

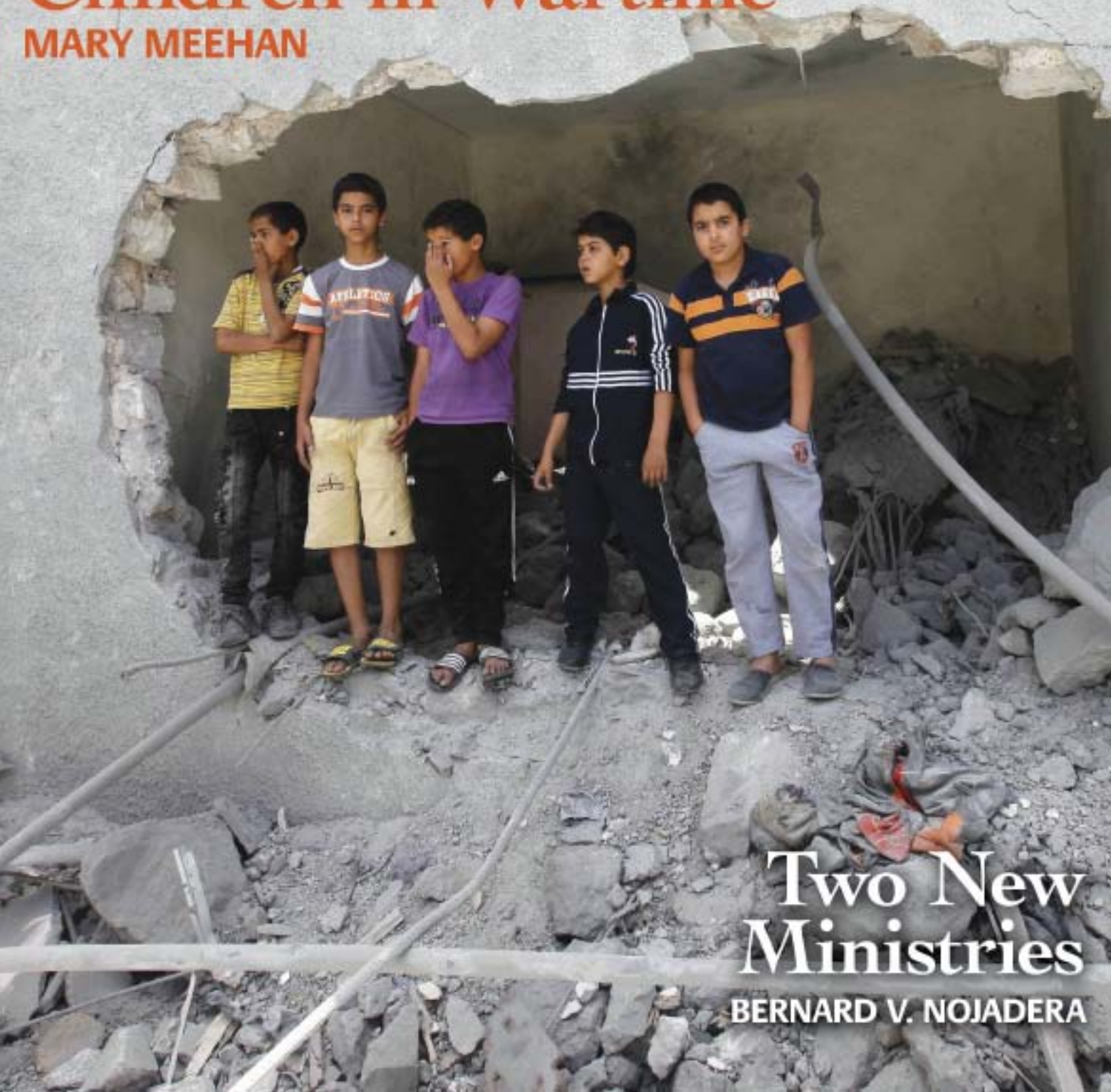
America

THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC WEEKLY

JAN. 16-23, 2012 \$3.50

Children in Wartime

MARY MEEHAN



Two New
Ministries

BERNARD V. NOJADERA

OF MANY THINGS

The following letter is fiction.

Dear Josh,
This letter comes from both Joe and me, but he knows you and I were close in college and thought I should write it because I'm more "sensitive." We haven't seen you in several years, but we three were best friends when we graduated from Georgeham in 1980. Your ordination was a high point in our lives, and the following year we picked you to celebrate our wedding. We still love you. But we follow your career and sometimes wonder if you are the same person we knew 30 years ago.

It crystallized with last year's Christmas card. You posed—still handsome, though a bit thick around the middle—in bishop's robes as if you were a Renaissance prince! As if Christmas were about you. Do you remember our college immersion trip to Latin America, when you were so appalled by the lavishly decorated cathedral next to a slum full of poor people, and how upset you were by that overweight monsignor who sneered at liberation theology? You said he was a "pompous so-and-so," and you swore that would never happen to you.

What has happened to you, Josh? Joe and I used to say the priesthood needed fearless men like you. But instead of building on your political science education, you went to Rome and did a degree in canon law. Then you came home to be a bishop's secretary and were made a bishop, with no more than a few summers' parish experience.

You cut your diocesan newspaper down to a monthly. It doesn't allow letters to the editor, never covers social issues, prints only right-wing columnists and runs way too many pictures of you. Your own column never deals with war, race, poverty, capital punishment or labor and reads as if contraception and gay marriage were the biggest problems facing the world.

Finally, we are most disturbed about your role in the reprimand issued by your Bishops' Committee on Orthodoxy to our old theology professor at Georgeham, Bill Worthy, because of his new book *Jesus and the World*. I'm sure you remember his *Jesus and Ourselves*, which we used in the course we took with him.

You loved that man. He took you to dinner, visited you in jail when you were arrested in that demonstration, talked you out of quitting school when you broke up with Sally and presided at your father's funeral. But you were on that committee and signed the report accusing him of "heterodoxy." In his rebuttal Bill asked whether all the committee members actually read the book. Did you read it? Did you defend him? Why didn't you let him testify? What has happened to you?

You can't be deaf and blind to what has happened to the church, the alienation and empty pews. Joe and I receive the Eucharist and pray for leadership that will remind us of Jesus curing the sick and slamming the rich who hog their wealth and the Pharisees who love titles and fame.

Joe suggests that now that you're a bishop you want to be a cardinal; and once you're a cardinal you will think you can be pope. So you keep your mouth shut. Joe has a cynical streak. I can't believe that your mind actually works that way. But a lot can happen in 30 years.

My Irish mother told me that people don't change. I remember the evening in 1980 when you and I went out for a few beers after finals, and you told me you were going to be a priest who would fight for the weak and the poor, and you asked me to pray for you. Then you reached across the table and kissed me. I haven't given up.

Love,
Mary and Joe

RAYMOND A. SCHROTH, S.J.

America

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Cover: Children stand in an area that the Libyan government said was damaged by a coalition air strike, at the house of Saif Al-Arab Qaddafi, son of the Libyan leader Muammar el-Qaddafi, in Tripoli, May 1, 2011. Reuters/Ismael Zitouny

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ON THE WEB

Mary Meehan, right, discusses her **pro-life advocacy** on our podcast. Plus, Mary Valle reflects on the accidental holiday standard, "**Do They Know It's Christmas?**"
All at americamagazine.org.



Cradle Christians

The Arab Spring has lingered into autumn and now winter. The outcome of these uprisings for the region's Christian population remains uncertain. In Egypt, the militant Salafists have made unexpected gains; but like the more moderate Muslim Brotherhood, they have been campaigning on bread-and-butter issues like jobs and health-care, not on imposing Shariah law. Some form of pluralist Islamic democracy with freedom for Christians remains possible. In Syria, the cradle of Christianity, however, the future of the country and of its Christians is less certain.

A mostly nonviolent resistance to the Assad regime continues to grow and suffer. The fate of Christians depends less on the overthrow of the Assad dictatorship than on the unknown future that will follow. Syria is home to two million native Christians in a variety of traditions, and it also hosts more than a million refugees, including hundreds of thousands of Iraqi and Palestinian Christians with nowhere else to flee. A civil war between Sunni, Alawite and Shiite Muslims would inevitably embroil Christians.

With the aid of U. N. and nongovernmental agencies, like Caritas Internationalis and the Catholic Peacebuilding Network, the world community needs to take steps to see that conditions are established to avoid a civil war, in which the minority Christians would be victims. The committed nonviolence of the Syrian resistance is encouraging, but the many tools for post-conflict transformation that have been developed in recent decades need to be made available and adopted for the sake of the survival of Christianity in the East and a peaceful future for all.

Saving 'The Finest'

The public may know that more than 2,000 military men and women have committed suicide within the past decade. Fewer know of the suicides down the street—the 300 police officers a year who kill themselves, more than those who die on active duty. New Jersey, for example, lost 12 in 2010. That number was the second highest, after New York, and deaths would have been higher if not for COP2COP, its HelpLine suicide prevention program that dissuaded 15. In Connecticut, four took their lives between June and August 2011. These victims are men and women psychologically screened to represent “the finest.”

There is no one answer to the question why. These police officers are overwhelmingly white and male. They shoot themselves off-duty, at home, because of marital discord, alcohol and substance abuse, and psychological, legal

or work-stress problems. New York, Connecticut and New Jersey, with rising death rates, have initiated creative programs to break through the protective wall that inhibits strong men, who fear that talking about their problems will make them look weak. This includes stress-debriefing after violent episodes, straight talk about alcoholism and annual “mental health checks.”

The basic element in many suicides is the confluence of the three most-mentioned factors: (1) work stress, which flows into (2) the marital relationship and (3) threatens the officer's self-image as the person in charge. The challenge for an anti-suicide program is to reshape what it means for a cop to be strong—including the way the officer relates to his or her weapon. This is a large order, but society owes attention to these officers.

A Matter of Life and Death

Last September, thousands gathered to protest the execution of Troy Davis in Georgia, and the death penalty in general. That same month, at a Republican presidential debate, audience members applauded with enthusiasm when the moderator, Brian Williams, mentioned the 234 executions that took place in Texas in recent years. Americans, it seemed, were divided as ever on the issue. But support for the death penalty is declining, and with it the number of executions in the United States.

A Gallup poll in 2011 found that 61 percent of Americans supported the death penalty, down from 80 percent in 1994. Illinois abolished the death penalty last year, and Gov. John Kitzhaber of Oregon declared a moratorium on it in his state. In addition, the number of individuals sentenced to death in the United States has fallen drastically. This year, according to a recent report from the Death Penalty Information Center, 78 individuals were sentenced to death, the first time the number has dropped below 100 in three decades.

This shift comes as Americans increasingly find the practice unfair, expensive and at risk of executing innocent people. Many also question the reliability of forensic evidence and eyewitness testimony in capital cases. The fact that criminals can be sentenced to life without parole has made the death penalty seem less necessary for the defense of public order.

Last November Pope Benedict XVI reiterated the church's opposition to capital punishment and his support for groups working to eliminate it. The United States has other ways to protect the public from dangerous criminals. The death penalty is unnecessary and wrong.

The Way of Life

Once again this January, hundreds of thousands of people will gather on the National Mall to protest *Roe v. Wade*, the U.S. Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion nationwide. The March for Life is a longstanding tradition for many Catholic parishes and student groups and serves as a crucial showcase for the pro-life cause. Though the media sometimes downplay the march, the political potency of the event should not be underestimated. Here is a vibrant, grass-roots movement that predates the Tea Party or Occupy Wall Street. That so many of the marchers are young people is a clear sign that the pro-life message has lost little of its prophetic power.

This year's March for Life comes at a time of some uncertainty for the pro-life movement. Thirty-nine years after the promulgation of *Roe v. Wade*, a legal reversal remains elusive despite the presence of six Catholics on the Supreme Court. At the state level, even in conservative South Dakota efforts to criminalize abortion have failed. In Mississippi, the "personhood amendment," which would have defined a fertilized egg as a person, was easily defeated on the November ballot. Some within the pro-life community, including some Catholic bishops, have questioned the wisdom of these state initiatives. Indeed, the recent setbacks should spark reflection on the goals and methods of the pro-life movement.

A constructive assessment might begin with a re-examination of the movement's priorities. The March for Life, as worthwhile as it is, ought not to be the only expression of the pro-life cause. To effectively reduce the number of abortions in the United States, a political strategy must be accompanied by a more personal campaign for conversion. Ultimately, members of the pro-life community must work to make the world more welcoming for children. To accomplish this, they must be nimble, creative and above all motivated by love and compassion for mother and child. A comprehensive pro-life strategy would include, for example, the following important elements:

Outreach to families with disabled children. The challenge of raising a physically or mentally impaired child is overwhelming. A true culture of life makes these families a focus of outreach and support. Group homes for disabled young people and adults, like the LArche communities founded by Jean Vanier, should become a regular destination for pro-life groups. How wonderful it would be to see buses filled with volunteer college students pulling up in front of institutions for people with disabilities. Tragically, many prospective par-

ents now choose to terminate pregnancies if prenatal tests reveal Down syndrome or other genetic anomalies. Before judging these decisions, however, the pro-life Christian must ask what circumstances compel a person to make such a choice and must work to offer alternatives.



