. The announcement, along with a resolution to abolish the country's "re-education through labor" camps, came on Nov. 15, following the annual closed-door meeting of Communist Party leaders. There is no timetable for the implementation of the new policy, which will be introduced by provincial governments.

China's family-planning regime was put into place in 1980 amid fears that overpopulation would undermine economic growth. Officials boast that it has averted 400 million births and reduced pressure on the environment. But today the policy has become a victim of its own success; a shrinking young labor force will be unable to support a growing elderly population.

Although this reform is a step in the right direction, it does not go nearly far enough in protecting the fundamental human right to decide whether and when to have a child. Since 1971 Chinese doctors have performed 336 million abortions, and though forced abortions are illegal, they are not uncommon. An enduring cultural preference for males leads to millions of sex-selective abortions every year, contributing to one of the most skewed gender ratios in the world; in 2012, 118 boys were born for every 100 girls.

It is not always the case that economic exigency and basic morality point in the same direction. But in the case of China's birth restrictions, they do. This massive intrusion of the state into a couple's decision to give and support life must end. The choice between foregoing an "extra" child and paying a fine for having one is no choice at all.

### People, Not Prisoners

The United States has been reluctant to take lessons in social policy from our allies in Europe, but on one issue it may be time to pay closer attention. The criminal justice system in the United States is severely overburdened, and for financial if not moral reasons, policymakers have much to learn from societies where incarceration rates are far lower.

Germany jails an average of 79 per 100,000 residents. In the United States the overall rate is 716 per 100,000 residents. There are many reasons for this disparity. Prison sentences are far shorter in Germany, for example, and rehabilitation programs are more widely available. The chief reason, however, is one of principle: Germany and other European countries view imprisonment as a way to help lawbreakers reform themselves and re-enter society. In the United States, retribution takes precedence over rehabilitation.

Prison officials from the United States saw the European approach firsthand on a fact-finding trip sponsored by the Vera Institute of Justice. A report released last month outlined some of the lessons learned. The delegates, representing Colorado, Georgia and Pennsylvania, visited Germany and the Netherlands. They were impressed by the flexible sentencing policies and treatment of the mentally ill in those countries and said they hoped to bring a similar approach to their home states.

The most encouraging insight came from an American observer who, while visiting a German prison, remarked on the practice of permitting inmates to wear their own clothes and prepare their own meals: "If you treat inmates like humans, they will act like humans."

# Inexcusable Inaction

The Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn., is scheduled to be completely demolished by Dec. 14, the first anniversary of the massacre that took place within its walls. A place where such unspeakable violence occurred and so much suffering was inflicted is being removed from view because it is too heartbreaking to look at.

One year later, the people of Newtown and the families who lost loved ones at Sandy Hook are trying to move on. But the nation should not raze Sandy Hook from its conscience. We have not earned that mercy.

Sandy Hook should not have happened. Those 20 children and six teachers and administrators should not have died. They died because a disturbed young man got his hands on some dangerous weapons and because inaction and indifference helped put them within his reach. After a series of mass shooting events in recent years, no one should have been surprised by Sandy Hook, just as no one should be surprised by the 16 mass shooting incidents (shootings with at least four dead victims) that have followed Sandy Hook this year. And, sad to say, no one should be surprised by the next Sandy Hook. Newtown's first and second graders became new statistics in U.S. gun violence because U.S. politicians consistently refuse to legislate common sense gun control measures, and U.S. voters let them get away with it.

If the murder of 20 schoolchildren is not enough, it is indeed hard to imagine what degree of carnage might finally challenge America's gun idolatry. As in past shooting events, after the initial national gasp of despair, Second Amendment absolutists simply waited out public outrage in well-founded confidence that the Sandy Hook threat to gun rights would eventually dissipate. It has.

What has changed since Sandy Hook? The nation's school districts have been busy attempting to shore up security, allocating \$5 billion this year, not on new learning technologies or textbooks, but on such oddities as bulletproof whiteboards and new barricade and intruder-alert systems. Some have even trained and armed teachers and staff, and campus invasion safety drills have become commonplace.

The National Rifle Association had a good year, breaking records in fund-raising, and, in a small nod to simple decency, a coalition of gun-rights groups agreed to change the date for their proposed celebration of gun ownership, "Guns Save Lives Day," from the Dec. 14 anniversary to the day after.

In April, modest gun control legislation that would have expanded background checks for gun buyers failed to

make it through the U.S. Senate. Some state legislatures, notably in gun-traumatized Connecticut and Colorado, managed to put new limits on gun ownership, and advocates for gun control have been able to turn back legislation in other states that would have expanded gun rights. It is a painful irony, however, that in the aftermath of Sandy Hook, gun-rights supporters have also had notable successes in broadening gun ownership and the ability to carry concealed weapons. Federal gun law nullification measures that make it a crime for federal agents to enforce U.S. gun laws passed in Missouri and Kansas.

A couple of months after Sandy Hook, this publication advocated a constitutional change to put an end to the interminable debate about the meaning of "well regulated" in the Bill of Rights ("Repeal the Second Amendment," Editorial, 2/25). Our current appeal is simply to common sense. As the victims of gun violence pile up—about 90 die each day—a minority of Americans hold the nation hostage to an absolutist interpretation of the Second Amendment. Who but a handful of citizens wish to live in the current gun dystopia? Some continue to insist, against all empirical evidence, that the answer to gun violence is to put even more guns in circulation. Such ideology over evidence cannot be allowed to dictate public policy.

A recent survey by Johns Hopkins University confirms that 89 percent of Americans support universal background checks and that significant majorities support bans on assault weapons and the high-capacity magazines that serve them. Why does such legislation time and again stall in Congress?

David Wheeler lost his 6-year-old son, Ben, in the terror that consumed Sandy Hook. As an advocate for common sense gun regulation, he has learned since that day "how completely disconnected our legislative system seems to be from the opinions of the American people." In an interview on ABC's "Good Morning America," he explained that he remains determined, nonetheless, to someday bring Congress to its senses.

"I will do whatever it takes," Mr. Wheeler said, "to keep another father from having to go down this road of loss and despair and grief." It is time for those in the majority who have remained silent on this issue to join him in that commitment.



## REPLY ALL

### An Absurd Act

I very much appreciate “A President for Peace” (11/18), the fine reflection by James W. Douglass. It is wise and insightful. But I must disagree with his assertion that President Kennedy was assassinated as a consequence of his peace policies. The simple passage of time has ruled out any conspiracy behind Kennedy’s death.

If anything, Kennedy’s murder shows us how fragile, random, violent and unforgiving life can be. To invest Kennedy’s death with meaning, we look to elaborate plots and conspiracies. This is an understandable emotional reaction; but it ought not to cloud the objective reality of Kennedy’s death, which, while tragic, was the act of a non-compos-mentis person who got his hands on a gun. To use a popular term from the 1960s: it was *absurd*. Even more tragic is that Kennedy’s vision for peace was never realized.

BRIAN PINTER  
*Online comment*

### Why Compromise

In “What You Can Do” (11/18), John Carr writes, “Washington is ‘de-moralized’ by a House faction that paralyzes their party and the nation with disdain for compromise and for government itself.” But why should the Republican Party compromise on something they see as fundamentally wrong?

Engagement, in their view, is not going to fix what is wrong with Obamacare. The fundamental problem with Obamacare is that health care is a plumbing problem (local), not an electrical problem (federal). Health care is a problem of private goods, not common goods. The only reason to make it federal is to increase

crony capitalism, which never helps the poor.

MATTHEW McCARTHY  
*Online comment*

### The Bible at Home

“The Gift of the Word,” by Richard J. Clifford, S.J. (11/11), deserves serious attention from all who value Catholic faith formation, especially Catholic parents with young children.

While the “big church” is enriched with a plenitude of excellent Bible studies, there is a real need to cultivate the practice of Bible reading in families in the “little church,” where faith is nurtured and love of the scriptural word grows exponentially. Parents who read inspiring biblical stories to their children in a home setting will bring about an even greater revolution than adults reading the Sunday readings before Mass. I am sure Father Clifford agrees this would promote his cause even more.

PAUL J. CARTY SR.  
*Houston, Tex.*

### Invite Sinners

Re “Vatican: No Change for Divorced, Remarried Catholics” (Signs of the Times, 11/11): My now deceased sister-in-law had the misfortune of falling in love in with a divorced man in her first and only marriage. She watched three daughters march up for their first Communions, while she sat in the pew like an unworthy pariah with the eyes of other parents burning holes through her.

Czeslaw Milosz, the Nobel laureate, said in a poem written in his 90s that Catholic dogma is “well armored against reason.” It seems, if the Eucharist has all of the ineffable graces claimed for it, sinners should be invited to the Communion rail ahead of those who merely pray, pay and obey.

ERNEST C. RASKAUSKAS SR.  
*Potomac, Md.*

### Not Believable

There is much that resonates with me in “Are We Winning?” by John J. McLain, S.J. (11/4), but one sentence caught me up short, especially after reading “Love of the Person,” by Jeanne Schuler (11/4), about the core conviction of the late John F. Kavanaugh, S.J., about the ultimate and overriding dignity of each human person. Father McLain writes: “Nearly all the soldiers with whom I served believed in the fundamental goodness of people, even people who resisted and resented their presence in their countries and lives.”

I find it incredible that soldiers training for battle are steeped in the concept of the “fundamental goodness” of those they will try to kill. Is it merely myth that dehumanizing words like *enemy* and *goon*, which only become cruder and more debasing, are intentionally used precisely to train a soldier to consciously render the other as less than human, so as to more easily kill that person?

I do not have any inclination to mock or malign our service men and women. Nonetheless, I think the claim that soldiers respect and acknowledge the “fundamental goodness” of those “resisting” them is not believable. Could a person steeped in Father Kavanaugh’s philosophy of radical human dignity ever willingly become the soldier described by Father McLain?

RITA HESSLEY  
*Cincinnati, Ohio*

### Still Singing

Thank you for “Love of the Person,” about John F. Kavanaugh, S.J. My interactions with him in community and on campus in the early 1970s at Saint Louis University shaped me in many ways. His sense of life, his embodiment of Ignatian spirituality and his

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own personal journey always left me for the better.

One aspect of his life only touched on in the article is that John was a vocalist and a musician. I recall fondly concerts that he and his friend John Foley, S.J., would give in the student union. Years later this gift of music helped lead to the unique contribution of the St. Louis Jesuits.

It was tradition that the concerts would close with the Quaker song, "How can I keep from singing?" Indeed, when pondering John's life, reflections, challenges and embodied goodness, how can we keep from singing?

LAWRENCE G. EHREN  
*Overland Park, Kan.*

### Bon Voyage, John

What a joy to hear again about John F. Kavanaugh, S.J. While reading "Love of the Person," I felt great gratitude that I had told John, way before his death, about my folder stuffed with the wisdom of so many of his one-pagers.

John cannot write again with his scintillating kindness, but his spirit of wisdom, liberation and humor still smile in my soul. Some of his carefully sketched phrases still burst aloud for me, again and again. But underneath a laugh, I always knew John was never more serious and truthful.

Bon voyage, John, forever and ever.  
GEORGE ASCHENBRENNER, S.J.  
*Wernersville, Pa.*

### Don't Try So Hard

I understand that the "special" issue on women (10/28) may be some kind of preliminary penitential gesture on your part (since *America's* masthead and voice have grown increasingly masculine in the last year or so), but there remains, despite your honest intentions, something contrived and anachronistic about the very notion of publishing a one-off issue on "women."

Here's my advice: Try not to try so hard. Just desegregate your masthead and your table of contents a little, for starters, and make a point of integrat-

ing your articles more, so that when you publish about politics and culture (and not just motherhood and ministry), the authors and columnists we hear from just happen to have two X chromosomes. It might be rare in the Catholic press, but it is pretty commonplace in the rest of the media. I mean, *Sports Illustrated* may have more female contributors right now than *America*, for heaven's sake.

If you manage to do any of that, even unevenly well, you can leave the rest to the Holy Spirit. She'll probably take care of it.

ANNE MURPHY  
*Online comment*

### The Ordination Question

*America* introduces the issue on "women in the life of the church" as a response to the invitation of the 34th General Congregation of the Society of Jesus to "listen carefully and courageously to the experience of women." The key phrase is "life of the church." What gives life to the church? What nourishes the body of Christ?

"The Constitution on the Sacred

Liturgy" (1963) reminds us it is the very body of Christ in the Eucharist that is essential to the life of the church. The community is increasingly starved for the Eucharist because of a shrinking number of priests, yet there are many women who possess the ministerial gifts for ordained priesthood and who experience an authentic call to that ministry.

The requirements for infallible teaching have not been met in the prohibition against ordaining women. Yet *America* has obediently adhered to the ban on discussing the issue of women's ordination. What is the use of a greater role for women in church governance if the whole body continues to starve for the Eucharist and women are denied the opportunity to serve where their service is most acutely needed?

Some would say that *America* has ignored the elephant in the room. To me, it has failed at courageous listening—not just to the experience of women, but to the experience of the entire people of God.