Support adoption agencies. Adoption is a life-giving choice, both for the birth parent and the adoptive family. Yet it can be a difficult process, requiring the expertise of trained professionals who understand the emotional hurdles involved. Persuading an expectant mother to have a child is not always as simple as showing her an image from an ultrasound test. Adoption counselors can present a fuller view of parenthood, and they are well placed to reach out to women in difficult circumstances. Adoption agencies also find homes for children with special needs.

Improve childcare. Like so many other social services, child care in the United States is anemic in comparison to that available in Europe. Surely more women would choose to raise a child if they knew that there were affordable options for child care. Increased government support is necessary, but it is only one part of the solution. Shared cooperatives of parents, working together to raise their children amid the demands of careers and education, should be encouraged and perhaps initiated by Catholic parishes.

These initiatives will not by themselves bring about a culture of life. Political programs are crucial, and not just those focused on the Supreme Court. With one in four children now counted as poor, working against poverty so that families can feed their children is also key. Child poverty should not be ignored by Congress amid its drive toward austerity.

What must be acknowledged, finally, is that the problem presented by abortion is enormous and that there is no one way to eliminate this scourge. To change the attitudes of a society, whether about war, capital punishment or abortion, the pro-life community must work through a variety of channels. Some will feel called to travel to Washington, D.C., on Jan. 23. They deserve our encouragement. All pro-life supporters should consider attending a support group for parents of disabled children or helping to care for a neighbor's baby. These works of mercy may not offer the same public witness as the March for Life, but they can help to make the pro-life cause a way of life.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

U.S. ECONOMY

A Bare Minimum Wage Persists in Most States

For decades the U.S. bishops have supported a decent minimum wage for U.S. workers in keeping with church teaching on a just wage, the rights of working people and the dignity of work, according to John Carr, executive director of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development. But efforts to legislate an automatic increase of the federal minimum wage tied to inflation, he said, have been "unsuccessful."

At the state level, however, there has been some progress. Washington State celebrated the new year by becoming the first state in the nation to have a minimum hourly wage (\$9.04) above \$9 per hour. According to the Economic Policy Institute, Washington is one of just 10 states with some form of minimum-wage cost of living indexing, which requires that the state minimum wage grow at the same rate as inflation and offers some measure of automatic protection to the real value of the wages of lowest-paid workers. Seven other states—Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Montana, Ohio, Oregon and Vermont—likewise had automatic increases on Jan 1.

This minor New Year's adjustment is small fiscal good news for the 1.2 million workers in Washington and these other states who will be directly affected, but thousands of other minimum-wage workers around the nation remain stuck at the federal minimum of just \$7.25 per hour.

"The core principle underlying the idea of the minimum wage," Carr said, "is that you ought to be able to raise your family with dignity through your work. The minimum wage falls far short of that now and it ought to be raised." According to Carr, increases to the federal minimum tend to ripple through the economy, improving wages for all workers.

The federal rate was last changed in 2009 and can be changed only by an act of Congress. Because of that high hurdle, over the last 40 years the infla-

tion-adjusted value of the minimum wage has eroded dramatically. E.P.I. researchers say the federal minimum wage was highest in 1968, at a value of roughly \$9.85 per hour in 2011 dollars. That is significantly higher than even the recent \$9.04 in Washington, and at \$7.25 the federal minimum has declined in value by more than 26 percent since the 1968 peak.

Noting that historical decline, Carr said, "It's not even a minimum anymore; it's really a subminimum wage."

The diminishing purchasing power of the minimum wage matters because, contrary to general expectations, the typical minimum-wage earner is not a burger-flipping teenager. The U.S. Census reports that 80 percent of minimum-wage workers are over the age of 20. Minimum-wage earners are also disproportionately women. Roughly 60 percent of mini-

num-wage workers are female, despite the fact that women make up only 48 percent of the national workforce. According to the institute, families with a minimum-wage worker rely on those minimum-wage earnings for nearly half of their income. At 40 hours per week, 52 weeks a year, a federal minimum-wage worker would earn just \$15,080, a figure that is barely above the poverty line for a family of two.

"With inequality at record levels and still on the rise, indexing the federal minimum wage would be one very basic protection of workers at the very bottom of the income distribution," writes the E.P.I. researcher David Cooper. "The question we should be asking then is not whether Washington's minimum wage is too high, but why isn't the federal minimum wage just as high or even higher?"



Women workers at a clothing factory in Los Angeles, Calif.



AFRICA

Sectarian Terror Strikes Nigeria

As the new year began in Nigeria, a state of emergency was declared, and heavily armed troops and tanks patrolled the streets of the capital of Borno State, Maiduguri, in the nation's northeast. President Goodluck Jonathan imposed emergency measures throughout the country's northeast, the conflict-prone central city of Jos and part of Niger State near Abuja and ordered northern borders closed. The emergency decrees came in response to four days of bombing attacks around Christmas that killed and wounded hundreds, including a suicide bombing that claimed the lives of at least 37 people at the Church of

Santa Teresa in Abuja, the federal capital.

The president said on state-run television that his aim was to restore security, but many are questioning the government's capacity or even willingness to respond to the security threat posed by Islamic extremists from the Boko Haram sect. Cardinal Anthony Olubunmi Okogie of Lagos said the spate of bombings makes people wonder "what the government is doing with our money. If they cannot protect the lives of its citizens, then why do we have a government?"

"People have identified themselves as members of Boko Haram, taking credit for bombings; still, nothing is done to them. That means the killings [could] continue," he said; it seemed that "anybody can just do anything they like and go scot free."

In Abuja, Archbishop John Olorunfemi Onaiyekan said the quick arrest of those responsible for the bombings would renew people's confidence in the government and its ability to guarantee their security. He urged Nigerian Muslim leaders to assist security agents in exposing those responsible, "as they are giving Islam a bad name."

Boko Haram's campaign to stir up sectarian conflict in Nigeria, an oil-rich nation on Africa's west coast with large Muslim and Christian populations evenly divided between north and south, appears to be succeeding, at least rhetorically. The Christian Association of Nigeria, which includes Catholics, said in an open letter to President Jonathan that the Christmas bombings were "a declaration of war on Christians and Nigeria as an entity." The group warned that if the attacks continued in 2012 and

"Christians remain unprotected by the security agencies, then we will have no choice but to...take our own steps to ensure our safety and security."

Mujahid Dokubo-Asari, a Muslim convert and onetime rebel leader from Nigeria's mostly Christian south, said southern Nigerians could take up arms to fight Boko Haram extremists in the north and are holding back only out of respect for the president. He said such a development was "seconds away... Nigeria is on the precipice of a civil war."

On Jan. 2, an ultimatum issued by a Boko Haram spokesperson gave Christians residing in the north three days to leave and urged Muslims living in the south to return north as there was "evidence they would be attacked by Christians."

President Jonathan has met with Muslim and Christian leaders in an attempt to restore calm. One of the country's leading Muslim clerics, the sultan of Sokoto, Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar III, said after a meeting with Jonathan on Dec. 27 that the violence was not religious in nature. "It is a conflict between evil people and good people," he said. "The good people must come together to defeat the evil ones."



A car burns at the scene of an explosion outside Santa Teresa Catholic Church, Abuja.

In 2012, Fewer Deportations Likely

Under new rules adopted by the Obama administration last year, deportation will now be reserved for undocumented felons, national security risks or repeat immigration offenders. Undocumented immigrants guilty of only minor legal violations and who have long and substantial ties in the United States would have their deportation cases set aside. The policy shift addresses one of the major concerns of the U.S. bishops. They have long argued that immigrant families should not be broken up over small offenses. The change is “a potential seismic shift in enforcement,” said Geoffrey Scowcroft, an attorney who manages immigration legal services for Catholic Charities in Oregon. “We are in the very early stages of this, but this policy is as close to good news as we have seen in years,” he said. The Department of Homeland Security described the new discretion as a way to unlog immigration courts, which are now backlogged with more than 300,000 cases.

Making the Case For Catholic Schools

In recent years progress has been made on improving the affordability of Catholic schools by school voucher programs and tuition tax credits. Currently there are 11 school voucher programs in the United States and nine scholarship tax-credit programs. Some states have more than one program, and in April 2011 the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the practice of allowing Arizona residents to take a tax credit for their donations to school tuition organizations. But panelists at a conference on Nov. 30, organized by Catholic University’s Institute for Policy Research & Catholic Studies

NEWS BRIEFS

In 2011, 26 **pastoral care workers were killed worldwide**—18 priests, 4 religious sisters, 4 laypeople—as victims of crimes or in retribution for their activities on behalf of marginalized people. • A grant from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation will underwrite a survey of Catholic youth by the Secretariat of Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations to identify **cultural traits that affect openness to a call to a vocation**. • At St. Augustine High School in New Orleans, **disciplinary paddling is officially over**, as is a legal struggle over control of the school following an out-of-court settlement on Dec. 23, 2011. • The bishops of the Philippines are seeking funding for the construction of 1,000 **houses for the victims of flooding** in December that has claimed the lives of more than 1,200 people and left hundreds of thousands displaced. • Pope Benedict XVI will meet with Cuba’s President Raul Castro and Mexico’s President Felipe Calderón when he **visits Cuba and Mexico** on March 23-28. • Having celebrated their 75th birthdays, two U.S. cardinals and 20 other U.S. bishops will be **eligible for retirement** in the coming year.



Homeless in the Philippines

and co-sponsored by the Catholic Association of Latino Leaders in San Antonio, urged educational and state Catholic conference leaders to do more to promote the importance of Catholic schools to the wider U.S. public and in building political support for Catholic schools. Frank Butler, president of Foundations and Donors Interested in Catholic Activities, said, “We have to do a better job of making our case that we contribute to the common good through our schools.”

Calls for Dutch Bishops’ Resignations

Leading politicians in the Netherlands have called for the resignations of Catholic bishops in the wake of a damning report on sexual abuse in the Dutch church. On Dec.

17, 2011, Holland’s deputy prime minister, Maxime Verhagen, said the church has been “profoundly damaged” and bishops should consider resigning. Released on Dec. 16, 2011, the report found that somewhere between 10,000 and 20,000 Dutch children suffered abuse, ranging from unwanted sexual advances to rape, during the period of 1945 to 2010. The vast majority of instances were never reported to police. Prime Minister Mark Rutte said that his cabinet is considering lifting a statute of limitations to allow criminal prosecutions. A complaint has already been filed with the public prosecutor’s office against a former bishop of the Diocese of Rotterdam, Philippe Bär.

From CNS and other sources.

ARE YOU CALLED TO SERVE THOSE SERVING?

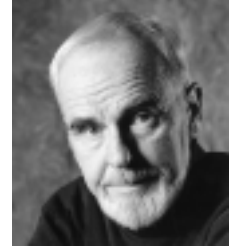


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What We Must Face

There are many minor irritants I face as we launch into another year. At the top of the list are the continual assaults of demeaning advertisements. One genre portrays us as preferring the latest electronic toy to any human relationship: we hush those around us as we try out our new app; others roll their eyes when they see us using last year's iPhone; if we long for companionship, we can "see if someone is searching for you. Find out on Mylife.com."

More directly related to the year 2012, we face a billion-dollar campaign for president in which the only comic relief from boring talking points and empty slogans might be the possible candidacy of Donald Trump, a man weirdly unburdened by self-knowledge. By his own testimony, of course, he is "big, huge"—a reference not only to his wealth and properties but to his ego, inflated, like so much of our nation, by self-display.

We face as well a political commentariat, carefully crafted and segmented to fit our prejudices and ideologies, from MSNBC to Fox News. We will be treated to hosts like Joe Scarborough and Chris Matthews, both masters mostly of interviewing themselves.

Looming above all the ephemeral irritants, there remain two inescapable challenges that will outlast the election and the year. They are the failure of middle- to upper management in our country and in our church.

In the wake of two trillion-dollar wars that have ushered in the rejection

of the just war theory and the legitimization of assassination and torture, of growing immiseration for the middle class and poor and of refusal to consider banking, election or health care reforms, the U.S. Congress has achieved the lowest approval rating ever recorded. At 9 percent, our senators and representatives are esteemed about as much as pornography and polygamy. Perhaps our legislators have lost touch with the average American family, whose wealth has declined over the last 25 years while the median net worth of a member of the House of Representatives has more than doubled.

The problem of leaders "losing touch" with those they are supposed to lead may be confronting the Catholic Church as well. First, let me be clear: Bishops, Catholics and Christians can no more be caricatured or monolithically lumped together than politicians or any other group. Nonetheless, there are troubling indications that the failures in leadership among politicians are mirrored by those of religious leaders.