MICKEY MATESICH EDWARDS  
*Washington, D.C.*

### A COLUMNIST RESPONDS

*The following is an excerpt from "Respondeo: On Clericalism" (In All Things, 11/19), in which Daniel P. Horan, O.F.M., reflects on the wide and varied reaction to his earlier column, "Lead Us Not Into Clericalism" (10/21).*

There has been a surprising amount of discussion...about clergy attire, vesture and titles. The attention paid to these themes in themselves is surprising to me (and many readers) because nowhere in the column do I claim that any of these things are inherently problematic...The question for reflection is whether or not how we dress, how we interact with others, how we introduce ourselves, and what we expect from the people with and for whom we minister

breaks down barriers to relationship or adds unnecessary barricades to potential relationships....

Every single one of the emails or messages [I received about the column] expressed an appreciation that the topic of clericalism was being discussed openly, but each also expressed the complications of being situated within a culture where clericalism was often present and, especially for the seminarians, pressures to conform were felt. This does not mean that there isn't hope. Many of these notes included references to the hope for change in culture and attitude signaled by Pope Francis in recent months. It is a hope that I likewise share.

DANIEL P. HORAN, O.F.M.

## CLIMATE CHANGE

### Church Should Help Build ‘Ethical’ Perspective on Global Warming

Climate change represents an “ethical challenge to civilization,” said the Vatican’s lead representative to a U.N. conference reviewing the phenomenon’s worldwide impact. Archbishop Celestino Migliore said that the Vatican would help “form consciences and ethical perspectives” on climate change in line with Catholic social teaching and encourage “fairness, impartiality and mutual responsibility,” when it came to action to address the environmental threat.

As survivors in the Philippines continued to dig out from under the destruction of Typhoon Haiyan, Archbishop Migliore spoke at a conference hosted by Caritas Poland and Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, Poland. The event coincided with the Intergovernmental Conference of Parties of the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change, which also met in the Polish capital in mid-November. The conference brought together Catholic leaders, politicians, climate scientists and civil society groups, who called on governments to reduce their reliance on coal, oil and other fossil resources. The Warsaw Conference of Parties, meeting from Nov. 11 to 22, was called to review progress since the 1997 Kyoto Protocol on reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

“The crisis situation humanity currently faces has an economic, consumerist, environmental and social character but is also fundamentally moral,” Archbishop Migliore told the ecumenical conference. “If we accept that every person and community has the same right to use the atmosphere, then they

also have the same duty to protect [it]. The scale of emissions must be proportionate to the size of population, emissions per capita and the level of [gross domestic product],” the arch-

**STORM WARNING.** A girl reviews the devastated waterfront of Guiuan, Philippines, on Nov. 19. Did global warming contribute to the ferocity of Typhoon Haiyan?



bishop said.

The World Health Organization estimates that climate change is already causing an additional 140,000 deaths annually. The World Bank re-

## SYNOD ON THE FAMILY

### Broad Feedback Sought Online

A questionnaire to gather feedback for next year’s Synod of Bishops on the family has been the source of some confusion since it was delivered to bishops’ conferences around the world in October. In preparation for the international meeting, the synod’s secretary general, Archbishop Lorenzo Baldisseri, sent out a preparatory document that included a 39-item questionnaire asking about the promotion and acceptance of Catholic teachings on marriage and the family and cultural and social challenges to those teachings.

The questionnaire sought information about divorce, remarriage, cohabitation, same-sex unions and contraception, and Archbishop Baldisseri requested that bishops seek widespread consultation. Some bishops have taken that request to mean that they should seek direct feedback from lay people. Around the world, some dioceses have forged ahead with the widest consultation imaginable, following the lead of the U.K. bishops’ conference, which posted the entire questionnaire online. Some provide the material in both English and

Spanish. Some offer ways of submitting responses through the mail.

The Diocese of Harrisburg, Pa., created an online option for everyday Catholics to put in their views about the discussions bishops from around the world will have with Pope Francis at the synod in October 2014. Harrisburg Catholics are being encouraged to do some study of church teaching before they weigh in.

The archdioceses of Baltimore and Chicago and the Iowa dioceses of Davenport, Dubuque and Des Moines are among those with links to an online survey on their Web pages. Though some ask different background questions, those dioceses all use the word-





droughts. The report said that annual economic losses had risen from \$50 billion in the 1980s to almost \$200 billion in the last decade, while the world had lost 2.5 million people because of climate-related natural disasters.

Jean-Pascal van Ypersele, vice chairman of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, said the panel's evidence had been accepted by all governments and 97 percent of world scientists, adding that "clear evidence" suggested that Typhoon Haiyan, which wrecked the central Philippines on Nov. 8, was linked to climate change. Van Ypersele is professor of climatology and environmental sciences at the Catholic University of Louvain and advises bishops in Europe and Asia.

Representatives of Catholic development organizations arrived in Warsaw to lobby for action on climate change, and many also urged greater involvement by their own church. Some Catholic organizations have been active on the issue for years. In Peru, Catholic groups have promoted mitigation and adaptation strategies, as well as education and awareness on

climate change, efforts that can arouse the ire of powerful mining, oil and forestry interests.

Fabian Simeon, an investigator with Forum Solidaridad Peru, thinks the Catholic Church should do more to offer protection to those who take a stand. "We're running out of time," said Simeon, whose country will host the U.N. Conference of Parties in 2014. "Although some priests and bishops are helping struggle for climate justice, their work faces strong resistance and often places them in danger."

Outlining his hopes, the Rev. Frederick D'Souza, Caritas India's executive director, said he believed championing "climate justice" should be viewed as a new expression of the Catholic Church's option for the poor and should gain new impetus from Pope Francis' advocacy of "modest lifestyles."

"Churches must present a compassionate face to the world, showing how the poor are being further marginalized by climate change," he said. "The Bible tells us we are stewards of the resources God has given us and must not allow them to be expropriated and misused."

ported on Nov. 18 that the costs of "more extreme weather related to a warming planet" were expected to grow, with developing countries "bearing the brunt" from floods, storms and

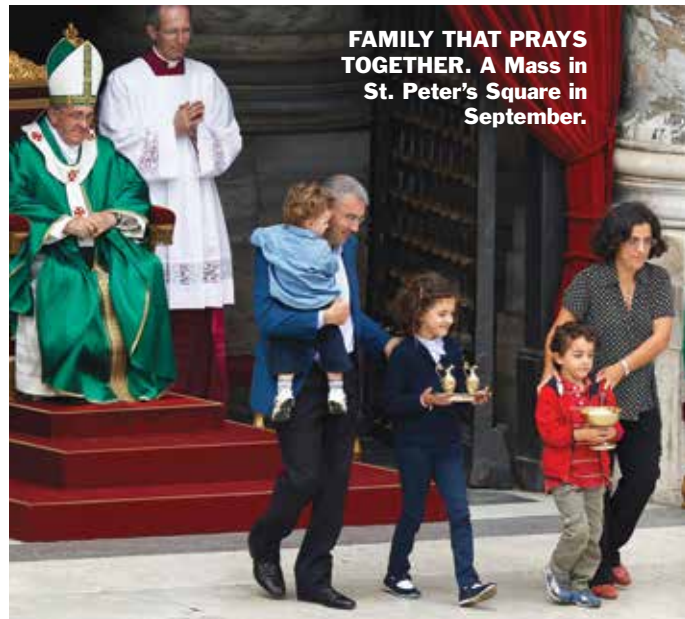
ing of the questions provided by the Vatican.

The Philadelphia Archdiocese has a similar online survey, but in more user-friendly language. The introduction to the Philadelphia survey notes: "Archbishop Charles J. Chaput has authorized the use of an Internet-based instrument for local participation in this consultation in the broadest possible manner. This is not a poll or a survey on church teaching. Rather, this is a unique opportunity for the clergy and faithful of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia to reflect and respond thoughtfully on serious challenges to family life and to marriage."

In introducing Chicago's survey page,

Cardinal Francis E. George explained that for previous synods, he had always sent the preparatory questions to the various councils that advise him. "For this synod, a more ample consultation will be helpful and every Catholic in the archdiocese is therefore invited to reply to the questionnaire now available in English and Spanish."

Baltimore's Archbishop William E. Lori prefaced the survey by inviting active and inactive Catholics to participate



“in this important conversation.”

Other dioceses are using a more focused approach, soliciting responses from pastors and advisory boards like presbyteral councils. Cardinal Sean P. O'Malley, O.F.M.Cap., of Boston said the questionnaire was on the agenda for his recent bimonthly meeting with priests who have been ordained five years or less and at the archdiocesan pastoral council.

## Thousands Seek Church Protection

More than 35,000 people are living on the 40-acre diocesan compound in Bossangoa, Central African Republic, seeking protection from rebels who are targeting Christians, according to the local bishop. Bishop Nestor-Désiré Nongo Aziagbia of Bossangoa said people began arriving in September to escape attacks by rebels of the Seleka alliance. Most of the people in the diocesan compound are women and children, the bishop said. The bishop reported that women have been risking rape and attacks to go out to their farms to harvest food. The bishop spoke on conditions at the compound on Nov. 19, after testifying in Washington about his situation before the House Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights and International Organizations. The previous night rebels had surrounded the diocesan compound and threatened those inside with a rocket attack. In his testimony, Bishop Nongo said Seleka was pitting the country's Christian and Muslim citizens against each other.

## Hear the Hungry

Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory of Atlanta and Bishop Gregory J. Hartmayer of Savannah called on lawmakers in Washington to listen to the

## NEWS BRIEFS

In a world where profit reigns over human dignity, solidarity has **become a “dirty word”** and risks being removed from the dictionary, Pope Francis said in a video message aired on Nov. 21 during the third Festival of the Social Doctrine of the Church in Verona, Italy.

• Alec Reid, the 82-year-old Redemptorist priest **praised for his role** in ending the decades-long sectarian conflict in Northern Ireland, died on Nov. 22 in a Dublin hospital. • “This is perhaps the sign of the joining of two extremes, **remote antiquity and modernity**,” said Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi on Nov. 19, at a news conference in Rome heralding the debut of the Catacombs of Priscilla on Google's Street View feature. • During a debate in London on Nov. 20, all three houses of the Church of England General Synod—bishops, clergy and laity—voted 378 to 8, with 25 abstentions, in favor of the **ordination of women bishops**. • A little more than a week after the 75th anniversary of Kristallnacht, the World Jewish Congress on Nov. 19 honored **Elie and Marion Wiesel** with its Theodor Herzl Award in New York City.



**Alec Reid**

needs of the hungry at home and abroad as they negotiate the 2013 farm bill. One of the most contentious issues is the bill's nutrition provision, which includes funding for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP. The Senate version of the farm bill would cut \$4 billion from the program over the next 10 years, and the House version would cut nearly \$40 billion over the same period. “SNAP is one of the most effective programs to combat hunger in our nation,” the bishops wrote in their op-ed column, published on Nov. 13 in *The Savannah Morning News* daily newspaper. “The Catholic Church runs many food pantries and other programs that help the hungry. However, all the food pantries out there are not going to be able to fill the hole that cuts to SNAP will leave,” they said.

## Great Need After Haiyan

Weeks after Typhoon Haiyan tore through the central Philippines,

Catholic aid workers were continuing their emergency response. “The needs are basically huge,” said Sandra Harlass, an emergency relief coordinator for Malteser International, after returning to Manila from communities across the strait from the worst-hit city of Tacloban. “Ninety percent of the houses are destroyed...most were just washed away from the storm surge.” She said, “Together with the houses, of course, all the food supplies were washed away, all the nonfood items, like blankets, mosquito nets, everything is just gone.” The team of emergency relief assessors found people who had very little to eat nine days after the storm struck. A 15-foot storm surge struck Tacloban after the typhoon on Nov. 8, creating a tsunami-like effect that swallowed up people in its fast-rising floods and left bodies strewn about in its wake. The area suffered most of the more than 5,200 deaths recorded so far.

From CNS and other sources.



# ¡Presente!

I can't remember being so inspired by so many young people in such a short period of time. They came from across the country, from Jesuit high schools, colleges and universities—by car, bus, train and plane. Perhaps the most epic journey was made by a group of students from Creighton University who piled into a bus for a very long ride from Omaha to Washington, D.C.

Bedraggled, bleary-eyed and bearing big backpacks, over 1,200 students, as well as faculty members, administrators and campus ministers, gathered on the third weekend of November for the Ignatian Family Teach-In for Justice. I was dazzled by the gathering and, most of all, by the presence of the Holy Spirit among these amazing young men and women.

Let me begin by explaining the ungainly name. "Ignatian Family" refers to the community of Jesuit high schools, colleges, parishes and retreat houses, as well as institutions and individuals inspired by Ignatian ideals. The teach-in is an outgrowth of a gathering previously associated with the annual School of the Americas Watch, itself partly an outgrowth of outrage over the death of six Jesuits and their companions, who were martyred in El Salvador on Nov. 16, 1989. Nineteen of the 26 soldiers involved in the murders had been trained at the U.S. Army's School of the Americas at Fort Benning, Ga. By the mid-1990s many Jesuit schools were taking part in the S.O.A. Watch on that November weekend; and from 1998 to 2009, a

teach-in was held to educate students in Catholic social teaching. In 2010, the teach-in moved to Washington, D.C., largely so the students could engage in advocacy on Capitol Hill.

You may smile at that last fact. But the descent of the Jesuit-educated students upon the offices of lawmakers was described to me by Christopher Kerr, executive director of the Ignatian Solidarity Network, which organized the teach-in, as the "largest Catholic lobbying day of the year."

The energy of the teach-in—during the keynote addresses, in smaller sessions on topics like the death penalty, suicide prevention, poverty, abortion, immigration and prayer or just in the hallways—was astonishing. For the first time I began to understand how fulfilling it must be to work as a teacher or campus minister in a Jesuit school. It was touching to have students speak to me about books of mine that they had read in class. And I have never been asked for so many hugs in my entire life.

"You look tired," I said to one college student. "Yeah," he said, "I was on the bus for about a million hours, and I was right underneath one of the speakers, and they were playing a movie, so I didn't sleep." By way of encouragement, I suggested that tonight, in his hotel room, he might be able to rest. He screwed up his face eloquently. "Well, Father, I'm with four other guys in a room with two beds—and I've got the floor!" Then he smiled. "But I'm psyched to be here!"

Around 10 p.m. on Saturday night, I

was invited to join the Jesuit priests and brothers, perhaps 25 in all, for a prayer service in the immense hotel conference room. Each Jesuit was handed a votive candle. Someone, we were told, would announce the names of all the Jesuits who have been martyred around the world since 1972. A few years thereafter, Pedro Arrupe, S.J., superior general of the Society of Jesus, reminded Jesuits that working with the poor, and for justice, would come with a price. Are we, he asked of Jesuits, "ready to take up this responsibility and to carry it out to its ultimate consequence? Ready to enter upon the more severe way of the cross? If we are not ready for this, what other use would these discussions have, except perhaps merely an academic one?"

I was  
dazzled  
by these  
amazing  
young men  
and  
women.

As a guitar player began strumming, I thought perhaps 20 or so names would be read. There were 52—so many that members of the Jesuit Volunteer Corps brought up the final candles. As each name was read, 1,200 of us said, "¡Presente!" Present. We are here.

Who was there? The Jesuits who had gone before us, martyred in places like El Salvador, but also Chad, China, Ghana and Jamaica. My Jesuit brothers—who walk with me in my Jesuit life—were there too. As were all those students, with their beautiful souls, who would come after us, and who would offer their youth, their joy and their enthusiasm to spread the Gospel and work for justice.

I was glad to be there. I was glad I was *presente*.

JAMES MARTIN, S.J., is editor at large of *America*. His book *Jesus: A Pilgrimage* will be published in March.

“Let us try also to be a church  
that finds new roads, that is able  
to step outside itself.”

—Pope Francis



## A BIG HEART OPEN TO GOD

*A Conversation with Pope Francis*

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HOW THE CHURCH CAN  
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DEVELOPMENT GOALS



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# Sowing the Future

BY JEFFREY D. SACHS

**H**ow to achieve a path to sustainable development is the most important problem facing the world today. It is a phenomenal challenge, unique for our time, and the voice of the church will be central for success. There is no possibility for success unless the world unites in an ethical vision defending humanity and nature. The social doctrines and moral teachings of the church are vital in building that ethical framework.

There was a moment in history, 50 years ago, when the voice of the church helped save the world. In April 1963, Pope John XXIII published “Pacem in Terris,” his last encyclical. It called on all governments around the world to exercise political power in a context of moral-

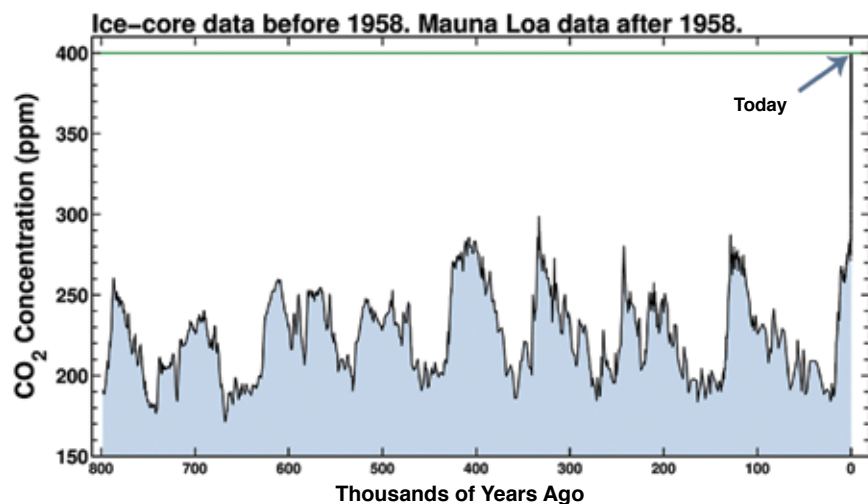
**GOOD GROWTH.**  
Fedlen Philio plants a  
mango tree with a youth  
group that encourages  
sustainable development  
in Kafou Kols, Haiti.

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JEFFREY D. SACHS is director of The Earth Institute, Quetelet Professor of Sustainable Development and a professor of health policy and management at Columbia University in New York City. He is also special adviser to U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon on the Millennium Development Goals and author of *The End of Poverty* (2005). His most recent book is *To Move the World: JFK's Quest for Peace* (Random House, 2013). This article is adapted from a talk he gave to the Pontifical Academy of the Social Sciences on July 1, 2013, at the Vatican.

ity and human survival, and it helped inspire and encourage President John F. Kennedy to give the most important speech of the modern American presidency, known as his “A Strategy of Peace” address, at American University in June 1963. The encyclical, combined with the speech, helped pave the way for the Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, signed with Premier Nikita Khrushchev of the Soviet Union in July 1963, a crucial step back from the brink of nuclear annihilation.

This historical case is a vivid example of how the words and vision of the church can help inspire global leadership on a pressing issue. I believe the same inspiration by the church is necessary for tackling today’s challenge of sustainable development. We have entered an era of human history that requires new approaches and solutions. If they are to galvanize



the necessary human action around the world, this fresh approach must be grounded in a new global ethic. At this point, however, we lack both the tools and the universal moral language for this monumental task.

Indeed, we are drifting rather than solving problems, and we are losing time. In his inaugural address in 1961, President Kennedy said, “Man holds in his mortal hands the power to abolish all forms of human poverty, and all forms of human life.” We still hold in our hands the ability to eradicate poverty, and we are indeed making some important progress. Yet we still threaten human life, not only through nuclear weapons and other armaments, but also through our wanton destruction of the natural environment. We must understand our predicament in order to reorient our actions.

## Achievements and Challenges

Let me begin with some good news: the rate of global poverty is falling rather rapidly. In 1980 around 55 percent of the households of the developing countries lived in extreme poverty, as measured by the World Bank. By 1990 the poverty rate had declined to around 44 percent, and by 2010

to around 21 percent. In short, the world has succeeded in achieving the Millennium Development Goal to cut the poverty rate by half between 1990 and 2015. Indeed, taking the developing world as a whole, we are ahead of schedule. We still have the urgent task in the years ahead to ensure that all regions, especially sub-Saharan Africa, the world’s poorest, share fully in the progress.

Even with this important news, the challenges remain profound: not only to complete the task of ending poverty, but also to ensure a just and environmentally sustainable economy.

In my travels on behalf of Ban Ki-moon, the secretary general of the United Nations, I have encountered massive street protests—in Istanbul, Rio de Janeiro, Santiago and even my home city, New York, with the Occupy Wall Street movement. This unrest is not a phenomenon limited to any city, country, region or level of development. It is a worldwide phenomenon of instability. It reflects a crisis of youth, unemployment, insecurity, inadequate or corrupt governance and rising inequalities. It is a global crisis of legitimacy and justice.

Youth unemployment is certainly one of the greatest scourges. The youth unemployment rates in many parts of Europe have reached 20 percent or 30 percent, and more than 50 percent in Spain. Youth unemployment in North Africa, which is in upheaval, is between 30 percent and 50 percent. In Latin America it is between 20 percent and 30 percent. In all parts of the world, we face a job crisis brought on by technological change. Young people are not equipped with the education and training they need to find jobs that can give them security and enable them to raise families.

The challenges extend beyond the economic and social realms. We must also address the rising environmental threats. Ecological change is dramatic yet poorly perceived. The human population has become so numerous—7.2 billion people today and perhaps around 11 billion by the end of the century—with human beings on average using so many of the earth’s resources at a pace that threatens to undermine fundamental balances involving the earth’s climate, the water cycle, the nitrogen cycle, ocean chemistry and the habitat for millions of other species. Scientists have even given our age a new scientific term: the Anthropocene (Greek for “human epoch”). *Human*, here, is used in a scientific manner, to refer to the fact that human beings have become the main sources of environmental change and destruction on a global scale. It is not a happy term.

Humanity is not driving these fundamental changes with

any sense of responsibility or even with much awareness, in part because the scale of environmental change is completely unprecedented. Our societies, cultures, economic practices and political institutions have been unable so far to face up to the threats of climate change, ocean acidification, deforestation and other profound dangers. But the pace of environmental change is extraordinary, putting humanity in imminent peril in a matter of decades, not centuries.

For a stark example, consider the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere during the last 800,000 years (see the graph on pg. 14). We care about carbon dioxide since it is the most important greenhouse gas, the kind that leads to global warming. The carbon cycles in the distant past were caused by orbital changes of the earth. Looking at the far right of the graph, we see that the carbon cycle has recently veered off its past course. Levels of carbon dioxide are soaring. In April 2013 it reached a concentration of 400 parts per million, not seen on earth for three million years. The cause is the massive use of coal, oil and gas for worldwide energy. The grave danger of this reliance on fossil fuels is massive and destructive climate change.

The environmental threats, alas, do not end there. World-leading ecologists have identified nine planetary boundaries—climate change, ocean acidification, overuse of fresh water, nitrogen and phosphorus pollution, ozone depletion, destructive land-use change, loss of biodiversity, aerosol pollution and chemical pollution—where human actions now threaten to destabilize the planet. We need urgently to ensure that our technologies and resources are compatible with a safe and sustainable planet.

The dangers are increasingly apparent in our daily lives. We are setting records for heat waves, droughts, floods and other extreme weather. In 2012 the United States had the worst floods and worst drought in decades and the highest temperatures on record. Yet the consequences are even more terrifying in the poorest regions of the globe. From 2010 to 2011, the Horn of Africa was gripped by an extreme drought. Many people perished. Violence and conflict flared. Last year the drought was in the Sahel region of West Africa. Again, hunger and drought were tinder for violence, contributing to the civil war in Mali.

## Goals and Ethics

So what must we do? We need a change of direction in our policies and economic organization. The concept I have long found to be the most fruitful for organizing thinking on how to change is the concept of sustainable development. This concept calls for a holistic approach to society's challenges, rather than a single-minded pursuit of economic growth. This holistic approach combines economic development, social inclusion, environmental sustainability and good governance.

The world's governments have adopted sustainable development as the organizing principle for global development

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following the Millennium Development Goals period. In the important Rio+20 Summit in June 2012, the governments declared their intention to adopt Sustainable Development Goals to help harness the world's energies toward this historic challenge. At the conclusion of the summit, they adopted "The Future We Want," which describes the world's sustainable development priorities and how a set of development goals can help to meet them.

The U.N. member states will select the new goals by 2015. These are likely to include the challenges of ending extreme poverty, extending quality education to all children, eliminating gender and ethnic discrimination, fighting climate change, promoting decent work, ensuring food security and making our cities more livable and resilient to hazards. The first intergovernmental meeting on the new goals took place at the U.N. General Assembly on Sept. 25.

The new goals, however, will not succeed unless we have a global ethical framework to underpin them. While the challenges of sustainable development are technical to a significant extent—for example, how to make the transition to a low-carbon economy—the challenges are also fundamentally a matter of ethics. Unless we have a shared moral understanding of what it means to take care of the poor, one another and the planet, there is little prospect of turning stated goals into reality.

The social doctrine of the church offers a critical and unique pathway to a global ethic of sustainable development. In my work on sustainable development, I refer to the compelling teachings of the church, like the preferential option for the poor, the universal destination of goods, placing private property within a moral framework and Pope Paul VI's still relevant message, "Development is the new name for peace."

The church speaks movingly about our responsibilities toward creation, charity in truth and subsidiarity in good governance. These wise teachings are, of course, only a small part

of the social doctrine of the church. They inspire us and point the way toward a universal ethic, with the human being at its core. They can help shape a global dialogue across religions and regions, since they embody deep human yearnings of a universal character.

We need a massive change of direction worldwide in a very short period of time. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has asked me to establish a global knowledge network on sustainable development, called the Sustainable Development Solutions Network, involving universities around the world, research institutes, businesses, foundations and scientific academies, to bring together world leaders in science, engineering, economics, finance, ecology and related fields to help brainstorm practical solutions. I hope that the network and the Pontifical Academy of Science can find ways of fruitful and exciting collaboration as we move ahead.