The latest data from the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life reveal that one-third of Americans who were raised Catholic no longer consider themselves Catholic. In fact, the top three religious groups in the United States now are Catholics, then Baptists, then former Catholics. Should this prod us, commissioned to pass on our faith, to ask some probing questions of ourselves?

It is true that dioceses have mounted stirring, often beautiful campaigns,

calling unchurched Catholics to "come home." But this raises two questions: Why did they leave? And what are we calling them home to?

As to the first question, there is no simple answer. Reasons may range from being deeply scandalized by the disgrace of sexual abuse to the self-serving rejection of challenging dogma or moral practice. But there does seem to be a growing number of disaffected Catholics who think they are leaving an institution whose primary commitment is resistance to abortion and same-sex marriage. This is unfortunate not only for those who leave the church but for those who stay as well. As important as our pro-life and traditional marriage commitments are,

they are not the center of our faith. The mystery of Christ is the center, and it is to this that we should be calling former Catholics back.

Just as leaders of a nation must call its citizens to a common good beyond any particular vested interest, so also leaders of our church must call the disaffected not merely back to the church but to the One without whom the church has no legitimacy or mission.

If we Catholics all return home to our true center, we will indeed have a bounty of "Welcome-homes." Coming back to a church focused on Christ rather than itself, some who have left us may discover what they were looking for when they left. And all of us might find ourselves newly empowered to challenge a disordered culture, just as courageously as our Lord did.

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

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Children climb over the wreckage of a school that Libyan officials say was bombed by NATO forces in the town of Zlitan, 99 miles east of Tripoli, on Aug. 4, 2011.

PHOTO: REUTERS/CAREN FIROUZ



CHILDREN, BORN AND UNBORN,
TRAPPED IN WARTIME

In Harm's Way

BY MARY MEEHAN

In Afghanistan, the Taliban kill children and other civilians by suicide bombing and roadside bombs. The United States kills them with Hellfire missiles. In northwestern Pakistan, families have much to fear from U.S. drone attacks, but they also fear their own government's planes and artillery. All major combatants in the current wars have innocent blood on their hands.

When the United States and other NATO countries started bombing Libya in March 2011, they said they were doing so in an effort to protect civilians there. Yet the Catholic leader of Tripoli, about 12 days after the bombing began, said the "so-called humanitarian air raids have taken the lives of dozens of civilians" in that city. In comments to Fides, a Vatican information service, Bishop Giovanni Martinelli stressed that he had "heard various eyewitness accounts from trustworthy people about this." Among civilian casualties elsewhere was a toddler named Sirajuddin al-Sweisi, of the poor mountain village of Khorum. His mother said a piece of hot metal struck his face when NATO bombed a nearby ammunition dump. His uncle told the Associated Press: "We took him to the hospital, where they treated him for the burns and some broken bones. But by nightfall he was dead."

While there is plenty of blame to go around in today's wars, Americans have a special responsibility for what their own government does. Americans must pay attention to the way our wars harm the most innocent and defenseless civilians of all—especially children, born and unborn.

The Death of Innocents

The Guardian, a British paper, reported a mistaken U.S. attack in July 2008 on a bridal party in eastern Afghanistan in which 47 people died;

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many were children. An elderly survivor, Hajj Khan, recalled that he was holding his grandson's hand as they walked in the bridal procession toward the groom's village. He said there "was a loud noise and everything went white. When I opened my eyes, everybody was screaming. I was lying meters from where I had been." He added, "I was still holding my grandson's hand but the rest of him was gone. I looked around and saw pieces of bodies everywhere."

In December 2010, a reporter for the McClatchy Company interviewed some Pakistanis about mistaken attacks by U.S. drones. A boy of 13 carried a picture of his 10-month-old niece, who had been killed by a drone attack on her home. "The drones patrol day and night," the boy said, adding that at times "we see six in the air all at once." Another boy, 15-year-old Saddullah, was having tea with his family when they were struck by a drone. Three family members died, and Saddullah lost his legs and one eye. More fortunate than many drone attack victims, he eventually was able to walk with prosthetic legs.

In 2001, early in the U.S. war on Afghanistan, American planes bombed two houses in Khanabad, killing nearly every occupant. The Washington Post reported: "On the street was a 5-year-old girl in a red dress, sobbing and beating her chest with her hands. 'My mother died,' she cried." When neighbors rescued her father from beneath the collapsed roof of his home, he said the little girl was the only survivor among his seven children. He wept as he described his losses—his wife, the six children, his brother and his brother's entire family.

U.S. surveillance technology is far less accurate than advertised. In any case, humans still must interpret what they see. This is true whether a pilot actually flies a plane or a computer operator back in the United States controls a drone in Afghanistan or Pakistan. A video screen may show what appears to be men who are digging, and a pilot or technician may suspect they are planting roadside bombs. But they may be gathering scrap metal to sell. Or they may be boys collecting firewood for their families. According to The New York Times, NATO helicopters fired rockets at 10 Afghan boys who were doing that in March 2011. Only one boy survived. A local shopkeeper who lost a nephew in the attack said some victims "were really badly chopped up by the rockets. The head of a child was missing. Others were missing limbs." The man's nephew, 14 years old, had been the only breadwinner of a large family.

Many deaths of the innocent are due to an assumption by the United States that it has a right to destroy a home and

all its occupants on the suspicion that an enemy is in that home. How can this be reconciled with just war standards and international laws that ban direct attacks against civilians? And what can we say to those who have lost their children, parents or siblings to the aptly named Hellfire missiles?

Unborn children share all the war dangers their mothers face. In 2006 Nabihah Nisaif Jassim's brother rushed her by car toward a hospital in Iraq when she was about to give birth. U.S. troops at an observation post shot and killed Jassim and her cousin, an older woman who had accompanied her. According to the Associated Press, the U.S. military said troops had fired only to disable the car when it failed to stop despite warnings. But Jassim's brother said he had not seen "any sign or warning from the Americans." Doctors at the hospital could not save Jassim's baby. Other unborn children never make it to the hospital; they die with their mothers when their family homes are bombed by U.S. planes or raided by U.S. troops.

There appear to be few studies of war's effects on abortion rates, but reports from Sarajevo show how drastic they can be. When that Bosnian city was under prolonged siege by Serbian forces in 1993, the abortion rate rose steeply. "I would never do this in peacetime," one woman told The Washington Post. "And God knows I wanted the child, but there is no food for him in my house. There is nothing. What could I do?" According to the Post, before the war, one baby was aborted for every three born in Sarajevo. In 1993, according to a study by Srecko Simic, head of the obstetrics clinic at Kosovo Hospital, the numbers were reversed; there were three abortions for every pregnancy carried to term. The Simic survey, using a sample of 400 women, also found jumps in rates of premature birth, stillborn babies and babies who died in the first week after birth. "Virtually all of the pregnant women in Sarajevo are anemic," the Post reported, and the Simic survey indicated that "congenital birth defects are up 300 percent."

Collateral Damage

War makes medical care much harder to obtain, especially in poverty-stricken Afghanistan. Reto Stocker, the chief of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Kabul, said last year: "Every day, there are mothers who bring their sick children to hospital too late because they are afraid to travel or are held up by roadblocks, and relatives who take patients home before their treatment is completed. The result is that children die from tetanus, measles and tuber-

Americans must pay attention to the way our wars harm the most innocent and defenseless.

culosis—easily prevented with vaccines—while women die in childbirth and otherwise strong men succumb to simple infections.”

Prenatal and obstetric care in Iraq have suffered greatly from trade sanctions, war and years of sectarian violence. In 2007 The Washington Post reported that many doctors had fled Iraq after the U.S. invasion in 2003 and that others, still there, were threatened by kidnapping. The streets were still so dangerous that some women asked to have Caesarean deliveries before 5 p.m., so they would not have to travel at night to a hospital. Noor Ibrahim, 20 years old, lost her second child because the threat of violence caused a delay in reaching a hospital, and there were no doctors there when she finally arrived. (“A surgeon had just been kidnapped and the doctors refused to go to work,” the Post reported.) Nurses attempted her difficult delivery, but the baby died. Ibrahim suffered a ruptured uterus; it was uncertain whether she could ever have another child. Also in 2007, Iraq’s Red Crescent Society reported that over one million Iraqis had been displaced by violence or the threat of it. ABC News, covering the Red Crescent report, said many pregnant women in that situation were having abortions “because they are unable to get medical care for themselves and their unborn.”

War-caused birth defects are another source of suffering. The city of Fallujah, Iraq, has experienced a large increase of severe birth defects since the U.S. bombarded it heavily in 2004. Some children are born missing one or more limbs; others have paralysis, facial deformities, major heart problems or cancer. A baby named Fatima Ahmed was reported to have been born with two heads. Sky News, a British television broadcaster, showed a video of Fatima with her mother. The sweet-faced little girl had what appeared to be a huge head covered with a great mass of hair. (Apparently a second, partially-formed head was attached to the first.) The rest of her body was tiny. Her mother said Fatima could not see or hear. While she slept most of the time, the video showed that she could move her arms when awake. She died at age 3.

There is dispute about what caused the increase in severe disabilities. Many Iraqis point to white phosphorus or depleted-uranium weapons. The U.S. has acknowledged using white phosphorus in Fallujah in 2004. It has denied using uranium weapons there in the last half of 2004, but has said information on whether they were used there in the first half “was not collected.” Many professionals say there is no proof that these weapons cause birth defects in humans.

Others believe they can, especially when an area is highly saturated with them. John Simpson, a veteran war correspondent with the British Broadcasting Corporation, suggested that there “may well be a link with drinking water.”

He heard that “the worst problems were to be found in the neighborhood of al-Julan,” near a river. After the battles in Fallujah in 2004, he said, “the rubble from the town was bulldozed into the river bank, and most people in this area get their water from the river.” Another possibility: Some neural tube defects may have been caused by war-related malnutrition. Still another: Perhaps bombs struck areas where toxic industrial chemicals were stored, releasing them into air and water. Whatever the causes, many women in Fallujah are now afraid to have children.

In current and former war zones around the world, children are endangered by unexploded ordnance that can be detonated when a curious child picks it up. Cluster bombs are a special danger to children because they are relatively small and can be mistaken for toys. When farmers die because they strike old landmines while plowing their fields, their children may have a hard time surviving.

Many people try to help children caught in war. Relief groups aid them and their families in many practical ways. Dedicated doctors, nurses and therapists ease the suffering of wounded children. In the United States we need more people who will work hard to end the wars that cause so much agony. Above all, we need such people in politics. **A**

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To Heal and Protect

Two new ministries help victims of sexual abuse and promote safety.

BY BERNARD V. NOJADERA

Ten years ago few in the church had heard the voices of those abused by its clergy. The U.S. Catholic bishops, meeting in June 2002 in Dallas, Tex., changed that, however, as they came to grips with a problem that was deeper and more extensive than they had realized. Their soul-searching led to the passage of a “Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People” and to several structural changes. Among the most significant of these is the creation of two new ministries: that of victim assistance coordinator and of safe environment coordinator.

Today every diocese has a victim assistance coordinator, whose ministry is to hear and help people abused by members of the clergy and to encourage others to come forward if they too have been abused. Every diocese also has a safe environment coordinator, whose job is to make sure dioceses and eparchies, parishes and schools create and maintain safe environments through screening and training programs. These two positions stand as a driving force behind the implementation of the U.S. bishops’ charter.

These new ministers come from a variety of careers and educational backgrounds. Most victim assistance coordinators are licensed social workers or other mental health professionals. Safe environment coordinators tend to be teachers, principals or human resource professionals. In some dioceses, safe environment coordinators work in the human resources department, in others the education office. All seek to make the church a safe place for children and young people, a place parents can leave their children with confidence.

The new ministers assist within and beyond diocesan boundaries; the services they offer help anyone who works with youth. Public awareness of the need for their wisdom has grown dramatically in recent months, as Americans have seen that sexual abuse of minors occurs not only in

church activities but in sports programs, scouting and youth groups—in virtually any program that brings young people and adult mentors together. Youth programs do a vast amount of good and attract generous people willing to guide youngsters, of course, but they also have the potential to



attract predators. As a result, the new ministers must deal at times with the dark side of humanity.

Still, as Mary Girard, victim assistance coordinator for the Diocese of Alexandria, La., puts it, “I have never doubted that it was God who wanted me in this position.” Paul Duckro, director of the Office of Child, Adolescent and Adult Protection in the Diocese of Tucson says, “I believe I have grown personally in taking on this ministry, and I am grateful to have been called to it.”

The work is not for lone rangers. “I am supported just by being part of this group of S.E.C.’s and V.A.C.’s, not to mention the benefit I have received from the wisdom and the talents of so many of my peers,” adds Mr. Duckro. The bonding among these ministers resembles that found in other high-stress careers, like firefighters, police and military in wartime.