As I travel the world and meet with government leaders, I find time and again that no government is yet equipped for the serious challenges we face, but the goodwill to take on these challenges can be found in all parts of the world and in all societies. Many political obstacles and vested interests hamper progress, and there are many causes for confusion and immobility. Yet there is a deep yearning for a shared global effort.

Can the world achieve sustainable development? The answer is certainly yes. We have the know-how. Even within the short time span that remains before 2050, we can make a radical transition to safe energy. By 2030 we can end extreme poverty, strengthen communities and ensure that every child can get a healthy start and a good education. We can also advance a new global ethic, drawing on the great social teachings of the church and other great traditions.

The choice, of course, is ours. Most important, we need to understand that humanity is bound together in a common fate. And in this regard, let us end where we began, with the speech President Kennedy made at American University. He sought to convince Americans that it would be possible to find common ground with the Soviet Union, something unimaginable for many Americans at the time. His message, drawing inspiration from Good Pope John, was that peace was indeed possible because the other side was human too, with the same hopes and dreams as Americans. President Kennedy expressed this conviction with these words of sublime eloquence:

Let us not be blind to our differences— but let us also direct attention to our common interests and to the means by which those differences can be resolved. And if we cannot end now our differences, at least we can help make the world safe for diversity. For, in the final analysis, our most basic common link is that we all inhabit this small planet. We all breathe the same air. We all cherish our children's future. And we are all mortal.



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# Currency Crisis

## How do you solve a problem like the euro?

BY PAUL D. McNELIS

**T**he Sound of Music,” the hit Broadway musical and later film, includes a scene in which a group of Austrian nuns, in the days leading up to the start of World War II, sing a song titled “How Do You Solve a Problem Like Maria?” Maria, played by Julie Andrews in the film, is a well-liked novice, but she has had some trouble fitting into the regime of the cloistered convent life. The problem is resolved when Maria takes a leave to think about her vocation, assuming a job as a governess of the von Trapp family.

Like the Austrian nuns, many countries in the euro zone, particularly Portugal, Ireland, Greece and Spain—together dubbed the PIIGS by The Economist—are adapting the titular question of that famous song to another problem: the euro. There are plenty of reasons not to sing, but rather sigh, and sigh deeply, or perhaps sing the blues. In 2012, a little more than a decade after the introduction of the euro, we see marked divergence between the economic performance of the PIIGS and that of the country at the center of the euro zone, Germany.

The PIIGS have extraordinarily high unemployment rates (27.9 percent in Greece, 26.2 percent in Spain, 16.5 percent in Portugal, 13.6 percent in Ireland and 12.2 percent in Italy). The ratios of debt to gross domestic product are also unpleasant: 147 percent in Greece, 109 percent in Italy, 87 percent in Portugal, 61 percent in Ireland and 51 percent in Spain. By contrast, Germany has an unemployment rate of 5.2 percent and a debt-to-G.D.P. ratio of 44 percent. Clearly the euro appears to be a union that was not made in heaven. Like Maria in the Austrian convent, is it time for some or all of the PIIGS to part ways and explore other options?

### Benefits and Hazards

The euro was the project of President François Mitterrand of France and Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany in the 1990s to enhance political cohesion in Europe and further the process of economic integration begun with the creation of

the Common Market by the Treaty of Rome in 1957.

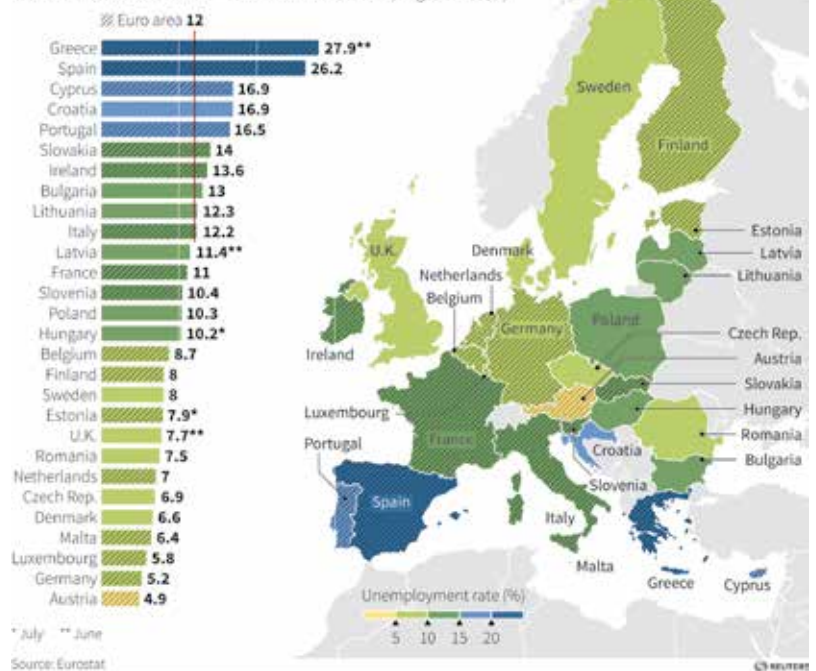
The argument for the monetary union was enhanced price competition, since goods and services would be priced in a single currency, which in turn would lead to greater transparency about relative costs across borders, thus increasing the efficiency of making financial decisions. All of this, the countries hoped, would pave the way, in the medium-to-long term, toward greater convergence in economic growth and performance across the euro zone.

The individual governments, of course, would surrender their own independent monetary authorities, so there would no longer be the option of currency devaluation to regain competitiveness, relative to other countries, for marketing exports and capturing tourism. But even this, by the late 1990s, was not seen as a high price to pay. Too often, as in the case of Italy, an independent central bank just meant high and unstable inflation rates.

The euro zone is what is known as a currency area. Independent nations share a common currency but still have their own independent fiscal policies for government spending

### European unemployment rates

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE — SEASONALLY-ADJUSTED, August 2013 (%)



PAUL D. McNELIS, S.J., holds the Robert Bendheim Chair in Economic and Financial Policy at the Graduate School of Business Administration at Fordham University, New York.

**EUROPE'S GREAT DEPRESSION.** Lambrousi Harikleia cries as she threatens to jump from the office in Athens where she worked, because her wage has been cut and she and her husband were threatened with layoffs, February 2012.



euro zone. One of the major responsibilities of a central bank is to be a lender of last resort to banks. If banks are in danger of a collapse, the central bank has the option of providing emergency financing. The reason for this mechanism is to prevent an individual bank crisis from turning into a systemwide financial panic through contagion effects. After all, if one well-established bank collapses, depositors at other banks may worry and withdraw their deposits, starting a general run on the banking system. As we know from earlier generations who lived through the Great Depression, a systemwide run on the banking system is not a pleasant experience.

and taxation. Because the countries use common currencies, debt is denominated in that currency. So each country can issue debt in the same currency as the other countries of the currency union. But individual countries do not have political accountability to the currency union about how they tax and spend and thus run up their debt.

This combination of complete monetary union with little or no fiscal coordination or accountability is the Achilles' heel of the euro zone. In the United States, for example, individual states do not have the power to issue their own currency and set exchange rates against the currencies of other states. But they are part of a broader federal tax and transfer system. In the wake of a natural disaster or economic downturn, for example, a state cannot devalue the dollar to encourage more tourism or investment, but it can receive federal transfers. Similarly, the federal government can mandate conditions for state spending or taxation in order for federal aid to continue.

This is not the case in the euro zone. Whatever bailouts have come so far to the PIIGS have come after long and contentious deliberation among the key players: the International Monetary Fund, the European Central Bank and the European Commission. These three entities are known, not so affectionately, as the *troika* in the PIIGS.

But the combination of monetary union without fiscal coordination is not the only Achilles' heel of the euro zone. The European Central Bank is the monetary authority of the entire

Given that the European Central Bank has to function as a lender of last resort to member banks in the euro zone, one would assume this entity would have supervisory authority over these banks. In the United States, the Federal Reserve System is a lender of last resort, to be sure, but has supervisory authority over member banks through its 12 regional Federal Reserve Banks, and through the Office of Comptroller of the Currency and the Federal Deposit Insurance Commission. There is also a national uniform system of bank-reporting laws and a unified financial accounting framework.

None of this is true in the euro zone. While the European Central Bank has the responsibility to be a lender of last resort to the banks in the euro zone, each country has its own banking supervision laws and its own national accounting practices. The national central banks of the system, like the Bank of Portugal, the Central Bank of Ireland and the Bank of Spain, have responsibility for bank supervision in their respective countries, but it is the European Central Bank that has to serve as a lender of last resort in a time of crisis.

It should not be surprising that things have turned out the way they have. National governments like Portugal's were able to run up large public-sector deficits while issuing euro-denominated bonds at low interest rates (since there was no longer any risk of a currency devaluation). At the same time, many banks throughout the system engaged in questionable lending practices, with less than adequate supervision from

their national authorities, which no longer had the responsibility to function as lenders of last resort. In hindsight, it is easy to see that the adoption of the euro was premature for many countries in Europe.

## Lessons From U.S. History

Many commentators have been advocating that their countries leave the euro and re-adopt their own national currency. The call is for a partial or full breakup of the euro system, with perhaps only a few countries retaining the euro.

The problem with the breakup of a monetary union of independent national states is that we have little data to indicate where this process of disintegration or fragmentation might end. Previous breakups of monetary unions took place in the context of nation-states breaking up, for example, in Yugoslavia, the Soviet Republics and the Czech Republic with Slovakia.

What happens if Spain, Ireland, Italy, Greece and Portugal start issuing their own currencies again? There will certainly be competitive devaluations against one another, leading to higher national inflation rates. But will things end there? Likely there will be trade restrictions, tariffs and controls on investment and labor mobility. With a currency breakup, Europe could regress to the state of affairs prior to the Treaty of Rome. As the Great Depression showed, increasing economic isolationism and protectionism is a sure way to prolong stagnation and delay recovery.

The other option is to enhance and strengthen fiscal consolidation through centralized control on taxation and spending across the member countries of the euro zone.

Thomas J. Sargent, a Nobel laureate and professor at New York University, has drawn a lucid comparison of the United States operating under the Articles of Confederation and the present euro zone. What triggered the adoption of the current U.S. Constitution in 1789 was a debt crisis. Before that the United States was a loose confederation of states with a common currency and a chief executive with little authority. The Northern states had accumulated large debts during the Revolutionary War, while the Southern states, rich in cash from exporting cotton and tobacco, had little or no outstanding debt from the war.

The issue for the new United States was the consequence of a default by the Northern states. Such a default would have repercussions throughout the country, making it harder for both Northern and Southern states to borrow internationally for capital equipment for infrastructure. Rather than risk the consequences of a default by the North, which would cripple the ability of the South to borrow internationally, the South agreed to federalize the war debts of the Northern states in exchange for moving the capital from New York to a new federal city in the South, Washington, D.C., and for greater centralized control over the collection of tax revenue and spending by states.

Europe is in a similar position today. If there is a breakup of

the euro zone, there is a real chance that several of the highly indebted countries would not only devalue their new currencies but also default on the euro-denominated debt they hold. Since many banks throughout the entire euro region hold debt instruments from these countries, such a default would put considerable stress on financial institutions throughout the euro region. Like the South after the Revolutionary War, many countries would rather not see a default by the highly indebted countries in their currency union.


## What to Do?

Although a breakup of the euro area is not out of the question, the better strategy would be to move forward and maintain the euro with a system of greater fiscal centralization. Clearly the European Central Bank has to harmonize bank accounting and regulatory standards across the system. For the euro to work, national governments will have to yield some—though by no means all—of their fiscal autonomy to a centralized Ministry of Finance in the euro system, much the way state governments have citizens paying direct and indirect taxes to the federal government.

Finally, there is the question of the way money moves across borders in the euro zone and beyond. The roots of the euro-zone crisis lie in the all-too-human tendency to borrow too much in good times, when lenders are exuberant, and in bad times to fall into situations of bankruptcy and severe recession as lenders become excessively risk-averse while investment dries up and unemployment skyrockets.

We are moving into the age of macro-prudential regulation, which calls for new, nontraditional tools of stabilization, so that we will not fall into this type of crisis in the future. In good times, when markets become overly exuberant, taxes on the flow of international capital can help moderate the accumulation of large amounts of debt and in bad times, when lenders are risk averse, subsidies for new lending would generate funds for new investment opportunities. As the late James Tobin of Yale would probably advocate: the time has come to throw some sand into the highly lubricated gears of the financial system.

The euro was a bold initiative, to be sure, but the painful experience of the last five years has shown how vulnerable the overall structure was. Just as the United States learned lessons from the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation, so the euro zone can learn from the present crisis and move forward toward greater integration in fiscal policy to support the monetary union, as well as to create some helpful frictions in the borrowing and lending taking place across member-state borders.

While the learning and restructuring process will be long and difficult, a euro breakup risks putting Europe in a back-to-the-future mode, reverting to the isolationist days before the Treaty of Rome. 



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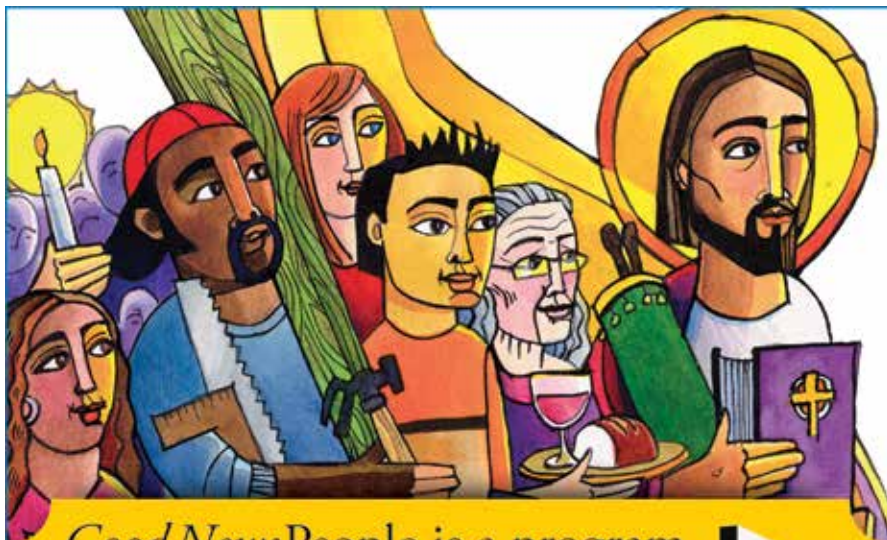
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# Democracy Is Not Enough

Arab states need a sense of citizenship first.

BY ELIAS D. MALLON

When Mohamed Bouazizi set himself on fire in Tunisia on Dec. 17, 2010, the Arab Spring began. Now, three years later, the results hoped for by people inside and outside the Middle East have clearly not been realized. Iraq is still violently divided between Sunnis, Shiites and an increasingly autonomous Kurdish region. Syria has sunk into a brutal civil war with over 110,000 casualties and 6.25 million citizens displaced to Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan or within Syria itself. Most recently, Egypt's experiment with democracy has at best been sidetracked. Whether the term coup is appropriate or not, the elected government of Egypt was nonconstitutionally removed by the military. President Mohamed Morsi—regardless of how inept and authoritar-

ian he was—was not removed from office in a democratic fashion. He was removed by the military, albeit a military with considerable popular support. The result has been the emergence of serious divisions within Egypt that could lead to civil war in the most populous and central Arab nation.

Coptic Christians, who were present in Egypt for 600 years before the arrival of Islam, have become the target of choice for religious extremist factions in Egyptian society. Christians were involved in the first demonstrations in Tahrir Square, where shoulder to shoulder with Muslims, they brought down the government of Hosni Mubarak on Feb. 11, 2011. For a moment it seemed that Christians and Muslims could work together for the good of the entire country. If, however, the situation for Christians under the dictatorships of Anwar el-Sadat and Mubarak was not good, it did not improve at all under the democratically elected Mohamed Morsi. A former member of the Muslim

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ELIAS D. MALLON, S.A., is external affairs officer of Catholic Near East Welfare Association in New York.

**NOT FORGOTTEN. A protester raises a sign in support of deposed president Mohamed Morsi on June 21, 2013.**

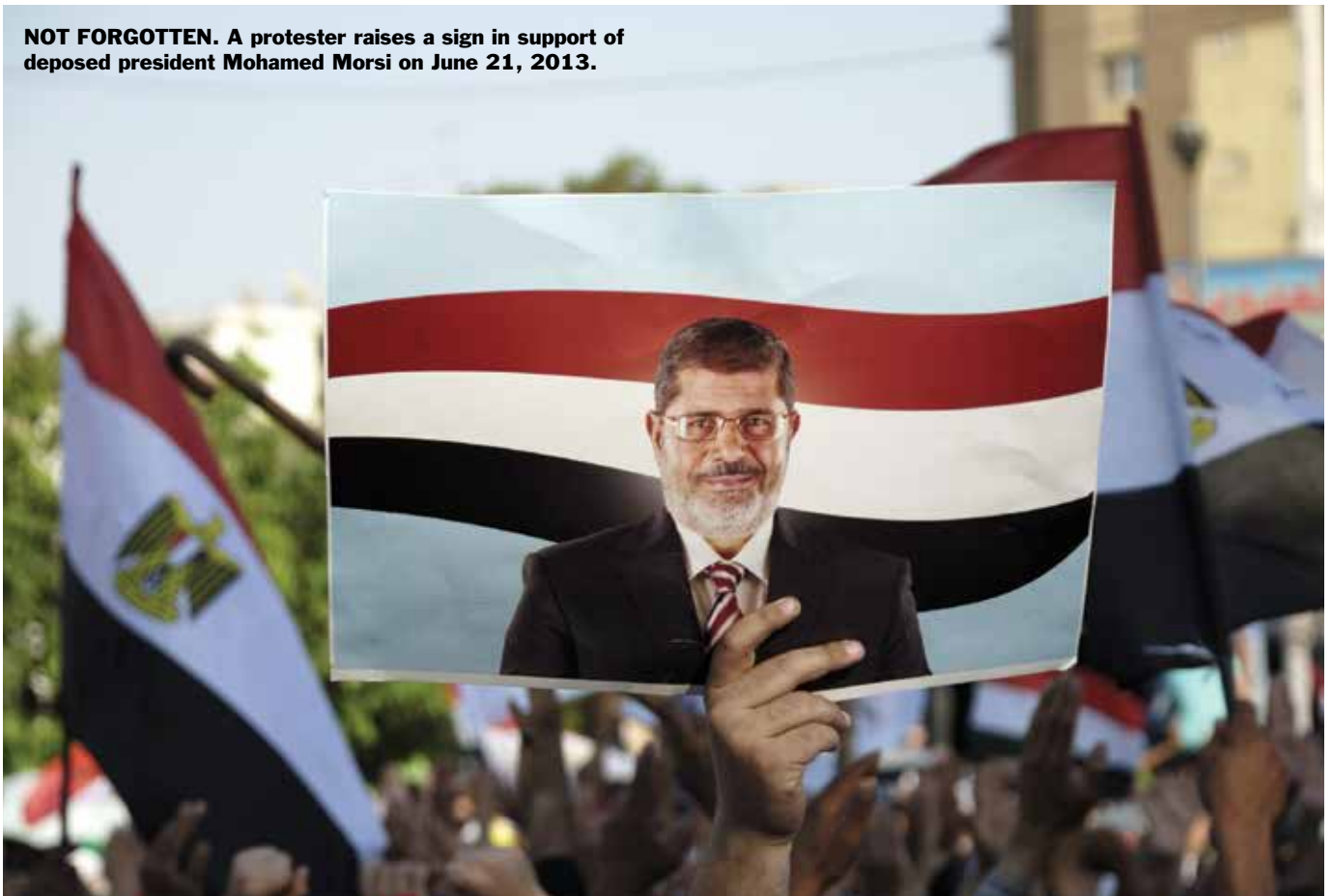


PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/MOHAMED ELSAYED

Brotherhood, Morsi did little or nothing to improve the lot of his opponents. Although he called himself head of a government “for all Egyptians,” Morsi in fact began to consolidate the power of his own faction, the Muslim Brotherhood. Liberal Muslims, secular Muslims, Christians and even some conservative Muslims felt betrayed and increasingly excluded from the political life of the country.

After large demonstrations in Cairo and around Egypt, Morsi was ultimately removed from office by the military on July 3, 2013. During the television program announcing the removal of President Morsi, the suspension of the Egyptian Constitution and the appointment of Adly Mahmoud Mansour as the interim president, General Abdul-Fattah el-Sisi was flanked by members of the military as well as by Ahmed Muhammad Ahmed el-Tayeb, the grand sheikh of Al-Azhar and Patriarch Tawadros II, the leader of Egypt’s Coptic Orthodox Christians. The image was clear, if strange and unsettling: the Sunni Muslim community through Sheikh el-Tayeb and the Christian community through Patriarch Tawadros, plus large popular demonstrations, supported the removal of President Morsi by the military. Large sectors of the Egyptian population—both Christian and Muslim—as well as some Arab governments continue to support the actions of the military.

Not long afterward, the Muslim Brotherhood responded. Mr. Morsi had been a member of the Brotherhood and advanced its interests for an Islamic Egyptian state. The Brotherhood, which continues to support him, has led large demonstrations around Cairo and in the rest of Egypt. The military has responded to these demonstrations with ferocity. Over 600 Egyptian citizens were killed in one night of clashes between the military and pro-Morsi demonstrators.

At the same time, members of the military have been appointed governors in 19 Egyptian states.

Since then, the situation of Christians in post-Morsi Egypt has grown rapidly and significantly worse. Pro-Morsi forces accuse the Coptic Christians of having staged a military coup against the democratically elected president. Although the number of Egyptian Christians is so small (estimates range between 5 percent and 15 percent of the population) that it would, practically speaking, be impossible for them to overthrow the government, nonetheless all over the country violent attacks on Christians and Christian institutions have reached an unprecedented level. On Aug. 17, 2013, a list was published of 32 Christian institutions that had been attacked, looted or destroyed since Mr. Morsi’s removal. When the looting and destruction of Christian homes and businesses are also taken into account, the list is only the proverbial tip of the iceberg. The image of Patriarch Tawadros standing with General el-Sisi has become a rallying point for the pro-Morsi, anti-military demonstrators to focus attacks on Christians as the enemy.

Egypt is experiencing the worst of all possible situations; there is no clear good side and no clear bad side. The actions of the pro-Morsi supporters who attack Christians show quite clearly what their agenda may have been all along. Yet the military’s actions and the ferocity of its response to the pro-Morsi demonstrators make it very difficult to be sympathetic. In fact, that is a major problem: it is almost impossible to be completely sympathetic to either side. Each side has grievances and each side has committed atrocities. This has made it very difficult, if not impossible, for countries like the United States and the member states of the European Union to take a clear stand on what is happening and to support one group against the other.

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## What About Democracy?

The situation in Egypt highlights a very important fact that is crucial for the entire Middle East. Despite all the rhetoric, democracy alone is not and cannot be the answer. Since the advent of the Arab Spring, there has been a great deal of talk about democracy. Most of it has been shallow and naïve. Westerners in general and Americans in particular are fond of talking about democracy. The United States, for example, invaded Iraq “to set up a democracy.” In addition to being historically naïve, the democracy being spoken about is all too often univocal and one-dimensional. For many in the United States, democracy means “just like us.” Democracy is considered to be identical



with the American system without remainder.

Historically, even in the United States the form of democracy changed radically when slavery was abolished in 1863. It was not until the 14th Amendment was ratified five years later that the United States had a definition of what a citizen was, and it was not until the 19th Amendment was ratified in 1920 that women enjoyed full citizenship. Democracy in 21st-century United States is very different from the democracy of the “three-fifths compromise,” which counted five slaves—who had no civil rights—as the equivalent of three citizens for the purpose of congressional representation.

Historically naïve and one-dimensional concepts—to say nothing of expectations—of democracy are not helpful in the Middle East. In fact, they are not very helpful anywhere. No successful democracy arose like Athena from the head of Zeus, fully formed and mature. The history of democracy in Britain, France and Italy, for example, included long periods of development. In some cases the development took centuries. The Magna Carta was signed in 1215, but the English Bill of Rights (for some but not all) was not signed until more than 450 years later, in 1689. After abolishing the monarchy in 1792, France has gone through one Empire and four republics to arrive at its present Fifth Republic. The list goes on. To expect democracy in the Middle East to emerge, develop democratic institutions and thrive in a decade or two is not only unrealistic; it is unfair.

### Dictatorship of the Majority

The presidency of Mohamed Morsi proves that democracy alone is not enough. In even moderately pluralistic societies like Egypt, where one faction holds an overwhelming majority, democracy can be the quickest way to a dictatorship of the majority. The majority will always win at the ballot box and can quickly move to disenfranchise minorities. Thus, while there is no doubt that Morsi was democratically elected, there were profound doubts about his agenda for Egyptian minorities, including Christians, secularists and others. Nevertheless, a very dangerous precedent is set when a government is nonconstitutionally removed, especially by the military. The result is that it is almost impossible in the conflict in Egypt to determine who is right and who is wrong. Each side is both right and wrong in different ways at the same time. It is profoundly wrong to attack Christians because they are Christians; but it is also wrong for over 600 demonstrators to be killed. Democratic procedures alone will not solve this.

In observing the turmoil in the Middle East, it has become increasingly clear that if democracy is to succeed, citizenship must be established first. If democracy means no more than “one person one vote” and “majority rules,” it is a formula for the tyranny of the majority. Clearly, in a democ-

ocracy the majority decides, but it cannot be a zero-sum phenomenon. Minorities do not lose their rights; the opposition is not “excommunicated”; and the possibility remains for the minority to be in power one day. If democracy in the Middle East is to succeed, it must be built on the notion of a citizenry in which, independent of ethnic, religious, political or gender considerations, all are equal before the law in rights and responsibilities.