BERNARD V. NOJADERA, a permanent deacon, is executive director of the U.S. bishops’ Secretariat for Children and Young People.

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/BRIAN A. JACKSON

Victims No More

The goal of the victim assistance coordinator is to help abuse victims become survivors. “I was able to assist in providing help for healing to the majority of victims who previously were not believed, who were rejected, dismissed,” says Ms. Girard. “I have seen people whose whole lives were affected by the abuse from clergy.... They grieve the loss of their church and sense of God.”

So have I. In 2003, as the new director of the Office for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults for the Diocese of San Jose, I attended, at the invitation of a survivor, a meeting of the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests. Sitting in a circle, the participants started to introduce themselves. I said I had come from the diocese to listen and help. There I learned of the immense pain and struggle of abuse victims. I heard stories of lives turned upside down because a victim reported abuse, as well as stories of strength and courage, determination and forgiveness from the victim/survivors. Some participants expressed love for the church; one expressed at the meeting a strong personal desire to make sure no other child is abused.

The crime of sexual abuse of minors calls for many types of action by the church. Dioceses have placed victim/survivors on their review boards, pastoral outreach committees and bishop advisory boards. Some of these survivors staff support networks that offer victims the kind of understanding that comes only from shared experience.

Research and experience show that victims of sexual abuse come from all walks of life, ethnic and cultural backgrounds and socio-economic classes. Some have experienced abuse as a one-time incident; others have suffered it for years. Among victims, minors typically suffer confusion, disgust, guilt, fear and shame; many describe a sense of being frozen, of not knowing what to do and yet feeling responsible for what happened to them. The effects of therapy are varied: some victims have recovered, while others have not. Some victims have committed suicide. Some have returned to church, while others want nothing to do with the church. This is the world of the victim assistance coordinator.

Keeping It Safe

Safe environment coordinators express a sense of calling by God and a fierce determination to see the bishops' policies (outlined in the charter) implemented in diocesan parishes

and schools. Some safe environment coordinators have taken bold stands in the community. They have suspended a head coach a day before a big game because he failed to attend training. They have suspended teachers because they were behind on their training. They have suspended volunteers because the required background check had never been completed.

They have also removed volunteers deemed a liability because of their grooming behavior toward minors. Singling out one child for special attention, giving gifts, wrestling or consistently being alone with a child are red flags. The coordinators know to avoid risks when it comes to minors and to trust their instincts when they signal discomfort with child-adult interactions. They have also been heartened to hear parents recount how their children told them of boundary violations before the behavior became abuse because, said the child, “I finally get what all that training was about.”

The coordinator's two main responsibilities are screening and training.

Background checks: Some 75 dioceses/eparchies required background checks before the “Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People” mandated them in 2002. Since that year all diocesan clergy members, employees and volunteers who work with children are required

to undergo a background evaluation and training. Initially, some parish and diocesan leaders felt this was an overreaction. Many changed their view, however, when they learned that background checks had uncovered convicted sex offenders and child abusers, who should not be around children.

Early on, some dioceses and eparchies reported that the number of volunteers had dropped off as a result of the mandate. Having to submit to independent audits in 2003 caused dioceses a unique set of problems. Diocesan Annual Reports noted confusion about what was required of them. That took time to sort out. Yet by 2008 almost all dioceses and eparchies were found compliant with the charter, article by article. By 2010, management letters were issued to offer guidance for performance improvement or to highlight potential problems. Those conducting the 2011 audits will issue recommendations to further improve the record-keeping and implementation. While background checks and training may make volunteer recruitment more difficult, the measures have become routine—two of many steps that parishes and schools take to protect children.



Patricia Mudd, of the Diocese of Arlington, Va., offers direct outreach and support to victims of sexual abuse by clergy.

While most bishops are involved in complying with the charter and the audit, there are exceptions among several eparchies and two dioceses. The charter is an agreement among the bishops to hold each other accountable, and as such each has a moral obligation to participate. Participation in the audit is voluntary.

The Diocese of Lincoln, Neb., participated in the first audit (2003), was found compliant and has since refused to be audited. The Diocese of Baker, Ore., held to the standard that parents be the only teachers for their children, especially about topics of this nature. A diocesan training program for parents only was developed. The diocese did not participate in the audits because the bishop at that time knew the diocese was not in compliance. The current apostolic administrator is addressing this situation and expects to participate in the 2012 audit. Both dioceses have identified victim assistance coordinators and secure environment coordinators.

Prevention is costly. According to a survey in 2010 by CARA, U.S. dioceses/eparchies reportedly spent \$20,954,405 in 2010 for abuse prevention (not a large amount compared with the damage to a child and the overall cost of settlements). The expectation is that as adults working with children learn what their protective roles are, what to look for and how to respond to questionable behavior, then sexual abuse of children can be prevented.

Training programs: The goal of training is to educate adults on the nature and scope of abuse. Few adults realize that one in four females and one in six males report having been sexually abused as a child (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2006). Strangers commit 11 percent of sexual abuse; relatives, 29 percent; and "people known to the victim," 60 percent. Sexual abuse of children occurs in all socio-economic groups and neighborhoods.

Over the last decade, safe environment coordinators have seen to it that more than 58,843 priests, deacons and candidates for ordination; 239,090 employees; 162,026 educators; and 1,686,713 volunteers in parishes have been trained to create safe environments and prevent sexual abuse of children—a staggering accomplishment.

Safe environment training reaches beyond church institutions. The Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, for example, has offered training (using the risk-control program VIRTUS) to Lutheran, Methodist and

other congregations that participate in joint youth programs with them. The Diocese of Grand Island provides continuing-education credits approved through the Nebraska Nurses Association; medical and mental health providers who participate in a daylong workshop can receive license-renewal credits. The Diocese of San Jose offers joint safe environment workshops for parishes that host boy scout groups. Attendance enables scout leaders to fulfill both the scouting requirements for working with youth and those of the diocese.

Though it is always the adult's responsibility to protect minors, safe environment coordinators also train children. The training teaches youngsters how to recognize grooming behavior, for example, and encourages them to tell a trusted adult if another adult does something that makes them uncomfortable. According to the CARA report, more than 5,107,000 children were trained in the 2010 audit year.

Research shows that children who received training were more likely to report what made them uncomfortable and less likely to blame themselves. Data also indicate that adults who received training as children were less likely to have become victims of abuse.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People." The policy document addresses many aspects of the sexual abuse of minors by the clergy, and implementation continues to be refined. Catholics ought to feel more secure, knowing that two new ministries are in place. The victim assistance coordinator and the safe environment coordinator are working to help those wounded by abuse and to prevent abuse now and in the future. **A**

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An archive of articles on the sexual abuse crisis. americamagazine.org/crisis

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The Continuing Mission

Carolyn Woo takes the reins at Catholic Relief Services.

BY KEVIN CLARKE

Some things about Carolyn Woo are very “un-Chinese,” as she puts it. Joining a debating team as a teenager coming of age in Hong Kong was “a very un-Chinese activity,” she says. And her career in strategic planning? It was “an unlikely field for a Chinese person when I was young,” she says.

Perhaps Ms. Woo’s exposure to Maryknoll sisters from the United States, who educated her throughout her childhood in Hong Kong, had something to do with it. Even as a child she was impressed by the faith, creativity and enthusiasm of the sisters. “They were always joyful; they had great humor and great spirit,” she remembers. “Things were always fun, and they were not easily intimidated.”

Ms. Woo watched the Maryknoll sisters build schools and clinics and find ways to support the Vietnamese boat people then landing in Hong Kong. “The word *cannot* does not exist in their vocabulary,” Ms. Woo says. “When I look back, I think, ‘What entrepreneurial people.’ Every time there was any type of barrier, they found a way to overcome it and actually lead to a better outcome.”

Her experience with the Maryknoll order proved a lifelong inspiration. She devoted herself to understanding and promoting that entrepreneurial spirit as a student, then as a professor at Purdue University and, since 1997, as the Martin J. Gillen Dean of the Mendoza College of Business at the University of Notre Dame. This month, she will bring what she has learned about entrepreneurialism into a new role when she replaces Ken Hackett as president and chief executive officer of Catholic Relief Services. Mr. Hackett is retiring after 18 years at the helm.

Ms. Woo expects to bring her entrepreneurial expertise to her new job. “My role,” she says, “has always been looking at the future and seeing how an organization could be better positioned to be successful.” Ms. Woo says she has done that not only on the job at Mendoza but also as an advisor to corporations and not-for-profits and as a long-time member of the C.R.S. board of directors.

“Catholic Relief Services is a well-oiled machine in terms of day-to-day operations and its ability to deliver humani-



tarian relief,” says Ms. Woo. The agency is great “heads down,” working in disaster response and poverty mitigation in the field. The agency could benefit, she thinks, from someone who remains “heads up, looking at the major changes in our environment...to think about how do we need to position this organization, what new capabilities do we need to develop or restructure in the most optimal way to support the people’s work in the field?”

Thomas Harvey, the director of the Nonprofit Excellence Program at Mendoza, calls Ms. Woo “a woman of great compassion and drive.” He describes her as “intuitive and insightful; she can see what’s going on and she’s often a few steps ahead of other people.” This is a skill that can appear like micromanaging, Mr. Harvey says, but “the balance is she really relies on teams.” At Mendoza she has learned that “you don’t have to be afraid of rigor; you can demand excellence and still be liked,” Mr. Harvey says. She also learned how to turn around a faltering academic program. Mr. Harvey attributes the survival, indeed the flour-

KEVIN CLARKE is an associate editor of *America*.

ishing of his program to Ms. Woo's energy and determination and not least of all her fundraising skills.

A Workday for Everyone

That last skill obviously will be of use in her new position. Catholic Relief Services already has proven itself, Ms. Woo



‘I always try to remember: Do your very best, and leave the rest to the Holy Spirit.’

says, as one of the more entrepreneurial relief and development agencies responding to humanitarian crises and fighting poverty around the world. Over the last decade the organization has grown from a \$200 million dollar operation to a \$1 billion humanitarian juggernaut. But entering an era that likely will include federal budget constraints and reduced disposable income among its bread-and-butter supporters within the Catholic middle class may be challenging.

Maintaining the level of support Catholic Relief Services needs for its many overseas commitments in this difficult environment will likely require the development of new skills, Ms. Woo says, and an ability to find new sources of revenue when government wells run dry. She believes the organization is well positioned to survive a period of consolidation and austerity. During such periods, she says, funders, both public and private, are often willing to support only the most reliable humanitarian actors. “C.R.S.

is extremely well respected and is known for its fiscal stewardship and its ability to achieve positive outcomes no matter how complex” the situation, Ms. Woo says.

Noting that Ms. Woo is the first head of Catholic Relief Serviceto to come out of the business world, Gerald Powers, the director of Catholic peacebuilding studies at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame, says Ms. Woo will “bring a new perspective to managing and promoting what is a large, complex global organization.” He expects, however, that she will continue Mr. Hackett’s commitment to a strong Catholic identity at the organization. In fact, her personal spirituality is among the professional tools she has come to rely on.

“I always try to remember: Do your very best, and leave the rest to the Holy Spirit,” she says. “Sometimes now before I go to work at Notre Dame, I start at the grotto, and I say, ‘Blessed Mother, Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, today is a workday and we all have to show up for work.’”

Ms. Woo grew up in a swirl of cultural influences during a time of tremendous dislocation and change. “I lived in Hong Kong, one of the most capitalist cities in the world, and I was raised in the Chinese culture but educated by Americans,” she said.

She watched Hong Kong grow from a sleepy fishing village in the 1950s into a dominant economic powerhouse. Adjusting to such dramatic changes and the at times contradictory forces that accompanied them, she says, created “a sense to trust in God, trust in the Holy Spirit, trust that whatever problem we are presented with is actually an opportunity, an invitation.”

Tough Call

Mr. Powers says that at Mendoza Ms. Woo pioneered the integration of ethics into the business curriculum and developed innovative programs on social entrepreneurship and corporate social responsibility. “The business school under her leadership has served the Catholic community,” he says, by working with Catholic charities and hospitals around the country. Internationally Mendoza now connects its M.B.A. students with efforts to promote social change or heal trauma-

matized societies through field study guided by the U.N. Global Compact. That international policy initiative commits international businesses to accountability for the broader social good in the communities they affect and to efforts to

promote human rights and protect the environment.

Ms. Woo’s decision to accept the job offer from Catholic Relief Services took six months of discernment, mostly because she found it difficult to break with the colleagues and staff she worked with at Mendoza. Her new role will be far removed from the life of a university dean.