It is noteworthy how often the word *citizen* appears in contemporary Christian literature referring to or coming out of the Middle East. The *lineamenta* for the Synod of Bishops’ meeting in Rome in 2010 used the word several times. On June 23, 2011, the Holy Synod of Antioch (Greek Orthodox Patriarchate) called upon governments to secure “citizens’ interests.” The notion of citizenship in these documents is not determined by ethnicity, linguistic grouping, confessional affiliation or the like.

In the present conflict in Egypt, reference to democracy is a dead end, since in different ways both sides are claiming—neither with overwhelming credibility—to be on the side of democracy. Democracy in Egypt cannot work until a notion of citizenship is enshrined in law and practice. For democracy to succeed in Egypt, all citizens—Muslims, Christians, secularists, moderates as well as the Muslim Brotherhood—must be guaranteed equal rights and obligations before the law. ▲



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# Marcel as Prophet

Schools of philosophical thought emerge and recede. Structuralism has vanished. Post-structuralism barely lingers on. For generations of undergraduates, however, one philosophical current never loses its appeal: existentialism. Professional philosophers may smile at the lack of rigor in some of its poetic effusions, but every year a new crop of 20-year-olds enthusiastically explores the call to tragic freedom, authenticity and commitment still ringing in its sacred texts.

Last spring I taught a seminar on existentialism. I structured it as a dialogue between the movement's atheists (Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Albert Camus) and its theists (Martin Buber, Nikolai Berdyaev, Gabriel Marcel). The author who most impressed the students was Marcel. What struck them were not so much his famous theories of creative fidelity or of the difference between problem and mystery. Rather, it was his prescience as a social critic. In *Man Against Mass Society* (1955), Marcel took the measure of the culture of death that was incipient in postwar France but has since become part of our daily routine.

For Marcel, acceptance of abortion is the sign of an affluent society choking on its own material comfort. Having abandoned a contemplative approach to existence, a society defined by its growing material possessions ends up considering life itself an irritable joke. The destruction of the innocent becomes a casual gesture. He writes:

This generalized comfort, with its appurtenances, such as standardized amusements, now

seems the only way to make life tolerable. Life is no longer considered a divine gift; it is just a "dirty joke." The existence of a widely diffused pessimism, at the level of the sneer and the oath rather than that of sighs and weeping, seems to me a fundamental given fact about contemporary humanity. It is in the perspective of this widely diffused pessimism, a sort of physical nausea at life, that we ought to consider such a serious and significant contemporary fact as the prevalence of abortion.

Beyond the anguish of an individual drama, the practice of abortion reflects the despair of a society that sees no particular significance in its future, certainly not in its children.

The celebrated nausea of the existentialist is not, for Marcel, a universal human experience of dread before the absurdity of existence; it is the symptom of a society that has falsely defined itself by its technological prowess. Since existence is no longer perceived as a gift, people need no longer cherish this gift through sacrificial love. The boredom quickly turns lethal.

The very act of family planning easily becomes a cold act of calculation dominated by economic concerns. The difference between the human subject and the material object of consummation vanishes. Marcel envisions the mentality of a man considering the possibility of a child under the weight of such a technological perspective. He writes:

Given such a point of view, how could such a man fail to claim for himself the right to interfere with the overflow of life, just as one dams up a river? Before he decides to start a baby "on the way," he will make careful calculations, just as if he were buying a motorcycle. He will try to estimate the annual cost as exactly as possible: illnesses and doctors'

bills in one case, wear and tear and garage expenses in the other. Quite frequently, instead of a baby, he will decide for economic reasons to settle for a little dog. It costs less. If the bills at the veterinarian become too great, it can always be put away painlessly. To be sure, we have not so far envisaged this possibility in the case of sickly small children.

Since  
existence is  
no longer  
perceived as  
a gift, people  
need no  
longer  
cherish it.

Even Marcel could not envision the evolution of society on this point—a world in which some academics blandly justify the infanticide of the disabled under the veil of "post-birth abortion."

It has long been fashionable to dismiss Marcel as a romantic Luddite who categorically condemns modern technology and yearns for the family life of the old French village. But there is no restorationism here. In Marcel philosophy becomes prophecy. As a prophet, he simply reminds us that we have souls and warns that our souls are imperiled by a society where reason is reduced to economic calculation and all notion of gift has disappeared.

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# BOOKS & CULTURE

FILM | JOHN ANDERSON

## SHOW A LITTLE FAITH

*'The Unbelievers' puts little trust in the viewer*



SALESMEN. Richard Dawkins, left, and Lawrence Krauss, in Oxford, England

PHOTO: JAC FILMS/BLACK CHALK PRODUCTIONS

When Mitt Romney was running for president, and there seemed a reasonable chance that the White House would soon be occupied by a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, much was made of the fact that opinion polls traditionally rank Mormons low on the list of religious denominations tolerated by the American electorate. In fact, the only group that ranks lower is atheists. But compared with atheists, Mormons are Mom, the flag and apple pie. And baseball. And the Fourth of July.

What the ever-frantic, 24-hour news services seldom had time to men-

tion was: 1) who was being polled, 2) how the questions were phrased and 3) whether people really answer polls honestly. If one looks at the gun argument currently raging, there seems a wide disparity between how people answer pollsters and how they actually vote. The newsreaders never got around either to addressing why atheists attract so much loathing among voters or the hypocrisy of it, given that atheism likely exists far more widely than admitted by people in polls or, most assuredly, by members of Congress.

This last point is raised regularly in **The Unbelievers**, a documentary

film that follows the two superstars of neo-atheism—Richard Dawkins, the evolutionary biologist and author of *The God Delusion*, and Larry Krauss, a theoretical physicist/cosmologist—

as they tour the world promoting what they consider a reality-based view of the universe and creation. It is a trippy, snappy film, one that digresses regularly into musical montages featuring its subjects in this setting or that, augmented by clever cutaways and the occasional shameless juxtaposition. In one sequence, frothing, fundamentalist Muslims protest at an atheist convention in Melbourne while, inside, the dynamic duo attend a very civilized-seeming cocktail party, re-

plete with string quartet and acolytes; it's a calculated portrayal of "us" versus "the crazies."

In introducing his first feature-length film to a packed house at the Hot Docs festival in Toronto recently, the director Gus Holwerda said, "The goal of this film is not to offend anyone, although it certainly will." He's right, but not for the reasons he thinks.

The artistic merits of "The Unbelievers" can be summed up pretty easily and just as easily dismissed. Black Chalk Productions, which Holwerda runs out of Phoenix, where Krauss teaches at Arizona State with his brother, Luke, has up until

now concentrated on music videos and commercials. One can tell. “The Unbelievers” is worshipful—one might even say idolatrous—in presenting Dawkins and Krauss, who seem to be fairly likable people but are not given a real chance to exhibit their powers of thought or debate, because what they are part of here is a sales pitch.

“We wanted to make a rock and roll movie about science,” Holwerda told the Hot Docs crowd. And that’s what they have done, with all the intellectual rigor one would expect from, say, “Justin Bieber: Never Say Never.” Dawkins is the Anglo Elvis of atheism; Krauss, a native New Yorker, is more like Keith Richards. They swagger, they parry, they deliver the high-brow wisecrack and they nobly co-exist with the handicapped, i.e. those afflicted with the disability of a religious belief system. It is hard to imagine even the atheistically inclined not being put off by the smugness of it all.

It would no doubt pain the participants to hear it, but the audience to whom “The Unbelievers” is targeted is the same that switches to Fox News or MSNBC for its political reporting—to have pre-existing opinions corroborated. There are pronouncements, but no real argument. The one moment when something substantial is about to happen—in a debate on Australian television between Dawkins and Cardinal George Pell, the archbishop of Sydney—the conversation is prevented from, pardon us, evolving.

“I make it a policy not to debate fundamentalists,” Dawkins says, pre-event, and stating a very sound policy. “But it is my understanding that a cardinal of the Catholic Church is not a fundamentalist. If he is, I have been mistaken.” This seems a bit precious—Dawkins

certainly must know that his positions on Darwinism, and those of the Catholic Church, are not miles apart, save for the acknowledgement of a deity. Both, for instance, believe that the universe was created out of nothing. But, of course, this would dilute the image of crusader in which Dawkins drapes himself and which the film promotes.

What is doubly disappointing is how abbreviated the ensuing conversation is. Pell’s question to Dawkins, about the current whereabouts of Neanderthal man—Homo sapiens’s evolutionary cousin—isn’t really on point, but it indicates an other-than-doctrinal willingness to debate Dawkins on his own terms. The filmmakers, however, allow it to go nowhere. (Reports of the actual 2012 debate suggest that neither participant came off particularly well.) In any event, the viewer would like to have been provided more of this, especially given how the usually calm and collected Dawkins confronts Pell with considerably more aggression than seems necessary. You have to wonder what that’s all about.

If we cannot question everything, Krauss says, then we will be living in a world where thinking has stopped. Yes, but the thought processes behind “The Unbelievers” are nothing to get excited about. The filmmakers, who are more than anything else naïve, do

not know who their real audience is. The film is introduced with a short parade of stars—Woody Allen, Bill Pullman, Ricky Gervais, Werner Herzog, Cameron Diaz and Stephen Hawking—all weighing in on their belief in nonbelief. It is a pop-culture marketing approach to the infinite. When Dawkins assails Christianity for being a religion based on the “blood sacrifice” of Christ and scape-goating, even someone semiliterate in biblical prophecy and the metaphysics of Scripture wants to hear an opposing viewpoint. And one would love to have seen Krauss in conversation with, say, Hans Küng, rather than talking to people who agree with him

or are less than his equals in the subjects of either theology or science. The film also features a clip of an interview

with Krauss on “The Colbert Report.” Stephen Colbert’s question—“Why are you attacking my God?”—is about as deeply clever as anything gets in the film, which, again, will leave the very people who will be attracted to its subject matter, and thirst for intelligent debate, parched. Movies are supposed to move us. “The Unbelievers” leaves us frozen in place.

### ON THE WEB

Jim McDermott, S.J. on “Doctor Who” at 50. [americamagazine.org/television](http://americamagazine.org/television)

**JOHN ANDERSON** is a film critic for *Variety* and *The Wall Street Journal* and a regular contributor to the Arts & Leisure section of *The New York Times*.



CARTOON: BOB ECKSTEIN

# NOVAK'S TRAVELS

## WRITING FROM LEFT TO RIGHT My Journey from Liberal to Conservative

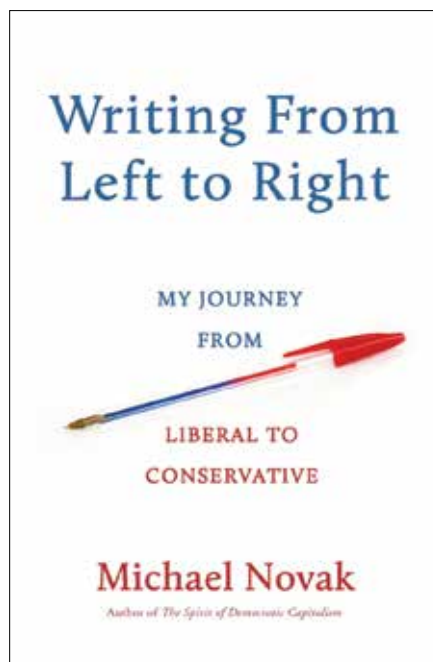
By Michael Novak  
Image. 336p \$24

Michael Novak has lived a richly rewarding public life. He tells us so in this account of his “journey from liberal to conservative.” He was accompanied in this journey, to his satisfaction, by a lot of people. “This is not just my story,” he tell us, “but the story of hundreds of thousands, even millions.” From his Slovak-American Catholic family, Novak journeyed across the world and finally stood with his good friends Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher as they faced down the dark forces of the left. He was at international tables in the fight for human rights as the cold war came to a victorious conclusion. And he joined his “dearest and deepest friend,” Pope John Paul II, as he helped bring that victory about. “Of all the great human beings I have met,” Novak says, “none is closer to my heart” or “better represents my dreams than John Paul II.” The book ends as Novak joins his voice to “the great roar of the throng” shouting “declare him a saint soon.”

Michael Novak’s autobiography is another remarkable American success story. He insists that this journey is about his public, not his personal life, but he never lets us forget his hard-scrabble working class origins. His self-making through the hard work of study and civic engagement is no story of a lonely pioneer. Novak’s story includes innumerable friends he loved and learned from: the theologian Robert McAfee Brown and the “saintly” Sargent Shriver in his liberal days, the neoconservative leader Irving Kristol

and prime ministers, presidents and popes who asked for his help. Coming out of 12 years in Catholic seminaries, then coming out again from what he now regards as the much more closed world of American academic life, Novak finally worked his way into the very center of contemporary history.

Without question, Michael Novak



has lived close to some of the centers of recent history. He awakened to the rich fabric of Catholicism at the Second Vatican Council, about which he wrote a fine book. With his students at Stanford he challenged the Vietnam War, then reported on that war on the ground. Later the accommodation of “crazy, rebellious anarchic” student behavior by his fellow professors at New York’s experimental college at Old Westbury exposed for him the folly of “deep leftist principles.” In the 1972 presidential campaign he

witnessed the alienation of working class Catholics from the liberal wing of the Democratic Party. Publication of *The Rise of the Unmeltable Ethnics* that year was his “declaration of independence” from the “cultural left.”