ON THE WEB

A slideshow of the work of Catholic Relief Services.
americamagazine.org/slideshow

In relief work, Ms. Woo says, “you need to move very quickly; it’s a high velocity environment.” The work requires good decision making over a short period of time in complex and volatile situations. Then during the post-disaster period, when the focus shifts from saving lives to restoration and reconstruction, she says, a completely different set of organizational attributes is required. “Relief work is not over as soon as you put shelter on top of a person and they can be fed and [given] medical care,” she says. Their homes have been destroyed; their livelihoods taken away. “What about the rest of their lives?”

Responding to the tsunami in southeast Asia in 2004, which devastated coastal areas in nations all along the coast of the Indian Ocean, required a long-term plan. “Not everyone should stay or could stay there for such a long period of time,” Ms. Woo says, “but we did, to see through the whole reconstruction.”

Restoring Haiti after its devastating earthquake in 2009 has likewise required a long-term restoration campaign. The real work, Ms. Woo says, “actually begins after relief, so the key is how do we then respond to the new set of needs.... How do we sustain this work, particularly when it has a long-tail response? That is one of the strategic challenges to embrace. It has implications for funding; it has implications for new skills.”

Catholic Relief Services is one of the few major relief agencies still active in Haiti. “It is a very difficult reconstruction environment,” Ms. Woo says, “and it needs patience and...a lot of expertise and partners on the ground and on the site.”

Looking ahead, Ms. Woo expects that the organization will have its hands full with “normal” emergency responses to typhoons and earthquakes and conflict. The frequency of such disasters seems only to increase, she says. And there will be unexpected humanitarian challenges like the nuclear mess engendered by the earthquake and tsunami in northern Japan. The ongoing crisis in Fukushima has required unwelcome innovation in disaster response.

But disaster relief is not the agency’s only focus. Its glob-

al role in economic and community development has increased in importance in recent years. “It’s a different type of work,” Ms. Woo says, “agricultural projects, mapping farmers into the supply chain for large companies, education projects in Pakistan, peace and civil society building work.”

As she steps into her new role in Baltimore, Ms. Woo will focus on another area: the scope and effectiveness of the agency’s outreach to U.S. Catholics. How well has Catholic Relief Services used its experience and expertise to engage, inform and inspire U.S. Catholics, she asks. “I would say at this point,” she says, “that I would consider it more of a huge opportunity for us rather than a momentum we have established.” Many Catholics may be familiar with the C.R.S. rice bowl, but she wonders how many understand all the work that cardboard icon represents. She is particularly eager to engage young American Catholics and hopes to offer them more background on Catholic social teaching and to explain how C.R.S. brings that tradition to life through its many efforts.

Full Circle

Mr. Harvey of Mendoza calls Ms. Woo’s success as an immigrant to the United States a tribute to the Maryknoll women who traveled halfway around the world to help “liberate and educate” girls like her. “Now she has opportunity to do the same on behalf of developing communities around the world,” he says.

It is a symmetry that Ms. Woo also notes. “I was born in Hong Kong to parents who chose to leave China because of the Communist government, so in some ways I was born to refugees; Hong Kong was a city of refugees.” Her appointment, she suggests, signals missionary work that has now “come full circle.” The American church sent the Maryknoll sisters across the world to help a generation of children disoriented, like their parents, by the rapid political changes that drove them to an emerging metropolis. “I was the beneficiary of their work,” Ms. Woo says, “and today I am to lead the humanitarian relief agency of the U.S. Catholic Church.”

This is the “whole idea of the global church,” she says, and an expression of the opportunities life in the United States and the U.S. church has offered to her. Her personal success and the talent and skills she returns to the church through this new role, she says, are the “fruit of the missionary work of the Catholic Church”—work she is committed to continuing as she moves from South Bend to this next important chapter in her American journey. **A**

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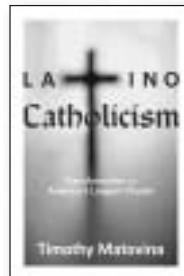
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Good Returns

Can you follow your conscience and still beat the S&P 500?

BY THOMAS HEALEY

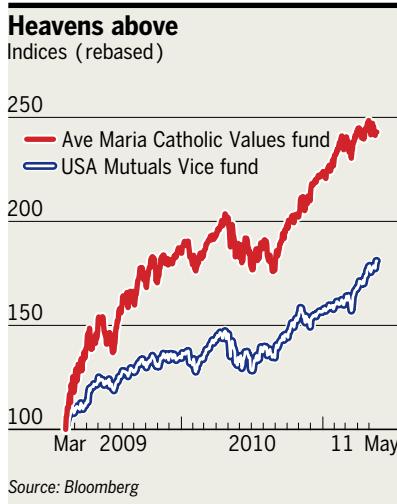
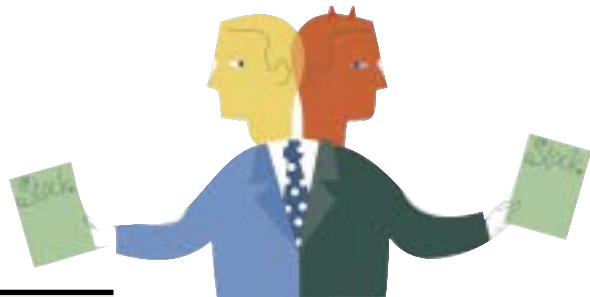
John Wesley probably had no idea what he was starting when, 250 years ago, he planted the seeds for what is known today in financial circles as socially responsible or sustainable investing. In his sermon “The Use of Money,” the Methodist founder urged his followers to forswear business practices that harmed their neighbors and to avoid industries like tanning and chemical production that could harm the health of workers.

There is no better way to put Wesley’s ethos into a modern-day context than to describe a chart I recently ran across while preparing a talk on business ethics to give at the Vatican in Rome. It showed in stark ascending lines that, over the two years ending in May 2011, the Ave Maria Catholic Values Fund, which eschews stocks contrary to church teaching, performed well above the USA Mutual Vice Fund, which invests only in arms, tobacco, alcohol and gambling.

Case closed. Or was it, I wondered? The “church versus vice” chart was amusing, but is there any concrete evidence that an investment strategy favoring companies that support the environment, consumer protection, human rights, diversity or sundry other virtues actually provides better returns than one that supports the “sin stocks”—or the S&P 500, for that matter?

Why should anyone care? Here is one reason. Socially responsible investing has become a huge market around the world. According to the Social Investment Forum Foundation, sustainable investing has been growing at a faster clip than the much broader universe of conventional investment assets under professional management. At the start of 2010 the foundation reported professionally managed assets pegged to socially responsible investing strategies stood at \$3.1 trillion, an increase of more than 380 percent from \$639 billion in 1995. As a result of this bullish trend, nearly one of every eight dollars professionally managed in the United States today—12.2 percent of the \$25.2

THOMAS HEALEY is a retired partner of Goldman Sachs and currently a senior fellow at Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government. He was assistant secretary of the Treasury under President Reagan.



trillion in total assets tracked by Thomson Reuters Nelson—is in some way tied to socially responsible investing.

Even more revealing, during the market tumult of 2007 to 2010, assets from socially responsible investing enjoyed healthy growth, while the overall stock universe remained roughly flat.

Positive Investing

Although the practice is hundreds of years old, the modern-day shift toward ethically grounded investments took off

in earnest during the culturally and politically restless 1960s. Boycotts and economic development projects spearheaded by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. provided a model for socially conscious investing, while a vocal group of investors opposed to the Vietnam War took out their fury on companies like Dow Chemical, a manufacturer of napalm. In the 1970s and '80s, many large institutions shunned investments in South Africa because of that country’s detested practice of racial apartheid. More recently, socially responsible investing has meant reaching out to companies with strong environmental credentials or to corporations that take governance, transparency and shareholder engagement seriously.

The latest version of socially responsible investing is known as “positive investing,” taking a financial stake in companies or institutions committed to making a meaningful societal impact. Money invested in a community development institution or fund, for example, may be used to alleviate poverty, support “green” businesses or promote economic projects like low-income housing.

But the question remains: Can socially or ethically responsible investing, for all its virtues, actually yield better



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returns than the market averages?

Unfortunately, the evidence is more anecdotal than scientific. An article published in *Fortune* in 2009 described how the small, socially conscious, private investment firm of Lowell Blake and Associates, based in Boston, sidestepped bank stocks because it believed these institutions made money by encouraging consumers to go into debt. Nor did the firm invest in tobacco companies, defense contractors or any enterprise it believed harmed the environment. Instead, it looked carefully at a company's governance policies, balance sheet (there must be very little debt) and product quality. That unconventional approach, reported *Fortune*, seemed to be working. In 2008, the firm's holdings outperformed the S&P 500 by more than 4 percent; over the previous seven years they returned 36 percent while the S&P 500 lost almost 1 percent. Recent research by Craig Metrick, principal and U.S. head of responsible investment for Mercer, indicates that mission-related investments have generally performed better than "mainstream fixed income investments."

Other research is less clear. A study conducted by the financial economists Lobe, Roithmeier and Walkshäusl created a set of "sin indexes" consisting of 755 publicly traded stocks around the world aligned with the "Sextet of Sin": adult entertainment, alcohol, gambling, nuclear power, tobacco and weapons. They compared the stock market performance of these stocks with the socially responsible investment indexes they also built. They found no compelling evidence that either ethical or unethical investments made a significant difference in their market performance.

The Well-Managed Business

What can make a difference in terms of higher returns on sustainable investments is a focus on businesses that are well managed. These are companies, more specifically, that are known to have a strong culture of integrity, respect for their shareholders and senior managers who are driven by long-term value creation. Thorough research by skilled investment analysts can help to identify opportunities to pursue and risks to avoid based on a variety of generic socially responsible themes. These include climate change, environment and pollution, pandemics (like H.I.V./AIDS), water, human capital/training/work environment, lobbying, corporate governance/transparency, demographics, shareholder agreement, bribery/corruption and globalization.

Wall Street wisdom has been that if you invest with a social conscience, you must be ready to sacrifice performance. That mindset is changing, although additional studies into this fascinating field are needed to provide clarity and guidance to an always skeptical investment community. The conclusive evidence will appear when investment managers who emphasize well-managed companies with sustainable investments actually achieve consistently superior returns. **A**

FILM | JOHN ANDERSON

FAITH AT THE MOVIES

The best religious films of 2011

Since 1895, the magnification of the human image and the exaltation of human experience for the purposes of cinema have influenced how people see themselves, define relationships, conduct behavior, kiss, walk, act cool and perceive their place in the universe.

This image is not always elevating, of course. Many examples of human behavior in the movies are negative. But there is no escaping that the

moviegoer can develop an intimate connection with the screen. Inhibitions are dissolved. Bonds are formed. Souls are silently bared, which explains the fury with which some people react to intrusions into their movie-induced cocoons brought on by ringing cell-phones, yammering voices and the truculent light of texting, all of which burn a hole in the velvety darkness of a theater (as if someone barged into the confessional selling life insurance).

Under ideal moviegoing conditions, the viewer surrounded by others still inhabits his or her own womblike space and occupies as receptive a state regarding matters spiritual as he or she is likely to do in the course of an otherwise secular day.

This year, there has been no shortage of relevant stimuli at the multiplex, though some of it has come from the oddest places. "Cowboys & Aliens," for instance, which probably grossed \$100 million or so less than Universal would have liked, proclaimed a rather cogent message about the "fraternity of man": When faced with a common enemy, even cowboys, Indians and bad guys can come together to save the world

Lambert Wilson, left, and Jean-Marie Frin star in the movie "Of Gods and Men."



from evil, gooey space aliens—unlikely allies indeed, but created in God’s image nonetheless. Who created the evil, gooey space aliens? That was not a theological question the movie cared to investigate. But “Cowboys” was not a serious movie, certainly not about the nature of the universe, any more than the grotesquely profitable “Breaking Dawn” (or any other vampire movie) is a serious consideration of life after death. (One would be better off watching “Walking Dead” on AMC.) The exploitation of religion, whether implied or explicit, has always been part of the movies, the aim being a borrowed credibility meant to validate the most outlandish concept.

This year, the exploitation tactic seemed on its way to becoming entrenched and intractable.

Among those entertainments that might be termed “biblical burlesque” was “11-11-11,” released, naturally, on Nov. 11, 2011, involving false prophets, the Beast, the Man of Sin

and very little that was revelatory. Close on its heels was the exhausting “Immortals,” a hodgepodge of Greek and Roman mythology, excessive violence, lazy history and deities as martial artists; it was enough to give polytheism a bad name. These are ludicrous examples of a trend that elsewhere, however, found movies with genuine spiritual intentions (some realized, some not). Often these were endowed with a sense of aspiration that was inspirational.

Chief among them (reviewed in *America* on June 6, 2011) was “The Tree of Life,” Terrence Malick’s polarizing meditation on everything from the director’s own upbringing in 1950s suburban Texas to the Creation itself. No one seemed indifferent to what Malick was doing. Responses ranged from exhilaration to outright hostility. (In Connecticut, an art-house theater

operator had to post a sign at his box office, warning that there would be no refunds for “The Tree of Life.” Proceed at your own risk.) What seemed more important to this viewer was Malick’s

reach, whether or not it exceeded his grasp. Striving for euphoria is itself euphoric. To critique this movie for an opaque storyline

would be like deriding an artist-of-epiphanies like Mark Rothko for not making representational paintings or snarking at William Faulkner for using long sentences. You would simply be missing the point.

Unlike Malick’s oblique approach to the divine, several other movies this past year took a head-on approach to spirituality, which, as every savvy filmgoer knows, or should, is precisely not how it’s done. You do not make a movie about hubris by telling a story about hubris. You do it by telling the

ON THE WEB

Maurice Timothy Reidy reviews the film “The Descendants.” americamagazine.org/culture

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story of a newspaper tycoon named Kane. You do not create a timeless classic about undying devotion by putting two mooncalf teenagers together on a beach; you do it through a cynical bar owner and his lost lover in wartime Casablanca. It is very unlikely that you can make a convincing movie about a spiritual journey by making a movie about—literally—a spiritual journey. That is what Emilio Estevez did this year with “The Way,” a well-intentioned train-wreck of religious cinema.

Instead, you do it with a movie like “Of Gods and Men” (rev. 2/21/11), as ennobling a story about faith as has ever been made, precisely because it was about men questioning their faith.

Directed by the Frenchman Xavier Beauvois and based on a true-crime story about the abduction and beheading of seven Cistercian monks by Islamic extremists in Algeria in the mid-'90s, “Of Gods and Men” was suspenseful, entertaining and profound. The hard-working Trappists at hand, threatened with real and unimaginable violence by Islamic fundamentalists, are forced to confront the meaning of their lives, their vocations, their beliefs, their purpose. The specter of death, no longer an abstract construct, haunts their existence. The very concrete collision of faith and mortality makes for the most stirring religious movie of this year, or any year in recent memory.

Why was “Of Gods and Men” such a rare gem? Because the movies are a mass medium devoted to sating the appetites of viewers accustomed to predigested concepts and uncomplicated thought.

Most of the movies this year that used Christian imagery or beliefs generally did so to either ham-handed or facetious effect. “Soul Surfer,” the oh-so-deliberately “inspirational” story of a young athlete whose arm is bitten off by a shark yet who makes a spiritual and professional recovery, was so obvi-

ous that even some of those inclined to buy its message were turned off by its tactics. At the other end of the spectrum is “Red State,” by Kevin Smith, a comic-book entrepreneur, provocateur and practicing Catholic. Smith imagined an apocalyptic Christian sect so satirically evil that viewers had to take it as a joke or else take offense, not because the characters were implausible but because they were so clumsily constructed.

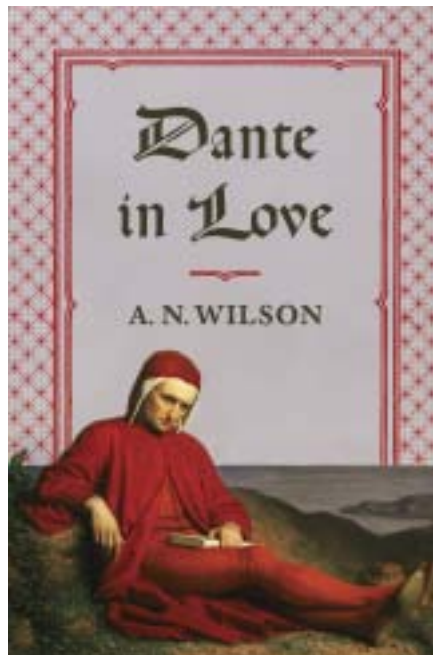
The execution of movie art, regardless of content or context, can have an exalting effect on the viewer, especially when his or her best instincts are addressed. “Melancholia,” an end-of-the-world movie by that problematically great Dane, Lars von Trier, did not delve into any questions of literal

immortality, but the humanity of the film’s characters possessed a divine spark. So did the documentary “My Reincarnation,” by Jennifer Fox, which took 20 years to make. Fox followed a Tibetan Buddhist teacher from callow youth, through the disavowal of his spiritual destiny to mature manhood reconciled with his mission on earth. One need not embrace these beliefs to appreciate the journey, because the story is transcendent—much like “The Tree of Life,” “Of Gods and Men” and other films this year that simply, sometimes eloquently, exceeded our expectations.

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

PAUL J. CONTINO

EXILE FROM PARADISE



DANTE IN LOVE

By A. N. Wilson

Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 400p \$35

How many Catholics have read the greatest literary work in their tradi-

tion? Many begin Dante’s *Divine Comedy* but never quite make it out of hell. They never breathe the bracing air of Mount Purgatory or hear the music in Paradise’s luminous, communal beatitude. As A. N. Wilson puts it, “Such readers are prepared to take on trust that Dante is a great poet, but they leave him as one of the great unread. And in so doing, they leave unsavoured one of the supreme aesthetic, imaginative, emotional, and intellectual experiences on offer.” In his latest book, the prolific British biographer and novelist has written a work “specifically designed” for these readers. As one who teaches the *Commedia* and shares Wilson’s love for the *Divine Comedy*, I judge his effort a success. His intermittent emphasis on the centrality of love for Dante will invite any reader who wishes to join the poet on a pilgrimage meant to end in heaven. For Dante’s journey is not just his but ours; his

BABY

For Jade

It's a natural process, yes,
the body's way to say no
to the embryo, the little one
clinging to the womb
the fragile, developing form,
baby, the Mr. or Mrs. whoever
you were going to be
had not the body said no,
something is amiss, this birth
will not happen, you month old,
fledgling child, you echo
of the heartbeat, the desire
of your mother, her womb
the home, the percolator,
the starting place of the life
you did not grow into, you
intricate DNA, the intertwining
of your parents, you, longed for,
the light in your mother's eyes,
you, who cannot be carried,
loved one, spark of life,
stopped, discharged, free to go,
no room at the inn, denied
the parting labial entry
into the world, miscarriage
of justice, we will never
forget you.

T O M D O N L O N

TOM DONLON, of Shenandoah Junction, W.Va., is a project manager for Verizon Communications. His poems have appeared in various journals and anthologies, including *Commonweal*.

poem is “for everybody and about everybody.”

Granted, Dante's medieval context can feel pretty distant, but Wilson relates the biographical and historical background with clarity and brio. In 1265, Dante was born in Florence, a city violently divided between two factions, the “new money,” pro-papal Guelfs and the aristocratic, pro-empire Ghibellines. But even these parties were divided: Dante, politically ambitious, was a member of the White Guelfs, who resisted Pope Boniface VIII's increasing consolidation of political power. Politically ambitious, Dante was elected a member of the city's priory in 1300 and chose to vote against the pope's request for Florentine military assistance, thus inspiring the pope's enmity. By 1302, Dante was exiled from Florence and family, and remained dependent upon the hospitality of patrons until his death in Ravenna in 1321.

But without Dante's exile we would not have the *Commedia*, to which Dante dedicated the last part of his life. True, even in his youth, Dante was an accomplished poet, crafting sonnets “perfectly made, like wonderfully carpentered furniture.” In these early works, Dante “cut his teeth” on the courtly love tradition. In an intriguing if sometimes puzzling chapter, Wilson links the frustrated eros of courtly love—in which the lover venerates and serves his married lady from a distance—with the Catharite heresy and its ascetic abhorrence of the flesh. Wilson rightly claims that “the mature Dante” rejects the angelism implicit in this rejection, and observes that when Dante recalls and dreams of Beatrice—the Florentine girl with whom he fell in love and who becomes his guide in Paradise—he is “aware of the body beneath the dress.”

Wilson's emphasis upon the incarnational in Dante is accurate, but it sometimes leads him to questionable

readings. For example, in *Inferno's* circle of the wind-blown lustful, Francesca describes her love affair, the catalyst for which is the love poetry she reads with Paolo, her infernal companion. Wilson describes this passage as “the most subversive of the very doctrine of hell” as it “venture[s] the possibility that in loving a woman, a man is not turning away from God but towards Him; that the meaning of Incarnation was that men and women, in the flesh as well as in the spirit, became like Christ.” Dante's incarnational art does affirm this possibility—but not through adultery. The pilgrim's swooning sympathy for the lovers is critiqued by Dante the poet.

Wilson confesses his admiration for an earlier commentator on Dante, Charles Williams, “who believed the Church was still not ready” for a Dante “who believed that what he felt for this Italian teenager [Beatrice] was part of, or identifiable with, the Love which moved the stars.” But it is not as if Williams does not have company in the Catholic tradition. As Pope Benedict XVI's first encyclical, “*Deus Caritas Est*,” makes clear, eros and agape are joined in the Christian experience of love.

Wilson's love for the poet does not restrain him from noting his faults. Dante's hatreds could lead him into theological blunders: why is the still-living Branco d'Oria freezing in the pit of hell? Dante's political enthusiasms could verge on madness: Holy Roman Emperor Henry VII would never redeem the Holy Roman Empire, despite Dante's counsel. Wilson is especially harsh in his judgment of Dante's treatment of his best friend and poetic mentor, Guido Cavalcanti. In 1300, at the height of Dante's political power, he voted to have Guido exiled, which led to his death by malaria. “It is extraordinary [that] by the time Dante reaches Purgatory...he presents Guido purely as a rival to be supplanted, not as a

friend to be mourned.”

Dante in Love is sumptuously illustrated with color plates, some of them works by Giotto, Dante’s fellow Florentine. Their friendship was fruitful: “Dante saw that what Giotto had done in paint could also be done in literature. The great drama of Christian theology could be peopled with [persons] he had known, just as Giotto used contemporary models for his Biblical figures.” In a later chapter, Wilson notes Dante’s affinity with St. Augustine: as an autobiographer, he tells the story of his life for its “universal application”; as a mystic, he knows “that the heart will find no rest until it rests in God.”

In his conclusion, Wilson makes a

case that Dante’s prophetic critique of fractured 14th-century Europe holds relevance as we reflect on our own fragmented culture. Certainly, Wilson’s emphasis upon Dante’s international vision makes for timely reading during the Christmas and Epiphany seasons. His book will be a worthy addition to any pilgrim’s pack—that is, to any reader determined to go the distance with Dante, and willing to be moved by “the Love that moves the sun and other stars.”

PAUL J. CONTINO is the *Blanche E. Seaver* professor of humanities at Pepperdine University, California. He has recently written the introduction to *Burton Raffel’s new translation of The Divine Comedy* (Northwestern University Press).

JAMES LANG

LOST HORIZON

THE TARBALL CHRONICLES A Journey Beyond the Oiled Pelican and into the Heart of the Gulf Oil Spill

By David Gessner
Milkweed Editions. 272p \$24

In the summer of 2010, shortly after the Deepwater Horizon well began spewing millions of gallons of oil into the Gulf of Mexico, the environmental writer David Gessner jumped in his car and drove from his North Carolina home down to the gulf to discover for himself the effects of the spill on the local environment, both natural and human. He wanted to experience the story for himself, he explains, “instead of letting the national media take me on its knee, like a kindly uncle, and tell me its sweet and homogenized version of the truth.”

Gessner’s account of his journey blazes out with a fiery, pugilistic style that fits well with this objective. He is an appealing and very personal narrator, one who readily acknowledges his

own biases and compromises—such as motoring around the Gulf Coast while critiquing the fuel industry—and does not hesitate to report that he usually carries a few beers in his backpack when he heads out into the wilderness.

Mixing personal reflection with reportage and research, Gessner narrates his encounters with a variety of gulf residents and experts on his journey, from restaurant waiters and beach workers to scientists and film crews, asking hard questions and observing everything he can. He confronts authorities, consults with experts in a variety of fields and offers clear and often moving descriptions of the natural world of the gulf.

What Gessner discovers from his quest, of course, is an oil company

behaving badly. While the British oil company BP makes a tremendous show of activity in response to the spill, he finds much of it questionably effective or ethically problematic. The company hires many residents of the gulf who have been put out of work by the oily waters, for example, to lay booms around spill patches—a very short-term solution rendered useless by a storm or strong wind. In exchange for this work, however, anyone who accepts a paycheck from BP signs a contract that prevents them from speaking about the spill or their work.

But hoping readers will be outraged by ethical breaches like this one may be Gessner’s most difficult challenge now. The much-feared disastrous consequences of the spill, after all, mostly failed to materialize. Almost immediately after the well was capped, television commercials began to assure the American public that the Gulf Coast was “open for business,” and President Obama seemed to confirm this sentiment when, on a family vacation to the gulf in August of 2010, he took a swim in the waters of Florida’s Panama City beach.

In the face of this public sanitizing of the oil and its aftereffects, Gessner’s book offers two reasons why we should still care about what happened in the gulf—and what continues to happen there.

First, very practically, Gessner argues that the long-term effects of the spill may continue to play out for years to come. One of the major strategies BP employed in response to the spill was to cover it with a chemical dispersant. This seemed to work quite well for removing oil from the surface of the water.