Ahead of history’s curve, Novak tells us, he was “becoming a neoconservative before that at first tiny movement was named.” The overall shift to the right in American life opened unsought roads to power. Important people read his books and some invited him to go over their speeches (or in the pope’s case, encyclicals). He had worked for the election of Bobby Kennedy, George McGovern and Sargent Shriver, even Jimmy Carter, but he was ready when Ronald Reagan came along. “I loved the Reagan presidency,” he tells us, for it brought “twenty five years of the greatest prosperity ever experienced in human history.” And, of course, Novak was there as Reagan won the cold war. That’s success.

Novak’s best idea is what he calls “democratic capitalism.” Experience convinced him that socialism and its American expression, “statism,” always fails “when it runs out of other people’s money.” By what he describes as rigorous study, he found that capitalism, when given a chance, almost always delivers on its promises. Democratic socialism is a contradiction in terms, but democratic capitalism is truthful because democracy and free markets need each other. Novak’s celebration of “democratic capitalism” proved enormously attractive to political leaders

determined to free capital from what they regarded as unfair restrictions. Some, like Vaclav Havel, another of Novak’s famous

friends, led people long denied economic opportunities. But his argument also resonated with new friends in corporate boardrooms who oddly believed that they too had been denied

### ON THE WEB

Chris Lowney talks about the leadership style of Pope Francis.  
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a fair shake by the reigning powers of the left. Mrs. Thatcher was shaking off unions and regulations when she showed Novak her well-marked copy of his book.

What made Novak's version of democratic capitalism so attractive was his moral gloss. Free markets are essential, as he sees it, to the produc-

tion of wealth, which alone can make possible the alleviation of poverty. That means that easing the burdens of government regulation and strengthening incentives by reducing taxes, especially capital gains taxes, is not only in the public interest but, in Novak's formulation, turns into practical policy

Gospel mandates about helping poor people. Novak wisely left a little space for government oversight, drew attention to the importance of civil society and insisted that culture and ideas make a difference. This argument about ideas was similar to that made more famously by Lewis Powell, which led to many fruitful projects to move American ideas to the right. In that move Novak found a home as resident theologian at the American Enterprise Institute.

Critics will find a lot to not love in Novak's work. Markets are rarely free; money and the power it brings can distort markets and run roughshod over civil society. And the creative capitalism policies he celebrates are hardly democratic. They widen gaps between rich and poor and place financial and corporate powers beyond public accountability. Novak continually accuses the left of "statism," but the fortunes of more than a few of his new friends depend heavily on public investment,

subsidies and guarantees.

Novak's political assignment with conservatives was Catholic public opinion. So he worked hard to undercut the U.S. bishops as they wrote pastoral messages on nuclear arms and the economy in the 1980s. He thinks Reagan's economic and cold war successes vindicated his positions. Indeed, cold war triumphalism informs Michael Novak's entire success story. Like other neoconservatives, Novak worried that opposition to the Vietnam War might weaken American cold war resolve, so he welcomed President Reagan's energetic support of increased spending on arms and initiation of anti-missile defense. Like Reagan, Novak had no problem arguing that the same government that could do little good at home should be armed to the teeth when it pursues national interests abroad. Nuclear deterrence may have worried popes and bishops, but for Novak it was "the most successful military weapons system ever."

Many neoconservatives worried about excessive caution after Vietnam, but Novak and his friends welcomed, without a touch of anxiety, America's emergence as the world's one great superpower. And nothing that has happened since has dampened their enthusiasm for the war-making road to peace. He honestly describes his "great struggle of conscience," when he felt compelled to disagree with Pope John Paul II on the Iraq War, which Novak supported and still defends.

There are many points on which Novak might have helped Americans and American Catholics better negotiate the shifts to the right in American life. He was correct to insist with the liberation theologians he so unfairly criticized that economics, politics and culture constitute a fabric that must be rewoven, whether the purpose is to liberate the poor or encourage the rich. But somewhere along the way Novak lost his early passion for grass

## Come Is the Love Song

Come is the love song of our race and Come  
Our basic word of individual wooing.  
It lifts audacious arms of lowliness  
To majesty's most amiable undoing,  
To Godhead fleshed and cradled and made least.  
It whispers through closed doors a hurry, hurry  
To Tierce and fiery feast.  
The liturgy of Advent plucks its buds  
From the green shrub of love's compendium:  
O Wisdom, Adonai, Root of Jesse  
And Sign by which the mouths of kings are dumb,  
O Key, O Orient, King and Cornerstone,  
O our Emmanuel, come.  
And Paschaltide prepares an upper room  
Where burns the fuller bloom.  
Come is the small sweet-selling crib we carve  
From fir, and bear across December frost.  
It is the shaft of the flame-wishing Church  
In public spring, or the thin javelin tossed  
Privately at a cloud that splits in fire  
And drowns us in the flood of some amazing  
Personal Pentecost.

JESSICA POWERS

*JESSICA POWERS (1905-88), a Discalced Carmelite nun and member of the Carmel of the Mother of God, Pewaukee, Wis., has been called one of America's finest religious poets. This poem was previously published in The Second "America" Book of Verse, a collection of the best of America poetry, 1930 to 1955.*



roots democracy. Instead, his journey led him to increasing accommodation to prevailing powers, providing for his new friends what he admits were “rhetorical strategies” for shaping culture in politically useful ways. He tells us he wanted to provide “realistic resistance to utopianism,” but he may have helped discredit important democratic ideals. And he wanted “to unmask the pretensions of elites,” which he did, but on behalf of other elites, this time political elites enamored with national greatness amid multiple signs of decline. Dependence on powerful pa-

trons is a very long way from the realism of Catholic ethics. It almost always tricks smart people into thinking they, not just their patrons, are making history, and it has nothing to do with anything authentically democratic.

Success stories are always self-help manuals: go and do likewise. From Novak one might learn one way to be a public intellectual, but the reader’s own journey might seek a worthier American dream.

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ROBERT E. SCULLY

## STORM WARNING

### GLOBAL CRISIS War, Climate Change and Catastrophe in the Seventeenth Century

By Geoffrey Parker  
Yale University Press. 871p \$40

One of the significant debates among students of early modern history has centered on the so-called General Crisis, especially as related to European history, which posits that there was a series of interconnected reasons why there were so many rebellions and wars in the mid-17th century, including tumult not only in the European heartlands of France, Italy, the Low Countries and the German-speaking lands, but also in more geographically peripheral areas like Iberia, Britain and Ireland, Scandinavia, the Balkans and Russia. Historians have also given some attention to the impact of the Little Ice Age of the 17th century, when general global cooling and climatic extremes wreaked havoc on many lands and peoples.

Geoffrey Parker, a renowned early modern historian, has produced an exhaustive (and, at almost 900 pages,

somewhat exhausting) account of this troubled century that incorporates these two major themes. He includes some significant current historiographical trends, especially an emphasis on global history environmental and climate history, and so-called history from below, which examines how the masses or average people influenced and were in turn influenced by the economic, social, political and religious changes of their times.

Parker contends that while historians have examined many aspects of both the political and environmental disasters that occurred throughout much of the 17th century, they have often failed to see the interconnectedness of these developments and have not produced a truly synoptic account, which he does here in a fairly persuasive tour de force.

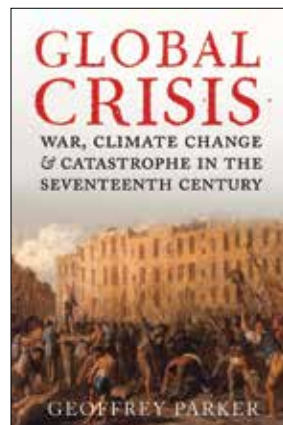
He proceeds to examine what he refers to as the natural and human archives of this period. The former

include tree rings, ice cores and pollen deposits, while the latter include a wide range of written records on contemporary political and social conditions as well as reports on climate change and related, often extreme, environmental factors. Parker argues that it was this often unique combination of natural and human disasters that produced a plethora of crises and catastrophes from the late 16th to the early 18th centuries, with the mid-17th century being a particularly devastating time in many places. Thus, he focuses here on the years 1618 to 1688, with some coverage of related events on either side of these particularly troubled decades.

Based probably on both his own areas of specialization in early modern European history and the frequent convergence of natural and human disasters on the continent, it is not surprising that Parker focuses a good deal of attention on Europe. Part of what gives this book such persuasive power, however, is its often global reach.

There is considerable discussion of events in east Asia, especially China and Japan, although Mughal India and other parts of Eurasia are also incorporated into the discussion. There are, in addition, some references to developments in various parts of Africa, the Americas and Australia. While one would wish for more data from these latter lands, part of the problem is that the human archives for many of these

areas are limited or almost nonexistent. Still, because of the wide-ranging, often intercontinental, effects of various climatic events like El Niño and major volcanic eruptions, the author is not amiss in suggesting that this extensive environmental, political and social disruptions across much of Europe and Asia likely had significant impacts elsewhere as well. To mention but a



few of the weather extremes of the century: there were two “years without a summer” (1628 and 1675); the flood waters of the Nile fell to perhaps their lowest levels ever recorded in mid- to late century; and evidently for the only time in recorded history, the Bosphorus froze over (1620) and China’s Grand Canal dried up (1641).

In light of current concerns and debates about climate change and global warming—as opposed to global cooling in the 17th century—Parker’s narrative and analysis manage to be relevant without being “presentist” or an example of simplistic climate determinism. In fact, the dynamic reality of contingency is front and center here, with the author stressing that as dramatic as climatic and environmental factors were in many places, human agency could and sometimes did ameliorate or, more often, exacerbate these threats.

The latter was more likely to occur in “composite states” including the Spanish Habsburg Empire, the Ottoman Empire and the Chinese Empire, where monarchs and their courts ruled over peoples of often wide-ranging ethnic, cultural and religious differences. Therefore, the complex crises of the 17th century were frequently the result of a “fatal synergy of human and natural factors,” in which revolts and wars, in tandem with environmental and agricultural disasters, produced demographic decline, sometimes of catastrophic proportions. While global estimates are to some extent guesswork, the overall population may have been reduced by a third, with some areas suffering the loss of half or more of their pre-crisis peaks.

Yet there were a few exceptions to this general demographic disaster, especially in Japan, New England and New France. In the case of Japan, some astute leaders learned from their recent past and built improved infrastructure and granaries as well as avoiding foreign wars, thereby shepherding precious resources that were then avail-

able in times of shortage. In the New World, New England and New France had the advantages of being relatively under-populated areas that also had extensive resources. Within Europe, cumulative demographic declines were generally more severe in southern versus northern Europe, resulting in the relative decline of the previously ascendant Mediterranean lands. On a global scale, Parker argues that the 17th-century Global Crisis contributed significantly to the so-called Great Divergence, whereby northern and especially northwestern Europe emerged from the crisis with better long-term economic, technological and other resources and strategies that enabled countries like Britain to outpace tra-

ditional powers in other parts of the world, China being a particular case in point.

In sum, this is a brilliant and multifaceted approach to the global 17th century. If at times tendentious, it nevertheless goes a long way toward demonstrating the connections between dramatic climate changes and widespread demographic and political crises, especially when and where governments squandered their resources on internecine and seemingly interminable wars instead of marshalling their human and financial capital to confront the onslaught of Mother Nature.

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NICK RIPATRAZONE

## SHARDS OF FAITH

### SORROW’S RIGGING

The Novels of Cormac McCarthy, Don DeLillo, and Robert Stone

By Gary Adelman

McGill Queen’s University Press. 182p  
\$45

In the years following World War II and continuing after the Second Vatican Council, to be an American Catholic novelist often meant to be lapsed. The modifier was so ubiquitous that it was unspoken. Save for Ron Hansen, Alice McDermott, Gene Wolfe and a handful of others, lost belief remains a prerequisite in contemporary literary Catholicism. What remains of the faith is made secular, in the service of art: appreciation of ritual and the aesthetics of the Mass, acceptance of paradox and repurposed biblical narratives. Belief is something to recover from, to react against. *Sorrow’s Rigging*, Gary Adelman’s recent study of three such novelists, operates under this assumption. Cormac McCarthy, Don DeLillo and Robert Stone fit the bill. Baptized and raised Catholic,

they have become “renegade[s].” Now, as former Catholics, they are not quite literary atheists, but their agnosticism is complete, and their characters feel the profound absence of God.

All three novelists received Catholic educations, with DeLillo’s continuing to Fordham University. Stone’s Catholicism is representative of the group. He stopped practicing as a teenager, happy to be “liberated,” but soon realized that faith was “not something you get out from under.” God’s absence left an “enormous empty space.” As the critic Paul Giles notes, Stone’s characters long for faith, from “lunchtime rosaries at Catholic school” to the reverent unbelief of John Converse in *Dog Soldiers* (1974), who is not able to light a candle at the foot of a saintly image. To do so would disrespect the icon. Stone, whose writing room was decorated with Spanish religious art, retains an aesthetic interest in Catholicism.