As Gessner points out, however, the chemical used in this process is one banned in BP's home country of England, and the experts he questions about the dispersant—as well as the gulf residents he talks to—suspect that this dispersal activity has simply pushed both the oil and the chemical out of sight and mind. They both likely remain somewhere beneath the water's surface, at the bottom of the gulf, making their way into the diet of the seafloor dwellers who will eventually end up, through the long route of the food chain, on our dinner plates.

Second, and more important, Gessner wants us to question the consumption habits that have led us to rely so heavily on oil that we are miles out into the waters of the gulf, drilling with all our might for every last drop of oil we can find, risking human life (11 workers were killed when the Deepwater rig exploded) and the environment in the process.

To drive home this point, Gessner moves beyond the question of oil to call us to account for a host of unsustainable human practices, both personal and societal. One long section of the book, for example, analyzes our mania for building houses on beaches—and then, when erosion and wind take their natural toll on those houses, undertaking extensive and environmentally destructive pains to defend them. Readers will not soon forget Gessner's bewildered account of massive diggers and dump trucks hauling sand from the uninhabited side of an island to the populated one, as public workers shore up the beachfront property that buttresses the foundations of local trophy homes.

This image perhaps serves as the most fitting illustration of Gessner's thesis. Take a bucket of sand to expand your beachfront property, and on some other beach an animal loses its nesting ground; hop in your car for a cross-country vacation, and the planet warms up a bit more; fuel a national

mania for development and material acquisition, and a gulf gets sacrificed in the process.

"On this planet," Gessner writes, "nothing is apart from anything else—all of us, human, plant, animal—intertwined."

His journey around the Gulf of Mexico offers us a powerful and sober-

ing reminder that whether or not we feel the direct effects of the oil spill in our backyards, we are all implicated, all compromised, and—most important for Gessner—all connected.

JAMES LANG is an associate professor of English and director of the honors program at Assumption College, Worcester, Mass.

JAMES S. TORRENS

MAGICAL REALISM

IMAGINARY LOGIC Poems

By Rodney Jones
Houghton Mifflin
Harcourt. 96p \$22

I approach the reviewer's task with caution because of what Rodney Jones says in his poem "Criticism," that a critic is always focusing on some minor quality or picking out inadequacies. (I did in fact pick out a blooper in this small volume, a poem entitled "In Media Res." I would expect "In Medias Res," but nobody gets the Latin right anymore!) In "Criticism," the poet is poking fun at critics, because they never talk about "taste," "though clearly that is the main thing." No matter, he concludes; the whole of creation "proves nearly/ impervious to criticism because of the peach."

Imaginary Logic is, to my taste, a peach. First of all, the writer is what he calls "a diction beagle," ever so apt in his phrasing. And story, or bits of it, abounds in these poems, as we can expect from a Southerner. Most of the book is scenarios from Jones's life,

from early to late. Evangelical religion appears here and there, as when in

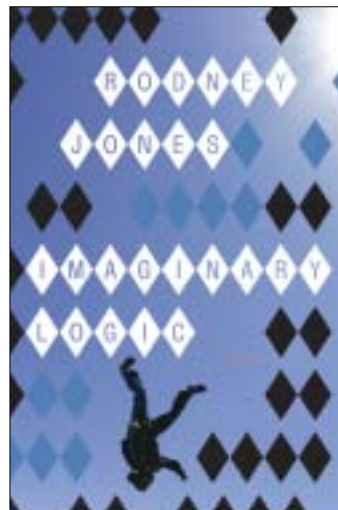
"North Alabama Endtime" a man named Earlie comes to his house "to say that the world is ending ('Anyone can see it,' he says)." In "Two Quick Scenes from the Late Sixties," the second scene, subtitled "The Rush," finds him smoking a hallucinogenic mix at what may be a frat-house party (the college rush?) but is called "Time's

house" (indicative of what those times did to us?). The dizzying high, the rush, concludes this way: "and now, said Time, now for a shotgun of the really dynamite stuff."

The endings of these poems offer continual surprise. "The Heaven of Self-Pity," reminding us of all the "poor me" things we treasure up, concludes:

"In the heaven of self-pity you are given a gun." To get even, I assume. In "Deathly" the poet, driving out of St.

Louis at night over the river into the countryside, falls into reveries while playing and replaying a rock 'n' roll ballad. We leave him "singing along/



ON THE WEB

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driving with my lights out for the fun of it." Some fun!

In his one long, multipart poem called "The Previous Tenants," Jones describes phases of remodeling his house, but does so while remembering the former owners and their deaths. The woman, of regal bearing, a counselor, "had a gift for empathy," we are told. At her funeral, though, "the younger son stood and agreed that, yes, she was a fine counselor, but a terrible mother." "She was not there for us when we failed." Jones recalls that "the instant/ stuck there like an arrow singing in a wall."

Though a professor in Carbondale, Ill., Rodney Jones is 100 percent Alabamian, where football is king. "The End of Practice" conjures up young gridiron warriors, subjected to "the coachly speech, the whistle, and then the last sprints." Images of the sweaty workout accumulate. The poem ends: "and, while this came to pass, monks in Asia soaked their robes in gasoline and burned alive for peace." In "Confidential Advice," the coachly speech is put in the mouth of the legendary Bear Bryant of Alabama's Crimson Tide, who urges one of his minions, "Get in there, turd./ You gotta shake off them heart attacks."

Life has its high points too in *Imaginary Logic*. One is the deft profile of ordinary good folks, the Jones family, on an outing by car—"The Trip to Opelika." My favorite is "In Media Res." It shines a light upon a farm wife, "large and blond, easy with herself and others," like the gracious queen Wealhtheow in *Beowulf*. But the young husband is the real focus. Gray and drawn from leukemia, close to death amid fields of growing wheat, yet with courage and a touch of humor, he is being taken off in the middle of things. How fleeting but precious life is.

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



POETRY CONTEST

Poems are being accepted for the
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Each entrant is asked to submit only one typed, unpublished poem of 30 lines or fewer that is not under consideration elsewhere. Include contact information on the same page as the poem. Poems will not be returned. Please do not submit poems by e-mail or fax. Submissions must be postmarked between Jan. 1 and March 31, 2012.

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

The winning poem will be published in the June 4-11 issue of *America*. Three runner-up poems will be published in subsequent issues.

Cash prize \$1,000

**Send poems to:
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LETTERS

Beware 'Pastores Dabo Vobis'

Contrary to what Katarina Schuth, O.S.F., reports in "A Change in Formation" (1/2), there is no evidence to suggest that levels of sexual abuse by members of the Catholic clergy concentrated after 1960. Anecdotal evidence abounds of abuse and cover-up predating 1960. With the widespread use of "Pastores Dabo Vobis" in seminaries (a document ghost-written by a Sulpician theologian), the hierarchy is returning to an

exalted post-Tridentine identity formation, first successfully promulgated by the French school and lasting until the Vatican II era. This identity creed can only guarantee situational group narcissism and its concomitant sexual deviances, as it did for the 400 years it was in the ascendancy, having replaced the more grounded identity found in Gregory the Great's *Pastoral Rule*, now all but forgotten.

Simply adding psychological, moral and spiritual fail-safes on top of the indoctrination may weed out some men, but it will not yield a healthy

priesthood. A few men may be first attracted to and then actually survive a training by which they are hyper-invested in a rococo ideology that tries to tell them they are both special and kenotic members of Christ. But this is a recipe for both ego inflation and deprivation neurosis, which, when combined, will continue to breed psychologically and spiritually brittle men and a greatly weakened church.

CLARE MCGRATH-MERKLE, O.C.D.S.
Baltimore, Md.

Render Unto Caesar

In response to "Obama Seeks 'Right Balance'" (Signs of the Times, 12/19/11), the Catholic bishops' argument that Catholic institutions would not be protected by the religious employer exemption and would be forced to discontinue health coverage for employees or cease offering some social services, it seems possible that even a modified mandate would be unacceptable to Catholic organizations.

I suggest an alternative: consider the health insurance mandate as being dictated by Caesar. In Jesus' time the taxes rendered to Caesar supported many immoral activities—crucifixions, temples to Jupiter, public religious celebrations. But refusing to pay meant ceasing to function. Today, for Catholic organizations, the small part of the health insurance payments supporting the mandate would be like a tax payment rendered to Caesar so as to continue functioning. Rendering to God would be to continue the good work, teaching compassion, so lacking in our society. Any diminution of Catholic presence would delight the followers of Ayn Rand, to whom compassion is a four-letter word.

DON RAMPOLLA
Pittsburgh, Pa.

A Cost Overwhelming

In response to Kevin Clarke's Of Many Things column (1/2): It seems to me that we are a country that will

CLASSIFIED

Positions

DIRECTOR OF FAITH FORMATION AND EVANGELIZATION. Blessed Sacrament Parish, Seattle, Wash. This medium-sized Dominican parish, which includes the University of Washington community, is seeking a Director of Faith Formation and Evangelization. The Director will motivate parishioners to gain a greater understanding of the Catholic faith, deepen their spirituality and enable them to preach the Gospel by speaking openly in the world about our relationship with God through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. Working with our community, the Director will take a leadership role in designing and implementing programs that will enhance our parish vision as a center of evangelization in the Northwest, a place where Catholics and non-Catholics gather to converse at the intersection of faith and culture. This position requires energy, commitment, courage and creativity. Successful candidates will be proficient in organizing and teaching, with exceptional leadership and communication skills.

Preferred candidates will hold a master's degree in religious education, theology or pastoral studies and have five years of parish experience. The candidate must be a practicing Catholic. The position is currently available. Finalists will be interviewed in Seattle. To obtain a job description and application, please send your résumé to hr@bspwa.org by Feb. 3, 2012. Blessed Sacrament Parish is located at 5050 8th Ave. NE, Seattle, WA 98105.

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always be at war. We have a thousand military bases around the world. The cost of casualties will continue to climb. Coalition deaths totaled 4,803, of whom 93 percent were Americans. U.S. wounded were 32,200. Iraqi deaths are estimated at between 103,000 and 114,000. The war resulted in 1.24 million internally displaced people and more than 1.6 million refugees.

In their book *The Three Trillion Dollar War*, Joseph Stiglitz and Linda Bilmes estimated the projected cost of veterans' health care and disability payments to be between \$422 billion and \$717 billion. The number of veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder is at least 168,000. The suicide rate for Iraq/Afghanistan veterans is one every 36 hours. We have left Iraq a devastated country and squandered capital that could have improved our cities, schools and infrastructure. The official casualties number hundreds of thousands, but we are all victims.

RICH BRODERICK
Cambridge, N.Y.

Off With Their Heads?

Concerning "More Human Rights" (Current Comment, 1/2) on the persecution of homosexuals in Uganda, Kenya and Saudi Arabia: Judging from my time spent in Saudi Arabia, the accusation is unjust. There no one is "beaten or killed" because of sexual orientation, at least not by the legal system. The crime for which the death penalty is occasionally inflicted is homosexual acts. No doubt this is draconian by our standards; but all sorts of sexual acts that are not criminalized in the developed world are capital offenses in Saudi Arabia, including

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adultery and bestiality. The U.S. secretary of state certainly could not have intended to imply that it is a violation of human rights to criminalize sexual activities that society considers deviant. In fact the United States does this too—e.g. rape, though it does not execute rapists.

AMY HO-OHN
Boston, Mass.

Silence Violates Integrity

Thank you for "More Human Rights" about the oppressive anti-gay bill in Uganda. Catholic leaders have been shamefully silent on international human rights violations of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. This is indeed a pro-life issue. The leaders' silence bespeaks a homophobia that is destructive not only to others but to themselves, as they violate their own integrity by their silence. Uganda's population is 42 percent Catholic, the largest denomination in the country. Catholic leaders speaking out could

make a real difference on whether Uganda accepts or rejects this legislation. I invite those interested to see the New Ways Ministry Web site for more information.

FRANCIS DEBERNARDO
Executive Director, New Ways Ministry
Mount Rainier, Md.

Prosecute the Real Culprits

Re "Fixing Immigration," by Donald Kirwin and James Ziglar (12/12/11): You do not have to spend billions on the border to stop illegal immigration. You have to spend the billions on a worker identification system that will prevent job seekers from getting a job if they do not have work-related documentation. I have witnessed situations where the *migra* have arrested illegals while the employer watched unscathed. The real culprits in this fiasco are the employers who have gone untouched when most know their workers are illegal. Exporting the illegals themselves is only a Band-Aid



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DEAN OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF RELIGION AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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on the system; eventually they will go home because they cannot find a job.

PEDRO PACHECO
Tucson, Ariz.