McCarthy’s Irish Catholicism was an identifying trait during his childhood in Knoxville; his brother spent

years in a Jesuit seminary but left before ordination. Much like Flannery O'Connor, McCarthy was surrounded by evangelical caricatures of his family's faith, and that dissonance is reflected in his pulpy and visceral fictional iconography. Bryan Giemza reaches a smart conclusion: McCarthy's Catholicism is revealed in "literally liturgical" prose, in a "fascination with the mystery of evil," all delivered in a "heretical interrogation" of the religion. That McCarthy is less sacramental than eschatological does not negate his Catholic background. DeLillo's Catholic allusions range from the ecstatic nuns in *Underworld* (1997) to the ascetics in *End Zone* (1972), a metafictional satire about college football influenced by the philosophy of the Jesuit priest Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. One character in *White Noise* (1985) summarizes this cadre of novelists: "Hell is when no one believes."

Adelman's volume begins with McCarthy. He is wary of the writer's more recent, popular novels, *No Country for Old Men* (2005) and *The Road* (2006), claiming that McCarthy has resorted to sentimental, "Sunday school" "Christian parable," a move that "feels like capitulation." Adelman prefers McCarthy's earlier work, including *Suttree* (1979) and *Blood Meridian* (1985). The two books exemplify his thesis that humanity is afraid of divine retribution but still resorts to violence instead of grace. Adelman disagrees with critical claims that the titular character Cornelius Suttree is "callous"; he finds the character "a guilty man thirsting for redemption in a Pauline world without God." He sees no potential for grace in the 19th century-set *Blood Meridian*, a story about a 14-year-old Tennessee runaway named "the kid," who joins a gang of scalp hunters at the

Mexico border. The killers operate in the shadow of an absent God; the closest omnipotent force, Judge Holden, is nearly satanic in his methods. Adelman dismisses *The Road* because of the possibility of hope offered in its conclusion, calling it a work devoid of the "creative tension" between "longing and squelching that longing."

He connects McCarthy to DeLillo, another writer whose novels "murder hope." "The end is programmed" in DeLillo's fiction, and "nobody is saved." His characters "live in terror of payment due," dumping doctrine but retaining fear. He says the author's "Catholic upbringing is to be found in what seems the punishing exactitude he insists his art demands of him." Yet Adelman pauses there, and even readers not particular to biographical criticism will wish that Adelman would dig deeper.

Amy Hungerford and Thomas LeClair have considered how the linguistic, ritualistic and performative components of DeLillo's childhood Catholicism have translated into his narrative style and aesthetic. Adelman appears to want to use DeLillo's Catholicism as an anecdotal starting point rather than a critical focus. He opts instead to summarize DeLillo's novels in wry prose, but without firm conclusions beyond his initial pronouncements. There is no need for Adelman to take such a zero-sum approach. The nuance of much postconciliar Catholic literature and thought is observing how agiornamento is a continuous process, cycled through each generation, reconsidered for each writer's idiosyncratic vision.

Adelman's treatment of Stone is more open-ended and is his most successful inquiry. Stone "doesn't believe in miracles, but all seven of his novels

fight outward...to bathe in light." He joins the other novelists in only giving "hint[s] of the transcendent," and whose inability to personally believe is a form of "self-punishment." At least Stone offers the "illusion of hope" at select moments in two novels, *A Flag for Sunrise* (1981) and *Children of Light* (1986), in which the female protagonist Lu Anne Verger becomes an ethereal symbol of grace for other characters. Yet as he does with McCarthy and DeLillo, Adelman undermines Stone's brief moments of grace, noting that any "trace of mockery or black mass... expresses author Stone's alarm at his own seriousness about religion."

That criticism might be applied to the book as a whole; Adelman's preferred mode is parody or grand narratives where God is dead. Selections from all three novelists dramatize that preference but raise a simple question: Why choose Catholicism to connect these writers? Adelman attempts a synthesis in his concluding chapter: "The attraction of postmodernism for these renegade Catholics is to know the 'truth' and to curse the absent God they want to love. There are no grand narratives."

With the absence of justified seriousness about religion, "all you can do is write." So postmodern literature is acceptable, but not postmodern criticism? Adelman's framing of the prior critical reactions to these novelists is reflected in his own soft gathering of them. At the end of *Sorrow's Rigging*, the reader is thankful for continued attention to these worthy novelists, but unclear why they were offered in this manner without deeper consideration of their Catholic genesis.

Silence on that question might imply its answer. For some writers, Catholicism is neither crutch nor consolation; it is a beautiful story they wish were true.

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**NICK RIPATRAZONE** is a teacher and the author of six books.



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# Worth the Wait

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT (A), DEC. 15, 2013

Readings: Is 35:1–10; Ps 146:6–10; Jas 5:7–10; Mt 11:2–11

*“Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord” (Jas 5:7)*

Remember when you were a child, how little understanding you had of how things happened, if they would happen or when they would happen? When you were waiting for something you wanted, like Christmas for example, excited anticipation fused with a vague sense of time to make waiting a consuming reality: When will it be? How long is that? Is that soon? As a child, you get used to waiting. I recall thinking that when I was an adult, I would have the knowledge and power to make things happen or at least to understand when things would happen. I would no longer have to wait; I would be in control.

What I came to realize as an adult is that the power I thought I would acquire when I grew up, and in many ways did acquire, is either a fantasy or a false power. Things, let alone people, do not do what you want them to do or jump at your command, as in childhood you hoped they would.

When I was a child, I viewed the power of my parents as rock solid, and probably never-ending; but as they are now in their late 80s, I see that like the rest of us, they are just two people whose power was fleeting—over me, but even over themselves. None of us have real power, not power that will last; what we have is a simulacrum that will fade, as will our strength of mind and body.

How does our fading, limited pow-

er connect to the waiting of Advent? Waiting is often experienced as a lack of control or power. As I have aged, though, waiting seems like a luxury that the rush of busyness denies me. Time moves so quickly and the joy of anticipation is too costly. As adults we are caught up in what must be done now, what needs to happen now and the sense that we have no time. We cannot wait for anything, let alone God.

Time destroys all human power and it is in the waiting for God that we grasp true power. This is the power, Isaiah says, that “will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense.” But what God’s power brings is salvation. Once God’s power arrives, Isaiah says, “the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.”

When John the Baptist’s disciples were seeking a sign of Jesus’ messiahship, Jesus did not list for them his virginal conception or his Davidic lineage. He spoke of deeds that indicated that God’s power had broken in to our world in a new way. He instructed John’s disciples, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them.” Isaiah’s prophecies, awaited for

so long, were coming to fulfillment.

For us now, awaiting Jesus’ *adventus* yearly and finally, Jesus’ brother James instructs us: “Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near.”

It would be wise for us in our daily lives to reconsider the role of anticipation and waiting, of letting our powers be exchanged for those of God, who will take our weaknesses and in the fullness of time make us whole again.

This is not an argu-



## PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

What do you most look forward to with the coming of Christ?

ment for indifference, ennui, idleness or the meaninglessness of life; this is an argument for the sheer joy of living life in anticipation of all the good things that God has in store for us and using our weaknesses, strengths, gifts and love to work on preparing ourselves for the arrival of the King. Waiting in joyful anticipation is a luxury that we can all afford.

In Isaiah’s vision, the exiles, those people who most often spend their time in waiting, “shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.” Wait for it, like a child at the window anticipating Christmas.

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

# Love at First Sight

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT (A), DEC. 22, 2013

Readings: Is 7:10–14; Ps 24:1–6; Rom 1:1–7; Mt 1:18–24

“Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way” (Mt 1:18)

The baby Jesus still grabs our attention, and the sweet obsession of the gypsy Yerko in Robertson Davies’s *The Rebel Angels* for the “Bebby Jesus” reveals that deep attraction. After a trip to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, where Yerko sees a medieval crèche scene, he returns to Toronto and works on his own nativity scene “with his great skill as a woodworker and craftsman to make it the most splendid thing of its kind his imagination could conceive.” Yerko had fallen in love with Bebbby Jesus.

The narrator of the novel, Yerko’s niece Maria, is working on a doctorate, and she says, “I was not pleased with Bebbby Jesus, who went contrary to what I hoped was my scholarly austerity of mind, my Rabelaisian disdain for superstition, and my yearning for—what?” What she yearns for is what she calls a Canadian conventionality, in which religion is seen but not heard and which does not upset polite society. Maria is scared the two professors she has invited over for the Christmas feast will take offense at the gaudy Christmas scene, but Yerko loves Bebbby Jesus more than the conventions of polite society.

Yerko explains to the two academics the gifts that the Magi bring to Jesus, saying: “It is in the story. I saw it in New York. The kings say, ‘We bring you Gold, Frank Innocence, and Mirth.’” The Anglican priest Simon Darcourt responded saying, “*Sancta simplicitas...* And Frank Innocence. Oh Yerko, you dear man.”

But while Yerko grasps the truth

of Jesus in a malapropism, Jesus’ birth does bring us “frank innocence.” Darcourt sees the “holy simplicity” in Yerko’s love of the infant king. Such innocence and simplicity define the baby Jesus and attract the love poured out on the symbol of transcendent goodness, but the virginal conception and birth have also attracted learned questions. These questions stretch from the early church fathers to the magisterial study of Raymond E. Brown, S.S., *The Birth of the Messiah*.

The ancient questions revolved around a word in the Hebrew of Isaiah 7:14, *almah* (“young girl”), which in the Greek version of Isaiah (the Septuagint) was translated as *parthenos* (“virgin”). So who would give birth to Immanuel, a young girl or a virgin? This claim of a virginal conception created debate between ancient Jewish and Christian scholars about the intent of the Isaian prophecy, since it was initially written in Hebrew, not Greek. Matthew’s Gospel, which relies upon the Septuagint, naturally has *parthenos*, and Jesus’ conception is seen as miraculous: the child “conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.” For all the linguistic questioning, though, what draws us to this account is the powerful statement that our God came to us not as a mighty warrior nor as a Roman emperor in triumphal procession, but in frank innocence and sacred simplicity.

I warn my students about not

confusing the infancy narratives in Matthew and Luke. But when I envision the baby Jesus, I do not see discrete infancy narratives, but the Lord’s choice to send among us a child to bring a saving message to the world, a child who is innocent, vulnerable and dependent. I see parents and an extended kinship network in the ancient world—at a time of high maternal and infant mortality, perhaps as high as 40 percent—thankful that both mother and child survived the birthing process, in love with a newborn infant. I see that God chose Jesus to be born in the midst of a family, with a father still processing the child’s origins, a mother uniquely gifted with a child and relatives happily welcoming the birth as they would any other.

Yes, there is more, for when we speak of the son of God, the son of David, a child conceived and born of the virgin,

## PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Imagine the feelings and thoughts of Joseph and Mary as they welcome their newborn child. What do you want to tell them?

we speak of the destiny of humanity, of the purposes of human life, of the arrival of the newborn king we have eagerly been awaiting. But does that not make it all the more wonderful that this came about because of simple, innocent responses to God? “When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife.” Together, they brought this new life into the world and raised the baby Jesus. God with us. Holy simplicity. Frank Innocence. It is in the story.

JOHN W. MARTENS

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A symposium to mark the 50th Anniversary  
of the Decree on Social Communications  
of the Second Vatican Council

Co-sponsored by  
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The Catholic media has a vital role to play in re-proposing the Gospel in the contemporary United States. What are the challenges and opportunities for Catholic journalists in the United States today? How do Catholic journalists and media outlets meet the two-fold task of proclaiming the Gospel while also providing fair and balanced news and analysis? How do Catholic journalists and media outlets understand their individual relationships with the Church, both with the hierarchy and the larger People of God? How can the Catholic media serve the Church from within the Catholic tradition while also providing insight and reporting that is objective and encourages transparency and accountability?



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### PROGRAM FOR THE DAY:

9:15 a.m.: Registration and Coffee Social

10:00: Mass – Feast of St. John of the Cross

Most Rev. William F. Murphy, Bishop of Rockville Centre, president

11:15: Opening Session – The Mission of the Catholic Journalist Today

Welcome:

Rev. Msgr. Peter Vaccari, Rector, St. Joseph's Seminary and College

Opening Remarks: Matt Malone, S.J., Editor in Chief, **America**

Perspectives on Mission:

Jeanette Demelo – Editor in Chief, **National Catholic Register**

Meinrad Scherer-Emunds – Executive Editor, **U.S. Catholic**

Paul Baumann – Editor, **Commonweal**

R.R. Reno – Editor, **First Things**

1:00 p.m.: Lunch – Courtesy of Saint Joseph's Seminary and College

2:00 Panel Discussion – Reflections on Morning Presentations

Panelists:

Jeanette Demelo – Editor in Chief, **National Catholic Register**

Meinrad Scherer-Emunds – Executive Editor, **U.S. Catholic**

Paul Baumann – Editor, **Commonweal**

R.R. Reno – Editor, **First Things**

Matt Malone, S.J. – Editor in Chief, **America**

Moderator: James Martin, S.J., Editor at Large, **America**

3:00 Coffee Break

3:15 Plenary Session with Audience Participants

4:30 Closing reception

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