Stereotypes vs. Anecdotes

America should be commended for “Fixing Immigration” (12/12/11), but the prospect of reform remains hostage to extreme rhetoric on both sides. For a dialogue to be productive, the right must relinquish the manipulation of stereotypes and fears to create electoral support, and the left must forgo the argument-by-anecdote designed to undermine even legitimate immigration law enforcement.

JOE GREENE
Monticello, Minn.

A Voice of the Third

In response to “The Long Goodbye” (Current Comment, 12/19/11), the last sentence—“But when the shepherd surveys his flock and spots one sheep straying over a hillside to the right while a third or more of the flock is disappearing into the forest on the left, can there be any doubt about which way he should go?”—is an excellent analogy. I am one of the “third or more” who left after years of Voice of the Faithful meetings as well as writing letters to bishops and Pope John Paul II begging them to hold bishops accountable. At Penn State University and Syracuse, those who covered up the abuse of children either resigned or were fired. Except for

those who retired or died, the bishops whose negligence spread the abuse are still in power, and John Paul II is on the fast track to canonization. The survivors who spoke out are responsible for the positive changes in the church in the past 10 years.

EILEEN M. FORD
Rockport, Mass.

End as He Lived

Franklin Freeman’s review of *Hemingway’s Boat*, by Paul Hendrickson (1/2), calls for a reply. Hemingway could write like an angel, but he lived for thrills, worshipping at the altar of the idol god Pleasure: four marriages and goodness knows how many affairs, bullfighting, fighting in the Spanish Civil War, big-game hunting in Africa, deep sea fishing. The person who lives for pleasure and thrills can never get enough. This helps explain the deep pessimism in Hemingway’s writing. From the moment when the fisherman in *The Old Man and the Sea* catches the biggest fish of his life, he knows it will turn out badly. Too large to get into the boat, the huge catch is lashed alongside, soon the target for sharks. When the man gets back to port, all that is left of his catch is a skeleton. Is it so surprising that a man who “could never get enough” ended by blowing his brains out at age 61?

(REV.) JOHN JAY HUGHES
St. Louis, Mo.

Tell Me a Story

I am a new Catholic, as of four years ago, and “The Long Black Line,” by Patrick Gilger, S.J. (1/2), captured much of what has drawn me to this “fallible, tissue-paper-thin church.” It is love and the great mystery of how God’s love for us is transmitted through Christ and then through each of us, person by person, like a wonderful contagion of Spirit. Thank you for the stories of how these three men helped shape one Jesuit’s life. It is important to tell stories like these.

LAURA LOCKE
Calgary, Alberta, Canada

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WITHOUT GUILF



“Just make believe we don’t notice him.
That must be the idea behind his weird getup.”

CARTOON BY HARLEY SCHWADRON

Jesus Comes

THIRD SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME (B), JAN. 22, 2012

Readings: Jon 3:1-10; Ps 25:4-9; 1 Cor 7:29-31; Mk 1:14-20

“This is the time of fulfillment” (Mk 1:15)

May 21, 2011, marked the clear and unmistakable return of Jesus Christ and the Day of Judgment. At least this was the message promoted by Harold Camping of Family Radio. You may remember the nationwide billboard campaign informing and warning us. A few believers gave away their personal property to friends, neighbors and even strangers. Let’s face it, you do not need your BMW after the rapture. On May 23 Camping triumphantly announced that he had been right. Christ did come, albeit spiritually, and the last judgment did happen, although performed in secret. As for the physical rapture, that would happen “beyond a shadow of a doubt” on Oct. 21, 2011.

This move was not original. In the 19th century William Miller gathered fellow Christians to await Christ’s coming sometime no later than March 21, 1844. When that day passed, a follower of Miller discovered a “tarrying time” revealed in Habakkuk that would delay the date until Oct. 22, 1844. Seventh Day Adventists are Miller’s followers who believe the expectation was fulfilled but as a heavenly “investigative judgment” of the world.

In terms of an imminent rapture, Camping and Miller have more in common with St. Paul than the rest of us. He, too, thought that Jesus’ return

was looming, even in his lifetime (1 Thes 4:17). One sees this conviction throughout First Corinthians, particularly in our reading today. Paul begins this small passage with “the time is running out.” Then he strings together five “as [if] not” scenarios. Taken literally, they are senseless: “Let those having wives act as not having them, those weeping as not weeping...those buying as not owning.” Taken collectively, however, their rhetorical power brings home the last line: “For the world in its present form is passing away.”

Paul’s urgency reflects Jesus’ first day of ministry. Mark says that he began by announcing: “This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.” In both texts, the word used for time is *kairos*. *Chronos* is simply ongoing time. But *kairos* often connotes a heightened time of opportunity or a crisis. Something important is happening now! Jesus proclaims the imminent salvation of God. He then demands that they (and we) repent. Repentance (*metanoia*) is not merely a moral call to stop sinning. Rather, it refers to reorienting one’s mind, heart and life toward God. The kingdom is about transformation.

Mark’s description of Jesus calling his first disciples expresses the power of the Lord’s call and the imperative to respond here and now. On the shores

of Galilee, Jesus sees Peter and Andrew. “Come after me,” he commands. Then he sees James and John and likewise calls them. Mark tells us that both pairs dropped their nets and immediately followed him. James and John even abandoned their father right there in the boat.

Harold Cummings and William Miller were wrong. And while Paul did not dare to set a date for Christ’s return, his expectation that the last judgment day would happen in his lifetime was obviously misplaced. On the other hand, at least with regard to the preaching of Paul and Jesus, we do well to see the Gospel as creating a *kairos* in our lives. The power of the Gospel and the imperative to turn our



PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

- Take time to consider where Christ calls you in your ordinary day.
- How do you respond? Immediately? Hesitantly? Fearfully?
- Thank the Lord for his presence in your life; renew your commitment to respond.

whole lives to God means that there is never mere *chronos* without the possibility of *kairos*.

Do we have the spiritual imagination to be totally immersed in the world, its joys, beauty, needs and its demands for justice and at the same time to see these as the last days? Christ’s definitive covenant means that it really is the end times—that is, the last stage of salvation history. The end times does not mean we drop the ball on the world. Rather it means we engage it with the power and urgency of the Gospel.

PETER FELDMIEIER is the Murray/Bacik Professor of Catholic Studies at the University of Toledo.

Teaching With Authority

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME (B), JAN. 29, 2012

Readings: Dt 18:15-20; Ps 95:1-9; 1 Cor 7:32-35; Mk 1:21-28

A prophet like me will the Lord, your God, raise up (Dt 18:15)

Prophecy is a tricky thing. Usually, when we use the term *prophetic* we mean that someone is challenging structures of sin and oppression. I am not writing about that kind of prophecy. I am referring to those who experience direct visions or voices from God. I know God can and does work in this manner, but my default posture is to be quite wary.

I have experienced several instances of this kind of prophecy in Catholic parishes. At one parish the head of a music group kept changing the music minister's selections during Mass. When challenged, his response was, "I believe in prophecy," meaning apparently that he believed God was telling him to change the music on the spot. St. Paul had a similar problem with unruly members of the assembly in Corinth. "The spirits of the prophet are under the prophet's control," he told them (1 Cor 14:32). Translation: Control yourself and fly right.

I also remember a prophet who channeled Jesus and the Blessed Mother every Wednesday night at a local Catholic church. Her spiritual coin lost a bit of value after she prophesied that half of California would be swallowed up by the ocean. She also told her followers that God wanted them to buy extra groceries for the refugees who would be coming. Some believers actually did buy surplus food.

In this week's first reading, Moses predicts that the Lord will raise up "a prophet like me," whose words the Lord will put into his mouth. If he is

an authentic prophet, then Israel is commanded to listen to him. Anyone who does not listen will answer to God personally. But if he is not an authentic prophet, "he shall die," God threatens. In the verse just after this reading, Moses gives only one criterion to determine a true prophet: "If his oracle is not fulfilled...the prophet has spoken it presumptuously" (18:21).

The context of Moses' instruction is a contrast between how Israel comes to know God's will and the Canaanites' methods, including child torture, casting spells and consulting ghosts (vv. 10-11). Instead of these Moses anticipates authentic prophets. We recall with awe and gratitude the ministries of Isaiah, Jeremiah and all the powerful prophetic voices through Israel's history.

Moses' criterion is, however, not terribly helpful in the moment. If someone proclaims God's will, you will know only after the fact (if then) whether he was an authentic prophet. Perhaps this is one reason Deuteronomy seems rather lukewarm on prophets. They are mentioned only one other time, and this as an example of false prophets (13:1-6). It is safe to say that Moses had much more confidence in the Torah than in prophets.

Still, we should not dismiss what Moses anticipates, especially since it directly applies to Jesus. In the Gospel, Jesus enters the synagogue and teaches the people. There he encounters a man with an unclean spirit, which he rebukes: "Quiet! Come out of him!" It

immediately and dramatically does so. Twice in this short reading Mark tells us that the people were amazed at what Jesus taught. Mark focuses not on what Jesus said, but rather on his power and authority. The crowd's response to Jesus is: "What is this? A new teaching with authority. He commands the unclean spirits and they obey him."

With Jesus the problem of not knowing whether a prophecy will eventually come true or not seems to

PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

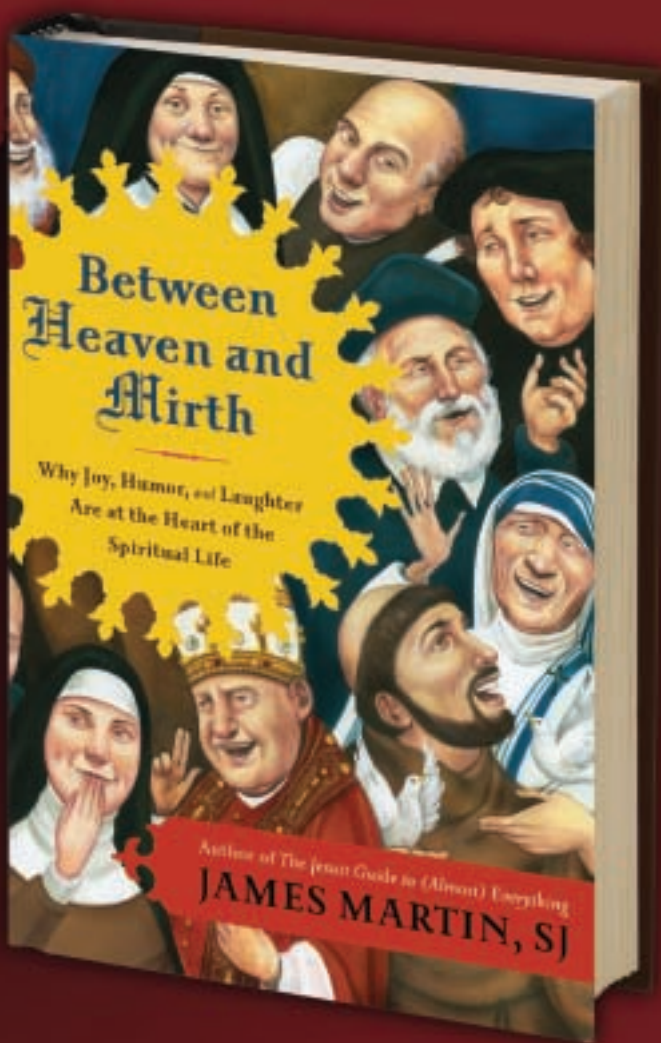
- Think about a favorite teaching of Jesus and meditate on it.
- Why does this speak so powerfully to you?
- Are there new ways it can change your life?

be solved. Jesus' words cause what they say, and on the spot. He began his preaching with "the kingdom of God is at hand," and immediately we see the kingdom unfold before us.

Prophecy is a tricky thing. Moses knew that, but he assured God's people nonetheless that "a prophet like me will the Lord, your God, raise up." Jesus shows that God is true to his word and then some. For we have One who is far greater than Moses (Heb 3:1-6), someone we should utterly trust, someone whose power makes what he says happen.

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Immigrants AND Refugees

SOCIAL, POLITICAL,
LEGAL, AND ETHICAL
PROBLEMS AND
SOLUTIONS

MAY 21-22, 2012

*On the Saint Louis
University Campus in
St. Louis, Missouri*

KEYNOTE SPEAKER:

The Patriarch of Antioch,
the leader of the Maronite Catholic Church,

**His Beatitude
Bechara Peter Rai**

a proponent of peace in the Middle East.

He will address the question of refugees in the context of Lebanon and will discuss the need for an inter-religious dialogue to spread the spirit of freedom, democracy and human rights in the region.



For more information or to make reservations
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**THE CONFERENCE
ALSO WILL CONSIDER:**

- The experience of immigrants from Asia and Latin America
- Reasons for the immigration of those who come without documents
- Practical problems immigrants face, such as health care and education, including a panel discussion about Casa de Salud, a St. Louis clinic open to Latino immigrants — regardless of legal status — and supported by Saint Louis University
- Ethical questions regarding the treatment of refugees and immigrants



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